

# ECO-UNESCO NEWS

Ireland's Environmental Education and Youth Organisation



## YEA 2019 Timeline

Sep 2018

Online Registration

Opens



Sep-Oct 2018

Free YEA 6 Steps to

Success Training



Nov 2018

Registration Closes



Nov 2018-Feb 2019

Project Submission



Mar-Apr 2019

ECO-Den Semi - Finals



May 2019

Showcase & Awards

Ceremony



### Ireland's Greenest Teens Honoured at ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2018

Young people from Newpark Comprehensive School were named 'Overall Senior Winners' at the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards that took place on Tuesday, 22nd May in the Mansion House, Dublin.

The Awards featured environmental projects from young people aged 10-18 in schools, youth and community groups across the island of Ireland.

From 327 entries, 80 projects were shortlisted and showcased at the Mansion House event. The awards are broken up into 10 categories ranging from biodiversity to eco-enterprise, with junior and senior winners named in each, and overall junior and senior winners chosen from these.

Reflecting the national trend and focus on waste and climate change action, 'Plastic Outta the Park' by a group of young people in Transition Year at Newpark Comprehensive School, Blackrock, County Dublin aimed to make the school the first single-use plastic free school in Ireland. The young people have reached thousands in their community and beyond through awareness-raising events, videos and social media campaigns. The group from Newpark also won the Senior Climate Change category.

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. Katherine Zappone TD, who addressed the young people at the ceremony, said: "Young people have the most to lose if we do not continue responding to major environmental challenges. It is this generation which are responding to climate change, plastic pollution in our oceans, and extreme weather events. We can draw hope, inspiration and confidence from their leadership. They are already shaping the Ireland of the future."

The annual awards programme has provided over 40,000 young people with an opportunity to take action and raise awareness in their own community since it began in 1999.

## REGISTER NOW!

Sign up for #YEA2019 at [www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie)

### Pictured Right:

(TOP) YEA 2018 participants pictured with Elaine Nevin (ECO-UNESCO) and Catherine Martin TD, Deputy Leader of the Green Party

(BOTTOM) YEA 2018 participants pictured with Elaine Nevin (ECO-UNESCO) and Catherine Byrne, Minister of State for Health Promotion



### Pictured Left:

Newpark Comprehensive being presented with the Overall Senior Award by Alexander Leicht (Chief of the Section of ESD at UNESCO) and Elaine Nevin (ECO-UNESCO)

Read more about the YEA's on Page 4 >



# Youth for Sustainable Development Programme !



In January 2018 regional YSD groups were set up in Bray, Drogheda, Clane & Carlow



The Dublin YSD group have been busy throughout the year working on a number of action projects including 'Fishy Pins', a project that makes designer badges out of ocean plastic, and 'Education's Lacking, Let's Get Cracking', a YEA winning project that advocates for more environmental and sustainable development focused content in the national school curriculum.

Other events throughout the year included an event to celebrate Earth Day, organised by the young people in Dublin YSD and focusing on social media campaigning for environmental grassroots projects. This event was attended by young people from the regional YSD groups in Carlow, Drogheda, Bray and Kildare.

Some of our Youth Leaders also had the opportunity to meet with President Michael D Higgins at the Aras Garden Party in July this year. This event focused on the brilliant work carried out by young people all across Ireland, and our young people even had the chance to give both the President and Sabina Higgins a fishy pin each!



Want to get involved?  
Contact [ysd@ecounesco.ie](mailto:ysd@ecounesco.ie)

## Directors Message

Dear friends of ECO-UNESCO,

Welcome to the 11th edition of ECO-UNESCO News where you can read about the activities in 2018 which are helping to empower young people to protect and conserve the environment.

We've been busy with our wide range of youth education and training programmes, working with thousands of people all across the island of Ireland. Among them was our flagship Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase which took place in May 2018. The event saw over 650 young people showcase their fantastic action projects. Our Youth for Sustainable Development programme also engaged and inspired young people to get active on environmental issues, and more groups were developed around the country.

Throughout the year, we continued our international work as Key Partner of UNESCO's Global Action Programme on ESD and attended the Annual International Meeting of Key Partners in April. In May, we attended the GAP Youth Forum in UNESCO HQ and in July the High Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations HQ.

This year marks a significant milestone for ECO-UNESCO as we celebrate 20 years of our Young Environmentalist Awards programme, so we'll be looking forward to celebrating with you throughout the year.

I hope you enjoy reading some of the highlights of our past year and up and coming events in 2018/2019.

Until next time,

**Elaine Nevin,**  
National Director, ECO-UNESCO



## Carlow's Young People Lead the Way in Tackling Global Issues

Since January 2018, 120 young people in Carlow have been actively involved in the Youth for Sustainable Development Programme. The programme aims to empower young people to take action and make a real difference in tackling some of the issues related to environment and sustainable development.

