



IMPACT REPORT

2023





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Acknowledgements

Global Action Plan Board of Directors

Caoimhe Donnelly	Chairperson
Olaf Schmidt	Company Secretary (retired June 2023)
Niall O’Leary	Company Secretary
Aoife Connaughton	
Aisling McCaffrey	
Amine El Alami	
Frances Neary	(appointed October 2023)
Jack Lee	
Jana Platau-Wagner	

Auditors

Whiteside Cullinan
Registered Auditors and Chartered Accountants
Molesworth House
1-2 South Frederick Street
Dublin 2 D02 N820



Partners & Supporters

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to our partners, patrons, supporters and volunteers who have supported our work throughout the year.

At the heart of everything we do is the belief in teamwork and shared responsibility. Global Action Plan Ireland is focused on making real changes in behaviour, and spreading the word about the impact of local action. And we are encouraged by the fact that so many people and organisations share our belief, and are willing to come out and support our programmes.

Our partners and supporters not only give us a boost but also get inspired by the people that we work with, all over Ireland, who are making a positive difference in their communities.



We thank all our partners who supported us in the past year, including:





Global Action Plan

Global Action Plan's goal is to inspire and support people throughout Ireland to become environmental change makers.

We aspire to be the leading organisation for environmental behaviour change in Ireland.

Guided by our new Strategic Plan, adopted in the Spring of 2023, we want to grow our impact and reach, and bring our unique blend of social inclusion, empowerment and environmental education to people all over Ireland.

To achieve that, we have invested in our knowledge, our network of supporters and allies, and our systems, to ensure that we can continue to improve the quality and impact of everything we do. In 2023, we published research papers, built new partnerships with schools, local authorities and businesses all over Ireland, and we leveraged the expertise of the networks we belong to.



We are working to ensure that people in Ireland have the knowledge, skills and motivation to make sustainable lifestyle choices within their communities.



We will work with all levels of society to empower people to act for a better future for our planet and for the people that depend on it.





As a leading behaviour change organisation, we aim to set a benchmark for others, serving as a source of expertise, and a role model, inspiring other groups and individuals to understand and address the psychological, political and economic barriers that people encounter during their efforts to lead more sustainable lifestyles.

In the past year, we have used our experience and knowledge to inform public discourse on societal change. With improved outreach and communication, we were able to leverage media organisations to spread our message and engage more people with the challenges and opportunities of eco-friendly lifestyles.

We work with all levels of society, empowering people in community groups, schools, public bodies, and businesses, to drive the changes in values and behaviour that will bring about a more sustainable society.





2023 At A Glance

587 Events

587 workshops, training sessions and other events hosted in the past year.

 **88%**

88% increase in the number of events compared to last year.

13,000+ Engagements

More than 13,000 engagements were achieved through all events combined.

 **126%**

126% increase in the number of people taking part in our activities compared to last year.

Company Teams

Teams from 13 different companies spent time volunteering in our community gardens, keeping these urban oases accessible for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Post-Primary Teachers

87 post-primary teachers developed their skills in global citizenship education at our training sessions.

New Community Garden

We opened 1 new community garden in Dublin, providing the community in the greater Blanchardstown area with access to a safe, inclusive and accessible urban community garden where people can meet and work together.



Media References

Our work was referenced 62 times in national and local broadcast and print media.

9,800 Social Media Followers  **11%**

Our social media audience grew to 9,800, an increase of 11% compared to last year.

Climate Competitions

We organised 6 different climate competitions, involving 96 companies and 68 community groups all over Ireland.

Climate Heroes Challenge

The 525 people from 68 community groups taking part in the first ever Climate Heroes challenge together saved some 36,800 kg of CO₂e emissions over a 2-week period.

