



OUR OCEAN ~ OUR LEGACY STRONG SOUTH KERRY REPRESENTATION AT GLOBAL OCEAN CONFERENCE

As part of her role at CoDesRes's Eleanor Turner and the rest of the team are keen to share the work and make connections with researchers both locally and globally, especially those who are addressing real-world global problems. This month's report from CoDes reflects and shares Eleanor's experience at the Our Ocean summit last month held in Bali.

High-level ocean leaders meet annually for a 2 day conference focussing entirely on the Ocean. They focus specifically on what solutions we can innovate to clean and protect our ocean and use its own resources in a sustainable way. In 2014, the Our Ocean youth leadership summit was created to represent the work of young leaders in global environmental discussions. Since then alongside the Our Ocean conference were world leaders make commitments to funding further research, protecting species or areas from overfishing or degradation, the Our Ocean Youth Leadership summit is held. This brings together youth ocean leaders to provide insights and support for their projects and commitments.

The conference took place on the 30th and 31st of October. Attendance at the Youth leadership summit is via an application process with 500 applications coming from 65 different countries. Of these 500 only 200 are chosen and Eleanor and colleague Sara Albrecht's names popped out of the hat. Lucy Hunt, Youth Transition Leader and Sea Synergy founding Director and Damian Foxall also attended bringing a strong South Kerry representation to this global conference.

A side event to the main conference had been organised for Sunday including a beach clean (something which Eleanor was very familiar with) and a Turtle release of Olive Ridleys sea turtles from a rescue centre. "It was an amazing feeling to watch these tiny little turtles swimming out to sea for the first time, the elation of which was slightly tempered by the number of plastic straws and cigarette butts we picked up during the beach clean. But nonetheless it was a joyous and unforgettable start to what was a truly inspiring week"

A meeting with the Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine Michael Creed and other Irish Government representatives gave Eleanor the chance to discuss Ireland's place in the world picture of ocean sustainability and how we in South Kerry are contributing with positive actions.



Another side event saw Eleanor working with local group Divers Clean Action on coral restoration work and a chance to snorkel and dive on the reef and see these new structures being placed on the seabed to help recreate damaged areas of the reef. At the Youth Ocean Leadership Summit John Kerry spoke about the power of youths to create change and youth participants were invited to the stage to pitch their ideas to aid in creating partnerships, international collaborations and sharing experiences

"From working to create new protected areas, promoting sustainable fishing practices, harnessing energy from the ocean, raising much needed awareness through engagement projects and reduce pollution particularly plastic pollution in the ocean, the youth leaders covered it all, again showing the world what our young people are capable of contributing in global actions and improving ocean health". Eleanor told us. "Just look at our own place here on the Iveragh peninsula, there is so much our communities are already doing to protect ocean health, to reduce plastic pollution and live more sustainably. From green schools to our local markets selling local produce, to beach cleans and species conservation we are changing the world every day, with local action that adds up to a much bigger impact.

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