

ECO-UNESCO

Ireland's Leading Environmental Education Youth Organisation



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Affiliated to the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA)



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



ECO-UNESCO endeavours to work towards the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in every aspect of our work.

As SDG ambassadors our primary purpose is to raise public awareness of the SDG's, and secondly to illustrate practical ways in which organisations and individuals can contribute to achieving the SDGs, using our practices as an example.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON & NATIONAL DIRECTOR



NIAL JENNINGS
Chairperson,
ECO-UNESCO



ELAINE NEVIN
National Director,
ECO-UNESCO

Dear friends,

We are very pleased to present this Annual Report outlining our work in 2024.

In 2024, our work continued to focus on environmental protection and youth empowerment through environmental action, education and youth programmes which helped to tackle some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

During the year we engaged with thousands of young people, educating and inspiring them to protect our environment using our specialist environmental youth and education approach, in a fun and safe way.

In 2024 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Young Environmentalist Awards, our flagship programme empowering young people to take positive environmental action. We engaged over 300 groups of young people across Ireland, tackling issues such as waste, biodiversity loss and climate action. We held our Regional ECO-Dens across Ireland and we celebrated our 25th anniversary in a special event at the Royal Convention Centre in Dublin with over 1000 young people present and over 110 finalist projects on display. We created a 'Stories of Impact' exhibition highlighting the impact of the Young Environmentalist Awards over the past 25 years showcase on the day and we were delighted to welcome Minister Pippa Hackett to celebrate with us.

Our direct youth programmes continued successfully in 2024 with our ECO-Choices programme enhancing young people's health and well-being through environmental education activities, responding to the needs of young people with weekly meetings and after schools groups.

We also continued to deliver our Youth for Sustainable Development (YSD) programme which provided young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become peer educators and advocates for sustainable development running after schools YSD and ECO-UNESCO clubs across Ireland.

In 2024, for the fifth year, we ran the Youth Climate Justice Advocate with support from DCEDIY. We were delighted to partner up with 4 other youth organisations providing training, workshops and supporting local action projects.

In ECO-UNESCO we pride ourselves on developing and delivering quality environmental education programmes and we successfully continued to deliver our QQI trainings upskilling and trained young people through a range of accredited training courses. In addition, we carried out our Youth Climate Voices Survey with over a thousand young people aged 15 – 25 years, finding out about young peoples concerns in relation to climate change, barriers to taking action and opportunities.

Our education programmes continued to be delivered in schools and out of schools and we delivered our wide range of workshops throughout the year and ran an ECO-Week during Science week in November 2024.

During the year we continued our international work and we linked with UNESCO through its ESDfor2030 international programme attending its ESD workshops online.

We would like to acknowledge the collective effort of all the people who are involved with ECO-UNESCO – our funders, participants, young people, board, staff, interns and volunteers who continue to support and deliver our programmes.

We hope you enjoy reading the highlights of our work in 2024 and learn about the positive impact that we have on young people, their peers and their communities both around the country and beyond.

In the future, we will continue to innovate and use our resources in the most effective and efficient ways possible. We will expand our reach, impacting more young people through our high-quality environmental youth programmes.

We look forward to 2025 and to continuing our work to make a real difference in the lives of so many young people.

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2024 IN A NUTSHELL



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

A photograph of two young women in school uniforms (green blazers and plaid skirts) standing in a grassy field under a blue sky with clouds. The woman in the foreground is holding a small green plant with two leaves.

+108,935

PEOPLE STRONGLY IMPACTED BY
YEA ACTION PROJECTS

+5,200

YEA PARTICIPANTS

+4600

YOUNG PEOPLE TOOK PART IN
WORKSHOPS, ECO-WEEK &
SUMMER CAMPS

+660

ENGAGED IN THE YOUTH FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,
ECO-CHOICES, INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH & YOUTH CLIMATE
JUSTICE PROGRAMMES

271

PROJECTS
REGISTERED IN YEA
2024



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



YOUTH CLIMATE
VOICES
FEBRUARY



The Youth Climate Justice Survey, launched with Spunout, was a cornerstone of the Youth Climate Advocate Programme. This annual survey captured young people's views on climate change and climate justice, with over 986 responses. Funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (now the Department of Children, Disability and Equality), the programme was delivered in collaboration with partners including Irish Girl Guides, Feachtas, No Name Club, Poppintree Youth Project, and Young Irish Film Makers.



ECO-DENS
MARCH/APRIL



The regional semi-finals of ECO-DENS were a standout feature of the Young Environmentalist Awards 2024, highlighting 176 projects and engaging over 730 young people from 95 organisations. Groups presented their action projects to a diverse panel of judges, including academics, researchers, and representatives from environmental agencies, educational institutions and international NGOs. In-person events were held in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Armagh, complemented by online sessions to ensure all young people could take part.



