

Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)

Case Studies from countries running EcoCampus



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1. Case studies from Ireland

1.1 Themes

Colleges of Further Education tend to take on a singular Theme at a time, this is to facilitate the shorter course times as well as staffing levels on campus. Often these sites do not have buildings management.

EcoCampus Committees in colleges can look to foster their individual specialities as is the case with the jointly registered NUI Maynooth and St Patrick's College Maynooth (together known as Maynooth Green-Campus) who are harnessing their experience in international aid and development and climatology to address the theme of Climate Justice alongside the themes of Waste, Energy and Transport.

1.2 EcoCampus Committees

GMIT Letterfrack Green-Campus has a representative who sits on both the local Tidy Towns group and the Green-Campus Committee in GMIT Letterfrack. This ensures that strong connections are maintained with their local community. The two groups regularly host joint events such as Home Composting Evenings and local clean ups and both groups work to support each other in their efforts.

Ballsbridge College of Further Education: Membership and active participation on the Green-Campus Committee has for a large proportion of students become part of their required course work in Ballsbridge CFE. Students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language study a module called Business Management and a requirement of this module is to implement and monitor a change in their workplace.

These students each year form the key group of the Green-Campus committee and are assessed on the work done implementing the Green Charter and the developments of the Green-Campus Programme for the academic year. This active involvement from students where there is a link to performance and assessment has proven quite successful in the CFE environment where students often attend courses lasting for one year only.

1.3 Environmental Review

As part of their Environmental Review, Dundalk IT Green-Campus undertook a litter survey of the campus grounds and looked at college policy surrounding littering. The committee also looked at the times of year when littering was greatest for example during Rag Week and Open Day.

The amount of Estates staff time and resources used to address litter on campus and the contribution to litter clearance made by the landscape contractor were established. An analysis of litter types and black spots showed that the litter dealt with included cigarette butts, plastic bottles, paper cups and sweet wrappings and black spots included building entrances, car parks, the area around the student bar etc.

Of the various litter types the biggest problem related to cigarette butts and based on the Environmental Review, it was decided to focus on the issue of Cigarette Butt Littering on campus as part of Green Week and Spring Clean 2012.

1.4 Action Planning: A long term project

Project: Establishment of a 5 acre Native Woodland in Letterfrack, Co. Galway Collaborators: GMIT Letterfrack, Connemara West, Connemara National Park

In 2013 the Green Campus Committee of GMIT Letterfrack initiated a collaboration with Connemara National Park to establish 5 acres of Native Woodland. With support from the One Million Trees in a Day and the Department of Agriculture Native Woodland grant, over 3,000 saplings were planted in the grounds of Connemara National Park by students and staff of GMIT, Connemara West, Connemara National Park, Green Belt and community members.

There have been a number of additional plantings over the past two years to restock the woodland and there is continuous maintenance to help the trees become established. The species planted include alder, birch, whitethorn, guelder rose, holly, pendunculate oak and scots pine. The site will be hugely important to support biodiversity in the area, will play its role in carbon sequestration and also act as a learning environment for students and the wider community.

In the coming years GMIT Letterfrack will develop resources to ensure that the potential of the woodland is maximised from an educational perspective. Ireland imports approximately 95% of hardwoods consumed each year and this project helps students of GMIT Letterfrack, who specialise in the use and manipulation of wood in furniture design and technology projects, to understand how trees and forests develop and how long it takes for trees to mature. It is hoped that thinnings, and later mature timber, from the woodland will be extracted to demonstrate how sustainable forestry can work in local environments supporting local communities.

1.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

In University College Cork, the monitoring of items like waste disposal, energy, and water use is undertaken by the Buildings and Estates Department. This data is communicated at Eco Committee meetings in order to analyse and compare data against established targets. Transport and Travel is monitored by the Commuter Manager, who is also a member of the Eco Committee.

Dundalk Institute of Technology identified areas where waste saving measures were routinely practised and had been for years. In order to maintain the benefits of this system, the Green-Campus Committee documented the measures and presented awards to practitioners in these areas.

Galway Mayo Institute of Technology Mayo has established within the Eco Committee systems for Monitoring and Evaluation. For instance, the monitoring of energy use and water use allows the Committee to identify when the heating system has been drained and refilled. The Committee are thus not alarmed by increased water consumption (and do not assume there is a leak) when it is known that the system is under maintenance.