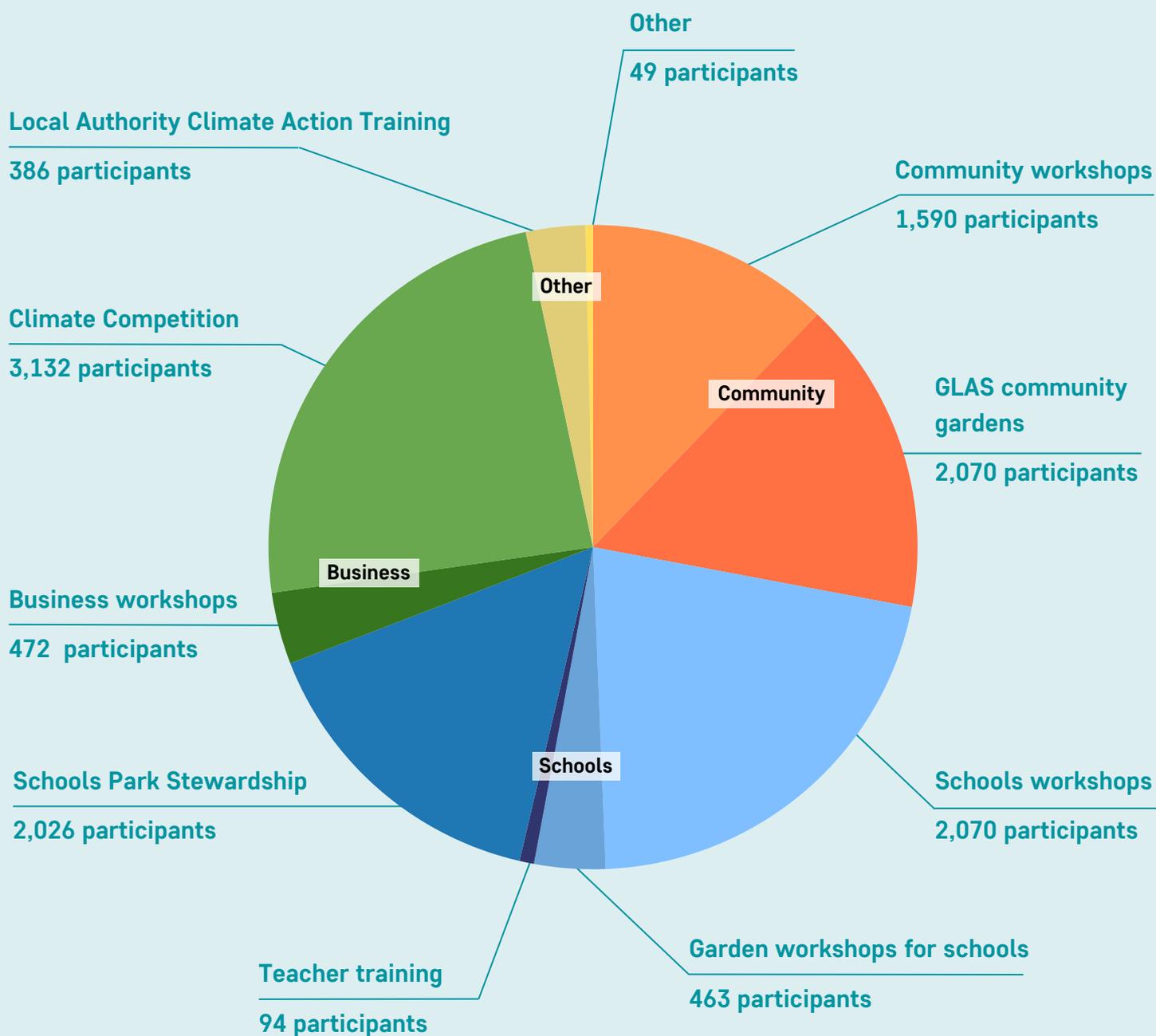
Funds Industry Climate Challenge

The 2,300 people who took part in the first ever Funds Industry Climate Challenge saved on average 6.3 kg of CO₂ per day; they reduced their carbon footprint by 19% compared to the Irish average, by making small changes in their everyday lifestyle decisions.

Growing Staff Team

Our staff team grew, with the addition of extra education officers, to deliver our growing programme of activities.

Breakdown of Programmes



Total number of participants: 13,081



Our New Strategic Plan

Following a lengthy and thorough participatory review, GAP adopted a new strategic plan in March 2023.

The new strategy builds on our successes to date, and opens routes for significant scaling up of the organisation's work, in all 3 programme areas (community groups, schools and businesses). The new strategy is also more specific about our approach and our indicators for success.

Guided by our new strategy, in 2023 we:

- Significantly increased our geographic reach, delivering more events in more counties and communities. We built partnerships with local authorities and have applied for funding specifically aimed at assisting us in scaling up our activities in two priority regions: Monaghan and Clare/Limerick.
- We built new partnerships with community groups and NGOs and companies. A Creative Ireland funded project in Ballymun will also blaze a trail by using art as a means to engage and consult communities.
- As a new departure for our organisation, we published a number of research papers and policy submissions on local and national issues. IEN support in this regard has been gratefully received.
- Our media coverage and social media reach continues to grow, meaning that more people have access to information about our work and our specific behaviour change approach.
- In line with our own guiding principles and best practice guidelines, our Board continues to assess its own performance and attract new members.
- A number of companies have been providing pro bono services to us, helping us further strengthen our financial administration systems and our public communications. Having attracted some significant corporate support, we now have more multi-annual funding arrangements, allowing us to plan for the longer term, and invest in programme quality measures such as staff training.



Community Action for a Better World

In 2023 we expanded our work with community groups and local authorities across Ireland, helping participants to understand local challenges through a global perspective.

We expanded our GLAS local programme to West Dublin, and delivered 315 events and workshops for community groups.

During the year, we delivered Community Climate Action training programmes in rural areas of Co. Dublin (Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown), and led workshops for community groups in the 4 Dublin Local Authorities. In addition, we hosted the first ever nationwide Climate Heroes community climate challenge, which saw 525 people from 68 community groups taking part.





Social Inclusion and Environmental Education

Global Action Plan has been engaged in a social regeneration initiative in Ballymun for over 2 decades now, boosting community involvement and environmental awareness.

For many of those years, our Ballymun programme has centred on the GLAS community garden, where people can come to reconnect with nature and with each other. The garden has provided a safe, inclusive and accessible space for community members to gather and collaborate, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or skill levels, and to experience 'Green Living' principles and practices.

It is this emphasis on social inclusion and environmental education that makes GAP's work unique, and it is a considerable source of pride for us that we have been able, with support from Fingal County Council and TU Dublin, to replicate the programme in the Blanchardstown area of West Dublin.





GLAS Community Gardens

GAP's mission is to support communities, businesses and schools, to break down barriers, and showcase the collective impact of small changes.

Our innovative approach is based on our expertise in behaviour change and empowerment. What this means is that we build our work around GLAS community programmes. These programmes combine outdoor social inclusion and education activities with outreach in underserved communities.

The GLAS community programme creates opportunities for under-served communities to reconnect with nature and grow food in an inclusive, climate-positive way.

In the GLAS gardens, we “grow communities, nurture nature and harvest hope.” We strengthen community ties, encouraging empathy and collaboration among the many different people and groups that make up our society.



During 2023, we hosted 114 in-garden sessions in the GLAS garden in Ballymun, involving 1,614 engagements.

What people say about our GLAS gardens:

“GLAS Community Garden is a beautiful garden where you can learn how to plant crops and harvest as well. Neat and structured garden for planting. People from different cultures and countries come there to learn about planting. Kudos to Ms Sharon; what a kindhearted woman, who accommodates people from different cultures and diversities and teaches them all about planting.”

- Boladale Vera Jaiyeola

“We have both enjoyed our time there. What has really made it special has been Lee and his wonderful ability to make every volunteer feel so welcome and wanted. Lee is the reason we will come back to the garden.... He made us feel part of things, explained and educated us on each visit and is full of positivity. He listens to everyone and embraces suggestions.”

- Caitriona O’Sullivan .

“In our research we found that spending time in the GLAS community garden is hugely important to many people. Some come to learn about growing their own food and others come to the community garden for company, or just to de-stress... Despite their different reasons for coming to the garden, the people we interviewed all agreed that access to the garden is vital for their community.”