YOUNG
ENVIRONMENTALIST
AWARDS
MAY



The 2024 Young Environmentalist Awards Final Showcase took place in-person on Wednesday 15th May, at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre, welcoming 110 finalist groups and over 1,000 guests for the Awards 25th anniversary. Highlights included the **25 Years of the YEA Exhibit** and the workshops by the Book of Leaves Podcast, SEAI, ECO-UNESCO and Change Clothes Crumlin. Distinguished guests, including Councillor Michael Pidgeon, Minister Pippa Hackett, and Robert Mooney from the Climate and Communications, (now the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment), joined in celebrating the creativity and impact of young environmentalists from across Ireland.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



SUMMER CAMPS
JUNE-JULY



During the summer of 2024, ECO-UNESCO was delighted to host the annual ECO-Camps for young people aged 10 to 16. Participants engaged with sustainable development, ecology, and biodiversity through interactive activities. Based at our Dublin youth space on Burgh Quay, the groups were excited to explore the city's green and blue spaces, including day trips to nearby natural areas, where they had hands-on opportunities to learn about and connect with the environment.



EARTH RISING
SEPTEMBER



In September 2024, we hosted an interactive Climate Justice Banners Workshop at the IMMA's Earth Rising Festival. For several years, we have been invited to the Earth Rising Festival to run a series of youth-friendly events and workshops. Last year, the Youth Climate Advocate Programme team set up a stand providing stencils, paints, recyclable paper, and other tools for participants to create their own climate justice banners. Through the Earth Rising Festival, we engaged over 200 participants including 50 young people directly engaged through activities.



ECO-WEEK
SEPTEMBER



ECO-Week 2024, our series of free, online sustainability sessions, was held during Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week, from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th September. In a new approach, ECO-Week sessions were split into two distinct age groups: 8-12 and 13-18. This allowed us to expand our reach and provide age-appropriate content, enhancing both engagement and learning outcomes. Across the week, 20 themed workshops were delivered, with 3,946 young people from 205 organisations taking part.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



ERASMUS+



Over the past year, we secured Erasmus+ funding to deliver a joint project with Ronanstown Youth Service and Limerick Youth Service. This collaboration provided valuable opportunities to share knowledge, exchange best practice, and support young people through innovative, community-based initiatives. We also established a new partnership with Enniscorthy Community Alliance, broadening our reach and creating fresh opportunities for engagement at local level. These partnerships reflect our ongoing commitment to working collaboratively to strengthen youth services and maximise the impact of our programmes.



EARTH GALA
DECEMBER



The ECO-UNESCO Earth Gala 2024 was an event held in early December 2024 at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) to celebrate and promote youth climate action. The event featured young people, experts, and policymakers in conversations about climate change and advocacy, drawing from ECO-UNESCO's Youth Climate Advocate Programme. It was part of ECO-UNESCO's broader efforts, including the Young Environmentalist Awards, to educate and empower young people in Ireland to take meaningful steps for climate justice.

ABOUT ECO-UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation that works to empower young people and conserve the environment. ECO-UNESCO is a key partner of UNESCO, is a member of UNESCO's ESDfor2030 Net, and is a QQI-accredited training centre.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

ECO-UNESCO works with young people, educators and youth leaders on environmental projects across Ireland, helping to protect and conserve the environment. Each year our programmes, workshops, events and training programmes inspire environmental action at a local level among young people, their peer groups, communities and beyond.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Through our innovative peer education programmes and youth-led events, ECO-UNESCO continuously strives to better achieve our mission of using environmental education as a means of empowering young people and supporting positive personal development.

ECO-UNESCO'S KEY ACTIVITIES 2024

ECO-YOUTH

- Young Environmentalist Awards
- Youth for Sustainable Development and Peer Education Programme
- Environmental youth events, activities and workshops
- ECO-UNESCO Clubs Programme
- ECO-Youth Choices
- Youth Climate Advocates Programme

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Green Youth Employability
- QQI accredited courses
- Member of the UNESCO ESD Net for 2030 - on Education for Sustainable Development
- ECO-Academy development

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Development of environmental education resources
- ECO-Sustainability Award for organisations
- Representation and advocacy for environmental education and education for Sustainable Development

OUR PEOPLE, OUR PARTNERS, OUR PURPOSE

ECO-UNESCO is affiliated with the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA).

Founded in 1981, WFUCA is responsible for informing, coordinating and mobilising its members with UNESCO's support and cooperation.

ECO-UNESCO is the WFUCA affiliate in Ireland and supports and coordinates all-island networks of ECO-UNESCO environmental youth clubs.

BOARD MEMBERS: Fiona Cusack, Mary Gallagher-Cooke, Nicola Horgan, Niall Jennings (Chairperson), Vivienne Kelly (Treasurer), Rohna O'Donnell, Shane O'Reilly

NATIONAL DIRECTOR: Elaine Nevin

SENIOR MANAGEMENT: Sadaf Sarfraz, Vince Harney

STAFF (2023/2024): Aisling Miller, Aine Keating, Alex Konieczka, Alex Marinelli, Almoruf Opere, Anita Nwalo, Ciara Muldoon, Claudio Nacosia, Delyth Hughes, Doireann Dunbar, Dunchadh Kinane, Eimear Panoho, Gary Donegan, Ian Nuguent, Josh Kovarsky, Julie Jones, Kate Stuart, Katie Ryan, Kayleigh Harris, Richard Hennery, Roisin Fitzgerald, Sarah Austin, Sarah McElroy, Sarah Page and Ziqi Zheng.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders and supporters for their partnership.



