

**PILOT 2021  
FINAL REPORT**



**RE-IMAGINING NATURE IN THE CLASSROOM**

# INTRODUCTION

Re-Imagining Nature in the Classroom (RNIC) is an educational program all about peatlands. The first pilot programme took place in 2021 at Knocknagoshel Primary School, in Country Kerry Ireland. The program is special in its 5-senses approach, which encourages the children to experience peatland ecosystems in a non-conventional and tangible way. Through this in-depth exploration of peatlands, the program also allows them to develop ideas about life, space, time, local heritage, and culture. Rather than a grading system or other quantitative forms of testing, the final piece requires that the students capture and distil the knowledge, in creative outputs.

RE-PEAT team members - Frankie Turk, Flavie Bernadou, Bethany Copsey, Poppy Bagwell, Carolina Maienza, Mari-Liis Bagó and Ciáran Cotter, as well as a few volunteers were responsible for all aspects of the project, including planning, budgeting, implementation, and reflection. This project was funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the framework of the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme 2021.



'Life' class



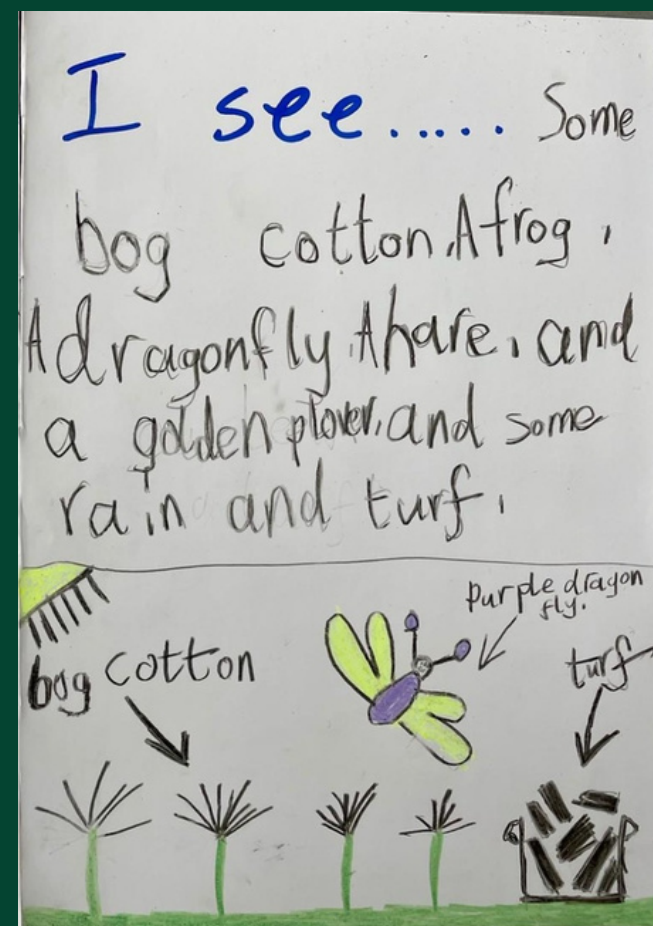
This report is designed to conclude the pilot program, bringing together the various phases, feedback from the school and discussion about what can be improved upon for the following implementation. The format of the report is as follows:

- Introduction
- Key information
- Conceptualization
- Timeline & Project Planning
- Timeline 1
- Timeline 2
- Content creation
- Teacher Workbooks
- Bog-in-a-box Activities
- Adjustments
- Feedback from school
- Discussion & Conclusion
- What's next?