On 30th April 2018, ECO-UNESCO hosted an Open Night at The Vault, Carlow Regional Youth Service, to celebrate the incredibly successful pilot of the YSD programme in Carlow. At this open night participants were awarded with their certificates of participation and were joined by ECO-UNESCO's National Director, Elaine Nevin, Eimear Cotter and David Smith from the EPA, Mayor Jim Deane, community leaders, teachers, and parents.



The 'Youth for Sustainable Development' leadership programme incorporates an after-schools youth programme and an in-schools module that focuses on youth leadership, peer education and Sustainable Development. In this programme, young people aged between 15-18 years old explore some of the world's most pressing issues such as climate change, sustainable development and how they can take action in their local area to make positive change.

The 12 session programme uses fun activities such as debating, drama, art and music to explore global issues and develop skills in young people such as leadership, team work and how to communicate these issues to their peers.

Feedback from young people and teachers has been extremely positive. When asked to explain their experience with the programme, a young person from Tyndall College said 'You are learning, but in a fun way!' A young person from Gaelchoilaiste Cheatharlach said 'It's important that we learn about the environment because it's us who are living in it.' A teacher from Tyndall College said that after just two weeks of the programme, she could notice a dramatic difference in her students confidence and ability to work together.



# Teachers and Young People Across Ireland are 'Learning 2 Change'

ECO-UNESCO's 'Learning2Change Our World' Programme aims to support Education for Sustainable Development in post-primary schools. We work with students, teachers and principals in participating schools to explore issues regarding sustainability and development and how these areas affect our local and global communities. As a result, young people are empowered to become agents of change within their schools and local communities.

One teacher had the following to say:

*"[The facilitators] were brilliant at communicating with the students and encouraging them to fully engage in their action project."*

**Our workshops currently cover the following topics and are open for booking:**

- Fast fashion focus
- Distaste for food waste
- Take climate action
- Get drastic about plastic
- What can the earth sustain? A global picture

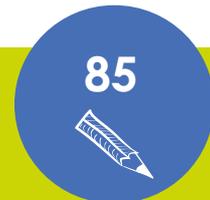


**Workshop enquiry?**

Contact [youth@ecounesco.ie](mailto:youth@ecounesco.ie)



No. of Youth Engaged in 2017/2018



No. of Teachers Reached in 2017/2018



No. of Workshops Held in 2017/2018



## International News

### UNESCO GAP International meeting on ESD

In 2015 ECO-UNESCO was selected by UNESCO as a Key Partner for the implementation of its Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The GAP identified five priority action areas to advance the ESD agenda, and ECO-UNESCO has been selected to work towards the achievement of Key Priority 4 'Empowering and Mobilizing Youth'.

GAP Key Partners, including ECO-UNESCO's National Director Elaine Nevin, came together in April 2018 for the third Key partner meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica to discuss the future priorities for ESD, post-GAP implementation mechanisms and site visits to ESD projects in the region.



### UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris

As part of UNESCO's Global Action Programme (GAP), 70 young leaders came from over 60 countries came together to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the ESD Youth Conference 'Youth Saves the Planet' in UNESCO's Paris Head Quarters during May 2018.

Having run the European Regional Training in conjunction with UNESCO, ECO-UNESCO nominated 10 youth leaders to attend the conference. These chosen youth leaders had worked with over 1000 young people throughout the course of the year, educating them on matters of sustainable development.

ECO-UNESCO's 'Youth for Sustainable Development' Programme Coordinator Niall Barrett was one of the Youth Leaders to attend the meeting. The event took place over 3 days and included opportunities for the young people to voice their views, share best practice, develop joint projects and network.

### International Youth Summit in Dublin

In Autumn 2017, ECO-UNESCO launched a new initiative that aimed to empower young people to engage with key policy makers and influence the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Environmental Youth Summit programme was an innovative 10 month initiative made up of a series of events, trainings and action projects for over 50 Irish and European young people aged 15-19.

By the end of the project, which was funded by Erasmus+ with support from UNIDO, young people were equipped with the tools they require to influence the achievement of the SDGs.



### High Level Political Forum in New York

In July 2018, the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) brought countries from all over the world together to review progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Ireland's official delegation to the HLPF came from Irish Civil Society Organisations through Coalition 2030 and included:

- ECO-UNESCO & IEN
- Dochas
- The National Youth Council of Ireland
- Other civil society organisations

In particular, ECO-UNESCO were promoting the importance of education, awareness, youth engagement and the youth voice in working towards the goals, placing particular importance on further government support of NGO's which have been promoting the SDG's for many years.