THE YEAR IN QUOTES

Volunteering with ECO-UNESCO has been unforgettable... a warm, family-like environment with so many new skills gained.

ECO-UNESCO Volunteer

Working on the YEA has shown the whole team that they shouldn't be afraid to speak up about climate issues such as biodiversity loss, because these issues are a big problem in our world today.

YEA Team Flora & Fauna LK

It is greatly encouraging to know that we have, in this country, so many young citizens who strive to develop new visions for our shared future. As President of Ireland I am very proud of those citizens.

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

ECO-UNESCO became a safe place, a place where we can talk about social environmental injustice around the world. They gave us a voice throughout, giving us a way to take action through submitting projects in the Young Environmentalist Awards and letting us do something meaningful by helping our voices being heard.

ECO-Choices Participant

As a mentor, I was genuinely impressed by the Young Environmentalists Awards Project. These young people...harnessed their imagination and creativity to tackle real-world problems.

Cathal Foley, YEA Mentor

Our school had a fantastic time, and we were thrilled with our victory (bringing an All-Ireland title to Mayo!). The experience has truly motivated our students to focus more on environmental issues and take pride in themselves and their school community. It has significantly boosted their confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

Sarah Corcoran, YEA Mentor

I have to say...what a fantastic event! All the team were blown away at the incredible commitment, effort and knowledge from the students. They all enjoyed the experience and said it gave them a renewed sense of purpose to their own work.

YEA Sponsor



OUR VISION

GAIRDIIN NA BEATHA

PROGRAMME UPDATES



YEA 2024

YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST AWARDS

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-18 YEARS



108,935
DIRECTLY
IMPACTED



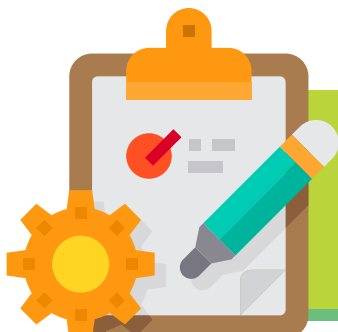
30
COUNTIES
REPRESENTED



5,500
YOUNG PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED



24
AWARDS



271
REGISTERED
PROJECTS

YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST AWARDS

ECO-UNESCO continued to recognise and reward the work of young people in environmental protection and conservation through our Awards scheme. In 2024 YEA celebrated 25 years of the programme.



YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST AWARDS (YEA)

In total, 271 projects registered to the Young Environmentalist Awards 2024. These included projects from different age groups (Super Junior, Junior and Senior). Projects were diverse in nature, with most registering to the Biodiversity and Waste categories. This year there was a broad geographic spread, with projects from 30 counties across the island of Ireland.

6 STEPS TO SUCCESS TRAINING

In addition to ECO Week, other training opportunities were offered as part of YEA 2024. These included the 6-Steps to Success Online Course for both mentors and young people, as well as live online mentor sessions.

ECO-DENS

ECO-UNESCO held its ECO-Dens Semi-Finals, regional “Dragon’s Den” style events, in March and April 2024. Across nine days and five different locations, semi-finalist groups pitched their environmental action projects to an expert judging panel, providing them with a sense of empowerment and a valuable opportunity to receive feedback. In total 42 judges participated, representing organisations such as Environmental Protection, Community Foundation for Ireland, Department of Education, Department of Environment, and Irish Aid. In 2024, a total of 176 projects were shortlisted and invited to ECO-Dens. A total of 737 young people from 95 organisations across Ireland attended to pitch their environmental action projects.

SHOWCASE AND AWARDS CEREMONY

YEA’s Final Showcase and Awards Ceremony took place on Wednesday 15th May 2024 in the Dublin Royal Convention Centre. The event was a grand celebration of the work of the 2024 young environmentalists, attended by over 1,000 guests, including 110 finalist projects and esteemed guests such as Councillor Michael Pidgeon, Minister Pippa Hackett, and Robert Mooney from the Department of Education.

The day began with an impressive showcase of finalist projects at display stands, featuring a 25 Years of YEA Panel Exhibition and a range of engaging talks and activities. In the afternoon, MC Clara Murray hosted the awards ceremony, honouring the hard work of the young environmentalists and announced the award winners of YEA 2024.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS



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YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Youth for Sustainable Development (YSD) programme provided young people with the opportunity to engage in quality global citizenship education and education for sustainable development (ESD) activities, empowering them to act as youth leaders and peer educators.

In 2024, we worked with over 250 people through the structured peer education programme, local environmental action project work, ECO-Days, our Youth Action network, trainings, events, workshops and International Days including World Water Day, Earth Day and the Earth Gala impacting their peers and communities. 2 participants represented ECO-UNESCO at the National Youth Assembly on Climate. 9 projects of participants from the YSD programme were entered into the Young Environmentalist Awards. We continued our Global Conversations initiative.