Group picture after the final activity

# KEY INFORMATION



**Pilot School: Knocknagoshel Primary School**

**Number of Students: 41**

**Number of Classes: 6 (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th)**

**Dates of Implementation:**

**1st & 2nd -31st of May**

**3rd & 4th -3rd of June**

**5th & 6th - 11th of October**

**Age Range: 7-12**



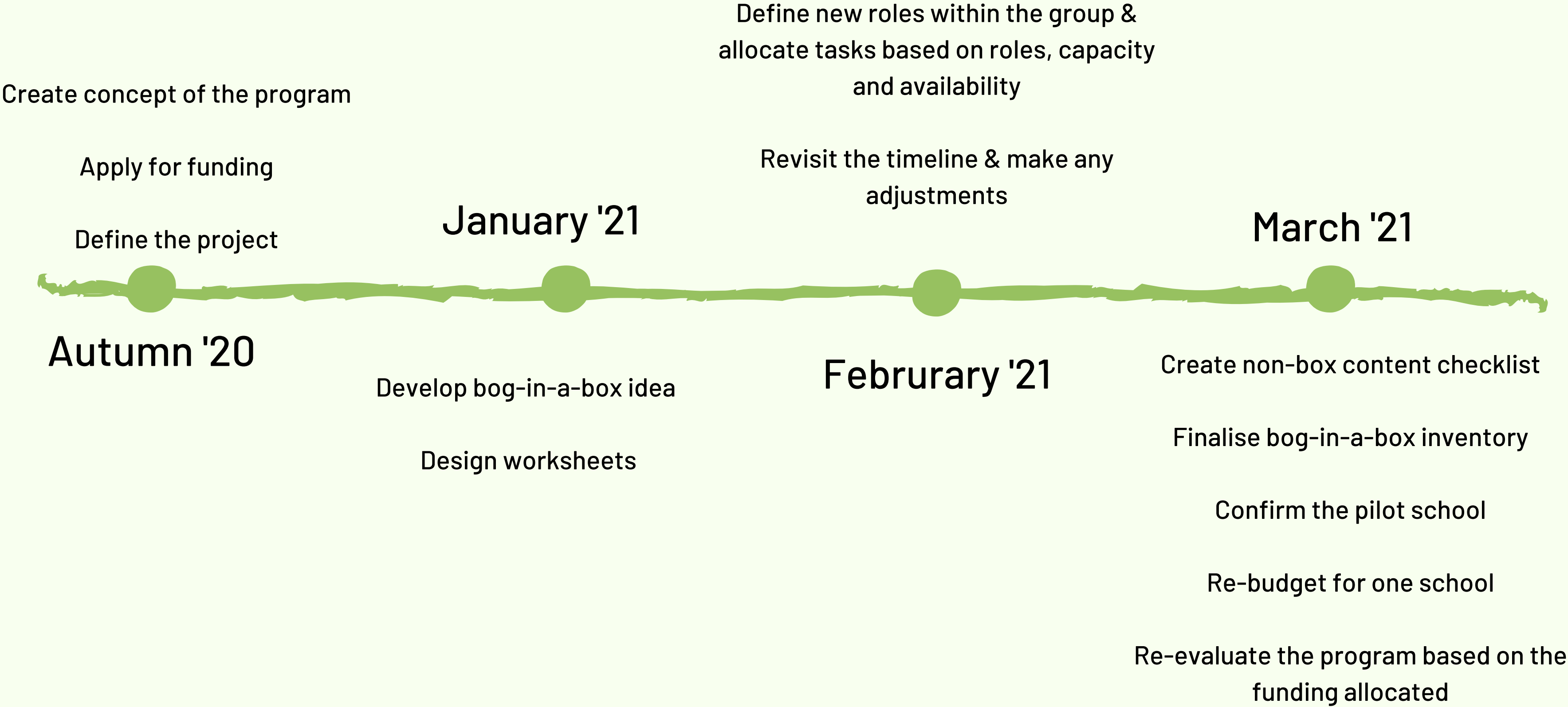
# CONCEPTUALISATION

The program was designed to engage and inspire young people between the ages of 7-12 about the multiple and largely underappreciated wonders of the peatland ecosystem. As a collective of young people we identified our target audience to be youth. We view young people as a major stakeholder when it comes to climate and ecological issues and see them as leading drivers for positive change and transformation in the present and future.

Our approach to getting youth engaged in the topic was to design an all-5-senses education program that would allow them to personally and physically experience this ecosystem and its many dimensions. We geared much of the program content to locally relevant cultural references and stories, which helped to demonstrate the place-based and historic connection that they have with the peatlands around their school.

