

John Ruddy, Youth Worker from Farney YSD Project, Monaghan Youth Federation

"Taking part in the Young Environmentalist Awards clearly encouraged our young participants to explore their place in the wider world and the impact they could have on it for better or worse. Getting to display their project in Dublin greatly boosted their confidence and sense of achievement, and they came home all set to educate their families and friends."

IMPORTANT DATES Young Environmentalist Awards 2009

Celebrating 10 Years of ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards Exhibition: 25th August - 25th September (ENFO)

Young Environmentalist Awards Teacher/Leader Training

Dublin City: 23rd September 2008
Galway City: 2nd October 2008
Cork City: 9th October 2008
Athlone: 16th October 2008
Belfast: 30th October 2008

Registration Deadline: 28th November 2008

Project Submission Deadline: 27th February 2009

Judging Process: March - April 2009

Showcase and Awards Ceremony: May 2009

Other Important Dates

22nd September 2008: Car Free Day Event (Dublin)

24th September 2008: Starting of Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programme

24th September 2008: Starting of ECO-Youth Choices Peer Education Programme

21st November 2008: UN Biosphere Day Event

26th November 2008: ECO-UNESCO's National Youth ECO-Forum 2008 - What's so hot about climate change?

13th December 2008: Winter Hike

Getting Started

So, you want to be a young environmentalist...well here's something to help you get started. Surveys are a great way of finding out how much or how little is being done.

Carrying Out A Waste Survey

Step 1: Get organised

To find out exactly what is being thrown out you need to survey the contents of your rubbish bins. Do this outside, on newspaper, wearing gloves and old clothes. Be very careful of broken glass and sharp edges.

Step 2: Separate your waste

Weigh the contents of the bin and then separate them under different headings: glass, paper, metal, plastic, food, organic material, textiles etc.

Step 3: Identify items for recycling

Next, separate out all the items, which can be

collected for recycling e.g bottles, paper and cans. Don't forget organic material, which can be used to make compost!

Identify items, which can be reused for other purposes - plastic containers and bottles, wood, rags, cardboard, and any others you can think of. Draw up a list of ways of reusing things from the bin.

Step 4: Examine left-overs

Now look at what you have left, this will most likely be plastic packaging and pollutants e.g batteries.

Life After The Young Environmentalist Awards

After taking part in the Young Environmentalist Awards Emily Aherne and Elaine Anthony were selected to take part in an ECO-UNESCO youth exchange project in Portugal. Here is what they said about the experience.



"My experience with the Young Environmentalist Awards has made me more environmentally conscious and aware of the amount of waste that we are creating. I have learned to reduce my consumption of water and materials, for example by reusing newspapers and by composting. I have also become aware of environmental problems at the Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase in Dublin, for example the alien plants issue." Emily Aherne, St. Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

"For me the Portuguese exchange was a fantastic experience, I enjoyed it so much I would happily jump back on a plane

to join my Portuguese friends again in a heartbeat. This project has inspired me to do so much, even as far as to tackle learning Portuguese so that I can stay in touch with my new friends easier. Though the tan that I got from the Portuguese sun has faded the happy memories that I got from

my new Portuguese and Irish friends will last forever." Elaine Anthony, St. Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Besides having the opportunity to join special programmes such as the Portugal Exchange, all Young Environmentalist Awards participants have the opportunity to engage in various initiatives run by ECO-UNESCO including ECO-UNESCO Clubs, the Youth Advisory Group and the organisation's peer education programmes - ECO-Youth Choices and Youth for Sustainable Development.

■ The next issue of ECO-UNESCO News will be released in January 2009. If you have participated in any of ECO-UNESCO's programmes and would like to send a contribution to the next issue of the newsletter please contact Fernanda Parente, ECO-UNESCO's Communications Officer at communications@ecounesco.ie by the end of October 2008.

2007: The Young Environmentalist Showcase is held for the first time in the Mansion House with the participation of over 400 young people displaying their projects.