- Francis McGeough, lecturer in Accounting and Finance at TU Dublin, and co-author of a study on the impact of the GLAS Ballymun garden

“Our evaluation aimed to determine the impact that the GLAS garden is having on the people that visit there, and to learn lessons from its model, in the hope that the model can be replicated in other urban communities. Our findings are in line with a wealth of academic literature that shows how community gardens are not only important for the biodiversity they promote and for the food that they cultivate, but that access to such urban oases is hugely important to people for reasons to do with social inclusion, environmental awareness and mental health.”

- Rachel Freeman, lecturer in Horticulture at TU Dublin, and co-author of a study on the impact of the GLAS Ballymun garden



GAP welcomed service users from St. Michael’s House, the Central Remedial Clinic, Rosewood House as well as individual volunteers and people that are part of our longstanding partnerships with schools and organisations such as Young Ballymun. We also welcomed large numbers of volunteers from nearby direct provision centres at Crowne Plaza, Santry and Travelodge, Ballymun, among others.

Using the experience of our social inclusion and environmental education programme in Ballymun, GAP’s second locality based programme opened formally in May 2023. The project, a partnership with Fingal County Council and TU Dublin, resulted in the creation of a new GLAS community garden and outreach programme in Dublin 15. The GLAS @ TU Dublin community garden received more than 300 visits in 2023.





In 2023, GAP earned a number of awards:

- The GLAS community garden in Ballymun was awarded Best Community Garden at the Ballymun Tidy Town Competition 2023 awards ceremony in September 2023.
- The GLAS garden also won Third Place in the Best Community Garden category at the Dublin County Council North West Area City Neighbourhood awards, and was shortlisted for an award in the “Social Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion” category at the All Ireland Sustainability Awards 2023.
- The Funds Industry Climate Challenge initiative facilitated by GAP won Silver at the All Ireland Sustainability Awards 2023, in the category “Stakeholder Initiative of the Year.”
- GAP’s CEO was awarded ‘CEO of the Year – Environmental Services’ by CEO Magazine.





Nature Explorer Programme

In 2023, we continued our Nature Explorer programme, which is being run in partnership with Young Ballymun. This initiative provides families with a safe space to experience nature together through planting, growing, crafting, and play.

Many participating families have limited access to safe outdoor green spaces. Since its inception in 2020, the programme has facilitated nearly 700 nature engagements in the GLAS community garden. Through the Nature Explorer Programme, we offer a sensory-rich environment for children and parents to safely and intuitively explore the natural world, helping them develop confidence and trust in their surroundings.



During 2023, we organised 10 “Nature Explorer” events, in partnership with Young Ballymun, involving 157 parents and children.



Action for Community Transformation (ACT)

Through ACT, our adult education programme, we supported members of community groups all over Ireland to develop awareness of global issues and develop plans for taking effective local action. ACT is supported by Irish Aid's global citizenship education (GCE) funding, in the belief that adults should be better equipped with the knowledge, values, and skills to take climate action for justice.

In 2023, we worked with learners from the following organisations and groups:

- Dublin South City Partnership
- Ballymun Fairtrade Committee
- Dingle Hub 2030
- Prosper Fingal (Balbriggan, Swords, Portmarnock)
- Clare Climate Conversations
- Shannon Tidy Towns
- Hill Street Family Resource Centre

We also held workshops for community groups in our two community gardens in the Dublin area on health and wellbeing, which were attended by a diverse range of community members.

Through our innovative and nationwide Climate Heroes competition, we engaged 68 community groups in 2023, and 59 groups in 17 different counties in 2024. Members of community groups logged daily climate-friendly actions to the Ducky App, which calculated the reduction in their carbon footprint. Together, they saved 36,800 kg of CO₂e emissions over a 2 week period. Accompanying webinars on climate justice and system change offered participants a chance to discuss the big picture.

In 2023, 240 people attended training through the ACT project, leading to an average 7.23% increase in their capacities to respond to climate change as global citizens.