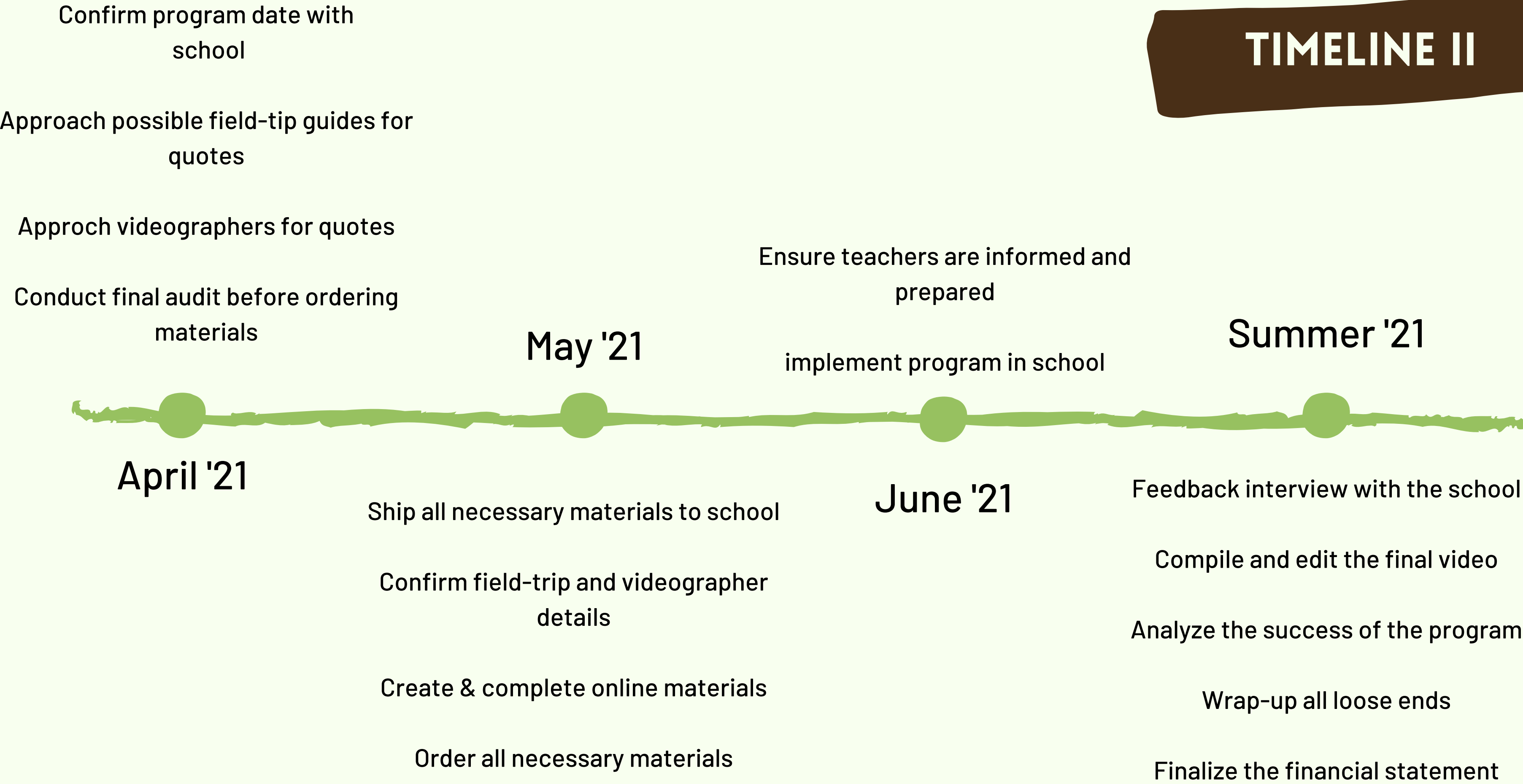
The programme is divided into three different courses that are adjusted to the range of knowledge levels between the young people and have different themes, namely Life, Space & Time. The life-themed box contains activities that communicate the ecological aspect of peatlands, the space-themed box contains activities that explore the geographic side of peatlands, and the time-themed box looks at the historical relationship between peatlands and society.

# TIMELINE I





**TIMELINE II**

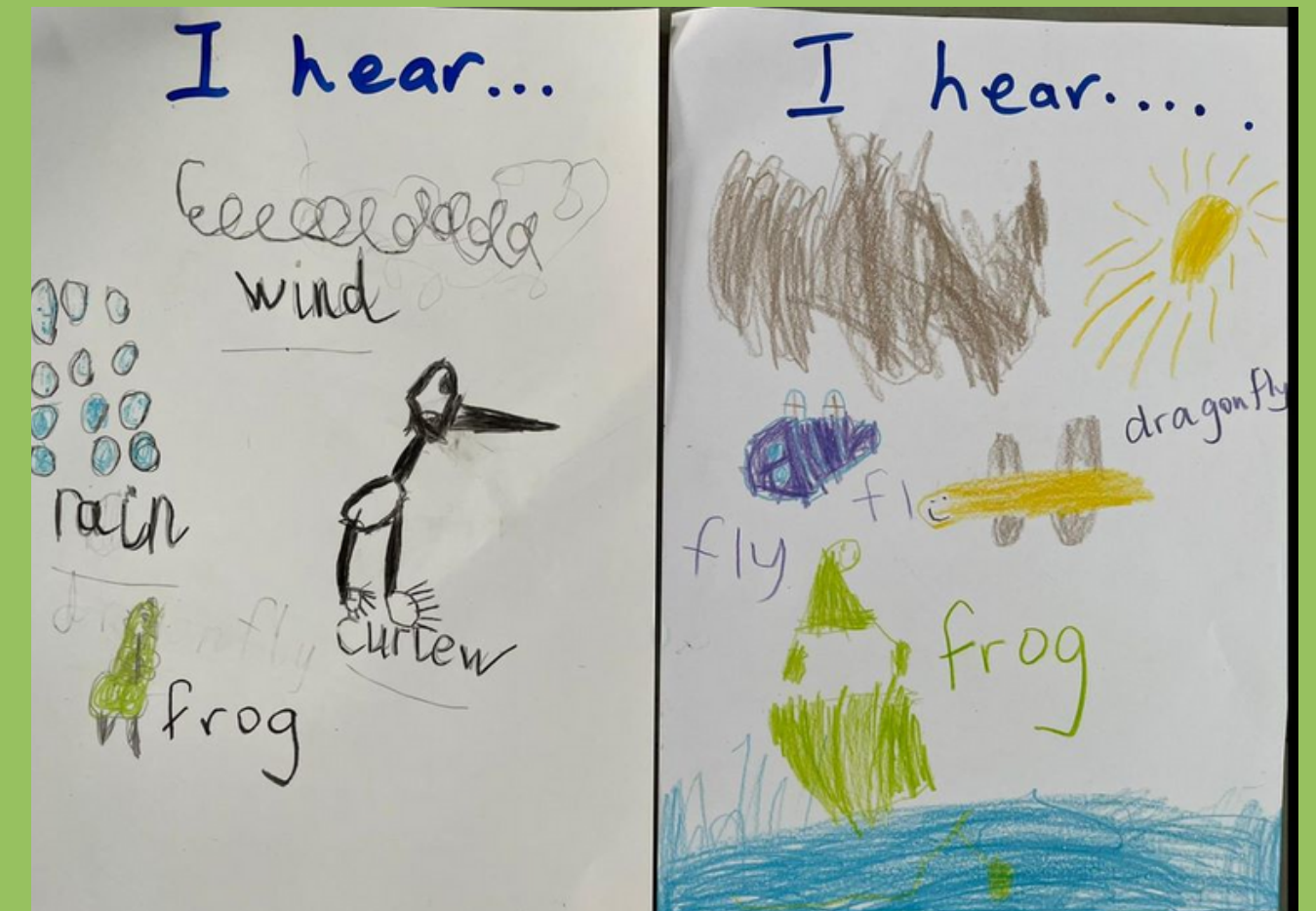


# CONTENT CREATION

## Teacher Workbooks

The teacher workbooks were created so that the primary school teachers could easily implement the program during their normal lesson time. Included in the teacher workbooks are the specific learning objectives of the lesson, instructions for use, lesson plans and all other relevant information that was needed for that particular program.

We made sure that the teacher workbooks were as accessible as possible without requiring prior-knowledge of peatlands and considering teachers high workloads.