## ECO-Choices Programme Continues to Inspire Healthier Decisions

So far in 2018, over 100 young people have taken part in over 40 workshops and outdoor education days as part of the Eco-Choices programme. 38 young people have completed QQI training, taking on peer education lessons as their project in the QQI Level 3 in Eco-Community Development this Spring. This year, for the first time, the Eco-Choices Health and Wellbeing Programme has been adapted to be delivered as an intensive Summer programme with an inner city Dublin youth service. This innovation enhances the nature-connection aspect of the existing programme, as it is delivered exclusively through field trips in the Dublin area.

**Want to get involved?**

Contact [ecochoices@ecounesco.ie](mailto:ecochoices@ecounesco.ie)



ECO-Choices at Stoneybatter Youth Service



ECO-Choices at Stanhope Secondary School

## ECO-UNESCO Clubs Take Action Across Ireland!

It's been another busy year, with 103 out of a total 318 registered YEA projects coming from registered ECO-UNESCO clubs - showing that our clubs programme is inspiring eco-action across the country!

Looking ahead, the clubs programme recently received funding under LA21 Environmental Partnership Fund 2018 from Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council, and we're looking forward to delivering a series of workshops on 'Exploring Biodiversity and Sustainable Development' with one school in that local authority area.

Want further information? Contact [clubs@ecounesco.ie](mailto:clubs@ecounesco.ie)

## ECO-UNESCO Help Young, Unemployed People Build Sustainable Careers

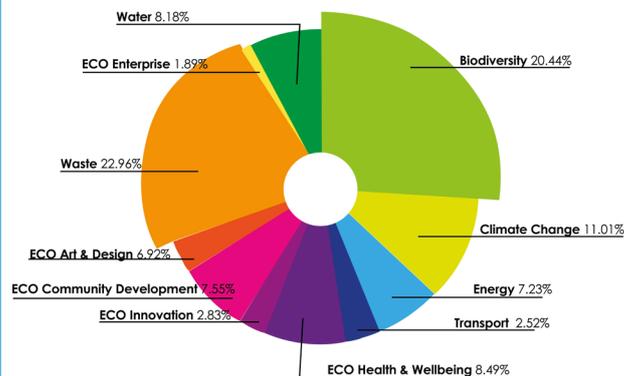
Although Ireland's unemployment rate has decreased in recent months, young people are still finding it difficult to get on the career ladder, particularly when their educational needs have not been met. With school drop-out rates now at twice the EU average in some areas of Ireland, immediate action is required more than ever before.

ECO-UNESCO's Youth Employability Programme is free to attend and aims to meet the needs of unemployed 18-25 year olds from diverse backgrounds. The part-time 10 week course includes a QQI Level 3 in Eco Community Development, one-to-one mentoring, support for CV and interview preparation, and most importantly - a valuable work placement in a suitable environment that serves as a chance to get a foot in the door with potential employers.

For more information on taking part, contact 01 662 5491, or email [yei@ecounesco.ie](mailto:yei@ecounesco.ie).

## What sort of Projects Were Entered in the Young Environmentalist Awards 2018?

Biodiversity, Climate Change and Waste were seen to be incredibly popular choices this year, along with a trend in increased popularity for 'eco-focus' categories such as Eco-Community Development and Eco-Health and Wellbeing, showing a swell in interest amongst young people in improving not only their own welfare, but also the welfare and prosperity of their communities at large. Participation in the Eco-Health and Wellbeing and the Eco-Community Development categories increased by 17.3% (from 23 to 27) and 26.3% (from 19 to 24) respectively, while Biodiversity saw a 6.6% (from 61 to 65) increase from 2017. The most significant growth in participation was in the Waste category, with engagement rising by 58% (from 46 to 73) from last year. YEA 2018 also saw the introduction of a new category, ECO-Innovation, which had 9 submissions.



## Over 650+ Young People Receive YEA '6 Steps to Success' Training in 2018

ECO-UNESCO offers onsite free '6 Steps to Success' training to teachers, leaders and young people on all they need to know about the YEA programme. The training is designed to help young people become well-equipped to carry out their very own environmental action project and to provide support and advice in developing project ideas, exploring what is involved in project management and helping to understand the various phases of the YEA programme in a fun and interactive environment.

In 2018 training was delivered to 36 groups of young people nationally, which is a 16% increase in training compared to 2017. This year, we saw high quality projects and high quality reporting coming from the groups who took part in the YEA training sessions.



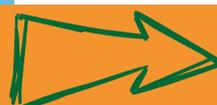
Young People Involved Since 1999



Young People Engaged in 2018



Projects Registered in 2018



**Register Now!**  
[www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie)