

Scottish pupils learn about making a circular world

Around 100 Scottish schoolchildren gathered at the National Museum of Scotland yesterday to celebrate their work to design the environmentally friendly products of the future.

The primary and secondary students have been taking part in Making Circles, a project where they engaged with professional designers and makers to come up with imaginative concepts and prototypes for sustainable goods.

Ideas included a wallet made from inner tubes of tyres and goggles with a mini wind turbine that powered a light to help see in the dark.



Sophie Stewart from St Peter's RC Primary School, Edinburgh with a collection of bags and other accessories made with recycled materials. PHOTO Colin Hattersley Photography

There were also a variety of bags including a backpack with a solar phone charger, one with straps to adapt to the growth of a child, and another that could be given a variety of looks to suit different uses and occasions.

The event marked the culmination of Making Circles with the

launch of a display of posters and pictures showing some of the designs and products and explaining more about the project.

The children taking part came from 19 schools in Edinburgh, Fort William, Mull, Aberdeenshire, Glasgow, Angus, Fife, Midlothian and Dumfries and Galloway.



Sophie Stewart (centre) and Martha Anderton, both from St Peter's RC Primary School, Edinburgh with a collection of bags and other accessories made with recycled materials with Hector Michel from Duddingston Primary School, Edinburgh. PHOTO Colin Hattersley Photography

The project aims to give the up-and-coming generation the knowledge and skills to build a circular economy. Its key principles are to design out waste and use renewable sources of energy to create products which are practical, long lasting, easily repaired or upgraded and readily recycled.

Scotland aims to be a world-leader and the Scottish Government has pledged to introduce one of the first Circular Economy Bill's in the world.

Mary Michel of Edinburgh-based organisation Ostrero, which is behind Making Circles, said: "The most pressing question of our time is how to live in a world of increasingly scarce

resources and how to encourage young people to engage with this.

“The idea of a circular economy is something children understand straight away. They get that it’s unfair that many of the world’s resources aren’t available to vast numbers of people, that we are using them up at incredible speed and that they will not be available for the world in the future.

“Young people need to be empowered to change the world in a positive way – so they have the knowledge and skills to design and create sustainable products.

“That’s why we wanted them to work with professional designers and makers and to have good-quality materials. They found the idea of transforming waste into high-value goods quite inspirational.

“The ideas they came up with were wonderful. Some, like the backpack with a solar panel for phone charging, were very practical. Others were a bit more ‘out there’ like a trampoline for gerbils to generate renewable energy.”

A problem highlighted by Making Circles is the amount of high quality material that goes to landfill without ever being used – perhaps because a product line has ended or there is a minor flaw.

As a result the children worked with materials including colourful sweet wrapper cellophane and fabric intended for high visibility jackets. Another issue is the sheer quantity of material that goes to landfill that could be reclaimed.

Ostrero also encouraged young people to take an interest in hand making skills like sewing and joinery that were once common but are being lost.

They hope to see a shift in emphasis towards consumer products that are durable and where materials are reused rather than

dumped.

Mary added: "Gold is perhaps the most cherished material of all, yet each year significant amounts go to landfill because it's not reclaimed from electronic goods we throw away.

"And something that really strikes a chord with children, who are so into their phones, is that the world's supply of indium – which makes screens respond to touch – may be gone in 12 years."

A number of children also spoke at the Making Circles launch about their part in the project.

Making Circles was created in collaboration with teachers and offered a creative learning opportunity that ties in with Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence.

Edinburgh-based explorer Dr Kim Crosbie, recipient of the prestigious Polar Medal, sent a message of support to the children:

She said: "When you have lived and worked in polar environments it really brings home to you the importance of being able to live – and survive – using only what you have with you and not be wasteful of the limited resources that you have.

"This is such a brilliant project because it is giving young people the platform to use their imagination and potential to be much smarter than our generation in making sure they can live and do the things they want to do while using the planet's precious resources in a sustainable way."

· The Making Circles display is in the Learning Centre at the National Museum of Scotland (Edinburgh) until 31 July.

Participating schools

Fort William; Inverlochy Primary. Mull; Tobermory High.

Aberdeenshire; Crathes Primary. Glasgow; Cuthbertson Primary, Oakgrove Primary, St Vincent's Primary. Edinburgh; Currie Primary, Duddingston Primary, George Watson's College, Juniper Green Primary, St Joseph's RC Primary, St Peter's RC Primary. Angus; Arbroath High. Fife; Newport Primary. Midlothian; Cuiken Primary, Stobhill About Ostrero

Ostrero is a small organisation dedicated to growing the Circular Economy in Scotland through clear communication and education. For more information, [click here](#)

or contact Mary Michel on 07752476954 or email info@ostrero.com



Pictured with Mary Michel co-founder of Ostrero are pupils from St Peter's RC Primary School, Edinburgh with a collection of bags and other accessories made with recycled materials with Hector Michel from Duddingston Primary School, Edinburgh in the centre. Photography for Ostrero from: Colin Hattersley Photography – www.colinhattersley.com – cphattersley@gmail.com – 07974 957 388.