Engaging with the sense  
of hearing





# CONTENT CREATION

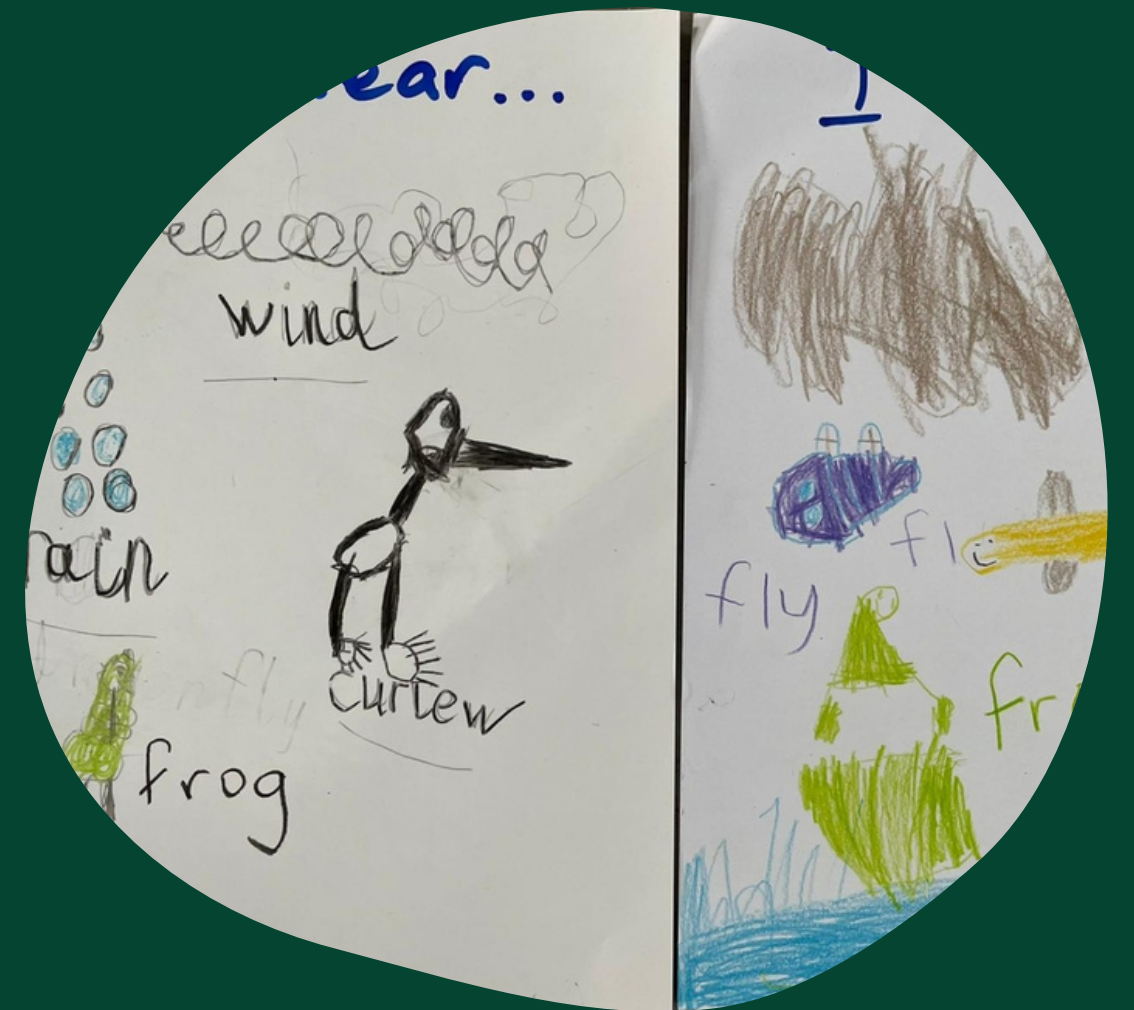
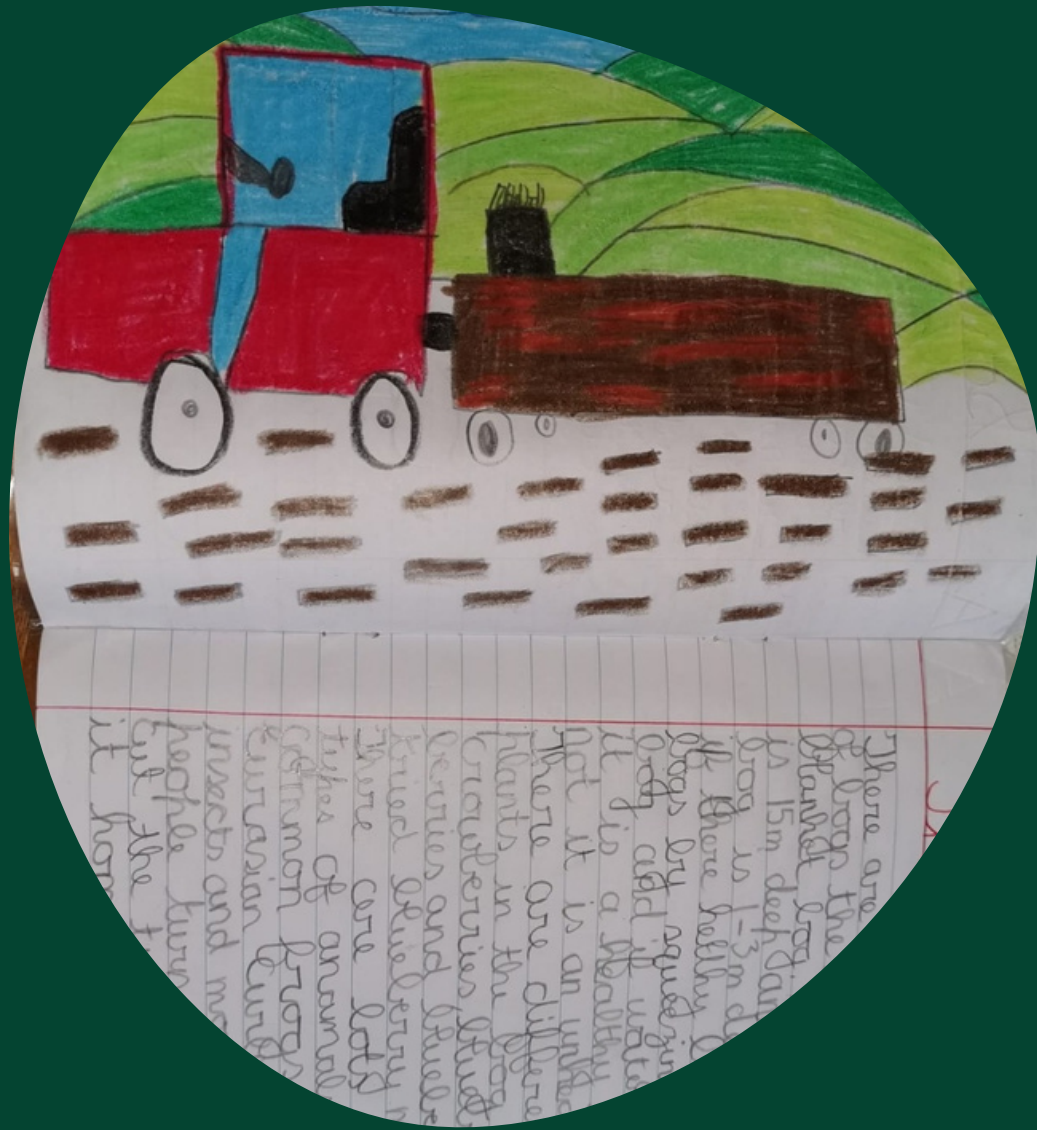
## Bog-in-a-Box Activities

Contained within the three boxes were a number of different learning resources, including worksheets, hand-made crochet animals, instructions and ingredients for a pre-tested “bog potion”, sphagnum moss experiment set, personalised bog diplomas, big fold-out map of the bogs of Ireland, miniature bottles containing bog oak incense and more. Full content of the boxes can be found in the Appendix.



