

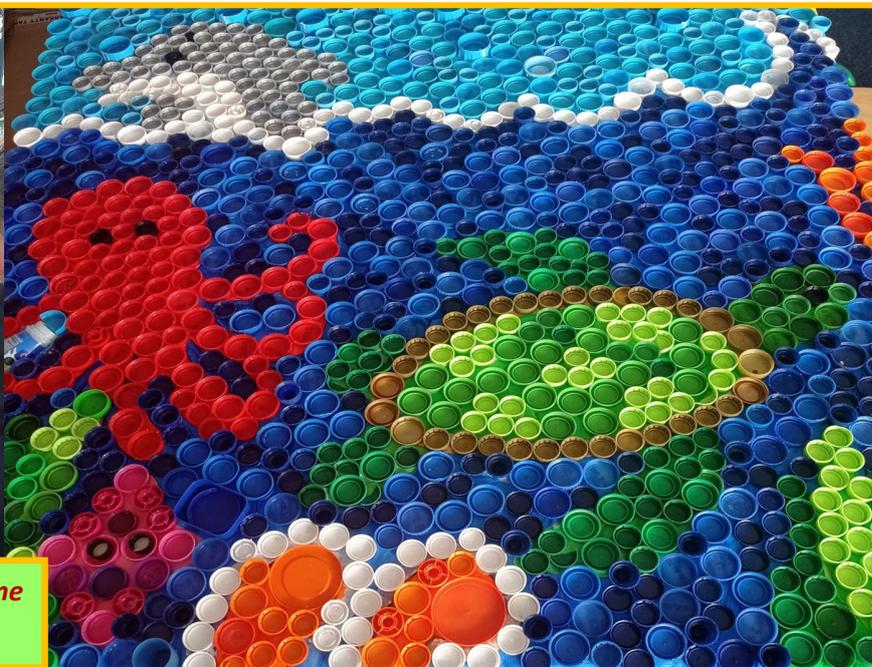
# CHALLENGE TO CHANGE



## 2021-2022



### A Development Education Project in Presentation Schools



*"In the time of climate change, it is a time to walk lightly on the earth."* Laudato Si

## CHALLENGE TO CHANGE PROJECTS 2021-2022

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**CHALLENGE2CHANGE 2021-2022**

- 'Growing momentum' to do better on climate change - Taoiseach
- Southwest US drought, worst in a century, linked to climate change.
- Firefighters race to protect giant sequoias in California fires
- US 'to double' contribution to climate financing - Biden
- "Twenty-five years ago, people could be excused for not knowing much, or doing much, about climate change. Today we have no excuse." — Desmond Tutu
- "Our collective future will hinge on our ability to recognise our common humanity and to act together." - Biden
- Summer wildfires emit record amount of CO2
- Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty to displacement to conflict.
- What is your climate impact?
- Xi tells UN China will stop funding coal projects overseas
- What impact will climate change have on Ireland in 2050?
- We need to talk about how we adapt to climate change

**Does this change your thinking?**



If Pope Francis had known about us when he was writing *Laudato Si* five years ago, he would surely have mentioned us. *Challenge to Change* could be the title of his letter.

When we began over twenty years ago, he was still living in Argentina and had no idea that he would ever be moving to Rome. When he became Pope, and did move to Rome, he took the name Francis after a very holy Italian man who had a great love for creation. He loved everything on our Planet and with that he included the Sun and Moon, calling them his brother and sister because like himself, they were children of God the Creator. The words *Laudato Si* are the first words of a lovely song written by Francis to celebrate the whole of creation.

In our projects every year, we suggest to people how to help our planet in ways that are not difficult but could make a huge difference to our environment. This year's projects continue that wonderful tradition and we can all look forward to being inspired by them.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools have been unable to participate in *Challenge to Change*. As we emerged from restrictions in October 2021, invitations to participate in the project were issued to schools. Schools were asked to focus on **Climate Change—its impact on our Common Home**. Despite the many difficulties, there was a generous response from schools and so *Challenge to Change* continued on. Unfortunately, during the early months of 2022 the virus was still around so we were not in a position to hold our usual seminars. Instead of gathering together to celebrate the work done, schools were asked to submit a report in any medium of their choice detailing the work done and the actions taken in relation to their chosen topic. This publication summarises the *Challenge to Change* projects 2021-2022. We are very grateful to the Principals, teachers, students and parents who got so involved with the project despite the many restrictions. Thank you.

### CHALLENGE TO CHANGE AT THE U.N.

It was a great honour to be asked to make a presentation at the U.N. **High Level Political Forum** on 12 July 2022. This brought *Challenge to Change* to a wider audience as the presentation was live streamed worldwide. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our projects on a global stage. Follow this link to view the presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuDzWhkOsMY>

### SECOND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Just two weeks ago, we were contacted by **Coalition 2030**, the SDG coalition who push for the implementation on the SDGs at home and abroad, to showcase our HLPF piece. This was perfect timing as the Second National Implementation Plan had just been launched on 5 October at an event attended by the three coalition government party leaders as well as eight other Ministers. The plan is the roadmap for future implementation against which we will measure and assess government progress! Coalition 2030 have added our U.N. event to their website. Check out the updates section UN SDG news and resources on [www.ireland2030.org](http://www.ireland2030.org)

**Once again, our students are leading the way and making a difference!**



*Challenge to Change* is a development education project aimed at all students from four to eighteen years of age in Irish Presentation schools.

These hands-on projects raise awareness of global inequality as students understand how their local action can have a global impact. What better way to bring about learning than to ground the *Challenge to Change* projects in the Sustainable Development Goals, a living plan for the future that connects us all?

The vision of the *Challenge to Change* project is driven by the Presentation charism and ethos embracing the challenge of working with those who are furthest behind. Justice, human rights, sustainability and promoting right relationships are central to the Presentation mission. *Challenge to Change* is about empowering students as they explore the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals encouraging a social consciousness, a broader vision and an appreciation of complex worldly issues.

*Challenge to Change* harnesses the energy and enthusiasm of all students and while an individual class may take the lead, projects are generally a whole-school effort.

This vision and passion inspires young people to consider the reasons why so many are left behind. Students choose projects that relate to **People, Planet, Partnership, Peace and Prosperity**—the 5 P's of the SDGs.

*Challenge to Change* projects have continued to spread across Ireland. For many schools such has been the learning and the impact that they are serial challenge to changers. Importantly, not all schools are the same. Some are located in wealthier areas, some in poorer, urban and rural areas. Some schools are extremely large whilst others, by comparison, are fairly small. Some schools have classes for students with additional needs but all students are invited to engage and there is a firm promise to leave no one behind, echoing an important principle that underpins the SDGs.

*Challenge to Change* projects are non-competitive. It is accepted that all schools have produced, learned and shared to the best of their ability.

Engaging with the project ensures the support of a tried and tested process that outlines how the projects might be collectively planned, who might be involved, how it might be recorded, indicating a possible timeline, taking all through their project step by step.

This year the *Challenge to Change* team asked that all projects would adhere to the theme of **Climate Change – its impact on our Common Home**. With this in mind, schools were offered a list of possible topics and suggested actions, only as a guide, but not limited by the suggestions.



So what are the activities that engage the students who take part in these *Challenge to Change* projects? This publication gives just a small sample of possibilities.

The students form a committee and are focussed in discussions as they explore their *Challenge to Change* project. They make important decisions together. Completed applications are signed by the school Principal and returned to the *Challenge to Change* team. The leadership of the school staff and the formal commitment is key to the success of the projects.

Previously, some projects have taken an investigative look at those who are furthest behind. This prompts students into taking an action to make a difference, awakening that social justice spark, prompting active, participative, global citizenship... with important opinions that may well have been shaped by their work on their respective *Challenge to Change* projects.

**Raising awareness** is a key element of each project. For example, *a child employed is a future destroyed* – this is an interesting challenge for the young students. Another impressive and impactful project looked at plastic waste, the effects on the oceans, on marine biodiversity, as students thought to practically re-use some of the carelessly discarded plastic. They re-imagined the waste and produced costumes, jewellery and accessories that would be the envy of any Parisian or New York catwalk - costumes entitled *Milk'in it, Rewind, Brewed Awakening, Colour Bomb, Fayette*, the fairy of the forest, and *Minima* of the 100,000 styrofoam beads.

Some of the topics chosen are complex, difficult and often confronting, e.g. child soldiers or human trafficking, but this doesn't deter the students from researching, caring and working to raise the profile and awareness of topics that perhaps we mightn't like to hear about.

Homelessness is a lived experience for many in Ireland and is regularly reported on in the context of urban homelessness. One Presentation school made rural homelessness the focus of their project. Researching, listening, questioning and reporting on their findings, their *Challenge to Change* project not only proved that rural homelessness is a real, lived issue for so

many in Ireland, they went on to make a practical action for those who lived on their streets. Together with parents, they raised money to purchase a van which they now use for the weekly delivery of sandwiches and practical supports. Their work has had the attention of the media and this project is an example to others in that it has been researched and solved. The project lives on but, more than any of this, those who were homeless in this part of rural Ireland are accompanied in their dignity.

Towards the end of the school year, all participating schools are invited to send representatives who will speak to their projects at special seminars that celebrate the achievements of all, showcase the work, and highlight the learning and insights, allowing all in attendance to shine. This is when the *Challenge to Change* project really comes to life. There is a renewed energy. Student creators are eager to explain their learning. They want to tell you the best parts, the worst parts and the fun parts. They want to show you their piece of the work. But more than anything that stands out is their enthusiasm, their passion for their chosen subject, their authoritative explanations and their confidence and their willingness to share and their ability to stand over their work.

Prior to the seminar, the students will have presented their work to other classes, their whole school, parents and perhaps even the school next door. They have become experts in their own field. They have become instruments of intergenerational understanding and change. They have taken active, competent steps to make a positive difference. All who attend the seminar are treated to relevant educational workshops that are offered by international N.G.O.s and others who have experience in working with those who are furthest behind.

But what of the *Challenge to Change* projects this year?