What people say about our ACT programme:

"I really enjoyed learning more about values and the role they play in our behaviour and responses. I loved the fact that we had plenty of time to discuss and share our experiences, feelings and insights."

"The group was engaged for the full two hours. The games, everything was amazing. The workshop was kept fun and also very engaging and the group learned so much about biodiversity from it."

"Interesting people with varied backgrounds that can contribute to an informed discussion about various topics. Well informed participants and a well managed workshop."

In 2023, GAP's activities recorded more than 13,000 engagements - an increase of 119% in the number of people taking part in our programmes, compared to 2022.

- **Of the 587 events facilitated and hosted by GAP in the past year 216 engaged with teachers and students in schools, with a further 315 events focusing on adult learners and community organisations.**
- **GAP's two community gardens hosted more than 200 sessions and its climate competitions involved 96 companies and 68 community groups all over Ireland.**



During 2023 we delivered more school workshops than in many of the previous years. Thanks to our partnerships with a number of Local Authorities, we have been able to provide workshops free of charge to schools in Dublin, Fingal, Meath, Monaghan, Cork, Clare, Kilkenny and Laois.

Our action-focused schools programme is aimed at primary and secondary school students and introduces them to issues of climate change, energy, waste, water, and biodiversity in an age appropriate, positive, and relevant way.

During 2023, we provided 216 biodiversity, water, waste and climate workshops in schools, reaching 2,799 students and teachers.

Our interactive workshops encourage students and teachers to come to a deeper understanding of the root causes of the environmental challenges we all face and to critically engage with issues in order to find ways of taking action at a local level. Our approach aims to enhance personal development in critical thinking, communication and leadership.

In 2023, we delivered workshops in Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny, Laois, Meath and Monaghan.

During 2023, we provided 216 biodiversity, water, waste and climate workshops in schools, reaching 5,288 learners.

This means that GAP more than doubled the number of events delivered in schools, compared to last year.

In addition, 94 post-primary teachers developed their skills in global citizenship education, by attending our training sessions.

Sonas Nature Connection and Care

(Park and Biodiversity Stewardship programmes)

In 2023, 411 students from 11 different schools across Dublin took part in our outdoor nature connection and care programmes.

Total number of hours learning in nature for 2023: 4,732

Funded by Dublin City Council, the “Park Stewardship” programme has been running in Ballymun since 2011. This year we brought the programme to other parts of Dublin under the name “Biodiversity Stewardship” with funding from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and DCC Biodiversity. Going forward both programmes will operate under the name Sonas Nature Connection and Care.

The 8-week programmes support young people to develop a strong connection to nature in their local area. It has a positive benefit for biodiversity by actively facilitating young people in developing a strong connections to nature in their local area, and inspiring appreciation and long-term protection of local biodiversity. Activities are child-centred and play-based and include identification of trees, insects, birds and mammals, as well as planting trees and doing litter picks. The programme also supports participants to develop lasting relationships between various community stakeholders.





What people say about our Biodiversity Stewardship programme:

“I have been teaching for 38 years now and I cannot say enough about this programme, not only in terms of its relevance to the world in which we live in but also its exceptional educational value within the curriculum that we teach.

Each week, the girls have learned about different aspects of nature in both our locality and our country. The girls were completely engaged in the learning process even when it rained. To say that they have had a blast would be an understatement!”

-Deirdre Delany, Class Teacher, St. Brigid's GNS, Killester,

“I liked that we learned about hoverflies and I learned that worms help the soil and different flowers are in the same family.”

- 3rd class student, St. Benedict's

“I liked picking up rubbish because I knew it was a good thing. I loved learning about the hoverflies because they could land on you and they're very interesting.”

- 3rd class student, St. Benedict's

“They made me feel happy and amazed. They made me feel a part of nature.”

- 4th class student, St. Brigid's

“I am going to try to keep the gardens and nature healthy and definitely not disrespect it 'cause it would make such a difference if everyone done the same.”