Crochet animals made for the  
Life themed box





Some examples of the stories compiled during the program

## FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL

We created a feedback form for the teachers to fill in immediately after implementation. Overall the feedback was positive. The teacher in charge of the Space theme found it to be a very successful lesson overall with the students learning a lot about bogs and bog formation. In addition, the teachers found that the learning outcomes were adequately achieved.

It was clear that the senses approach was successful, and the teacher who taught the Space themed lesson said that this was the student's favourite element.

Another feedback point was in relation to the location of the pilot school. One teacher noted that there are a lot of bogs in their locality so it is important to inform students about what a healthy bog is.

### Based on feedback form:

- ✓ Content fit the age range
- ✓ Children loved talking about the wildlife
- ✓ Children loved the element of senses
- ✓ Duration was given accurately
- ✓ Quiz element should be improved
- ✓ Program was easy to follow
- ✓ Children had fun!



*"the children enjoyed working as a group and the senses exercises. As the teacher I liked the multidisciplinary aspect of the program."*

*"Children loved the smell of burning turf, listening to the sounds from the bog, touching the moss, and learning about the wildlife."*

*"As a teacher it was a lovely lesson to teach. Lots of bogs in our locality so it's important to make children aware of what's a healthy bog."*

*"This was a very successful lesson overall. The children learned a lot about bogs and bog formation and really enjoyed the sensory elements of it."*



# ADJUSTMENTS

## Covid-19 adjustments

By the implementation phase of the program schools were back in session in Ireland, meaning the program could successfully go ahead. However, because of the local covid regulations, the professional photographer that we had found was unable to film the program. Rather than take any risks with the mixing of people, the teachers took photos instead. Additionally, there was no field trip scheduled for the same reasons.

## Age range

A challenge related to the age range appeared quite late and unexpectedly. We learned a few days before the implementation of the educational program that, due to the school having very few pupils, each class was a much wider age range. Due to this, we had to rework some exercises to make them suitable for older pupils.

## Financial adjustments

We initially applied for €25,000 for implementation in 5 primary schools. The eventual amount available was €5,000 for implementation in 1 school. This led us to make some changes in the program such as altering our initial aim of piloting the program in a spread of schools. This meant that we expended the same amount of effort and time on creating the materials but with lesser funding comparatively and adjusted the budget accordingly

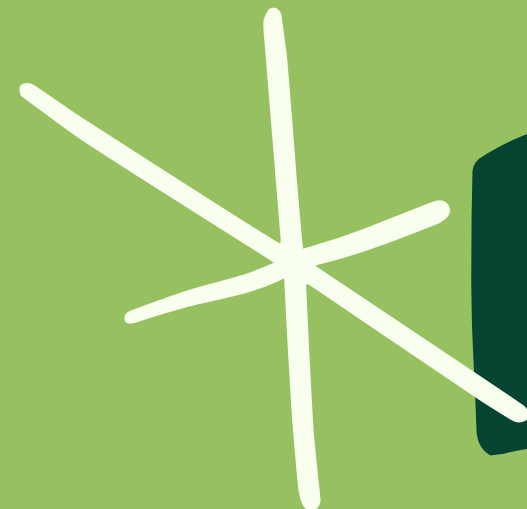


## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

It was important for us to not only include our values and ideas in the content of the education program but also in its realisation and components. At times this meant that we needed to choose more financially costly or time-consuming alternatives. One member of our team spent nine hours making the three boxes out of recycled wood, a choice which we felt was worth the time investment. Another member created the crochet animals from scratch. We also chose to buy muffins made by a local bakery rather than cheaper alternatives made on a more industrial scale. However, we are aware of the implications this has on scalability of the project and this has to be rethought in the future.

In conclusion, the Re-Imagining Nature in the Classroom pilot exceeded our expectations. As this was our first opportunity of creating an in-class program, we learned a lot about the development process, collaboration with teachers, and how to optimally communicate science to young children, and create an enjoyable and long lasting learning experience. The team had a very rewarding time putting together the program and found it to be a wonderful learning opportunity. We are confident that the lessons learnt will make for an even more impactful program in the future.





## NEXT STEPS

RE-PEAT has a clear vision to continue developing this project. Our first step would be to continue the relationship with Gaeltacht Peatland Community Scheme, when possible. We would love to expand the program into more schools in Ireland, including schools with children with special needs and inner-city schools.

In addition, we are looking into other opportunities of funding and collaboration beyond Ireland. We have an ambition to run the program in Estonia, UK, Netherlands and more.