One school in Dublin created an imaginative rap to alert all to the carbon emissions associated with transport. A little further afield in Galway, students paid careful attention to fossil fuels, learning about COP26 and the SDGs. They visited the Galway Wind Farm, researching costs, technology, local and global impact. Their guided learning is interactive and cross-curricular. In another project, the students saved plastic bottle caps from entering the ocean and created a seascape alerting us all to the effects of our plastic pollution.

Students lead by example, becoming teachers in a world where every country has signed up to the SDGs but where really only very few take them seriously. *Challenge to Change* is about doing. It's about learning by doing. It's about valuing all. It's about rearing young advocates. It's about the integration of speaking and thinking that puts the person and their dignity at the centre. It's about being moved by the heart as it taps into a curiosity and promotes teamwork where participation and affirmation are the prizes.

In the words of one young participant:

***"There are so many ways of challenging to change."***

***[A special word of thanks to Brian O'Toole, Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk, who brought such enthusiasm, passion and clarity to the narration.]***

# ENERGY: CRISIS OR OPPORTUNITY

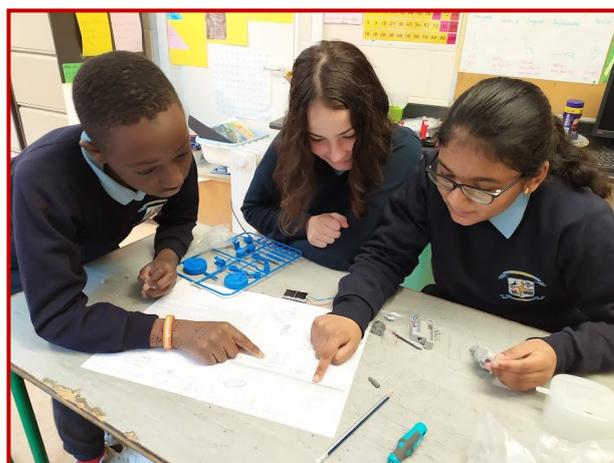
## *Scoil Bhríde Shantalla*

In this wide-ranging project Fifth Class students studied fossil fuels, global warming, clean energy, renewable energy, energy use in Ireland, energy use in Scoil Bhríde's school community. They linked their work to the **Sustainable Development Goals**, in particular, SDG 7, SDG 11 and SDG 13 Climate Action.

The students learned about **Fossil Fuels** and they identified coal, oil and gas as some of the most important natural resources we use every day.

Fossil fuels:

- are formed when Carbon and Hydrogen come together and are therefore called Hydrocarbons. They were formed millions of years ago from the carbon-rich remains of animals and plants, as they decomposed, were compressed and heated underground.
- are used to produce energy: in the home they are burned to produce heat, in large power stations they are used to produce electricity and they are also used as fuel to power engines in our cars, trucks, airplanes and more
- are non-renewable, their supply is limited and they will eventually run out
- are extracted from the earth by mining and drilling on land and under the sea
- have been in use for about 150 years. In the 1880s, coal was first used to generate electricity for homes and factories.



Energy from fossil fuels is not clean energy because such fuels produce carbon dioxide and methane gas when burned. These gases pollute the air and are harmful to both the environment and to people. Sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide and methane are greenhouse gases that get trapped inside our atmosphere and cause global warming. In turn, global warming causes the temperature on our planet to rise and this leads to melting of glaciers, melting of polar ice caps and rising sea levels. All this leads to climate change as our weather becomes more extreme and more dangerous and our planet becomes less safe to live on.

Governments are trying to stop relying so much on fossil fuels. They want to change to sustainable clean energy. At **COP 26** many countries promised to meet climate change targets. Europe gets most of its oil and gas from Russia. Because Europe is trying to stop the **war** in **Ukraine**, Russia is not supplying oil products to Europe. It is estimated that fossil fuels provide about 80% of our energy needs right now.

### Climate Change

The changing climate will actually make our weather more extreme and unpredictable. As temperatures rise, some places will get wetter and lots of animals and humans could find they are not able to adapt to their changing climate. We can already see the effects of global climate change on the environment: glaciers have shrunk, ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier, plants and animals now live and grow in different places to before, trees are flowering sooner, sea levels are rising, heatwaves are longer and more intense.

## Actions

Last November Fifth and Sixth Classes travelled by bus to visit the **Galway Wind Park**. When they returned from a 6 km walk, they met John, the manager, who told them all about the wind park and answered lots of questions. They learned that:

- The wind farm has 58 turbines, each turbine is 120 m tall
- The blades or rotors are 35m long and can rotate at up to 220 km /hour
- It cost €400,000,000 to build
- One turbine can generate enough electricity to power 2,000 homes!



## Energy Use in Ireland

In 2019, fossil fuels accounted for 87% of the total primary energy supply. The contribution of renewable energy to heat grew from 3.4% in 2005 to a peak of 6.7% in 2017 but then reduced to 6.3% in 2020. The amount of carbon dioxide avoided through the use of renewable energy increased five-fold between 2005 and 2020, reaching 6.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide avoided in 2020.

Natural gas is the second-largest energy source. Renewable energy use has been the most successful in the production of electricity, particularly from wind.

## Sustainable Development Goals

Renewable energy solutions are becoming cheaper, more reliable and more efficient every day. Our current reliance on fossil fuels is unsustainable and harmful to the planet. This is why we have to change the way we produce and consume energy. Everyone can help to make sure that we meet the Goals. These are the **targets** to create action to ensure universal access to sustainable energy:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy
- Increase global percentage of renewable energy
- Promote access to research, technology and investments in clean energy
- Expand and upgrade energy services for developing countries.



The world's population is constantly increasing. To accommodate everyone, we need to build modern, sustainable cities. For all of us to survive and prosper, we need new, intelligent urban planning that creates safe, affordable and resilient cities with green and culturally inspiring living conditions. Here are the **targets** for SDG 11:

- Support the least developed countries in sustainable and resilient building
- Provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces, strong national and regional development planning
- Implement policies for inclusion, resource efficiency and disaster risk reduction
- Reduce the environmental impact of cities
- Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage
- Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization
- Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters
- Provide affordable and sustainable transport systems and safe and affordable housing.



**Climate change** is a real and undeniable threat to our entire civilization. The effects are already visible and will be catastrophic unless we act now. We can make the necessary changes to our planet. Here are the **targets** for SDG 13:

- Integrate climate change measure into policies and planning
- Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change
- Implement the U.N. Framework Convention on climate change
- Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related disasters



### What is the Irish government doing?

In February 2020 the Irish government and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland gave **grants** to people to make their houses more efficient. These are available for insulation, heating, solar power, windows and external doors upgrade, mechanical ventilation.



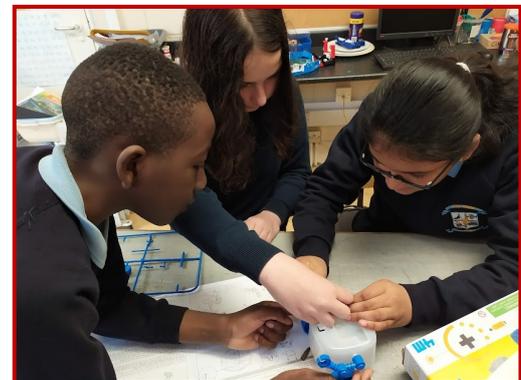
### Survey of Energy Habits

The pupils carried out a survey of the energy habits of the pupils from First to Sixth Classes, their families and the staff of Scoil Bhríde.

**Transport:** 80% of respondents said they had a car. This breaks down as follows: Diesel 54%, Petrol 40%, Electric 0%, Hybrid 6%. 62% of respondents said their next car will be an electric one, to reduce CO2 emissions and to help reduce climate change and decrease pollution as well as to help the environment. An electric car they said is cheaper to run.

Reasons for not buying an electric car included:

- Prefer to drive diesel
- Don't want to
- Like the idea but its too expensive
- Not enough charging points
- Charging takes too long
- Battery reliability
- I think they are dangerous
- Not proven to be a good solution yet



It seems that most people understood that electric cars will help the planet but they are not interested in buying one right now as they are too expensive and are seen as limited in reliability and distance they can travel on a charge. Diesel cars are the most common type in this community.

### Electricity, Heat and Water Savings

- It seems that the majority of people don't know or care if their electricity is green.
- Most people are already trying to save water by using/wasting less in their homes.
- The vast majority of our heating comes from fossil fuels. Nobody had heat pumps.
- 20% felt worrying about climate change is a waste of time and that there is no need to worry yet. It is concerning that some people still don't care and can't see the dangers.

*Co-ordinator: Brian Ferguson*

# THINKING GREEN

## Presentation Primary School Clonmel

We chose this topic because our main objective this year was to experience planting and to learn more about the benefits of planting and growing. We chose planting because, as one of our girls in Rang 6 explains *"Planting is fun and good for the environment and children like it too. Children will learn a lot when they have fun."* (Imaan, Rang 6)

As the year progressed, we covered other aspects of environmental work and we realised that any changes we make to improve our environment will help to keep the earth alive and green.

### Aims

- To gain an appreciation of the wonder of plant and animal life on earth
- To understand biodiversity
- To learn about deforestation and its impact
- To understand why trees are important for reducing climate change and protecting biodiversity
- To learn to grow plants in school and at home
- To learn about climate change and about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (an overview with a focus on Number 14, Life below Water, and Number 15, Life on Land).

