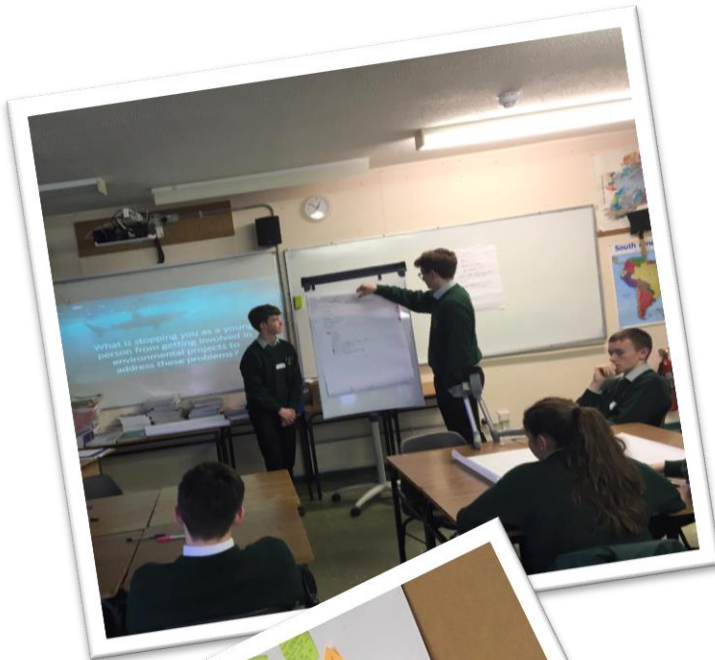


Youth Consultation Report

Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group

2017



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1. Introduction

The Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group conducted a series of Youth Consultations throughout Inishowen with young people aged 14 – 17 in November 2017. The purpose of these consultations was as follows:

- To engage young people in the work of the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group.
- To gain young people's thoughts, opinions, ideas, views and feedback on a proposed 'Inishowen Coastal Explorers' Training Programme.
- To identify and prioritise issues important to young people.
- To explore young people's interests and current perceptions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Overview

The Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group adopted the following methodology in delivering this consultation:

- Familiarising young people with Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group aims, objectives and projects.
- Baseline questionnaire
- Youth Consultation using participatory approach. Round table group discussions, brainstorming, feedback to flipchart, sticky note wall, interactive games.
- Analysis and presentation of results.

We engaged 4 secondary schools in Inishowen (Moville Community School, Carndonagh Community College, Scoil Mhuire Buncrana and Crana College) and consulted with a total of 93 young people aged between 14 – 17 (2nd year up to transition year).

2.1 Layout

The following brief was provided to young people before the consultation and a presentation was given by the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group on the day of consultation to familiarise young people with the work of the group. Full layout of the consultation is included below.

Pre-Consultation Advice

This consultation workshop is in the context of a newly proposed training programme by the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group.

The group are responsible for basking shark research; studying shark populations around the coast of Inishowen largely through tagging and tracking, sightings records and genetic sampling.

The group are dedicated to raising the awareness of the importance of sharks and the protection of local marine biodiversity. This requires education and engagement with a range of people including schools, youth groups, local community members, teachers and educators, researchers, fishermen and others in the maritime industry.

Environmental knowledge and skills are key to building a community that is more aware of the world around us and can develop solutions to environmental change. That is where you come in!

We want to work with young people in Inishowen to find out what sort of knowledge, skills and training you need to become real life Coastal Explorers! What are the topics you are most interested in and are there environmental problems you would like to know more about and even help to solve?

What we would like

- Your opinions, ideas, experience, willingness.
- Respect for each other's views and willingness to listen and let each other have turn to speak.

What you can expect

- Respect for you, your ideas, opinions, experiences.
- There are no right or wrong answers! It isn't a test – we want you to have fun!
- Feedback – we will create a report from all your feedback which will help us shape the programme and our next steps

CONSULTATION WORKSHOP LAYOUT

Introduction and Icebreakers	10 minutes
Talk from Inishowen Basking Shark Group – brief overview of research and engagement projects	10 minutes Projector and video
Reflection exercise (alone) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short questionnaire 	5 minutes

Group work Session 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you currently learn about your local environment and marine life? - What could be done better? Think about some of the ways you would like to learn about local marine life. 	15 minutes A3 Flipcharts
Break	5 minutes
Energiser	10 minutes
Group Work Session 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are some of the problems and issues that impact on the marine environment. - What is stopping you as a young person from getting involved in environmental projects to address these problems? 	15 minutes
Closing Statement and Request Wall of Wonder – sticky notes If you could design a programme for young people themed around the marine environment what would you include?	5 minutes

2.2 Collection of Responses

Responses from young people were collected in a variety of formats which are described below.