QQI ACCREDITED TRAINING

In 2024, 19 people engaged in the accredited QQI Level 5 minor award in Peer Education.

YSD PROGRAMME REGIONALLY

We continued to deliver the programme in locations including Dublin, Drogheda, Co. Louth and Galway in collaboration with local youth services and provided training for volunteers and youth leaders. We also delivered the programme nationwide through our online YSD programme.



80%

YSD PARTICIPANTS TOOK PART IN OUR YOUTH ACTION NETWORK & ECO-EVENT

ECO-CHOICES HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

ECO-CHOICES HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The ECO-Choices programme delivers inclusive environmental education for all young people, using a youth work approach at the heart of every activity. We identify the needs of young people and their communities, adapting our content to ensure their interests and priorities remain central to the programme.

Over 130 young people engaged through the ECO-Choices programme in 2024, in line with the UBU funding agreement. Through a non-formal, hands-on approach, ECO-Choices encourages young people to actively engage with environmental issues and supports each group in developing and delivering an environmental action project of their choice.

In 2024, the programme delivered a range of activities to young people from across the island of Ireland, including Community Participation training, community projects, 1-1 welfare sessions, weekly drop-in groups, ECO-action days, and a range of field trips. We continued our collaboration within Ronanstown Crosscare also, running a weekly environment youth programme.

QQI ACCREDITED TRAINING:

In early 2024, 39 Community Participation participants received QQI L3 Community Participation certification.

In September 2024, a further 40 participants began their Community Participation journey, with certification due to take place in early 2024.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

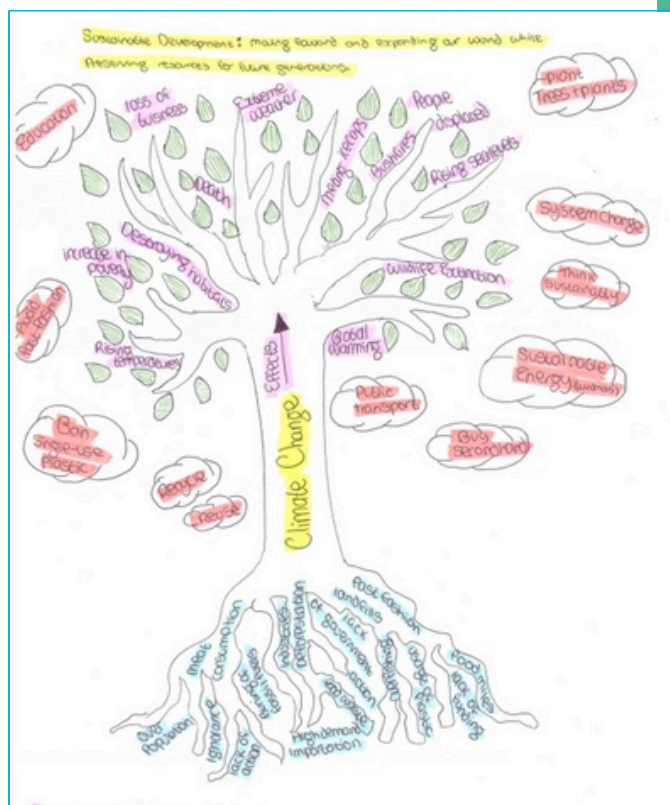
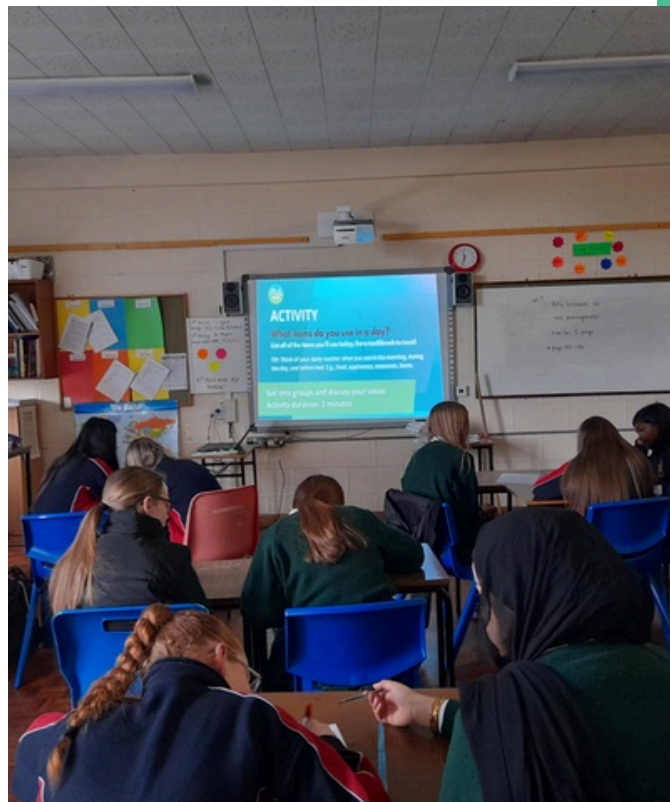
In 2024 ECO-UNESCO continued to deliver a range of 118 engaging workshops to 2,100+ young people across all provinces, in partnership with 51 schools and youth groups. These workshops were delivered as part of funding support from Uisce Éireann, WWGS, and ESB for generations.