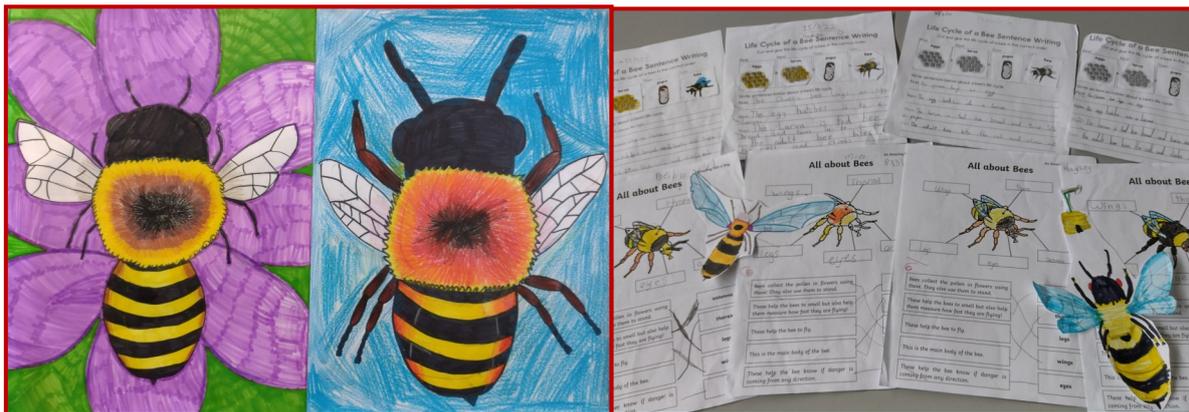


### Actions

Many classes from Infants to Rang 6 enjoyed the fun, excitement and anticipation of planting and growing. All our **Infant Classes** grew sunflowers from seeds and the Language Classes grew begonias. Junior Infants in Ms. Kennedy's class planted cress using compost, seeds and water. The children placed their pots at the window sill to give them lots of sunlight to grow. One pot was placed in a dark press and one pot was left without water. Children had to predict what would happen to each pot. Here you see the sunflowers in Mr. Connery's Senior Infant class.

**Rang 6** learned about **deforestation**: where it happens, why it happens, the effects on the area and on the world, possible solutions. **Rang 5** learned about **waste management**: types of waste, methods of disposal, benefits of composting. The girls are making board games which they will play with pupils in Rang 1 and Rang 2 to help the younger children make good choices about their waste. **Rang 2** got involved in a project called '**Picker Pals**' which provides materials for children and their families to get involved in picking up litter in their home environment.

**Rang 4** and **Rang 2** learned about the importance of **bees** to life on earth. They celebrated their learning through writing and art.



The **Speech and Language Class** also did some planting. They planted cress and sprouting seeds. They were recorded retelling step by step how to plant cress. These videos were uploaded to Google Classroom for the children and families to watch. We learned that cress needs compost, seeds, water and heat from the sun to grow.



**Rang 6** led a project whereby each class collected their **waste bottle caps** over a number of months. They used the bottle caps to create two beautiful art displays on a marine theme.

A **Green Schools Committee** of pupils from Rang 2 to Rang 6 guided us as we aimed to reduce energy consumption in the school. We enhanced the appearance of our grounds by planting a waste area on the way into the playgrounds. The planting took place in autumn (thank you Seán and Mr. Connery). Now that Spring is here, we are enjoying the first signs of growth and colour.



**Camida**, a Clonmel-based company, gave us a gift of **twenty trees** which pupils planted in rows leading to the sports field and in other suitable places around the grounds. Camida also gave every child in the school a gift of a box of wildflower seeds. We are looking forward to displaying some photos of our wildflowers around the school before the holidays.



## Caring for our School Environment

Rang a Cúig and Rang a Sé revised their learning about waste management. They watched videos and discussed the use of the different bins in the classrooms. Since the introduction of the Covid restrictions, we have not had compost bins in our classrooms (as we could not walk freely around the building). Pupils have been bringing their compostable waste and their general refuse home. Now that most restrictions have been lifted, it is a good time to focus on waste management. Rang a Cúig and Rang a Sé are devising songs and board games which they will use to teach younger classes how to manage their waste. We are looking forward to these peer teaching sessions which we will hold outdoors on a warm June day.



## Caring for our Local Environment

This school year Second Class are taking part in the **Picker Pals** environmental action programme for primary school children. Picker Pals motivates children to get out into their locality and complete their litter-picking adventure. Each student takes it in turns to bring home the Picker Pack which includes picker-uppers, gloves, hi-vis vests, safety information and bags. After their litter-picking adventure each child fills in their Picker Pals Report. Above you can see students on the day the Picker Pal Pack arrived, various students completing their litter-picking adventure and pictures of their completed reports. They are thoroughly enjoying it. Many classes studied a topic related to 'life on earth' or 'biodiversity'. Samples of this work are to be found all over the school, brightening our corridors and adding to our awareness of environmental issues.



## What the students said

*"We think the board games will help the younger children to use the proper bin every time." Layla and Natasha, Rang 5*

*"Sixth Class took it in turns to be 'energy monitors' and I think that helped the school to reduce the amount of energy we use." Aine, Rang 6*

*"I enjoyed working on the bottle cap art. I think it's useful that the bottle caps did not go into the bin; instead they now on art that will last a long time. It also showed us how many plastic bottle caps we use!" Cayla, Rang 6*

*"I think planting is fun. Learning about saving the earth could sometimes be boring or stressful for small children, but planting makes it fun." Imaan, Rang 6*

*Co-ordinator: Noelle Lambert*

# SUSTAINABLE SUSTENANCE

## Presentation Junior School Mullingar

We wanted everyone to get involved and plant our own food and watch it grow. We were inspired after doing the Food Dudes programme. The food was delivered to us but where did it really come from? This was our goal – to grow, harvest and cook our own.



As part of Green Schools, we are learning that planting our own food can save energy and food miles. We are a globally diverse school so we will find it interesting to see what recipes will be made using our own locally grown food. We want to learn to feed ourselves with our own food grown here.

### What sparked our interest?

- We loved tasting the new fruits and vegetables from Food Dudes.
- We created and drew our own characters.
- We learned about the food pyramid and healthy eating.
- We created silly food characters.

In the beginning, there was nothing but green grass. Gerry, our caretaker, made wonderful flower beds for planting. He recycled pallets and painted them in our school colours.

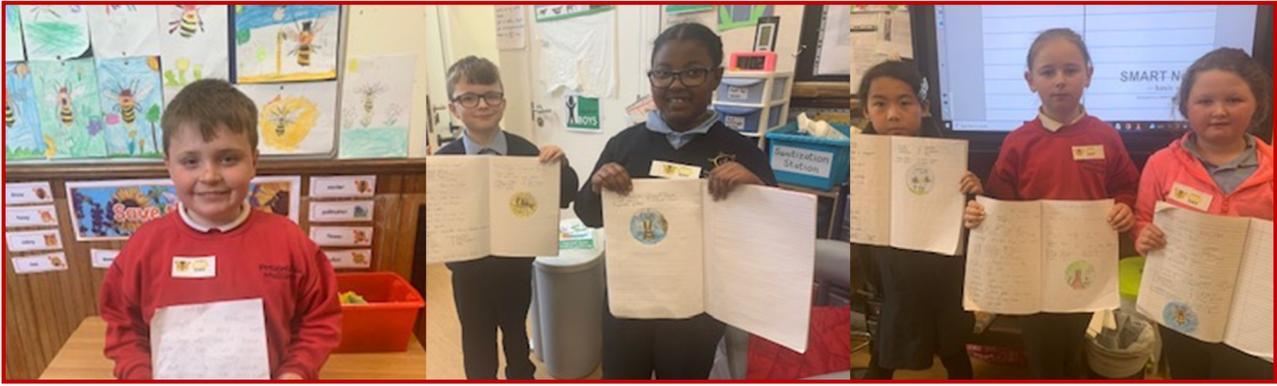


We started planting and planting, indoors and outdoors. We planted **salad leaves, radishes, peas, basil, onions** and **majoram**.

First Class planted **potatoes**. Another First Class planted **peas**. We are learning poetry and science together.

**Seed Life**  
A seed is planted:  
First a sprout.  
Then stem,  
and leaf,  
and buds come out.  
Buds grow bigger,  
smelling sweet,  
bees and birds come  
round to eat.  
Bees and birds  
help flowers spread  
their new seeds on  
the garden bed....  
A seed is planted.  
Helen H. Moore

The diagram shows a sequence of stages: 1. A seed in a pot. 2. A sprout emerging from the soil. 3. A stem growing from the soil. 4. A leaf growing from the stem. 5. A bud forming at the top of the stem. 6. A flower opening from the bud. 7. A seedling with roots and leaves growing in a pot.



Second Class wrote about bees.



Junior Infants drew these pictures of bees.

Infants, with the help of their parents, named the fruit and vegetables.

Introducing:

Paddy Potato



Olivia Onion



Rosie Radish



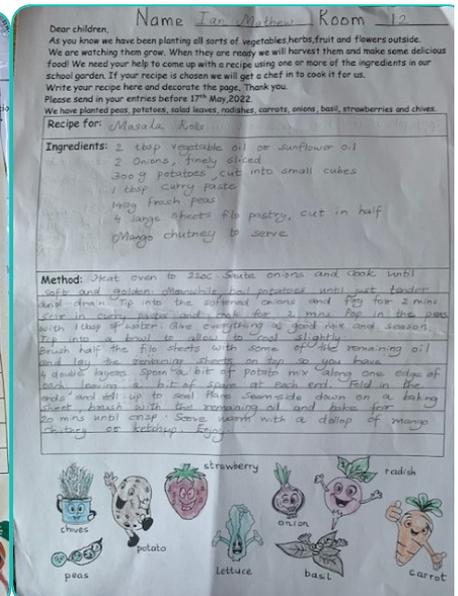
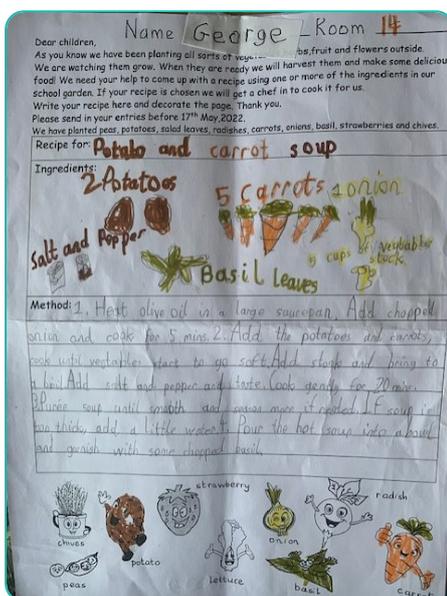
Louis Lettuce



Penelope Pea



Shauna Strawberry



These are some of the recipes created using vegetables grown in our school grounds.



Room 13 planted **carrots** and **strawberries**. The **Sunshine Room** planted **flowers** for the bees in readiness for **World Bee Day** on 20 May. The **Infants** planted seeds also **potatoes, radishes, peas, onion**.