A) *Baseline survey questionnaire*

Full copy of the questionnaire is attached in appendix 1. Questions were designed to gather formative baseline information on how young people described their current level of knowledge about their local environment and marine life, and opportunities and careers in the marine sector. Questions were also designed to gather information on whether young people currently take part in or have knowledge of training programmes/schemes themed around the environment and whether they thought learning about the environment and local marine life is important.



Figure 1. Young people from Crana College in the Exchange in Buncrana answering the questionnaire

B) Round table discussion and A3 flip chart answers to dedicated questions

Participants were split into groups and were given time to discuss four questions which follow below. Answers were given on flipchart paper and groups came to the front to discuss and explain their answers and rationale.

Q1. How do you currently learn about your local environment and marine life?

Q2. What could be done better? Think about some of the ways you would like to learn about local marine life.

Q3. What are some of the problems and issues that impact on the marine environment.

Q4. What is stopping you as a young person from getting involved in environmental projects to address these problems?

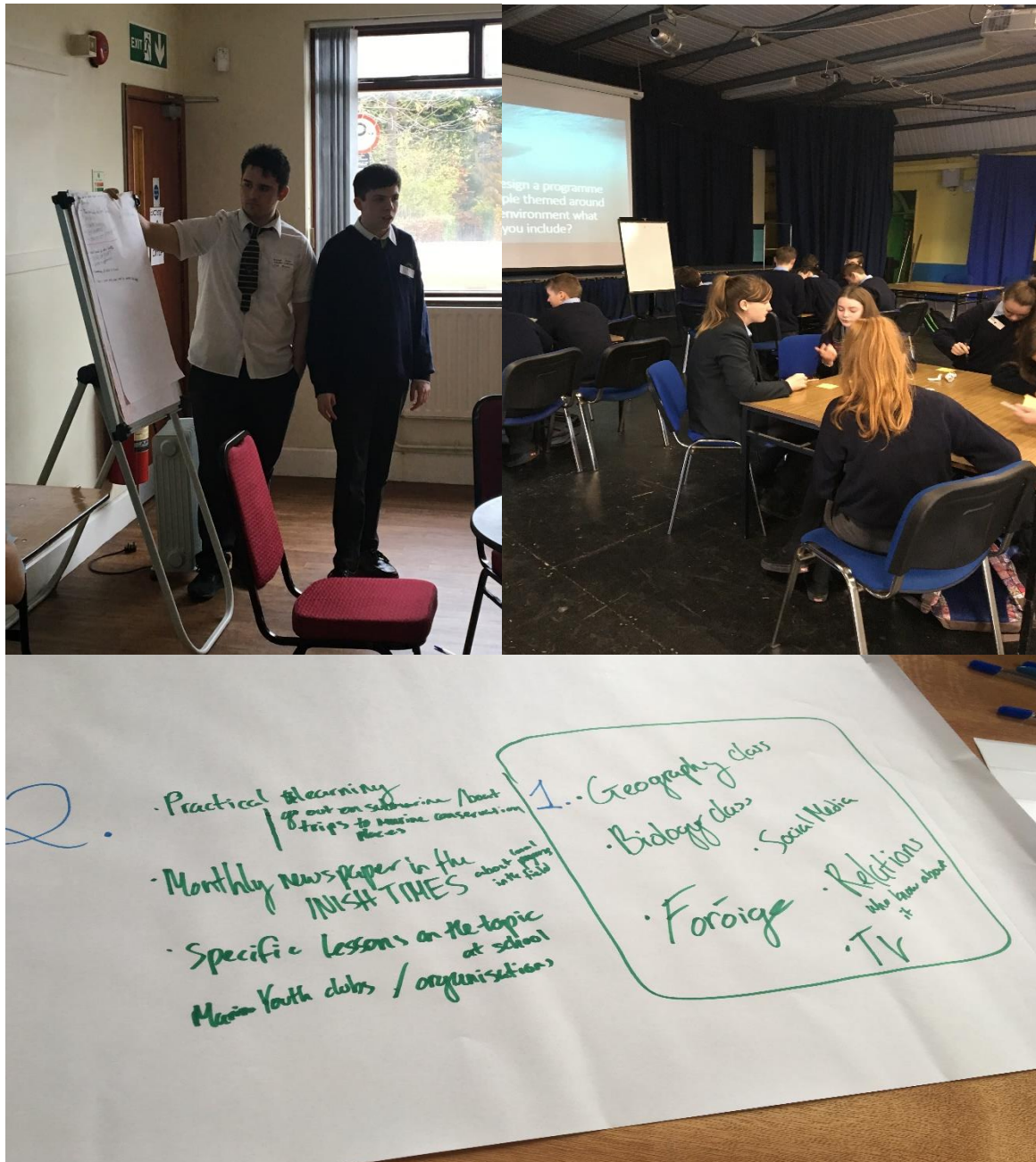


Figure 2. Group Discussions and A3 Brain Storming and Flipchart Feedback

C) Post it note wall with ideas

To end the consultation young people were asked to put responses to the following question on sticky notes and add stick them to a flipchart.

Q5. If you could design a programme for young people themed around the marine environment what would you include?

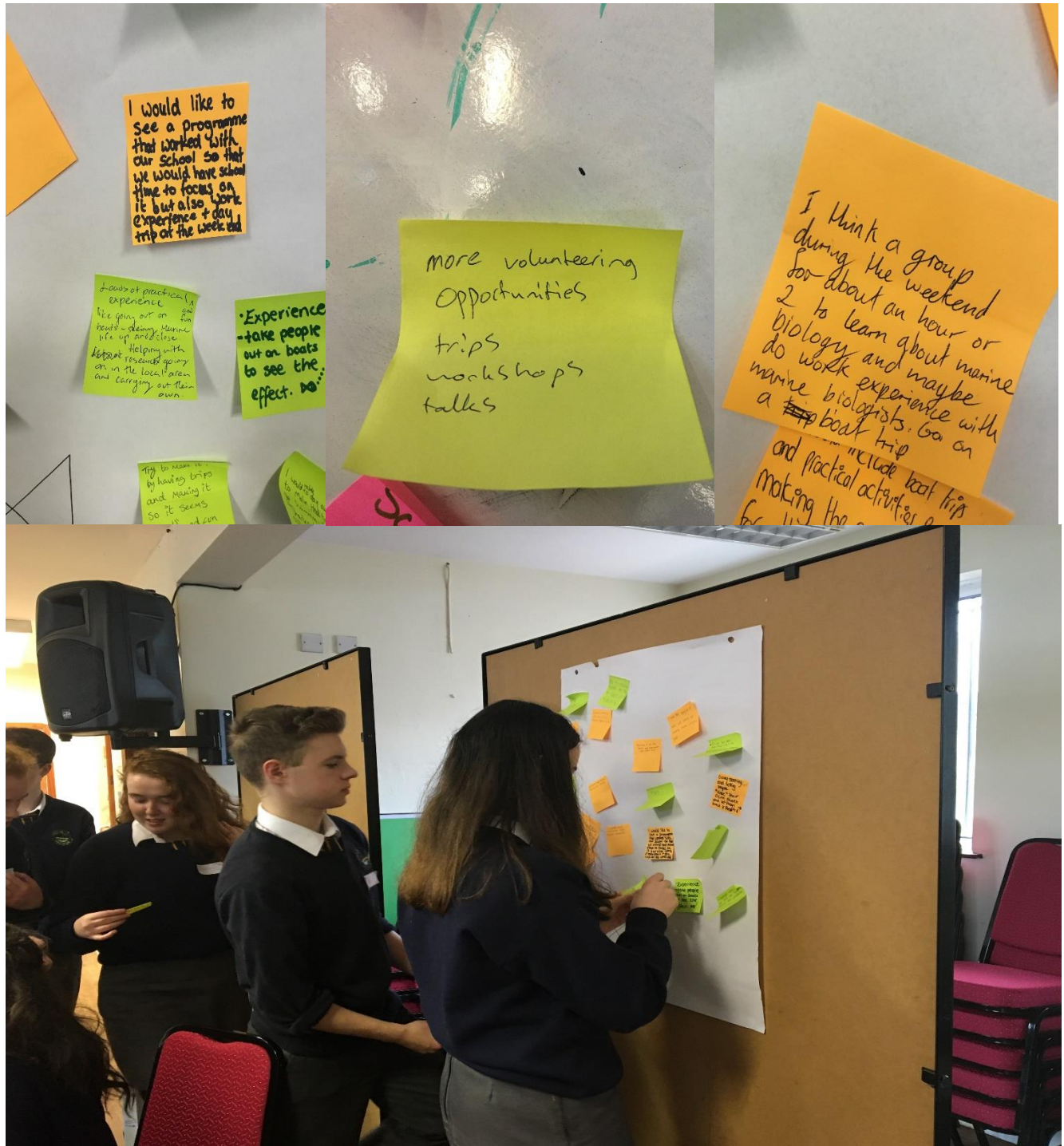


Figure 3. Participants putting their ideas on the “Wall of Wonder” with sticky notes