- 5th class student, Cabra



Action on Global Citizenship

Action on Global Citizenship builds the capacity of Irish secondary school teachers to engage with the climate emergency. This project aims to better equip teachers with resources, knowledge, skills, and methodologies to explore how climate change interacts with inequality, poverty, development and consumption, and to support student-led whole-school action. Action on Global Citizenship is funded by Worldwide Global Schools.

In 2023, GAP programme staff developed and delivered:

- A 4-week teacher training webinar series on global citizenship education for climate action in schools;
- 90-minute webinars on the topics of greenwashing, degrowth and climate action;
- Lesson plans to support teachers to teach the topics of greenwashing, climate and migration and fast fashion;
- Video lessons on climate activism and critical media literacy.

We again partnered with the Irish Schools Sustainability Network for their annual Irish Climate and Nature Summit. As a result, our video lessons were shown in 175 classrooms across the country, reaching an estimated 3500 students.

- **In 2023, we trained a total of 94 teachers through this programme.**
- **Our Teacher Factsheets were downloaded a total of 1,213 times, and our toolkits and lesson plans were downloaded 1,298 times.**
- **We also host a GCE Support Group on Facebook that shares resources and networking opportunities with 316 teachers (up from 281 in 2022).**



Local Authorities

Local authorities play a pivotal role in environmental sustainability.

The climate and biodiversity crises require changes at all levels of society, and the environmental solutions we need require policy change at global, national and local level. Local authorities can promote local responses to global problems, which is why GAP is interested in working with them.

During the year, we established stronger partnerships with a number of local authorities across Ireland. These partnerships culminated in new programmes, such as our training of local authority staff in 7 County Council areas, our Community Climate Action Training programme in the greater Dublin area, our 29 workshops for community groups in rural Dublin, and a major expansion of our Schools programme in Counties Fingal, Meath, Monaghan, Cork, Clare, Kilkenny and Laois.

In addition, GAP initiated a ground-breaking community climate programme in the Ballymun area, using art as a tool to consult and mobilise members of the community.





Working with Business

At Global Action Plan, our work is about helping people make informed decisions that will reduce their impact on the natural environment on which we all depend. We believe that, to respond to the climate crisis, people must be empowered to participate in collective action in their communities, be they at home, in schools or at work. Through connection, communication and collaboration, we help people develop more sustainable places and lifestyles.

- During 2023, we organised 7 different climate competitions, involving 96 companies and 68 community groups all over Ireland.
- The 2,300 people who took part in the first ever Funds Industry Climate Challenge saved an average of 6.3 kg of CO2 emissions per day; they reduced their carbon footprint by 19% compared to the Irish average, by making small changes in their everyday lifestyle decisions.
- Teams from 13 different companies spent time volunteering in our community gardens, keeping these urban oases accessible for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.





We work with businesses all over Ireland, as many companies have realised that there are long-term and short-term benefits with being a leader in the area of environmental sustainability. As businesses develop their sustainability strategies, GAP supports them on their journey, by providing services to empower and engage employees in the complex issues.

During 2023, our Business programme grew significantly, as our employee engagement work with its unique menu of offerings and our focus on underserved urban communities gained recognition. We connect businesses with the needs of the communities we support:





Our Theory of Change

We are convinced that the biodiversity and environmental crises are endangering life on our planet, and rapidly getting worse. To reverse the damage, and build a society that is more sustainable, both socially, economically and ecologically, we need to promote large-scale change in richer countries, who are responsible for the vast majority of the unsustainable practices that are causing the crises. We need a radical change to human consumption patterns across the globe to avoid irreversible destruction of life on our planet.

To address this, we will:





Using Our Voice

As an organisation focused on behaviour change, GAP has an approach and area of expertise. And our work combining environmental education with social inclusion means that we have access to firsthand information about people's lived experiences, in different communities and circumstances.

As an organisation, we aim to use that experience to amplify the voices of the people and organisations we work with, and use our programme insights to contribute to the public debate about policies and practices that impact on the potential for positive environmental behaviour change.