We learned about bees and their importance for helping our fruit and vegetables. Bees are needed to pollinate some fruits and vegetables. First Class designed the **Bee Trail**. We had a **Quiz**. We are planting wildflowers to attract more bees, more flowers, more bees, more nectar, more pollen, more honey, more fruit and vegetables.

### Parental Involvement

The **Infants** involved their parents as they made up names for the plants that are growing. **First** and **Second Classes** had to create a recipe using one or more of the ingredients in our school grounds.



World Bee Day Quiz-20<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Please follow our trail and find the answers.

- Q.1. How old is the oldest pot of honey? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.2. Where do bees live? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.3. What do bees collect from flowers? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.4. How many bees does it take to make a pot of honey? (500g pot) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.5. True or False: It takes 22 bees to make a teaspoon of honey. \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.6. How do you know that bees are insects? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.7. The bees do a dance to tell the other bees where the best flowers are. What is this called? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.8. What do bees make? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.9. How many flowers are visited to make a pot of honey? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q.10. What is it called when bees carry pollen from one flower to another? \_\_\_\_\_

Challenge: How many words can you make from the letters in H O N E Y B E E S ( can you make 20 words?)

Your teacher can call out the questions. Bring your whiteboard and marker along and write your answers on it.



Co-ordinator: *Eileen Gavin*

# EXPLORING AND PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY IN OUR SCHOOL

## *Presentation Primary School Kilkenny*

We started off by exploring the theme of Climate Change. The children in both Fifth Classes ended up having a particular interest in biodiversity. We took our guidance from the children and decided that we would explore and promote Biodiversity in our local area. As the year progressed, we redefined the local area as our school grounds.



### Aims

- To raise awareness of biodiversity in our school
- To empower the children to have a positive impact on the biodiversity in their area
- To identify the risks to biodiversity in our school
- To increase the biodiversity in our school
- To explore the biodiversity of an area in a contrasting part of Ireland.

We learned about climate change and biodiversity. We came up with an action plan around the topic of biodiversity. We learned about the earthworm and the bee. We shared our learning by creating posters for display in our school. We made our school garden an area more friendly for biodiversity. We regularly monitored and maintained our school garden and grounds. We learned about other areas with different types of biodiversity.

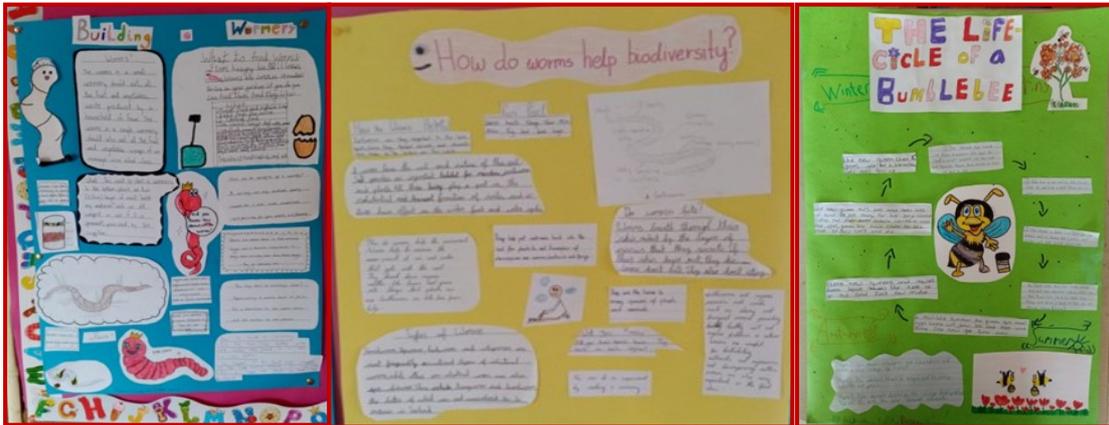
### Actions

We spent **October** and **November** exploring the themes of climate change and biodiversity and exploring what it meant to us in our school grounds. We worked in groups to come up with a plan of actions we could take this year to raise awareness of and increase the biodiversity in our school.



In **December** we learned all about the importance of the earthworm for other plant and animal life. We made wormeries to explore how earthworms rotate soil.

In **January** we learned all about the importance of bees. We are delighted that our school has since taken part in SuperValu's **Save the Bees campaign**. Once we learned how important bees were we decided that we wanted to focus on increasing the biodiversity in our school garden. We made posters about worms and bees so that other children in our school could learn about the importance of these amazing creatures.



In **February** and **March** we worked on our school garden. We had a big tidy up of the area. We sowed bulbs and scattered seeds to attract more pollinators to the garden. We constructed and decorated bird houses and bug hotels which we hung in our school garden. We are looking forward to seeing the biodiversity increase even more in our school grounds.

In April and **May**, we learned about **The Burren** in County Clare and the different type of biodiversity there. We continued to learn, monitor and maintain the biodiversity in our school garden and grounds.

### What the students said

*"I can't believe that a bee does all of that work. I used to think they were really scary and I would scream when I saw a bee. I've now learned that bees are so important for all other plant and animal life and that we need bees in our world."*

*"I remember I didn't believe our teacher when she said that we were going to do something to help with climate change. I learned so much about the different plants and animals in our school garden too. It kind of opened my eyes too. I didn't really pay much attention to the garden before and now I look at it every day."*

*"This project has changed some of the things that we do at home. I asked my parents if I could come up with a plan to promote biodiversity in our garden and they said I could. We now have a compost heap, a log pile and I have planted lots and lots of flowers to keep all of the bees happy."*

### How the project has made a difference at local and global level

At local level this project made the children in our locality aware of the climate change crisis. It also gave them the opportunity to learn about biodiversity in their school grounds. This has led to increased awareness of biodiversity in their immediate environments and enabled them to identify opportunities for increasing biodiversity. Our school grounds are now more biodiverse and some of our children are increasing biodiversity in their own gardens. At a global level, this project has created a curiosity about the biodiversity in other areas of the world. We hope the children will continue to apply the knowledge and skills they learned.

*Co-ordinators: Josephine Doyle, Mairead Moran*

## OUR SCHOOL

**a place for all creatures great and small**

*St. Colman's N.S. Stradbally*

This year we decided to base our project on Biodiversity. Our school is expanding, and with a third extension sanctioned, we are more aware of the green spaces around our school which are being lost in the process.

So, with this in mind, we have set about developing a space in our school where biodiversity is supported and where the children will have an appreciation and awareness of the cycle of nature. Now, more than ever, children need to be aware of their role in trying to press pause on the pace of climate change, and however small it may seem in relation to the big picture, nevertheless, it is about educating this generation.

### The Beginning

First, we had to find a suitable location. We chose a section of grass which leads to our main yard area. This was chosen because everyone in the school will see the garden on a daily basis and observe it developing and changing. It is also clearly visible from several classrooms so can be a source of aesthetic enjoyment.

Planting began in **mid-October** with 1,000 Spring bulbs which we ordered from Clarenbridge Garden Centre. All classes were allocated a section where they planted their bulbs. The children really enjoyed this, with some never having been involved in planting before.

As our bulbs lay in the cold dark ground during the Winter months, we decided to take our focus elsewhere and to see if we could invite small birds into our school grounds. We purchased bird feeders and filled them with a variety of food - energy balls, peanuts, sunflower seeds and multi seed and nut mix. However, when we hung them in the bare trees outside, the crows were first on the scene and cleared out all feeders in record time! After some research, we sourced caged feeders for small birds only.



We refilled and waited with baited breath to see if our little friends would come. Low and behold, one cold, crisp Winter morning as my Junior Infants were busily working on a phonics activity, one little voice piped up and said, "**Teacher, I see a robin at the bird feeder.**" Pencils were quickly discarded and little excited faces lined the two large classroom windows watching and hoping to witness the live action. Truth be told, it was a school day where bird watching overtook curriculum content!! In no time, they were capable of identifying common small birds and noticing them in their immediate environment.



And so, as we headed into Spring, we kept a keen eye on our project, until one morning there it was, the fruits of our labour. We planted snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils, tulips, anemone, bluebells, grape hyacinth and gladioli in our first phase of planting in October. The crocuses were the first to appear, perhaps the snowdrops were a little late being planted and should make the opening appearance next Spring. Seeing the children observe the flowers, smell them, talk about them and pick a few was very rewarding.



They will all have an integral role in the year on year additions to this space and will hopefully remember back to where it began in the Autumn of 2021.



The next stage involved purchasing **herbaceous plants**, particularly ones that will attract bees and butterflies. These were bought locally and have recently been added to our area. The final planting phase for this year will be the addition "**Blooms, Bees and Butterflies**" bulbs which will help create a haven for pollinating insects and will help in reversing the decline in the bee and butterfly population.

### Guest Speaker

To tie in with **National Bee Week**, a guest speaker from the **Irish Beekeeper's Society** visited the school. The children learned about all the different bees in a hive, and the crucial role bees play in maintaining harmony in Nature. Lots of our animals and birds feed on fruits and seeds from wild plants that grow in the countryside. Without bees and other insects pollinating these wild plants, they wouldn't produce the fruits and seeds that animals and birds need to survive.





Farmers depend on bees as lots of crops are pollinated by bees and this helps the farmer with all the work that has to be done on a farm. If farmers had to pollinate the plants by themselves, it would cost too much time and money, and we, as consumers, would in turn, have a lot less fruit and vegetables. The children really enjoyed this presentation and were amazed at the importance of bees in the cycle of Nature and maintenance of environmental harmony.



### The future

Looking down the line, over the next few years, the plan is to develop and expand this space. We want our school to be a place where children notice and appreciate the workings of the natural world and where they become aware of the necessity to support and maintain these crucial contributors to the balance of the functioning of our planet. Every little helps and we hope that our small project will in turn, encourage children to go home and spread the seeds of biodiversity in their homes.

*Co-ordinator: Nuala Casey*



## CHANGE OUR HABITS — NOT THEIR HABITATS

### *Presentation Secondary School Clonmel*



We choose this for our topic as we had studied sea pollution in *Geography* and learned how animals are affected by this. We wanted to learn more about the serious issues happening in our seas and wanted to research how we could help. We felt this would be a topic that our Year group would be enthusiastic about as it is currently a popular global topic.