3. Responses

3.1 Questionnaire Responses

Question 1 and 2 on the questionnaire were designed to determine young people's existing knowledge about the local marine environment and the marine sector. Responses to both questions were similar, with young people saying that they knew 'nothing' or 'a little' in 84% of responses to question 1 and 86% of question 2.



Figure 4. Responses to question 1 on baseline questionnaire from 93 young people.

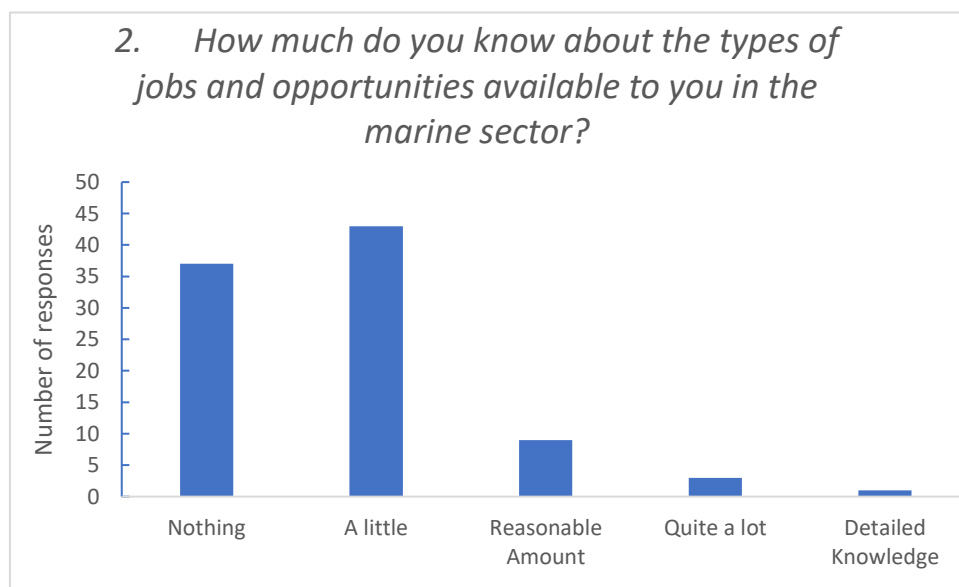


Figure 5. Responses to question 2 on baseline questionnaire from 93 young people.

Questions 3 and 4 on the questionnaire were designed to gather information on whether young people currently take part in or have knowledge of opportunities to get involved in training programmes/schemes themed around the environment, science and/or conservation (outside of school). In response to question 3. 'Have you ever taken part in any activities for young people (outside school) themed around Science, the Environment or Conservation?' 89% of young people said no. Yes answers indicated a range of different activities including references to 'beach clean', 'local events' (red squirrel, science fair, seaweed investigation) and volunteering.

In response to question 4 'Do you feel there are opportunities for young people in your area to learn about the local environment (outside of school)?' the most common answer (57% of responses) was 'I am not sure' indicating that young people felt uninformed about the potential opportunities available in the area.