2008: Minister John Gormley officially launches ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2008



Celebrating 10 years of the Young Environmentalist Awards

ECO-UNESCO News

Issue 1 / September 2008



The Evolution of the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards

When the great minds of ECO-UNESCO came up with the idea for the Young Environmentalist Awards programme at its centre was the concept of thinking globally and acting locally. We wanted to develop a programme that let 12 to 18 year old young people explore global environmental issues and take local action. This allowed them to have the space to learn, to grow, to develop and be inspired to help conserve and protect our environment.

Since the inception of the programme in 1999 thousands of young people have taken part. Young people all over Ireland have gained knowledge, learnt new skills, made friends, had a lot of fun and they have made a real difference in



local areas and to their local environment. The programme complements all of the other ECO-UNESCO environmental programmes among them ECO-UNESCO clubs, Environmental workshops, Training programmes and Peer education programmes.

Elaine Nevin
National Director
ECO-UNESCO

Message from Mary McAleese



The Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) have been set up to encourage young people all over Ireland to become environmentally aware and actively promote environmental conservation.

Over the years, the Awards have become a popular educational scheme within schools and youth clubs. The young people of Ireland have taken into consideration the importance of protecting the local environment through practical projects.

I am confident that with the help of young people, hard work and the growing support from parents and teachers, the positive message of environment conservation will prevail.

Congratulations to last year's winners and best wishes to all new entrants.

About ECO-UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's Environmental Education and Youth Organisation affiliated to the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA).

Our programmes and services:

- Environmental Youth Programmes
- Young Environmentalist Awards Programme

- Education & Training Programmes
- Education Resources
- Consultancy services

The ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards - Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

During the past ten years the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards has attracted over 10,000 young people and 750 schools and youth groups from all over Ireland environmental. These young environmentalists from north and south of the Island protect, conserve and enhance our environment through local environmental projects, making a difference to their lives and the lives of others locally and globally.

Emerging global environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity

loss and waste are the focus of many of the projects.

Sean Butler from St. Mary's Knockbeg College, Co. Carlow who were the Overall Senior Winners in 2007, comments: "Ultimately, I think it is the best project I've taken part in all year. It benefits yourself, your community and most importantly the environment."

Past projects have also covered specific Irish environmental issues. The young people from Presentation College, Tralee, won the Senior Water category

in 2007 with their project 'Public Health, Public Hazard' on the issue of fluoridation in Irish tap water. "ECO-UNESCO gave me the chance to work with my friends to raise community awareness on a serious issue", says Mary Dennehy.

So, what are you waiting for? All you need is a group and an environmental issue you would like to tackle. Then, contact us we will tell you how to get started!

What makes a great project stand out for the judges?

As judges we look for projects that inspire us! Its great to see a team effort and evidence that the project is youth led. Follow the key '6 steps' - the main emphasis is on research, positive action and awareness raising. We look to see what skills the group members have learned along the way and how they have gained a greater understanding of local and global environmental issues. Contacting your local authority, local businesses and engaging the media is really important to raise awareness and can effect real change. The Senior Winners of 2008, from St. Mary's School, Mallow consulted their local authority and succeeded in having native species planted on a local roundabout instead of alien plant species - have a look at our website for more ideas and inspiration!

Who's Who on the judging panel (2008)

Main Judging Panel (shortlisting of projects): Elaine Nevin, National Director, ECO-UNESCO; Karen Sheeran, Young Environmentalist Awards Coordinator, ECO-UNESCO; Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland; Aoife Quinn, Environmental Education Officer, ENFO.

Expert Judging Panel (on the day of the Showcase and Awards Ceremony): Matt Crowe, Environmental Protection Agency; Odette Gormley, ENFO; Andy Griggs, Environmental Education Forum Northern Ireland (EEF).

Jessica Gilmore from Banbridge High School, Co. Down



Junior Biodiversity, Shortlisted Project 2008 with the project 'Creature Discomforts'

"Participating in the Young Environmentalist Awards is a fantastic worthwhile experience. What I enjoyed most in undertaking my project at school was being part of a team and working together as a group to find out new and interesting facts about our decided topic. It is also great to meet new people within the group, to make new friends and to learn about the environment. To be in the final is a great experience - to go to the awards ceremony down in Dublin is a great trip and a brilliant day!"