We wanted to identify animals on the verge of extinction, learn about their habitats, examine how this impacts the environment/climate around us and to research what is being done by the global community to stop this from continuing.

We began our project by watching the Netflix original documentary '**Seaspiracy**' which is based around the environmental impact of sea pollution, fishing and other human impacts on marine life. We then chose to focus on **Sea Turtles** after hearing of a rescue off the coast of Ireland on Christmas Day.



Our actions included research, guest speaker, survey, quiz and powerpoint presentations. We hoped:

- To educate our own Transition Year classes about the issue of climate change and how this can impact on animals around the world
- To make the school community aware of this global issue
- To use social media to bring awareness to a larger audience



We did some research into the animals discovering their habitats, their endangerment of extinction and our contribution to this. We then had a zoom interview where we questioned a **marine biologist** from **Dingle Aquarium**. Our way of sharing the information we gathered was through presenting powerpoints to all Second Year classes in our school. We then continued our project by making our information board which summarised and included all of the information we had gathered over the past couple of months.



*Co-ordinator: Margaret McCarthy*

# THERE IS NO PLANET B

## St. Joseph's G.N.S. Mountmellick

The girls in **Fifth Class** completed a project on climate action. Our project aimed to raise awareness of the importance of climate action in our school by looking at what we could do locally to reduce the impact of climate change. Here are some of the actions we undertook during the year.

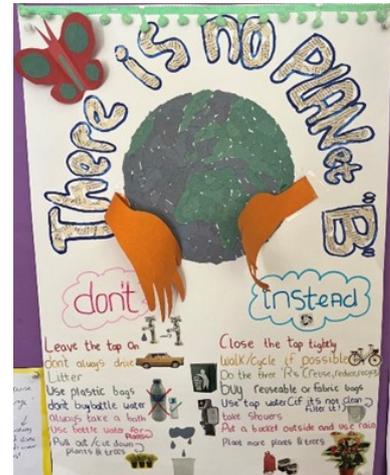
We learned about climate change and sustainability in Geography, focusing on the causes of climate change and how we can think sustainably at home and in school by reducing energy, saving water and reducing waste.

Fifth Class completed a **cycling course** to develop their cycling skills and safety.

We completed a **survey** at the beginning of the school year with the students from Third to Sixth Class to gauge their understanding of climate change, how it is/will impact their lives and ideas for climate action. We then completed the same survey towards the end of our project. We noticed an increase in the children's understanding of climate action and how it is/will impact their lives. We displayed this data on bar graphs. We made posters to encourage an awareness of climate change and its effects and also to promote climate action. We displayed them around the school.

We collected fruit and vegetable peels for our compost bin in our school garden.

We planted trees, plants and flowers in our school garden and around the grounds of our school.



We recorded a **video** in the form of a **news report** to educate the children on climate change and climate action. We included tips on how to think sustainably in school. This video was shown to all the classes in the school to inform the students on the topic. Fifth Class girls really enjoyed making the video and we received great feedback from the other teachers and students in the school.

## What the students said

*"I like doing [the project]. It helped me to become more aware about climate change. I understand more about it and I want to do more to help the environment. I am more aware of trying to buy more products with less plastic in our shopping."*

*"I am really happy that we are doing it. If we try our best with composting in our school, then we can make a change. I think if all schools try to do the same then we can make a big difference."*

*"I think it's good to help the environment. We are putting in a lot of work and we can make a change for the better."*

*"I think that we will make the other classes more aware of the importance of climate action by composting, making posters, planting a tree and making our video to teach the other classes about climate change/action."*



## Impact

I believe this project has made a difference at both a local and global level. The children have become more conscious of their waste and how they can recycle it correctly by using compost bins and recycling bins. They have become more aware that they are being affected by climate change through reading and discussing information about the topic. Therefore, they are becoming more aware that they must take action to live more sustainably such as turning off devices, turning off lights when they are not in the room, walking, cycling or carpooling to school, buying local ingredients and reducing the use of single-use plastics. By encouraging children to walk or cycle to school we are reducing carbon emissions in the local area. This awareness will also make an impact as these small changes can have an effect globally.



*Co-ordinator: Rebecca McCormack*

## WE ARE AWARE, WE SHOW WE CARE

### Presentation Senior School Mullingar



Fifth Classes were actively involved in this project. The project aims to:

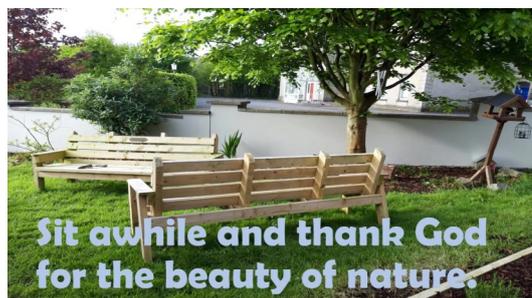
- Encourage environmental awareness
- Promote respect for our natural resources
- Encourage water conservation
- Explore and consider topics such as climate change, plastics in the ocean, water pollution, our rivers and lakes, threats to our water system and the marine environment
- Promote active citizenship and encourage our children to take responsibility for our world
- Enhance teamwork, research, collaboration and literacy skills

We began this very wide ranging and enjoyable project by examining **Water/Nature** in the **Bible**. The Scriptures have lots of references to water and nature. We enjoyed searching for them and made a colourful chart of our favourite ones. Here are a few of them.

*"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."* Job 37: 14 -16

*"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy."* Psalm 19:

Water flows throughout the Scriptures and this should remind us of its importance, both spiritually and physically.



## The Marine Environment

We looked at the Marine Environment. Our research and on-line workshops taught us the immense richness and variety of the marine environment and the importance of the oceans. There are many threats to the marine environment. Marine litter is a huge problem. **Did you know that each year approximately 8 million tonnes of plastics leak into our oceans?** This is the same as dumping **one refuse truck of plastics** into the ocean **every minute**.

*"We need to respect the oceans and take care of them, as if our lives depended on it. Because they do."* Sylvia Earle.

## Climate Change

As climate change is one of the main threats to the seas and oceans, and as we know climate change is a huge modern day problem, this part of our project was enthusiastically enjoyed by all. We learned about the causes of climate change and what is being done to stop its affects. We looked at drought and flooding and other extreme weather systems being caused by climate change. What can we do? We can waste less and reduce dumping. Reduce, reuse, recycle. Walk and cycle more. We can all do our part. Little steps make a difference.



*"The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have the facts and solutions. All we have to do is wake up and change."* Greta Thunberg

## Endangered animals and plants

As climate change causes a rise in global temperatures resulting in melting ice caps and rising sea levels, the lives and habitats of many animals and plants are at risk. Many animals and plants are dependent on the marine environment for food and shelter. Even the coral is losing the colourful food source and becoming weaker. This is happening on a grand scale in many places around the world. Ongoing loss of their sea ice habitat, because of climate change, means that the **Arctic polar bear** is endangered and scientists estimate that two thirds of the world's polar bear population could be extinct by 2050.

*"Animals are like us, endangered species on an endangered planet, we are the ones who are endangering them, the planet, and ourselves; they are innocent sufferers, in a world of our making."* Jeffery M Masson.



## Other Actions

We have enjoyed our journey this year working together. Other actions we included were: a biodiversity study, air quality survey on traffic pollutants, making water filters, helping with a very successful bake sale for Trócaire and of course lots of shared ideas, fun and chats. We availed of the public library and County Council leaflets and personnel.



*"The earth is a fine place and worth fighting for."* Earnest Hemingway

And our final quote. *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that has."* Margaret Mead



Co-ordinator: *Jacinta Sullivan*

# THE PROMOTION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN OUR SCHOOL

## *Presentation Secondary School Wexford*

Transition Years students and the Green Schools Committee are involved in this project which aims to increase awareness and appreciation of Biodiversity and to implement practical improvements to the school grounds.

We hope to develop a vegetable and herb garden, sow wildflower seeds, plant native trees and identify the natural habitats in our school.

### **Our Plan**

From November to February we hope to identify the natural habitats and sow seasonal vegetables, plant native trees and sow wildflower seeds.

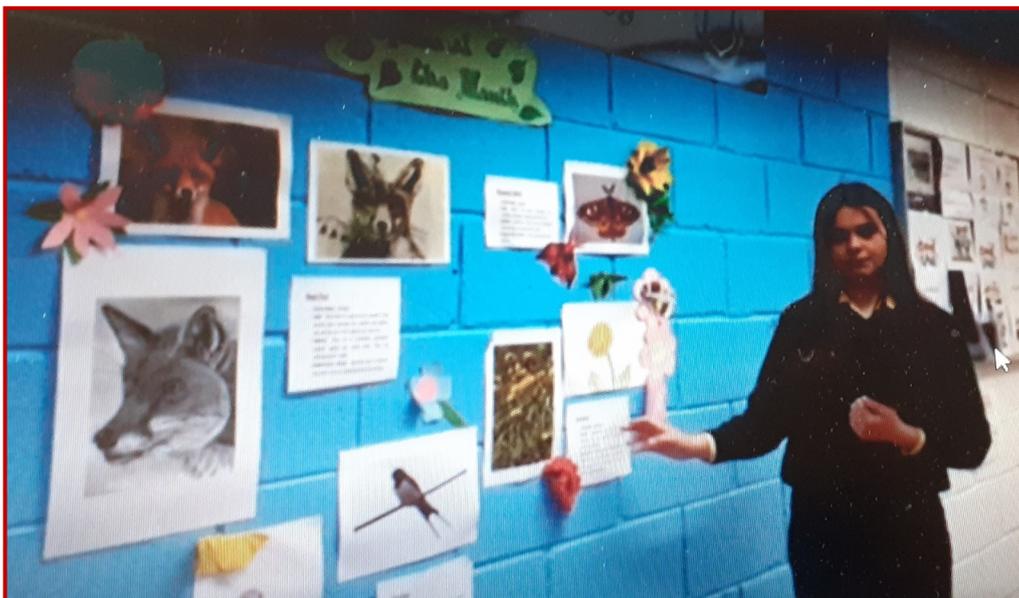
From February to March we will sow seasonal vegetables and set up bug hotels to improve the habitat within our school.