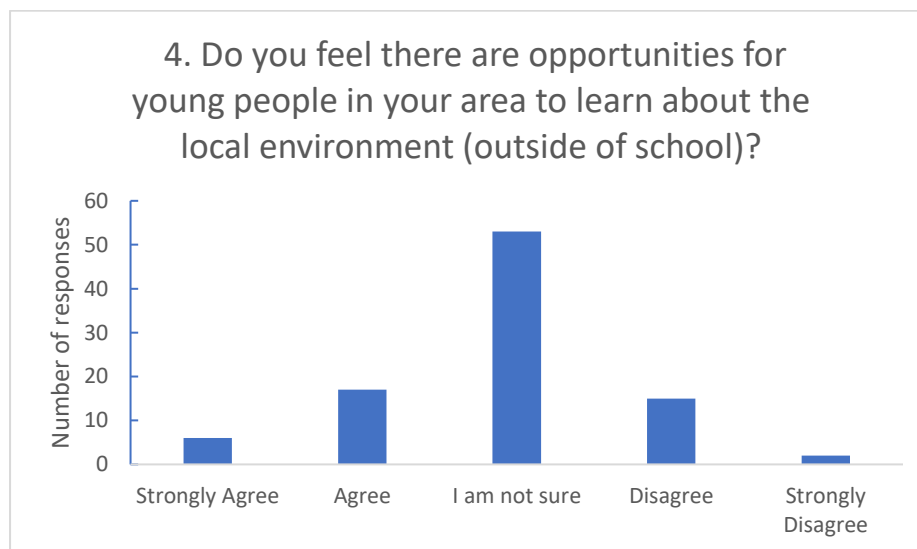


Figure 6. Responses to question 4 on baseline questionnaire from 93 young people.

Question 5 and 6 were designed to ascertain whether young people felt that learning about the local environment was important and what would be most useful to them when learning about it. 58 young people agreed and 29 strongly agreed (see figure 7 below) that learning about the environment was important (94% overall).

Figure 8 below shows the responses to question 6 which was a multiple-choice answer. From 93 participants there were 334 responses indicating an average of 3 answers ticked per participant. The 3 most commonly selected answers were B, F and C which are as follows:

- B) More practical opportunities to experience the marine environment
- F) More marine/environmental content in school
- C) Practical skills training so that I can gain skills that are useful in that sector

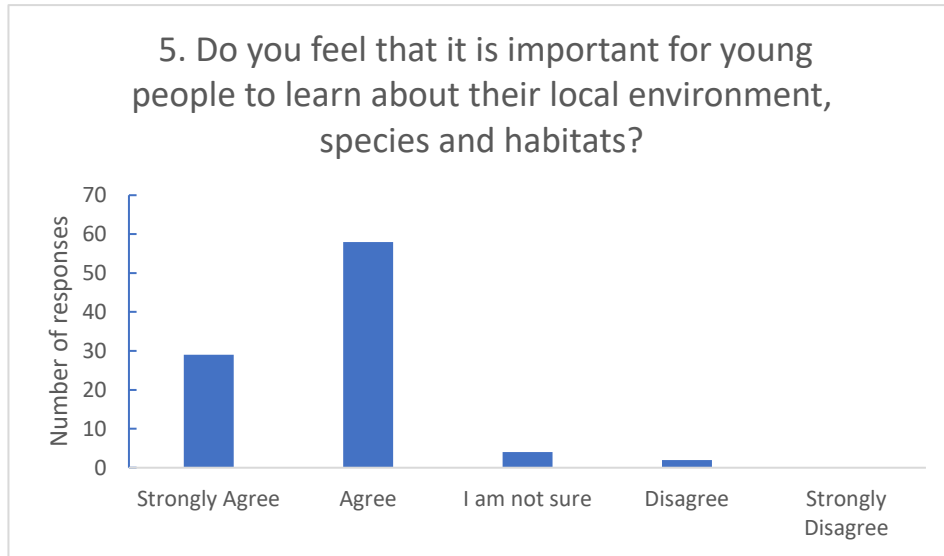


Figure 7. Responses to question 5 on baseline questionnaire from 93 young people.

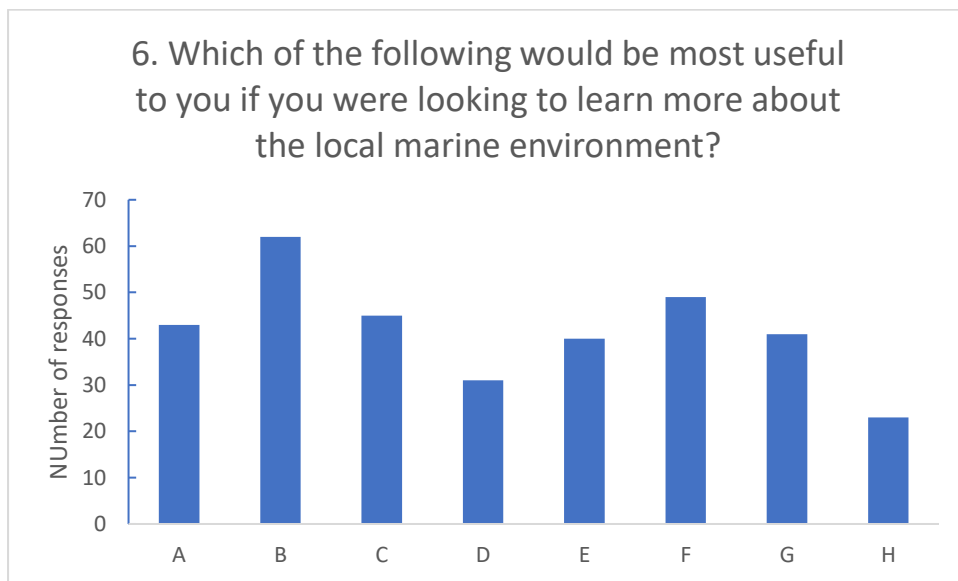


Figure 8. Responses to question 6 on baseline questionnaire from 93 young people.

