

GOLD Awards for the category Education in the BIAZA Annual Awards

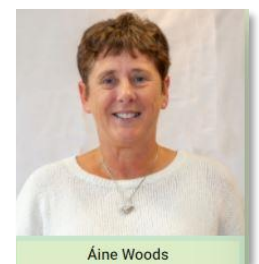
National STEM Collaboration; working together to promote BIAZA Conservation Education to the Junior Cycle Teachers in Ireland

This year a collaboration of Irish zoos and aquariums working in partnership with Junior Cycle for Teachers, a Department of Education and Skills schools' support service were honoured to receive a BIAZA gold education award. BIAZA, which stands for the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums, celebrates the best examples of research, conservations and education projects each year. The coveted awards recognise outstanding contributions in education directly or by inspiring others.



The project, which was entitled 'Working together to promote BIAZA conservation education to Junior Cycle teachers in Ireland' marks a partnership between collections which has been running for over three years.

Áine Woods from Junior Cycle for Teachers explained the aim of the partnership: "We partner with a number of BIAZA collections as part of our initiative, STE(A)M in Junior Cycle. This initiative supports teachers in addressing some societal challenges with their students in both subject-specific and cross-curricular contexts. Working with BIAZA has provided opportunities for teachers to connect with expertise in the area of conservation which can ensure that learning in the classroom has real-world relevance."



Áine Woods



"It was incredible to work on this project," said Dr. Noirin Burke, Director of Education at Galway Atlantaquaria. "More than 30 million people generally visit BIAZA collections annually in Ireland and England, however, this year many are struggling to remain open, deliver their education programmes and strive for their conservation goals. Working together is the only way forward I think", said Dr. Burke, who noted the dedication and passion of the staff who worked on this project.

The partnership with Junior Cycle for teachers has seen continual professional development delivered to 100's of teachers. Topics have included Biodiversity Loss, Oceans and Sustainable Food Production.

“We are thrilled to receive the highest recognition from BIAZA for this project”, said Aileen Tennant, Head of Discovery and Learning at Dublin Zoo. “The initiative has allowed us to showcase the important conservation work being done in BIAZA registered zoos and aquaria to teachers throughout Ireland. To collaboratively engage with so many passionate Junior Cycle teachers to look for solutions to challenging conservation and environmental issues has been a real highlight of our conservation education programme at Dublin Zoo.”



The collaboration involved Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium, Dublin Zoo, Fota Wildlife Park, Galway Atlantaquaria, Secret Valley Wildlife Park and Tayto Park.



For more information on BIAZA and the education and conservation programmes of zoos and aquariums see biaza.org.uk/projects/category/education

To access STE(A)M teacher resources see jct.ie/steAm