To help with this plan we need to build new raised beds and implement a school biodiversity campaign.

At the beginning of the school year, our teachers and students alike created a list of aims for the school year of how we can promote biodiversity within our school. One of the main aims was to identify the natural habitat within our school grounds. On our **Biodiversity Wall** students illustrated an aerial photograph of the school which included our no mow zone, our bug hotel and our wildflower patch.

Another part of our Biodiversity Wall is our **Species of the Month** section. This features pieces of artwork illustrated by our students as well as facts about the different flora and fauna within our environment. To promote biodiversity in our school we have introduced bird feeders. We made a rota so that each of our Green Schools members can help feed the birds and help increase the bird population.

We created a vegetable and herb garden within our grounds. We invited our students to clean up our raised beds and then we planted seeds.





### What we accomplished

- On Thursday, 17 February, we held a **Buns for Biodiversity** bake sale and raised €200 for **Seal Rescue Ireland**.
- Our **Green School Coordinator** set up a **Biodiversity Champion Challenge**. To enter, students had to create a natural environment for flora and fauna in their homes and gardens to promote biodiversity.
- The **Library Team** and the **Green Schools Committee** created an "**Earth Matters**" wall section in the school library.
- We teamed with the **Learning Hub** to do a **Teach/Meet** on developing practical ways to promote biodiversity and then we did a **Sunflower for Solidary** where we raised awareness for **Ukraine** and spread biodiversity by planting sunflowers in toilet rolls.



We are teaming up with our friends in the Green Schools committee for a special teach-meet on how to develop practical ways to make your environment more biodiverse friendly. Everyone is welcome!

In Presentation Wexford, we have so many ways of promoting biodiversity in our school from bake sales for biodiversity to a general chat and learning hub.

*We have so many ways of Challenging to Change.*

*Co-ordinator: James Grannell*



# WASTE FREE OCEANS—THE TIME IS NOW!

## *St. Colman's N.S. Mucklagh*

We chose this project because we wanted to learn about the future of plastic pollution, how it is impacting on our natural environment and what is its contribution to global warming.

We wanted to examine:

- The properties of plastic
- Different types of plastic
- How plastic is useful and how much plastic we are using
- What happens to waste plastic?
- How landfills can be detrimental to the surrounding environment, in particular the oceans
- What steps can be taken to reduce our use of plastic
- Global statistics about plastic usage
- A comparative study of the most polluted and least polluted oceans
- Whether there are any places that have succeeded in removing plastic from oceans/beaches
- Which species are most affected
- What can we do to raise awareness



Our objectives were:

- To develop an understanding of the importance of acting now to help conserve the planet
- To appreciate all that the world has to offer and why it is necessary that every person whether young or old should play their part in changing their habits involving plastic use
- To respect the seriousness of what is happening to the environment especially the oceans



### Hoped-for Outcomes

That the pupils will

- Develop a deep understanding and appreciation about the importance of conserving the environment for future generations
- Learn how they can make a difference by sharing their knowledge about plastic pollution with their friends and family
- Adopt new plastic-reducing practices in their daily lives.



### Actions

We created **data charts** to display information gathered in a 'plastic journal' used at home for one week to record how much plastic is used.

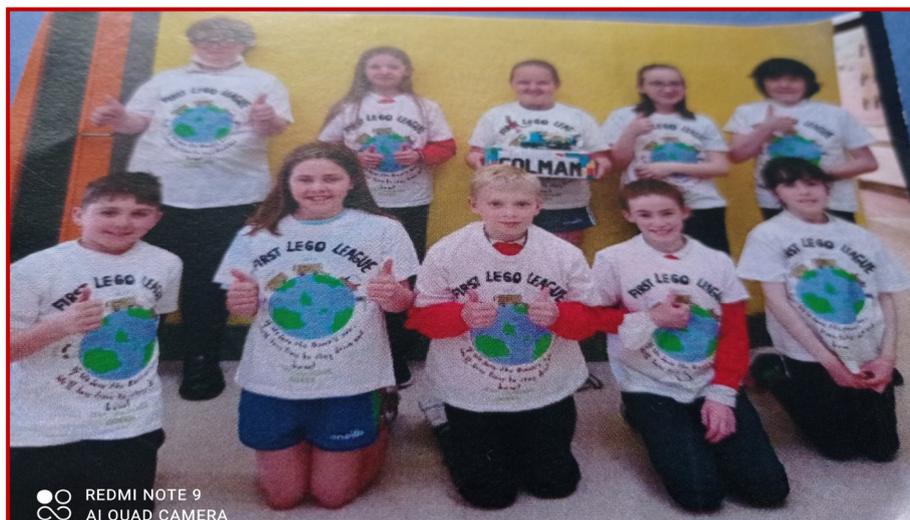
We watched a number of informative **videos** about the invention of plastic, the properties of plastic, why plastic has become a problem, the effect waste plastic is having on the environment. We watched a number of **webinars** that show the damage being caused by plastic.

A **Debate** on plastic pollution, a **role play** - conscience alley - also helped us to learn more about plastic pollution, where our waste goes and who is affected.

An **Analysis** of the future of plastic pollution was very informative. We used school chrome books to research more information about plastic pollution and its contribution to global warming

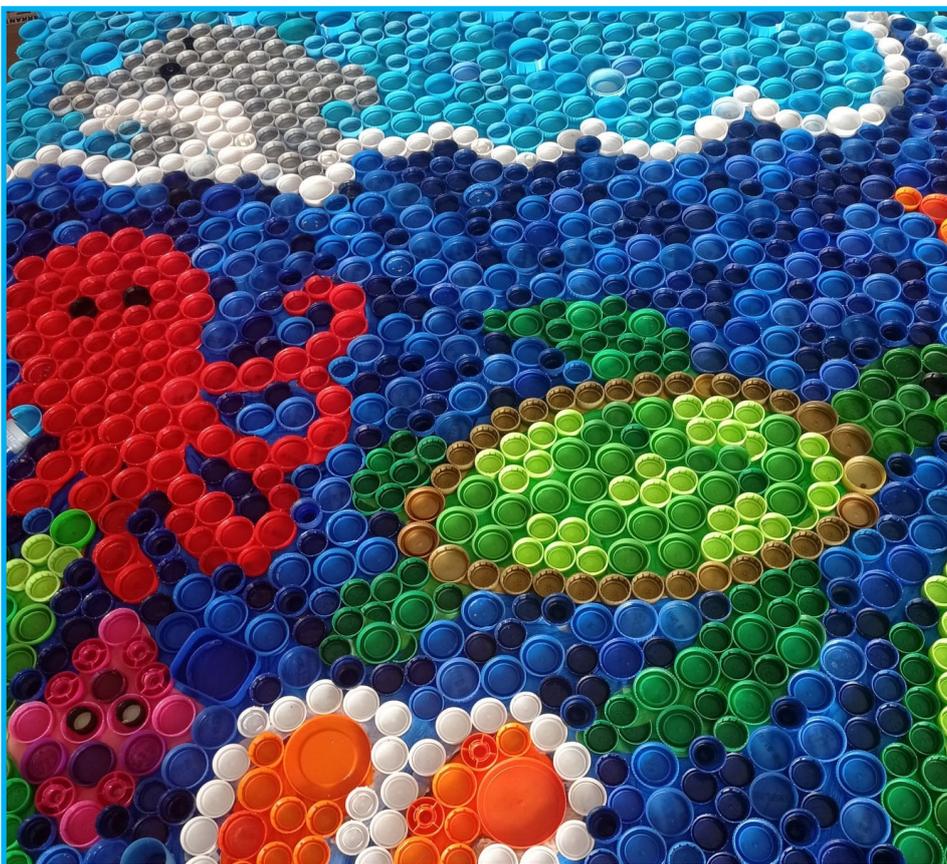
We completed **Art** activities, construction, using recycled plastic and we designed **T-Shirts** to combat the use of plastic packaging to save our oceans.

We designed **posters** to create awareness of the damage to our natural environments by plastic on beaches and to wildlife.





We created a **model** displaying the effects of plastic pollution and contrasted that with the removal of plastic. These innovative students designed and created a robot, a shark extractor named **Colman**, programmed to take plastic out of the ocean and to simulate cargo being brought to the main storage area. When the robot senses plastic, it opens its mouth to collect it. A speaker on its side emits a noise to scare away fish.



The **whole school** collected plastic **bottle caps**. The students sorted, painted and glued the bottle caps to create a **seascape** from plastic that would have ended up in the ocean. **Turtle, starfish, dolphin, seaweed and octopus** are beautifully depicted in the mural.



**Twenty-two minds are better than one!**

#### Did you know?

- 10% of the plastic in the ocean is fishing equipment.
- 386 species of fish have ingested plastic.
- At least 14 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean every year.
- If the world continues at its rate, there will be no more fish left by 2050.
- One in three sea mammals have been entangled in marine litter.
- Plastic takes over 400 years to breakdown.

*Co-ordinator: Caitríona Ní Thuama*

# HOW TRANSPORT CAN EFFECT CLIMATE CHANGE

## Presentation Primary School Warrenmount



Fifth Class pupils were given a number of topics to choose from for their *Challenge to Change* Project. They chose transport as

- They were interested in how their transport choices could affect the environment
- They were interested in learning about transport in the past and in the future
- The Green Schools Committee in our school had been promoting Green Transport

### Aims and Objectives:



- To explore and understand the effects of Climate Change on the environment
- To explore and understand that our actions can impact and slow down the damage to the environment
- To explore the effect of carbon dioxide emissions on the environment
- To explore and research transport in the past and compare it to transport in the present
- To explore 'greener' transport choices, like walking, scooting or cycling to school
- To explore the benefits of these modes of transport for the environment
- To explore the benefits of the modes of transport on individual wellbeing
- To understand that we are all responsible for our role in combatting climate change.



Working in groups, the girls explored transport in the past, present and looked at potential transport for the future. They explored the effects of different modes of transport on the environment. They compared carbon dioxide emissions for each mode of transport. They explored the best ways of travelling for the environment. They created a **RAP** and a **slogan** for the whole school to encourage children and their parents to walk, scoot or cycle to school.