- A) Lots of advice from people working in marine/environmental jobs
- B) More practical opportunities to experience the marine environment
- C) Practical skills training so that I can gain skills that are useful in that sector
- D) Opportunities where I can meet with other young people with similar interests
- E) Opportunities where I can meet local people and experts in the industry
- F) More marine/environmental content in school
- G) Placement opportunities/job shadowing so I can see what is involved
- H) Volunteering opportunities to gain experience

3.2 Group Discussion/Flipchart Session Responses

Below are the answers from the group discussions. All the answers from the A3 sheets have been compiled and summarised. In addition, we have considered observations, comments and interactions with young people during the session.

Question 1. How do you currently learn about your local environment and marine life?

“We don’t really”

Referring to school many of the groups (across the 4 different schools) talked about how they didn’t learn enough about the local environment in school, including local marine life. Several groups discussed how in Geography class there is a discussion about global fisheries, but this isn’t necessarily put into a local context. Another group discussed how in school they learn about deserts and rainforests but not their own local marine life.

“Online”

Google searches and Facebook/social media were mentioned frequently but the sources were unclear. Students seem to be referring to passive learning via these methods using phrases like ‘whilst scrolling’, ‘when someone shares’, ‘accidentally see something’ instead of active searching.

“TV/Documentaries”

TV programmes were mentioned and included David Attenborough, Bear Grylls, Deadliest Catch, River Monsters and Black Fish. Participants remarked that they rarely see the local environment featured.

“Family Members”

Family members and local people (word of mouth). Many groups discussed how they had a knowledgeable family member or someone linked to the marine/fisheries industry e.g. ‘My father talks to me about his role in the RNLI’. Several young people from each school group identified that they had a family member in the fishing industry (pelagic and aquaculture).

“Local Museums/Agencies”

Local museums/agencies e.g. Loughs Agency, Maritime Museum and Dunree Fort were mentioned.

“School Trips/Talks “

School talks and trips were less frequently mentioned and young people identified that school trips were not usually specifically to do with the local environment/marine life. E.g. surfing trip.

"Notice/interpretation boards "

Notice/interpretation boards at key maritime landmarks/headlands/piers.

"Personal experience"

"I live in a seaside town".

Question 2. What could be done better? Think about some of the ways you would like to learn about local marine life.

"Boat trips and practical experience"

Boat trips and practical experience were mentioned most frequently with participants expressing enthusiasm for opportunities to go out on a boat and "see sharks", "see a basking shark being tagged and tracked", "see wildlife", "meet fishermen", "go fishing/learn how to fish", "see the environment in real life", "actively take part in research".

"Interactions with wildlife"

Participants frequently mentioned wildlife including sharks, dolphins and fish and used words such as "swim with", "see", "look for", "work with". Several groups discussed wanting to have the opportunity to "put a tag on a shark" and "track a tagged shark".

"Tours and Trips"

Most of the groups thought that tours and trips either through school or together with other young people would be a good way to learn. Young people mentioned trips to "aquariums", "local museum",

"Young people working together locally"

Several groups expressed an interest in "regular meet ups for young people", "opportunities to meet other young people", "regular local activities", "marine groups".

"Meeting local experts, shadowing/volunteering"

Several groups discussed how they would like the opportunity to "meet local experts", "hear real life stories" and have the opportunity to complete "work shadowing" and "volunteering" in the marine sector.

"Underwater"

Participants expressed interest in the underwater world often referring to "diving", "submarine" and "underwater videos/pictures".

fishing industry expressed concern at over exploitation of the resource as well as an inability to modernise using terms such as “not enough time given for stocks to recover”, “competing with bigger boats”, “overfishing” and “poor equipment”.

Other common answers included “global food shortages”, “over utilisation of animals/fish for medicine, sport and food”, “illegal poaching”, “fisheries discards”, “microplastics”. Several groups discussed how there is a lack of understanding/awareness of the impacts on the marine environment, and young people identified a “lack of passion/interest locally”.