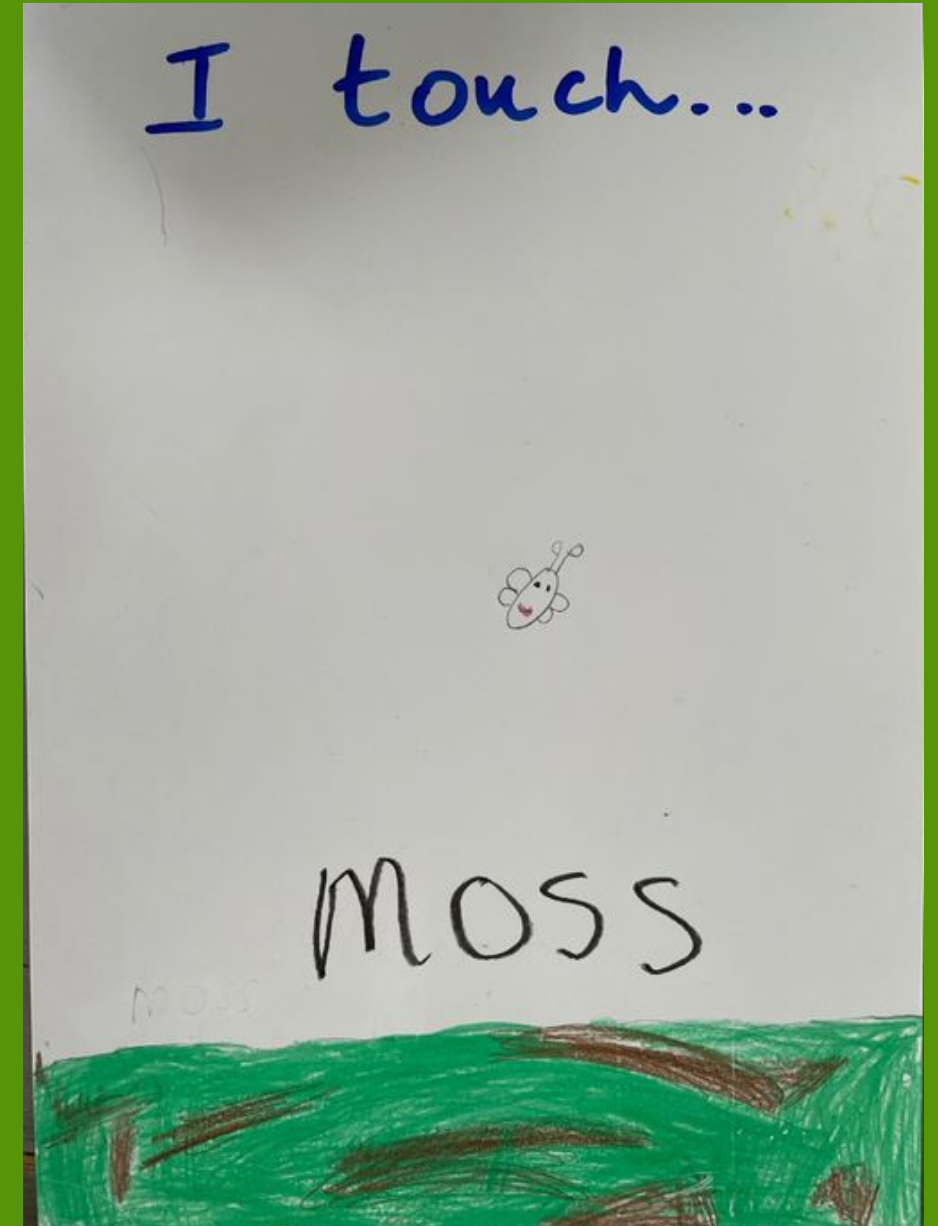
# APPENDICES

# TIMELINE AND PROJECT PLANNING

The project was divided into 3 phases - the planning phase (Timeline I), the implementation phase and the evaluation phase (Timeline II).

The project idea was born in the autumn of 2020 when we felt the urgent need and willingness to educate and inspire the younger generation with alternative teaching methods, and through that create a wider value to the whole community.

In Autumn 2020 a working group (WG) was established within RE-PEAT that included members who felt inspired to work with children and create a new and unique educational programme. With the WG established, we started a brainstorming process and worked to conceptualize the base for the project. We designed and developed activities that would enable children to use all their senses to learn about and experience peatlands.