They held an assembly for the whole school, demonstrating the findings of their project.

They sang and taught the rap to the whole school and shared this with their parents on Google Classroom. The girls in Fifth Class have a good understanding of the effect of climate change on the environment.

### **Actions**

We created a project in powerpoint form and on display boards which detailed Transport in the past and in the present and how certain transports have a negative impact on the environment.

We did **artwork** to show the different types of transport and compared their carbon dioxide emissions. We compared how each effects the environment.

We created a 'Transport RAP' called "**Get out of the Car, it's not that Far**" to highlight the importance of all children doing their bit for climate change. This was videoed around the school and was shown to the parents on **Google Classroom**. It was a great success.

The girls did a whole school assembly on their findings for the project. They created a quiz for the school and sang the RAP for the school.

We invited the head of the **Green Schools Project** who gave a presentation on tips for safe cycling to school. This was a great success as it encouraged the children to cycle in a safe way.

## Quotes from the students

"We absolutely loved creating the RAP, finding the right words that worked for the message we wanted to say." Mia

"[We had] great fun looking at transport in the past, it was so different to now!" Leah

"I didn't realise how bad CO2 emissions are for the environment. I think about that now before I get into the car with my Mam." Lacey



Challenge to Change at the HLPF 2022

Get out of the car,  
It's not that far.  
Walk, scoot or cycle to school  
If you can't do that  
Just car pool.

We all need to do our bit  
Or climate change is going to hit.  
Each of us has a role.

We don't want climate change to take control.

To listen to the rap, copy and paste the link below into your browser:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UJ8ywttK0upZan2wH9pPhBF2yoS3NnSF/view?usp=sharing\\_eil\\_m&ts=62b2e917](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UJ8ywttK0upZan2wH9pPhBF2yoS3NnSF/view?usp=sharing_eil_m&ts=62b2e917)

This rap was included in the *Challenge to Change* presentation at the U.N. High Political Forum on 12 July 2022.

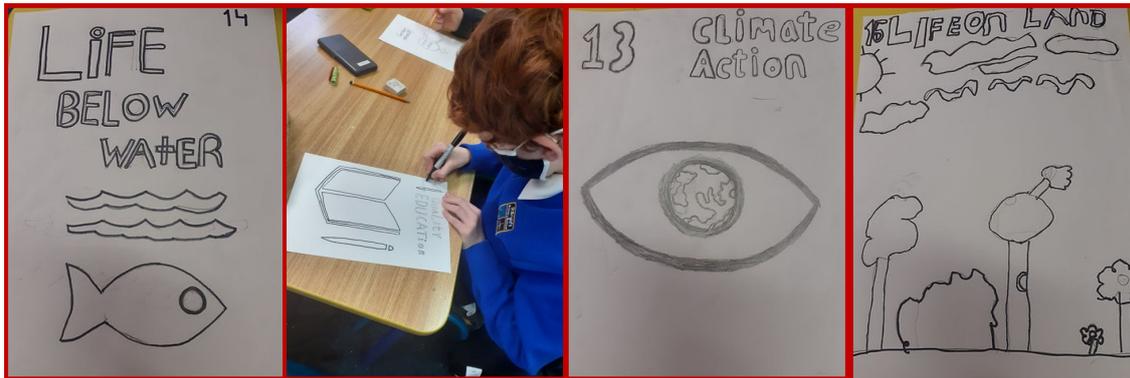
*Co-ordinator: Clíodhna O'Reilly*

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## St. Brigid's Primary School Kildare

Senior students at St. Brigid's Primary School in Kildare wanted to spread the word about the SDGs to the younger children in the school. The SDGs are goals that the governments in 19 countries are trying to reach by the year 2030 to help our world. There are 17 goals in total and each goal has a symbol. As part of their *Challenge to Change* project, the students decided to produce a colouring book as an introduction to the goals and as a means of communicating the message.

Here is the link to their matching pairs game <https://learningapps.org/view23352051>



Students engaged enthusiastically with each other as they participated in a workshop organised by **Trócaire**. Here are some images of their hard work.



Co-ordinator: *Gráinne Nugent*

# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP — LITTER AND WASTE

*Scoil Chríost Rí Portlaoise*



**Transition Year** students took a lead role in this project which aimed to reduce the amount of rubbish going into the general waste and recycling bins.

## Objectives

- To ban the use of plastic bottles
- To encourage all students to bring a refillable water bottle
- To make the school a WEE battery recycling centre
- To produce a video showing students how to use the bins correctly
- To hold a Sustainability Week

The hoped-for outcomes were to significantly reduce single use plastic in the school, to educate students about the impact of single use plastic and to reduce the amount of rubbish in the school.

## Actions

To identify the initial situation within the school regarding Global Citizenship Litter and Waste, students:

- Conducted a litter and waste audit
- Conducted a global citizenship awareness survey
- Researched nationalities in the school

## Global Citizenship Awareness Survey

The proposed questions were discussed in class. The committee realised they knew little about global citizenship so they decided to keep the survey general. They included questions such as: "Do you participate in community clean up?"; "Have you had anything to eat or drink from an African, Asian or South American country this week?"; "Does your family buy Fairtrade products?"

To identify the different nationalities in the school, students were invited to join a committee to promote their culture and plan an international day for the entire school. An **Intercultural Day** was held in March to represent the different nationalities. Over 40 different nationalities were represented. The day involved cultural dress, henna tattoos, face painting, various cuisine and a parade through the school for all classes to see.



## Linking with the Curriculum

We linked the theme of Global Citizenship Litter and Waste to curriculum work going on in our school by informing teachers of our theme and asking them to make links where possible.

<b>CSPE</b>	Stewardship, Waste Management, Sustainability Develop a sense of personal and social responsibility about the world we live in.
<b>ART</b>	Litter Poster competition for all First Year students. Junk Kouture creating striking couture designs from rubbish aiding the awareness of Global Citizenship Litter and Waste.
<b>Mathematics</b>	Using charts and graphs to present results from our awareness survey. Conducting bin audits by documenting and collating the rubbish in the bins.
<b>SPHE</b>	Development of citizenship and a sense of personal and social responsibility.
<b>Languages</b>	Promote communication skills Allow students to raise awareness for global citizenship in another language.
<b>Home Economics</b>	Examine food miles. Is the food we are eating locally sourced? Food science, organic food and the benefits to us and our environment. Food poverty in an unequal world. Waste management.
<b>Technology</b>	Promote awareness of sustainable wood sourcing. Development of electric vehicles and its positive benefits for the environment.
<b>Science</b>	Encourage responsibility for the environment and promote sustainable development. Study of habitats and species and how they interact, study of life cycle of various species.
<b>Geography</b>	Climate change and extreme weather events. Farming and fishing practices. Waste management. Litter and pollution. Study of greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, ozone depletion. Urbanisation (the concrete jungle), loss of greenfield sites to development, loss of habitats. Examine where our clothes come from. Fairtrade. What is Fairtrade? Who benefits? Study of different countries, cultures and traditions, e.g. Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India, France.

In September 2020, to promote biodiversity a **Garden of Hope** was developed in the school. This was an initiative inspired by the pandemic to give all students and staff hope for the future. Daffodil and tulips were sown and positive messages were painted on signs placed around the garden. The garden is back in full bloom this year. Winter Garlic and Herbs were sown in the polytunnel. Bird houses were placed around the school. Each form group was given a tulip bulb to grow and nurture. The potted bulbs are found in every classroom in the school.

## Litter and Waste Audit

Students worked in groups of two or three. They selected two bins at random from every area in the school. They observed and counted what types of rubbish were visible, e.g. plastic bottles, yoghurt pots, crisp packets. Each bin was weighed. The results were compiled to inform the students on how they could reduce the waste. They decided to purchase cutlery for the canteen rather than disposable cutlery, to change from foil trays to compostable trays and to ban the use of plastic bottles.

From the review we identified that students were not using the bins correctly, had little to no awareness of global citizenship and that we needed to reduce the amount of waste we were producing, in particular, single use plastic. New signs were placed over general waste and recycling bins. Transition Year student made a **video** on how to use the general waste and recycling bin correctly. This was shown to the entire school. Copy and paste this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAQPyZVGPI8&feature=youtu.be> to view the video. A massive campaign was launched: "**Say No to Plastic Bottles.**" The use of plastic bottles was banned to reduce plastic waste.

A **Sustainability Week** held in **March 2022** was themed as follows: Monday—Recycling; Tuesday—Saying No to Plastic; Wednesday—Fairtrade; Thursday—Sustainable Fashion; Friday Air Quality. Transition Year students were taught a **ten week module, Education for Sustainability**. Signs were placed on the photocopiers to highlight to teachers 'Eco-Friendly Printing Tips'. **WEE Recycling Boxes** were placed at various points around the school. A small **card** was placed beside each light switch to remind students and staff to turn off lights. A small **sign** was placed on all computers reminding teachers to power off computers and projectors at 4.00 p.m. each day. The I.T. teacher sent an email to all teachers before extended holidays to power off computers and projectors and to ensure they were not left on stand-by. All students and teachers were encouraged to bring a re-fillable water bottle to school. Bottled water is no longer sold in the school.



**Action Week 2022** - Each day there were announcements over the intercom and a short video was shown to students.

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>General Waste and Recycling</b>	A short video clip made by Transition Year students on how to use bins correctly was shown to all students. First Years participated in a <b>Recycling Relay</b> in the Hall
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>'Say No to Plastic' campaign</b>	<b>Sue Adams</b> from <b>Education for Sustainability</b> delivered a presentation via Zoom on plastic, its harmful impacts on the environment, alternatives to plastic. This reinforced our school campaign.
<b>WED.</b>	<b>Fairtrade—Choose the World We Want</b>	There was a <b>Fairtrade lesson</b> and a chocolate treat for First Years while teachers enjoyed Fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate for their break.
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>Fast Fashion</b>	An <b>non-uniform</b> day took place. Students were asked to wear blue and yellow to show <b>solidarity</b> with <b>Ukraine</b> . All students gave a donation. A total of €1,710.00 was raised.  Transition Year and Fifth Year students watched ' <b>The True Cost</b> ', a one-hour documentary on fast fashion. It discussed several aspects of the garment industry from production (mainly exploring the life of low wage workers in developing countries) to its after-effects on river and soil pollution, pesticide contamination, disease and death.
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>Air Quality</b>	Three monitors were installed around the school to measure air quality: (1) Traffic Counter; (2) Particulate Matter; (3) Nitrous Oxide levels.