Question 4. What is stopping you as a young person from getting involved in environmental projects to address these problems?

All the answers to question 4 were compiled and put into categories. The table below shows that the most common responses indicated a lack of knowledge/understanding/training and support. The second most common response was to do with safety along the coast and parental consent.

No of responses	Indicative Category
18	Lack of knowledge/understanding/training and support
9	Safety/Parental Consent
8	Young people’s opinions do not matter
7	No Interest, not our problem, no-one cares
5	No Groups/Opportunities for young people
5	No Time/Other Commitments/Pressures
4	Not seen as cool/peer pressure
3	Transport
2	PlayStation/Xbox/Social Media
1	Confidence

Table 1. Number of responses to question 4 and their indicative category

We have summarised and explained the top 5 most common responses under the indicative categories below.

Lack of knowledge/understanding/training and support

Participants gave a range of responses that can be categorised under a ‘lack of knowledge, awareness and training/support’ needed to undertake environmental projects. They said they felt “uninformed” and were unaware of opportunities for young people to get involved. They also said, “we don’t know where to start”, “we don’t have the training”, or “equipment”.

Safety/Parental Consent

One of the most common answers was a lack of confidence in young people and a perception of danger associated with working along the coast. They frequently mentioned

parents/guardians and the fact that they might not be “allowed” or had to get permission. They also used words such as “fear of water”, “danger”, “diseases”, “safety”.

Young people’s opinions do not matter

Many of the young people taking part in the consultation were unfamiliar with the process and had never taken part in a youth consultation before, and additionally had rarely experienced programmes in a “youth setting”. In their answers to question 4 participants used negative language to discuss the fact that they don’t feel included in decision making locally and do not have a voice e.g. “no-one would listen to us”, “who would listen to a young person”, “no-one trusts us”, “no-one cares what we think”, “it’s a losing battle”, “we tried something before and it didn’t work”.

No interest, not our problem, no-one cares

Participants discussed how there is a perception that if the problem wasn’t directly caused by them it is not for them to solve. They also talked about how the wider community “do not care about the environment” and how young people are “lazy”.

No Groups/Opportunities for young people

Participants stated there were no opportunities for young people to get involved or participate, as well as there being no local youth groups or projects dedicated to these issues.

3.3 Wall of Wonder – Sticky Note Exercise

The final part of the consultation required young people to put their answers to the following question on sticky notes which were collected on a flipchart.

If you could design a programme for young people themed around the marine environment what would you include?

From the 93 young people taking part in the consultations we received 171 suggestions for a future programme. Responses were categorised into 16 different categories (see Table 2 below).

The most common answer was boat based discovery (e.g. boat trips, practical experience on boats, going out on boats to see wildlife) making up 17.5% of answers. Interacting with and seeing wildlife (e.g. tagging sharks, swimming with wildlife, fishing), practical experience (workshops, hands-on, surveys, take part in research), working with other young people (meet ups, group work) and marine knowledge and skills (information, training, working with experts, sector skills, using equipment) were the next most common answers.

Response Category	No. of responses	% of overall responses
Boat Based Discovery	30	17.5
Interacting with and seeing wildlife	26	15.2
Practical Experience	21	12.3
Young people working together	15	8.8
Marine knowledge/skills	13	7.6
Diving	10	5.8
Trips	10	5.8
Fun	12	7.0
Meet experts	5	2.9
Digital Media/Online	5	2.9
Volunteering	5	2.9
Campaigns/Awareness Raising	4	2.3
Aquarium Visit	2	1.2
Competitions	2	1.2
Fishing	10	5.8
Printed media	1	0.6
	171	100.0

Table 2. Number and percentage of responses to question 5 and the response category they align to.

4. Summary of Findings

Findings from Questionnaire

- The majority of participants said they knew 'Nothing' or 'A little' about their local marine environment and the marine industry/sector.
- The majority of participants were unsure if there were any opportunities for young people to learn about the environment outside of school.
- 94% of young people agreed that learning about the marine environment was important.
- Participants said that the following points would be the most useful to them when learning about the marine environment.
 - B) More practical opportunities to experience the marine environment
 - F) More marine/environmental content in school
 - C) Practical skills training so that I can gain skills that are useful in that sector

Findings from Group Discussion

Question 1. How do you currently learn about your local environment and marine life?