In the past year, we have invested time and energy to strengthen our ability to collect and collate the stories of the people that take part in our programmes, and to communicate our experiences clearly and effectively. As a result, our public profile continued to grow compared to recent years, as we improved our ability to illustrate our work using photos and videos, and we enabled more of our programme participants to tell their stories.



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- During 2023, our work was referenced 64 times in national and local broadcast and print media - an increase of 33% compared to 2022.
 - Our social media audience also grew to 9,800, an increase of 11% compared to last year, while our online videos were watched 22,403 times (an increase of 69% compared to 2022, and an increase of 705% on 2021).
 - The number of people subscribed to our newsletter increased by 49% in 2023.
 - Our website pages were viewed 129,000 times - an increase of 117% compared to the previous year.

During 2023, we published a number of research papers, to document current academic insights into our area of work and support the further development of our programmes: In June, we published a paper on Disability and Climate Change and in July, we published a briefing paper on the links between mental health and access to nature.

Translating our experience of working with communities, we provided input into the public consultation processes of the Climate Action Plans of local authorities and made submissions on the development of the curriculum in the formal education sector.



Memberships

All our programmes are delivered in partnership with other organisations. We believe lasting and meaningful impact requires the building of partnerships in which different perspectives and areas of expertise are brought together for a common goal.

We are proud to be part of a range of coalitions and membership organisations, including:



GLOBAL ACTION PLAN INTERNATIONAL



Just Transition Alliance



Stronger Charities. Stronger Communities.



Organisational Finances

GAP worked with Whiteside Cullinan, Registered Auditors and Chartered Accountants, to prepare our 2023 Financial Statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and in compliance with the Charity SORP (Standard of Reporting Practice under FRS102).

Our total income for 2023 amounted to € 603,789, an increase of 22% on our income in 2022. Our expenditure during the year totalled € 583,598, of which 84% was spent on direct charitable costs and the remaining 16% on programme support costs.

Income 2023: €603,789

Expenditure 2023: €583,598

Total Income By Year (€)



Full financial statements for 2023 can be found on our website, along with copies of our Financial Statements for other recent years, under About / Governance & Compliance.



Governance and Compliance

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sets our goal of being “an effective and accountable organisation with good governance, nationwide reach and sustainable business model”.

To deliver on this goal, during 2023 Global Action Plan’s Board of Directors reviewed its own performance and appointed a new Board member, replacing one long-standing member who retired from the Board. The Board also reviewed and updated a number of organisational policies.

Average Board attendance stood at 82% in 2023, which is very high. Attendance rates have been consistently high, with an average attendance of 83% over the last 4 years.

Global Action Plan Board of Directors

Caoimhe Donnelly	Chairperson
Olaf Schmidt	Company Secretary (retired June 2023)
Niall O’Leary	Company Secretary
Aoife Connaughton	
Aisling McCaffrey	
Amine El Alami	
Frances Neary	(appointed October 2023)
Jack Lee	
Jana Platau-Wagner	



GAP is committed to a culture of efficiency, transparency and good governance: we strive to meet best standards driven by the principles of integrity, transparency, openness and accountability.

GAP Ireland is registered and complies with the requirements of:

- Revenue Commissioners, with the charity number CHY15448
- The Charities Regulator, under the number 20053338
- Companies Registration Office, with registered company number 3346806

We adhere to the relevant legislations and standards of good practice, such as:

- Charities Act 2009;
- Charities Regulatory Authority Internal Financial Controls Guidelines for Charities;
- Data Protection Act 1988, Amendment 2003, General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679;
- Guidelines for Charitable Organisation on Fundraising from the Public.

GAP remains committed to the Principles of the Governance Code and has been fully compliant since 2016. GAP and its Board continued working towards its full compliance throughout 2023.

We also remain signatories of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages, which provides a best practice framework for organisations for the public communications of global justice organisations. These guidelines promote dignity, equality, fairness, solidarity, and justice for everyone.

GAP has also signed up to the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education. This code encourages reflective assessment of DevEd delivery so we can ensure we will work towards the continuous improvement and quality of DevEd delivery and to critically evaluate and monitor if we are contributing to the sector meaningfully.



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