All students were invited to enter the **Groundwater poster competition** run by Green Schools.

**Andrew Coyne Cycles** visited the school to promote the 'Bike to Work Scheme'. He set up a display outside the staffroom and teachers had the opportunity to learn about the scheme and purchase a bicycle if they wished.



### Informing and Involving the Local Community

We have created a working relationship with **Lois County Council** who have provided advice and ideas on how to promote our theme of Global Citizenship. They have shared upcoming projects and events with us such as traffic monitoring projects, sustainable fashion projects, and training.

We have also created a working relationship with **Portlaoise Tidy Towns** through our Litter Picking initiatives.

Local newspapers such as the **Leinster Express** and **Lois Today** have provided publicity on various initiatives such as an article on Action Weeks.



Speakers have visited the school, e.g. **Fashion Blogger Meg Doherty** spoke to Sixth Year students regarding Sustainable Fashion, **Sue Adam** from **Sustainability for Education** spoke to the entire school about plastic and why we should try to reduce plastic usage in our lives.

### Minima National Winner Junk Kouture

We updated our **notice boards** on a regular basis showing when and where meetings will take place, artwork and our *Green Schools* code.

We publicised our programme on the **school website**, **school app**, **Facebook** and **Instagram** page. Pictures from Sustainability Week were shared on Instagram.

We wrote a two-page article and submitted photographs for the **Yearbook** to report on barriers and progress throughout the year and to inform the school and wider community.

We arranged events throughout the year.

We held **Action Weeks** in 2020 and 2022.

**An Taisce** and **Green School Ireland** contacted Ms Healy to inform her that the work that went on in the school stood out enormously and that Scoil Chríost Rí had been chosen as a **Regional Winner** for the Global Citizenship Litter and Waste Category. Three students, representing the committee, received the regional award at a ceremony in Athlone on 19 May 2022.

On the day of the awards, **An Taisce** announced the **National Global Citizenship School of the Year**. We were so delighted when it was announced that we were the **Global Citizenship School of the Year**.



*Co-ordinator: Anne Dollard*

# CASTLECOMER CLIMATE MISSION

## *Presentation Primary School Castlecomer*

The middle and senior classes in Castlecomer wanted students, staff and parents to become proactive about maintaining their local environment. They hoped that connections between school and community will be strengthened and will be imbued with the positive messaging of the project— we can make a difference! The middle and senior classes will communicate their learnings from the project to the other classes in the school.

### Objectives of the project

That students will:

- Learn practical ways to their reduce carbon footprint in class and put some of these into practice
- Feel their actions can have a positive effect on the environment, especially their school and the local environment
- Learn, in a hands-on way, the benefits of tree planting, recycling, reducing energy consumption
- Learn that developing countries are the most likely to be affected negatively by climate breakdown in many ways and students will study a selection of these places, including people living there
- Learn about how Castlecomer's climate was once 'tropical' and has now evolved to become temperate.

### Actions

Through Geography mapwork, students will study the Irish climate and the climates of developing countries. They will learn about the impact of climate on lifestyle, economics, education through Development Education resources. The Sustainable Development Goals will be used to chart climate action targets. Local studies will focus on **Castlecomer Discovery Park** and appropriate workshops. There will be hands-on learning activities in SESE such as planting, recycling, conservation. Themes from the Green School will be revisited. There may be the possibility of linking virtually with other Presentation schools.

- Students participated in **Picker Pals** as Fifth and Sixth Class students went litter picking with their families in their neighbourhood
- All classes were involved in planting **tomatoes, sunflowers, trees and vegetables**
- **Energy Eagle** and **Waste Watchdog** were re-introduced to classrooms
- Fifth and Sixth Class engaged in **digital learning** as they participated in **Project Honduras** from **Trócaire** and reflected on how less developed countries are suffering on a daily basis as a result of climate change, rising temperatures, natural disasters
- Students learned about a range of other less-developed countries in the world and worked on **mini projects** before presenting the information to the class
- Fifth and Sixth class students designed and constructed their own **board games**, based on Green School / Climate Change themes, e.g. endangered animal species, fast fashion, littering, energy usage.

- Geography and Science text books and the Grow in Love programme (Climate Justice theme) were used to learn about climate change and how our actions at home and in school can help the environment - we can make a difference
- Students learned about Castlecomer's great change in climate over millions of years with a visit to the **Discovery Park** and the **Footsteps in Coal Museum**. The formation of coal was explained and students learned about fossils. We are continuing to develop this theme with a new project called Dragons and Dinosaurs.
- We received daily reminders to reuse paper, use reusable drink bottles and lunch boxes, and recycle batteries.



Co-ordinator: Marie Hughes

## MAKE A CHANGE FOR CHARITY

### *Scoil Chóca Naofa Kilcock*

As part of our *Challenge to Change* project, **Fourth Class** sold eco-friendly Christmas decorations to staff during the lead up to Christmas. Each decoration cost €2 and there was a donation box kept in the office. It was a self-service shop set up by the students. Staff took a decoration from the display in the foyer and kindly donated in the office.

By participating in this project we hoped to contribute to a sustainable and eco-friendly Christmas by creating unique Christmas crafts using recyclable and repurposed materials. We aimed to raise money by selling crafts to the school staff. All the money raised was donated to St. Vincent de Paul Society. We are very proud to say we raised €147.74 for this organisation.

We believe we have inspired our school community to repurpose materials at home and to be more environmentally responsible when gifting and decorating during times of celebration.



We also created a **video** of our project which we posted on our school website to spread awareness throughout our school community of our project messages. Please follow the link: <http://www.scoilchoca.ie/challenge-to-change-project/>

*Co-ordinator: May Smith*



# MIS-MANAGEMENT OF THE EARTH'S RESOURCES

## *Presentation Secondary School Thurles*

Presentation Secondary School students decided to look at how we mis-manage the earth's resources. There is a lot of waste in every aspect of our lives. **They decided to challenge themselves to change.**

Students in Class Naomh Éanna decided to look at recycling old **Christmas cards** and they created a variety of cards made from old cards donated to the students. They sold these creations in school with the aim of making everyone more aware of how we can become responsible producers and consumers. They raised €122.00 for Suir Haven in Thurles.

Students in Classes Naomh Pól and Naomh Peadar looked at the role **fast fashion** plays in our society today. They collected clothes from the girls in school and worked on them to give them a new and vibrant look.

Naomh Pól students decided that information is key to tackling the excess buying of fast fashion clothing. They spoke to classes in the school and created a powerpoint presentation to teach the girls to mind their clothes and ensure they at least get thirty wears out of any item they might buy. A **survey** was carried out to discover the extent of spending on clothes among teenagers. The environmental damage being done is quite frightening and hopefully this information will help students think before they buy. They also gathered scraps of wool from the students and put these together to knit blankets for the nearby nursing home.

Naomh Peadar students agreed that fast fashion was the most important issue to tackle. This is because it is an issue on which they felt they could make the most impact, especially considering that the students are the demographic for most fast fashion companies. **They discovered that there is 92 million tonnes of clothes-related waste each year.** This is a shocking figure and they wanted to explore ways of reducing it.

### **Actions**

- The students discussed how they purchased clothes and the volumes of clothes they had, e.g. how many leggings per person or how many t-shirts each person owns.
- Next they discussed how they could tackle the issue.
- They knitted a blanket which was then donated to an Ukrainian appeal held in the school.
- They looked up foundations and organisations linked with reducing fast fashion in order to gain inspiration for the project (**The Wardrobe Change Campaign, Sustainable Fashion and You.**)
- They researched ideas, watched videos, and garnered ideas for how they could put what they were learning into practice.
- They wanted to get creative! They agreed to ask for donations of old or unwanted clothes and then they were going to test themselves and attempt to upcycle the donated items.

In order to do this, they organised groups from the class to speak with the First, Second and Third Year students to inform them of the project. Posters were designed and donations boxes ready prepared. Old and unwanted items of clothing were collected from these year groups.

A supply of sewing items was required so they purchased what they were unable to source from their homes, e.g. elastic, needles, sequins, ribbons, buttons.



In groups, they chose items from the donation boxes and they got to work upcycling the clothes. Once the items were upcycled, the resultant creations were shown to the other students. The completed items and the items that were not used were then donated to the Home Economics, Art and Drama departments for future use.

Students in Naomh Ailbhe decided to look at **food waste** in school and in the home. They decided to raise awareness among First and Fifth Year students who have lunch in the assembly hall every day. In week one, they weighed the food waste bin each day at the end of lunch-time. They visited each class to explain that they were going to monitor the food waste bin to raise awareness about the amount of food wasted each day. Posters were made which showed how some people in our world live in food poverty and these were hung on the wall over the waste bins. In week two, they continued to weigh the bins and graph the results to see if there was a difference in the weight of the food waste bin. The results were examined to arrive at solutions. The students made a **Tik-Tok** as the most effective way to get the message across to others.

The students discussed food waste in the home. They discovered that food is thrown out at the end of the main meal of the day especially. So they decided to take a pro-active approach and produced a book of **recipes for leftovers**. This could be shared with students and permission sought to share it online with parents.

In Ireland, over **one million tonnes** of food are wasted annually. This amounts to €2 billion in losses and costs for Irish businesses.

The food industry accounts for approximately 30% of global energy consumption and 22% of total Greenhouse Gas Emissions. **A 12th of greenhouse gases is created by food that is never eaten.**

If the world population continues to grow at the same pace, by 2050, three planets will be needed to provide natural resources.

Goal 12 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals aims for responsible consumption and production globally. (Facts And Figures About Food Waste in Ireland) from [www.sustainabletravelireland.ie](http://www.sustainabletravelireland.ie))

*Co-ordinator: Siobhan Heffernan*



Challenge to Change at the HLPF 2022



Presentation Education Office

Presentation Convent, Warrenmount, Blackpitts, Dublin 8 D08 H92R