Participants told us that they have limited opportunities to learn about the local marine environment. Whilst there are some learning opportunities in school, participants felt that examples weren't made relevant to the local area/industry. Learning opportunities outside school included online, TV, family members, local centres e.g. maritime museum, Dunree Fort, Loughs Agency. Participants could not identify any youth training programmes outside of school where they could learn about the local environment and marine life.

Question 2. What could be done better? Think about some of the ways you would like to learn about local marine life.

Participants told us that they valued practical, real life experiences and hands-on activities. They would like to have the opportunity to go on boats, witness wildlife for themselves and take part in surveys, research and activities. Participants told us they would like to learn alongside other young people, as well as local experts; and expressed an interest in work shadowing and volunteering in the sector. In addition, participants mentioned the use of online, social media, photos and videos as learning and promotional tools.

Question 3. What are some of the problems and issues that impact on the marine environment.

Overfishing, pollution, global warming, oil spills, litter/plastics and the killing of animals were the most commonly described problems. Whilst young people were consistent across all groups at naming the problems and issues impacting the marine environment, most found it difficult to explain the problem proficiently due to a limited understanding of the issues. Young people from fishing backgrounds or links to the fishing industry had a greater understanding of the effects of overfishing and diminishing fish stocks, and the causes. Young people across all groups identified sewage pollution in the Foyle as a local issue.

Question 4. What is stopping you as a young person from getting involved in environmental projects to address these problems?

Participants said that a lack of knowledge, training and support, including limited or no opportunities for young people to take part was stopping them from getting involved in environmental projects. It was clear that participants felt a lack of confidence in their abilities to undertake environmental projects, expressing concerns for "safety", "knowing where to start", "training", "equipment" and "support/who to ask?". In addition,

participants felt that young people in their area do not have a voice in these matters and “who would listen to us?”. It was evident from a hands-up survey that none of the participants had ever had the opportunity to take part in a youth consultation, give feedback on or design a programme for themselves.

Findings from Sticky Note Wall

If you could design a programme for young people themed around the marine environment what would you include?

Young people’s responses indicated that they would like to see a training programme where they can take part in practical activities on board boats including searching for wildlife, conducting research/surveys, interacting with wildlife e.g. tagging, swimming with, fishing. Practical experience was valued highly by the participants and they described how their ideal programme would involve working together and having fun with other young people, and learning marine knowledge and skills from local experts through practical workshops and trips.

5. Recommendations

- (i) A fun and engaging training programme where young people take part in lots of practical learning experiences and activities that raise their awareness and knowledge of Inishowen’s marine environment and heritage.
- (ii) A dedicated programme for young people taking place outside of school due to the current limited opportunities for this in the Inishowen area.
- (iii) Opportunities for young people to learn more about the local marine industry and the skills required for the sector. This should include practical sector skills training, work shadowing, meeting local experts and volunteering opportunities.
- (iv) A programme that has young people in mind; a participatory approach to training delivery and a holistic approach to skills development which considers young people’s development needs and employability e.g. confidence, self-esteem, leadership, problem solving.
- (v) A programme that gives young people an opportunity to learn new skills, put their skills into practice and share their learning with other young people and the wider community.
- (vi) More marine/environmental learning in school (made relevant to the local area).

Appendix 1 – Youth Questionnaire

Age _____ School _____ Year _____

Address _____

Please answer the following questions by placing a tick in the box.

1. How would you describe your current level of knowledge about your local marine environment?

Nothing ☐
A little ☐
Reasonable amount ☐
Quite a lot ☐
Detailed knowledge ☐

2. How much do you know about the types of jobs and opportunities available to you in the marine sector?

Nothing ☐
A little ☐
Reasonable amount ☐
Quite a lot ☐
Detailed knowledge ☐

3. Have you ever taken part in any activities for young people (outside school) themed around Science, the Environment or Conservation?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered YES what did you do? _____

4. Do you feel there are opportunities for young people in your area to learn about the local environment (outside of school)?

Strongly Agree ☐
Agree ☐
I am not sure ☐
Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

5. Do you feel that it is important for young people to learn about their local environment, species and habitats?

Strongly Agree ☐
Agree ☐
I am not sure ☐
Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

6. Tick which of the following would be most useful to you if you were looking to learn more about the local marine environment?

Lots of advice from people working in marine/environmental jobs ☐

Practical skills training so that I can gain skills that are useful in that sector ☐

Opportunities where I can meet with other young people with similar interests ☐

Opportunities where I can meet local people and experts in the industry ☐

More marine/environmental content in school ☐

Placement opportunities/job shadowing so I can see what is involved ☐

Volunteering opportunities to gain experience ☐