Young Environmentalists Working With Their Communities All Over Ireland

If you think that it's only young people who have the energy to make our planet a better place to live in, then read this article. Many Young Environmentalists have shown that working together with their communities is an extraordinary way to improve the environment for all.

One example is the young people from Jobstown Junior Estate Management Committee in Tallaght who won the Eco-Community Development award in 2006 with the project 'Spirit of the Youth - Promoting Environmental Awareness'. This group decided to improve their area by building a community garden. The group contacted expert organisations such as the Botanic Gardens to learn more about the topic and when time was right for planting, they got the whole community involved. The project didn't stop at the garden; verges outside houses were given a new look, they painted a mural and a community litter pick was planned.

In 2008, the young people from Colaiste Muire, Ennis, Co. Clare decided to look at the impact consumerism has on the environment

through the project 'Tree-Wise and Waist-Knot', which won the Senior Eco-Consumerism Award in 2008. The project focused on potting Christmas trees and selling them in the Ennis Market to encourage people to grow their own Christmas tree instead of buying a new one each year. In addition, the group organised a fashion show with second-hand clothes to encourage both students and parents to be consumer-aware and think about the passing on of good second-hand clothes to others who would benefit. Karen Barrett, one of the students involved in the project commented, "This project was the highlight of our Transition year. It really did make a difference to our local environment and the attitudes of our local community. Most importantly it was brilliant fun!"

These and many other Young Environmentalist Awards projects have mobilised whole communities in the benefit of the environment. The young people might be leading the way, but we all have a part to play in working together for a better world.

Being in the limelight

Each May the Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase and Ceremony brings hundreds of young people together from all around Ireland to celebrate their environmental work. This is a high profile and exciting event, which displays the best of the Young Environmentalist Awards projects. The young people have also the opportunity to have a taste of how it is to be in the limelight by performing at the awards ceremony. In 2008, Eoin O'Brien and Darragh Keary from Crescent College Comprehensive, Co. Limerick made everybody sing along with them 'What can we do', which was composed specially for their project. The girls from Loreto College, Co. Cavan showed how they tackled waste issues by presenting their Trash 'N' Fashion Show at the awards ceremony in 2007. Stagehand or star, the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase and Ceremony is the place to show your environmental talents.

Check out what happened at the Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase and Ceremony 2008 on our YouTube page www.youtube.com/ecounesco



Jessie Fisher from St. Clare's Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim

Junior Waste Category Winners 2008 with the project 'Anti-Litter Awareness Film'

"Partaking in the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards was brilliant fun. Our group worked so fantastic together, I also got to know my teachers more as normal people rather than teachers. In our project we made a short film, learning about the cameras, editing equipment and sound was extremely fun and it opened up new future prospects. The actual awards day in Dublin was really interesting and exciting. I liked explaining to the judges and other contestants about how we made the film and in general talking about the projects. I met really nice people from other schools; I also saw some really creative projects and imaginative work. It was an amazing experience!"

YEA Timeline



1999: The Young Environmentalist Awards is developed and launched.



2000: First Young Environmentalist Awards is held in the Law Society attended by President Mary McAleese.



2001: The Young Environmentalist Awards is opened up to Northern Irish participants.



2002: Strong representation from Northern Ireland in the Awards, with a group from St. Patrick's Girls Academy winning the senior overall awards while its junior equivalent went to the Belfast Model School for Girls.



2003: An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern presents the Young Environmentalist Awards in Dublinia.



2004: ENFO becomes one of the main funders of the awards.



2005: The Environment & Heritage Service Northern Ireland support the programme stating that schools in Northern Ireland must carry out either an ECO Schools award (Green Schools in NI) and/or the Young Environmentalist Awards programme.



2006: There is an increase in participation from the non-formal education sector in the Awards. The Jobstown Junior Estate Management Committee win the Award of ECO-Community Development.