1.6 Linking to Learning on Campus

Ballsbridge College of Further Education: Students studying Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Marketing, Business and Word Processing all interact with the programme through various modules in their coursework. In Business and Marketing courses, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is covered in both business and marketing modules. The Green-Campus programme is discussed as an example of Corporate Social Responsibility in action. Marketing students also become involved in the Green-Campus programme as they aid in the design of the environmental awareness survey for students to complete each year.

In Ballsbridge CFE, approximately 80% of full time students are required to take word processing as part of a module on the FETAC Level Five courses. This module requires students to complete documents, letters and posters as part of the exam. The exam for 2012-2013 had an environmental theme and addressed the Green Charter of Ballsbridge College. Students wrote and edited letters, created posters and other word processing functions relating to environmental themes.

1.7 Informing and Involving

The Green-Campus Committee at Trinity College Dublin has uploaded a publicly accessible version of their Action Plan in their dedicated section of the TCD website (Google search: 'Trinity Green Pages'). Also included in the Green Pages section are: a quick introductory video to the Green Pages, details of the Green-Campus Committee, how to become involved and contribute to activities and an explanation of the environmental aspects of the Green Campus and College sustainability programmes on site and more. Most importantly, the website includes suggestions for simple steps (divided into themes) that every member of the campus community, including the thousands of transient visitors, can take to help reduce their environmental impact.

National Spring Clean: Many Green-Campus Committees join forces with local community groups to take part in this annual clean-up which can raise positive publicity for the college within the local community when the clean-up is extended beyond the college gates and into the local community.

GMIT Mayo Campus: Two Green Campus scholarships were awarded in GMIT Mayo Campus in the AY 2012/2013. One of these related to the theme of water: Stacy Brooks, a student on the Art and Design programme was awarded a Green Campus Scholarship for her 'Earth-friendly artist' flyer. This flyer is the primary tool in a campaign to raise awareness of safe and eco-friendly disposal of acrylic paint and is available to view [here](#).

2. Case studies from Denmark

In Denmark, the Eco-Schools programme is called Green Flag, Green School.

2.1 Green Flag and Environmental Education

A Green Flag, Green Teacher Training Institution puts environmental education and education for sustainable development high on the agenda and means that each academic year the institution implements an educational project about education for sustainable development and involves the students from different teams and from different subjects.

It also means that the student teachers examine how to work with environmental education and education for sustainable development in primary school, and the skills students acquire by working with the environment and sustainability.

2.2 Green Flag and Teacher Training Institution

Being a Green Flag, Green Teacher Training Institution means that the institution is working to become more sustainable. Every year, the Teacher Training Institution takes new steps to reduce the institution's global footprint for example by reducing the consumption of water and energy, reducing CO₂ emissions, reducing waste and so on.

The student teachers participate in the work of setting goals and implementing savings in cooperation with teachers, managers and technical staff.

3. Case studies from Latvia

3.1 Visiting local schools with lectures on sustainability

Often students can be far more persuasive in communicating the idea of green lifestyles, as they are regarded as more similar than high school teachers. Because of this, it is important that the EcoCampuses use this opportunity and establish frequent visits to local schools to inspire younger children to lead sustainable lifestyles.

One such example is *University of Liepaja*, where students visited the local *Ezerkrasts Primary school* (also an Eco-School) to create games about environmental issues.



3.2 Invite local artists to put the Style in the Sustainability

For university students it is often very important that green lifestyles are presented in a way that involves creative and smart solutions – it just makes the sustainability much more trendy.

Such an idea was employed in University of Liepaja, where together with local cycling activists and craftsmen the Eco Committee (Eco-Council in Latvia) transformed the old tables from lecture halls into bike racks, thus saving resources and showing creativity.



3.3 Establish a wilderness club

Establishing a club – or even just sending regular invitations to hiking trips for all students – is essential for Eco Committees, as it allows the necessary networking among environmentalists and recruiting new activists and is a great activity in itself – getting more students to connect in a meaningful way with nature should be one of the main objectives of an EcoCampus, as it strengthens all the values on which environmentalism is based.

Below is an example from a monthly hiking trip organised by Vidzeme University of applied sciences.



3.4 Stickers, pins and identity

One of the most important ways that students can influence their peers is through signaling their values and identity. An EcoCampus should ensure the students have the possibilities to show their support for environmental issues and lifestyle choices through creating products – pins, laptop stickers, maybe even T-shirts. As a benefit, it will also help to popularize the Eco Committee and university, which should cover the costs.

Here is an example from Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences describing the actions related to all Eco-Schools' Themes which individuals pledge to make by using them.

