

by *Blathnaid O’Dea*

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Irish **non-profit Teen-Turn** works with young women and girls to encourage them into the STEM sector. It also mentors students in creating science projects in line with the requirements of SciFest through its **Project Squad programme**.

Last year’s Teen-Turn SciFest mentees included Orlaith Heaney and Elizabeth Byrne from Mount Saint Michael secondary school in Claremorris, Co Mayo. The two 15-year-olds created a website to make it easier for farmers to become more sustainable. Both Byrne and Heaney come from farming backgrounds.

Peri-Elkie Tiendioh, a 15-year-old student at Cork city’s Christ King Secondary School, also worked with Teen-Turn to develop Forget-Me-Not. This is a medicine reminder app for people with Alzheimer’s and dementia, where patients can also schedule an appointment with their local GP.

Teen-Turn also mentored Limerick student Maha Shahzadi of Coláiste Nano Nagle. The 15-year-old developed Eataware, an app that helps visually impaired people shop independently for their groceries and track their dietary requirements. The app uses text, speech, audio, sensor alerts and picture technologies.

“I got guidance every step of the way and encouragement on the days things didn’t go to plan,” Shahzadi said. “From thinking scientifically to coding, time management and writing, Teen-Turn’s Project Squad has helped me gain countless skills that you wouldn’t learn in a traditional classroom.”

Shahzadi, Tiendioh, Heaney and Byrne all received high commendations for their projects last year. They will continue to work with their mentors at Teen-Turn to develop their projects.