We partnered with local authorities (e.g., Sligo, Mayo and South Dublin County Councils) to deliver targeted environmental workshops. We also collaborated with Youthreach centres, community organisations, and the TCD Coastal TALEs initiative.

In December 2024, we partnered with the Enniscorthy Community Alliance (ECA), and local authorities to launch a programme of environmental education workshops for secondary schools in Enniscorthy.

ECO-UNESCO was successful as one of the partners on SEFIT programme launched by Rethink Ireland. We started the project by hiring a resource in Cork and started expanding our reach in the region by building relationships with schools and local authorities by offering range of workshops.

The workshop programmes brought together local schools, community groups, and public agencies to empower young people with the knowledge and skills to drive sustainable change in their communities.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Key highlights:

- **Launch Event:** In December 2024, we attended the launch of the ECO-UNESCO and Enniscorthy Community Alliance partnership which was attended by local school representatives, community leaders, and local authority officers.
- **Partnership:** We collaborated with Trinity College Dublin on the Coastal TALES initiative, integrating it into our workshop and outreach programme. (All proposed targets were met, subject to ongoing funding support).
- **Workshops:** 2,100+ young people engaged through in-person and online workshops in 2024. ECO-UNESCO successfully delivered a broad range of workshops both face-to-face and online, including YEA 6 Steps Action Project Planning, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Justice, Ecology, Fast Fashion, Plastics, and Waste. · We delivered TY modules and Student Council training across several schools nationwide.
- **Community Projects:** Young people were supported in designing and implementing local sustainability initiatives through the Plants and Places Project, funded by the Department of Justice Community Safety Initiative Fund.
- **Impact:** The programme strengthens youth environmental literacy, encourages community engagement, and lays the foundation for ongoing sustainability projects in Enniscorthy.



THE YOUTH CLIMATE ADVOCATE PROGRAMME



THE YOUTH CLIMATE ADVOCATE PROGRAMME 2024

Youth Climate Advocate Programme: In 2024, ECO-UNESCO led a consortium project in conjunction with five youth organisations - Irish Girl Guides, No Name Club, Feachtas, Poppintree Youth Project, and the Young Irish Film Makers.

This was the fifth year of the programme which was awarded funding by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (now the Department of Children, Disability and Equality), under their Youth Climate Justice Fund.

The programme ran successfully and engaged 252 young people and 55 youth workers through a range of capacity-building workshops and training for young people and youth workers. 406 were reached through the Climate Justice ECO-Week, and over 1,500 were reached through other public events and social media outreach.

A national Youth Climate Voices survey was conducted in partnership with SpunOut, collecting responses from over 965 young people aged 16-25, exploring their views, concerns, and hopes about climate justice. The programme successfully engaged youth in advocacy and leadership around climate justice issues throughout 2024.



THE YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE SURVEY OVERVIEW

Who responded?