Drawing of the touch-sense experience

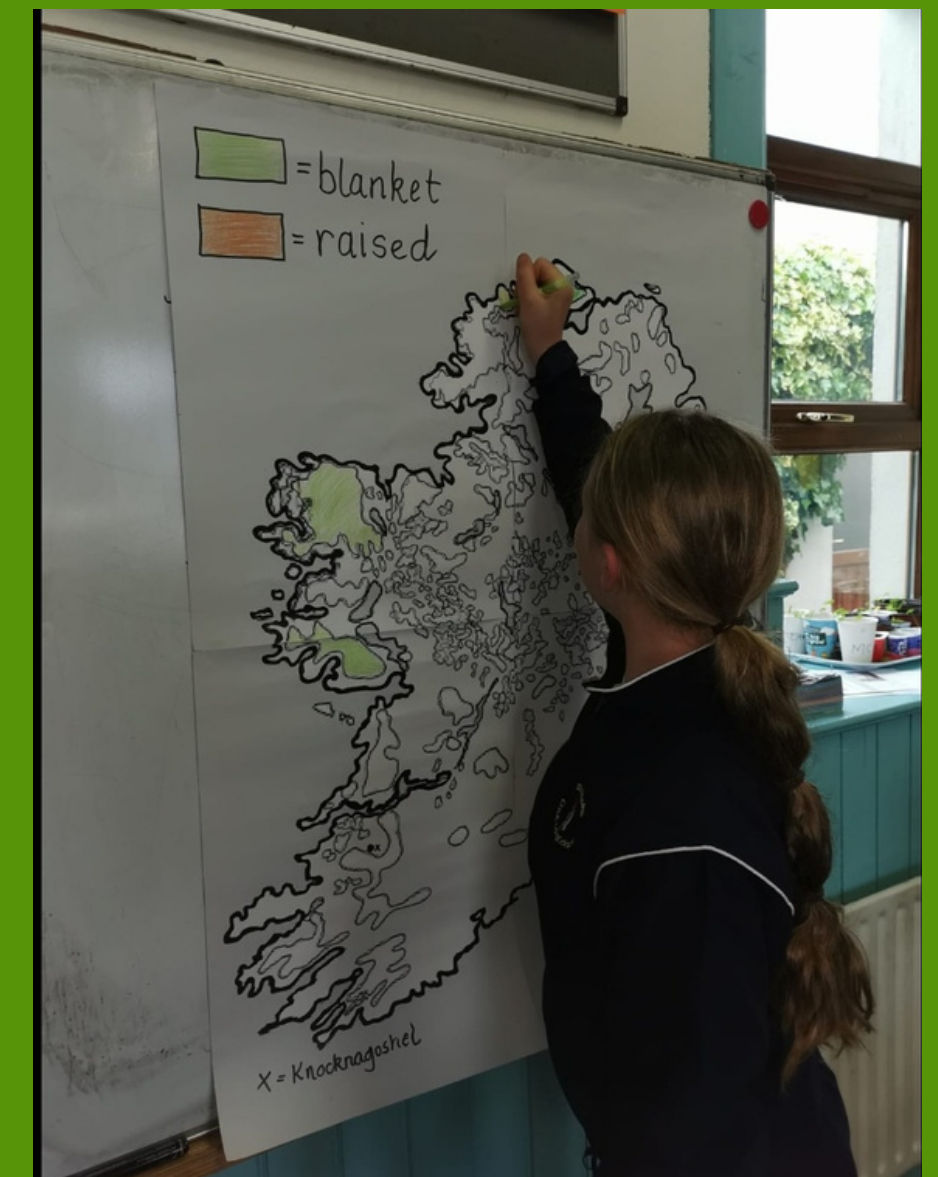


January 2021 - Creation of the content for the programme, including the development of the bog-in-a-box idea and designing the worksheets.

February 2021 - Definition of clear roles for the next part of the project. During this month the timeline was also revisited, minor adjustments were made based on previously mentioned modifications.

March 2021 - During this time the pilot school (Knocknagoshel PS) was confirmed. Due to the funding restrictions (receiving money for 1 school, instead of 5), re-budgeting was done, also keeping in mind the pandemic restrictions. The team reflected upon the new budget and re-evaluated the program based on the allocated funds.

April 2021 - The project materials started to take a very concrete shape and the date was confirmed with the pilot school. Time was spent planning the proposed field trip, which was initially going to be part of the program. A photographer/videographer was found but due to COVID19 restrictions this was not feasible. Auditing of the content was carried out to confirm the purchase of the materials.



Mapping Irish bogs

**May 2021** - All necessary materials were shipped to one of our team members in Ireland, who was responsible for transporting all the educational materials to the school. This was also the time when the crochet animals were made and the wooden boxes created. Teachers' workbooks were compiled and the online materials completed. A video call was organized with the school in order to ensure that they are informed and prepared for the pilot program.

**June 2021** - The program took place in the school, in 2 out of 3 classes. The RE-PEAT team continued regular meetings to work on the report and financial statement. All receipts were collected and working hours accounted for. The feedback forms were sent to the teachers in order to assess the project and take note of the improvement possibilities for the next steps.



Touching wet sphagnum  
with closed eyes



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**July & August 2021** - Finalisation of report and analysis of feedback from teachers and the project details.

**September - November 2021** - Final session in 3rd class was carried out.

Overall, the timeline was followed conscientiously; however, a few alterations were made due to fundamental changes in the project.



Drawing from  
Life themed course



# CONTENT LIST OF BOG-IN-A-BOX

- Sphagnum moss
- Bog incense in glass bottles
- 3 crochet animals
- Web of life poster
- Blueberry muffins
- Bog potion recipe & ingredients
- Fold out map
- Sundew poster & cut-out flies
- Teacher workbooks
- Bog Diplomas





An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