SURVEY RESPONSES

959

PARTICIPANTS

GENDER

59%
FEMALE

33%
MALE

4.5%
SELF-IDENTITY
AND OTHER

2.9%
NON-BINARY

LOCATION



29%
DUBLIN-BASED



71%
FROM OTHER COUNTIES

OCCUPATION



92%
ARE IN EDUCATION



8%
ENGAGED IN WORK

AGE

78%
18 AND
YOUNGER

22%
OVER 19

DAILY TRANSPORT MEANS



47% CAR



1% MOTOR



50% PUBLIC



11% BIKE

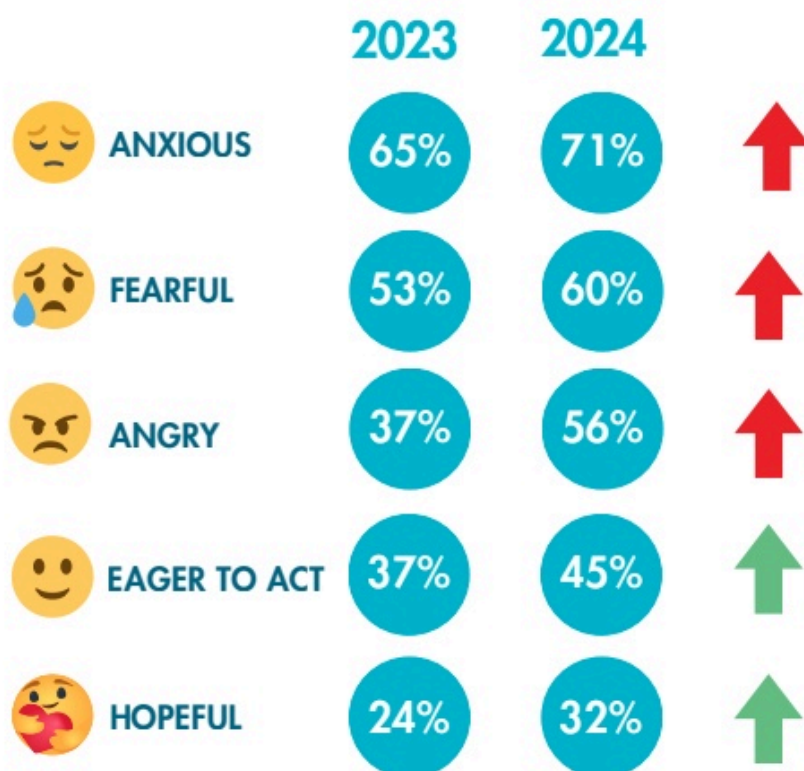


41% WALK



2% OTHER

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE SURVEY



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT

GREEN TEENS & ECO EXPLORERS SUMMER CAMP

The Green Teen and Eco Explorers Summer Camps catered for young people aged 10–16, providing a fun and interactive way to learn about the environment and sustainability. Through outdoor activities, hands-on workshops, and creative projects, participants explored topics such as biodiversity, climate action, waste reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The programme aimed to build not only knowledge but also practical skills, positive attitudes, and values to support young people in becoming active citizens for sustainability.

In 2024, ECO-UNESCO ran three weeks of camps with a total of 30 participants from across the Greater Dublin Area. Young people took part in team-building challenges, nature trails, and eco-crafts, developing their awareness of the natural world and the small steps they can take to make a difference.

UN DAYS

As part of our ongoing commitment to linking environmental education with global awareness, ECO-UNESCO marked a number of key United Nations Days with youth-focused activities. These events provided meaningful opportunities for young people to connect their local actions with international environmental movements.

One highlight was a river clean-up in Clondalkin, Co. Dublin for World Water Day, where participants learned about the importance of water conservation and biodiversity while taking direct action to improve their local environment.



EDUCATION & TRAINING



During 2024, ECO-UNESCO delivered a range of training programmes aimed at upskilling young people and educators. These included accredited and non-accredited trainings.

During the year, ECO-UNESCO successfully completed reengagement with QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland), which included a review of Quality Assurance policies and practices in the organisation.

ACCREDITED COURSES (QQI)

Strengthening Quality and Accredited Learning

In 2024, ECO-UNESCO strengthened its partnership with QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland), building on the successful re-establishment of our quality assurance procedures in 2023.

This collaboration ensures that our accredited training courses continue to meet the highest standards of learning and professional development. Our QA Approval Process Report is publicly available on our website, www.ecouneso.ie.

Through this framework, ECO-UNESCO offers high-quality, QQI-accredited courses that equip learners with practical skills and knowledge to drive sustainable change:

- Sustainable Development (QQI – Level 5)
- Growing Vegetables (QQI – Level 4)
- Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production (QQI – Level 3)

These courses reflect our commitment to accessible, credible, and impactful education in sustainability and environmental practice.

We delivered QQI training courses to over 64 learners with 58 QQI Minor awards achieved. 19 learners achieved a L5 Minor Award in Peer Education through our YSD Programme; 39 learners achieved a L3 Minor Award in Community Participation through our ECO-Choices Programme

EDUCATION & TRAINING



EDUCATOR TRAINING

In 2024 ECO-UNESCO delivered its training programmes to over 288 participants through: youth leader and educator training – delivered to educators from the USA, and welcomed visitors from Korea, Germany, France.

We engaged with 43 youth workers & 115 young people studying either the Professional Master of Education or Applied Social Studies in the University of Galway and Maynooth University, in-person, and online to give them practical ideas for how to incorporate education for sustainable development into their work. We also delivered GCE training to 26 international young people who visited our ECO-UNESCO offices.

**4 QUALITY
EDUCATION**



288+ participants



**43 youth workers &
115 young people**



**26 international
young people**

EDUCATION & TRAINING

GREEN YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

The Green Youth Employability [GYE] Programme, funded by Rethink Ireland's Urban Uplift Fund continued delivery in 2024. The programme aimed to improve participants' employability skills, green skills and expand their knowledge of the green jobs market.

During the programme, the participants learned how to navigate employment websites, completed voluntary work experience, and did a range of field trips including visiting museums, participating in confidence building activities such as hikes and cooking classes.

21 young people aged 18-25 participated in the programme in 2024 with 19 completing successfully. Of these 19;

- **42% are now in employed**
- **53% are now studying**
- **16% have continued to volunteer at ECO-UNESCO events**

These activities not only deepened young people's understanding of the links between local and global environmental challenges but also empowered them to see themselves as active contributors to positive change. By fostering this sense of global citizenship, ECO-UNESCO continues to inspire and equip the next generation to take meaningful action for a more sustainable future.

I real enjoyed the course it was fabulous, amazing, and I am comfortable and confident today

GYE Participant

Thank you so much for doing this kind of programme it helped me a lot rebuilding my confidence

GYE Participant

COLLABORATIVE WORK

In 2024, as highlighted above, we led a consortium with 5 partner organisations from the Youth Sector under the Youth Climate Advocate Programme.

We collaborated with partner organisations from across Europe for our Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership.

We collaborated with local and regional youth services in the delivery of our programmes including Boomerang Café in Drogheda, Co. Louth and Ronanstown Youth Service in Dublin, among others.

We continued our Strategic collaboration with the EPA.

We continued our collaboration with the NYCI and Involve CLG Youth and Community Services for website and communications.

We became involved in the Shared Services of the NYCI and attended a range of capacity building sessions with partners in the youth sector.

Our work continued to promote the ideals of UNESCO.



COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION



In 2024, ECO-UNESCO's events and initiatives received extensive coverage across multiple media platforms, including print, television, and radio. This widespread media presence allowed the organisation to reach a broad and diverse audience, raising awareness of its work in youth engagement, environmental education, and community action. Beyond traditional media, ECO-UNESCO's initiatives were actively promoted through a variety of digital and print channels, including magazines, e-newsletters, websites, and event guides.

Key Publications and Resources:

- YEA 2024 Finalist Booklet: Showcasing the achievements of young environmental advocates and highlighting innovative youth-led projects
- Youth Climate Voices Survey Report 2024: Offering valuable insights into the perspectives, priorities, and concerns of young people on climate change and environmental sustainability
- Informational and marketing materials supporting ECO-UNESCO's programmes and educational resources for key environmental days, helping to raise awareness and encourage active participation

These communications not only amplified ECO-UNESCO's reach but also strengthened its role as a leading authority in youth and environmental engagement.

Last year, ECO-UNESCO also inspired environmental awareness and youth engagement through two key initiatives — Earth Day to Earth Day and Seeds of Knowledge.

The Earth Day to Earth Day challenge encouraged individuals to adopt one new sustainable action each month, raising funds to support ECO-UNESCO's youth programmes, including the Young Environmentalist Awards and ECO-Clubs.

Through the Seeds of Knowledge campaign, ECO-UNESCO aimed to "plant" 65,000 symbolic seeds, representing the young people empowered through its programmes over the past 25 years. Both initiatives highlight ECO-UNESCO's commitment to nurturing environmental responsibility and youth leadership across Ireland.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION



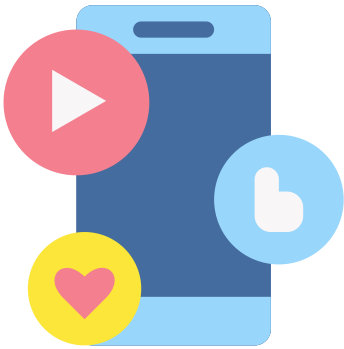
In 2024, ECO-UNESCO also strengthened its communications and fundraising capabilities through strategic partnerships and extensive media activity. A new pro-bono partnership with Ask Direct enhanced our individual giving initiatives and Instagram strategy, helping us engage more effectively with supporters.

Our PR campaigns delivered strong national and local visibility. We rolled out over 100 press materials across Ireland through our programmes including our Young Environmentalist Awards 2025, our #Act4EarthDay campaign and our Earth Gala and Survey Results Amplifications. Highlights included national coverage in the Irish Examiner, Irish Daily Star, the Irish Sun, four national broadcasts on RTE Radio 1, Today FM, and Newstalk, and online coverage on [breakingnews.ie](https://www.breakingnews.ie).

ECO-UNESCO's direct communications continued to grow, with regular newsletters and emailers sent to a database of 7,000 contacts via Mailchimp, supplemented by recent efforts to migrate additional contacts onto Salesforce, expanding our reach and engagement.



COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION



**400+ follower
increase on socials**



**600+
more reel &
trend based content**



**52.1k reach
30.5k reach on
Instagram**



**170k reach
103k reach on
Facebook**



**975.1k average
592 AVG content
interactions**

COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Irish Independent 

Young Kerry environmentalists win national award for project on pair trawling



Students and teachers of Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, who won two national awards for an environmentally conscious project on pair trawling.

Westmeath ^{Independent}

ECO-UNESCO exhibit in Athlone



At the exhibition at the Athlone Civic Centre were from left: Cailín Gallagher, Executive Librarian, Westmeath County Council and Elaine Nevin, National Director at ECO-UNESCO.

OFFALY INDEPENDENT

Young environmentalists from Offaly scoop top prize at ECO-UNESCO Environmentalist Awards



Minister Pippa Hackett with pupils from Tullamore College

Ulster Gazette
AND ARMAGH STANDARD

St Catherine's College bids for 'Eco Unesco' Green Flag for Biodiversity



COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Down Recorder

Established 1836

Knockevin Special School wins environmental gong

22 May 2024

STUDENTS from Knockevin Special School have claimed the top prize in a prestigious all-Ireland competition.

Having opened their eco-café at their Downpatrick campus, the students claimed first prize in the Further Growth Category at the Young Environmentalist Awards 2024 last Wednesday in Dublin.



DONEGAL DAILY



Students from Loreto Secondary School in Letterkenny were highly commended at this year's ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) 2024.

laoislive

Laois students reach final of Young Environmentalist Awards

Mountmellick Community School celebrate as students reach May final



Independent Westmeath



Athlone's Natasha Maimba, UN Youth Delegate for Ireland, with Elaine Nevin, National Director for ECO-UNESCO, at the Earth Gala climate justice event in the Irish Museum of Modern Art on Saturday, December 7.



REPRESENTATION & ADVOCACY

ECO-UNESCO continued to advocate for youth engagement in environmental issues and the importance of education as a tool for achieving sustainability.

During 2024, ECO-UNESCO remained active in the Department of Education Advisory Group on Education for Sustainable Development; in Coalition 2030, a coalition of civil society organizations promoting the SDG's; the National Youth Council of Ireland and the Irish Development Education Association.

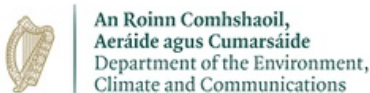
We made submissions to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the Climate Action and Sustainable Development senior cycle subject and on the Transition Year programme.

During the year we had ECO-UNESCO youth representatives on the National Youth Climate Assembly.

We continued to foster strong relationships with funders including Irish Aid through our multi annual funding for the YSD programme; CDYS through UBU; DCEDIY through ongoing support through the YSGS and additional support through Capital grant and Youth Climate Justice funding.

We secured funds for YEA from DECC in 2024 and funds from Dept. of Education. We continued our strategic collaboration with EPA. We continued to develop relations with the Community Foundation for Ireland and secured funds from a range of funding opportunities including the Toy Show appeal. We secured funds through the Rethink Urban Uplift Fund.

During 2024, we continued to work towards our Strategic Plan and continued work on the development of a new Strategic Plan.



HOW WE OPERATE?

FUNDING

We continued strong relationships with funders including Irish Aid through our multi-annual funding for the YSD programme; CDYS through UBU; DCEDIY with ongoing support for the YSGS and UBU, and additional support through Capital Grant and Youth Climate Justice funding. In 2024, we continued to receive funding from DECC and the Department of Education. The strategic collaboration with EPA continued.

ECO-UNESCO'S CORE FUNDING IN 2024

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, (now the Department of Children, Disability and Equality AND Department of Education)

Youth Service Grant

Youth Climate Justice Fund

The Irish Environmental Network

Core Funding Grant

City of Dublin Youth Service Board

UBU Scheme

Staff health & well-being Grant (minor grant)

Department of Rural and Community Development

The Special Scheme for National Organisations (administered by POBAL)

The Department of the Environment, Climate, and Communications

Young Environmentalist Awards Support

The Department of Foreign Affairs

Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Grant

ECO-UNESCO ALSO RECEIVED FUNDING FROM

The Environmental Protection Agency

The Department of Education, (now the Department of Education and Youth), through the ESD for 2030 grant

Local Authorities nationwide

Erasmus+ (administered by Leargás)

ECO-UNESCO RECEIVED FUNDING RELATED TO SPECIFIC PROJECTS FROM

The Community Foundation for Ireland

Worldwise Global Schools (on behalf of Irish Aid)

Concern

ESB Energy for Generations

Rethink Ireland

SEAI

Enrich Environmental Ltd

IKEA

Uisce Eireann

Our Audited Accounts for 2024 are available to download on our website: www.ecounesco.ie

HOW WE OPERATE?

GOVERNANCE

ECO-UNESCO is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors made up of members. In 2024, there was a 35/65 male-female gender split among Board Members, with a diversity of appropriate skills in place, ensuring that the board can meet its aims in oversight and policy development.

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS (2024):

Niall Jennings (Chairperson)
Vivienne Kelly (Treasurer)
Rhona O'Donnell (Secretary)
Shane O'Reilly
Mary Gallagher-Cooke (resigned 31/12/24)
Fiona Cusack (appointed 18/12/24)
Nicola Horgan (appointed 14/12/24)

In 2024 there were 6 Board meetings held. Additionally, the Board has 2 Sub-Committees, an Audit, Risk & Finance sub-committee and Education, Training sub-committee, which met in 2024. The AGM took place in July 2024.

Appropriate financial policies and procedures are in place, complying with statutory requirements and ECO-UNESCO's audited accounts are available on our website.

GOVERNANCE CODES

ECO-UNESCO is compliant with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code and reported compliance in 2024. The organisation complies with the Quality Assurance standards from QQI and works within the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work and is a signatory to the Dochas code of images.

STRATEGIC PLANNING 2024

We worked on completing the Theory of Change, and we developed the strategic plan which is being finalised in 2025 to cover the 2025-2028 period.

THANK YOU!

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our funders and sponsors



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality



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



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



**Irish
Environmental
Network**



Erasmus+



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht



Energy for
generations



The Community
Foundation for Ireland

**RETHINK
IRELAND**
Our Social
Innovation
Fund





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Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
Scheme to Support National Organisations **2019-2023**



ECO-UNESCO is supported by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth with support from the National Lottery Fund.



ECO-UNESCO is part-funded by the Department of Environmental, Climate and Communications through the Irish Environmental Network

ECO-UNESCO is a trading name of the Irish Environmental Conservation Organisation For Youth – Unesco Clubs CLG.

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