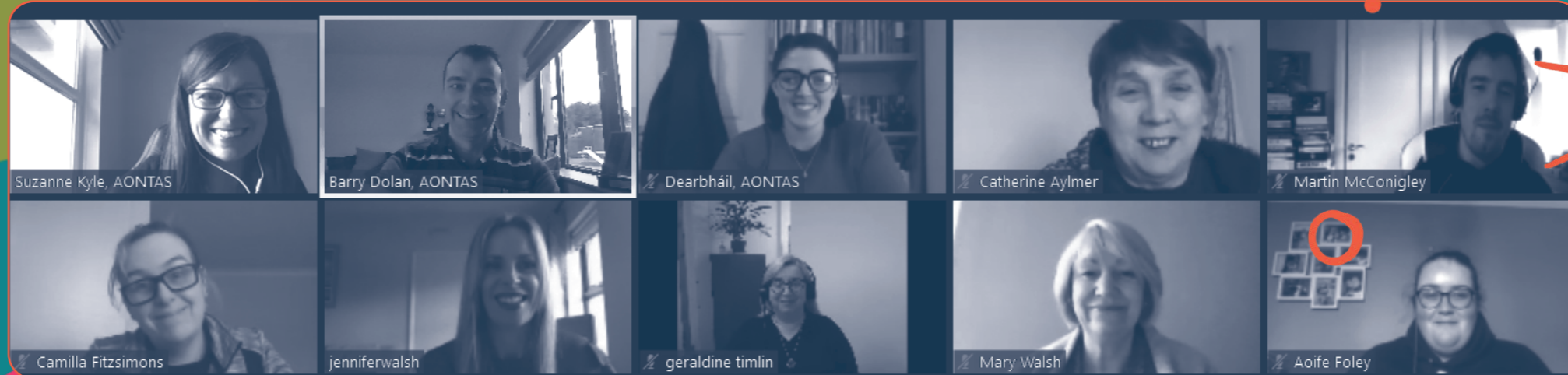




# OPPORTUNITIES

FEB 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021



Community  
Education  
Network  
Meeting



FEB 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021

- 10.00 Welcome and introductions:  
Suzanne Kyle, AONTAS
- 10.10 AONTAS updates: Dearbháil Lawless,  
Eve Cobain, AONTAS
- 10.20 Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) UCC  
course  
Ciara Staunton, Centre for Continuing Adult  
Education, UCC
- 11.10 The Cork experience of developing a  
Learning Neighbourhoods Initiative  
Jennifer Walsh, Centre for Continuing Adult  
Education, UCC
- 12.00 Saolta SDG Advocate Programme  
Bobby McCormack, Development  
Perspectives; Patrick Mulvihill, Amicitia Social  
Enterprise; Ann Hannan, Warrenmount  
Community Education Centre
- 12.50 Closing Remarks  
Suzanne Kyle, AONTAS

# Community Education Network Meeting



## INTRODUCTION



**This first CEN meeting of 2021** provided the space to share information and opportunities for community education practitioners. CEN Coordinator, Suzanne Kyle opened the meeting, welcomed all in attendance, and introduced the speakers.



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**After the introductions,** AONTAS Head of Advocacy, Dearbháil Lawless, and AONTAS Research Officer Eve Cobain gave some advocacy and research updates of relevance to CEN members. Dearbháil outlined the advocacy priorities for AONTAS in 2021 highlighting that we are continuing to represent our members and the adult learning sector across a range of different groups and committees and will continue to voice the needs of community education providers to the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Eve spoke about the work the Research Team, in particular the CEN Census and assessing the impact of the MED fund. A larger scale research study on the impact of Covid-19 on community education, which will be launched later this year was also highlighted.

Dr. Ciara Staunton of the Department of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) in UCC spoke about an exciting new opportunity for AONTAS CEN members who wish to learn more about Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and how it can be applied in a community education context.

Following this, Jennifer Walsh of the Centre for Adult Continuing Education in UCC gave a very interesting and engaging presentation about Cork Learning Neighbourhoods initiative. We heard about the evolution of this initiative which began after Cork was one of 12 cities globally that was awarded the UNESCO Learning City Award at the International Conference on Learning Cities in Mexico City in September 2015

Finally, Bobby McCormack of Development Perspectives introduced us in this section of the meeting to the Saolta SDG Advocate Programme, with Patrick Mulvihill of Amictia Social Enterprises and Ann Hannan of Warrenmount Community Education Centre sharing their experiences as participants on the programme.

# Community Education Network Meeting

33

Attendees

29

Organisations

15

Counties

FEB 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### AONTAS Advocacy Updates

*Dearbháil Lawless (Head of Advocacy, AONTAS) outlined the advocacy priorities for AONTAS in 2021:*

- **Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage (MAED) Fund:** Hearing from members about their experience of this fund and advocating for its continuation
- **Mobile data:** Seeking to ensure learners have access to unlimited data, and access to EDUROAM for the adult learning sector
- **Student wellbeing working group:** AONTAS has nominated representation from community education to this new Department of Further and Higher Education working group. Research from the FET Learner Forum is also presented here

Community  
Education  
Network  
Meeting

## UPDATES



- **National Access Plan Steering Group**  
AONTAS brings its member perspective on to this group

*CEN members are encouraged to liaise with Dearbháil around of these issues if they have any feedback or areas they would like to highlight. You can contact Dearbháil on [dlawless@aontas.com](mailto:dlawless@aontas.com)*

[Click to email](#)

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**AONTAS Research Priorities**

*Eve Cobain spoke about the work the Research Team including the following:*

- Using the CEN Census data collected so far and plans to build on this research
- Assessing the impact of the MAED fund and using the findings to advocate for its continuation

- Larger scale research study on the impact of Covid-19 on community education, which will be launched later this year
- Further research plans as part of the census, including a mapping of community education
- Three research papers focusing on the wider benefits of community education

*For more information on this community education research you can contact AONTAS Research Officer, Eve Cobain at [ecobain@aontas.com](mailto:ecobain@aontas.com)*

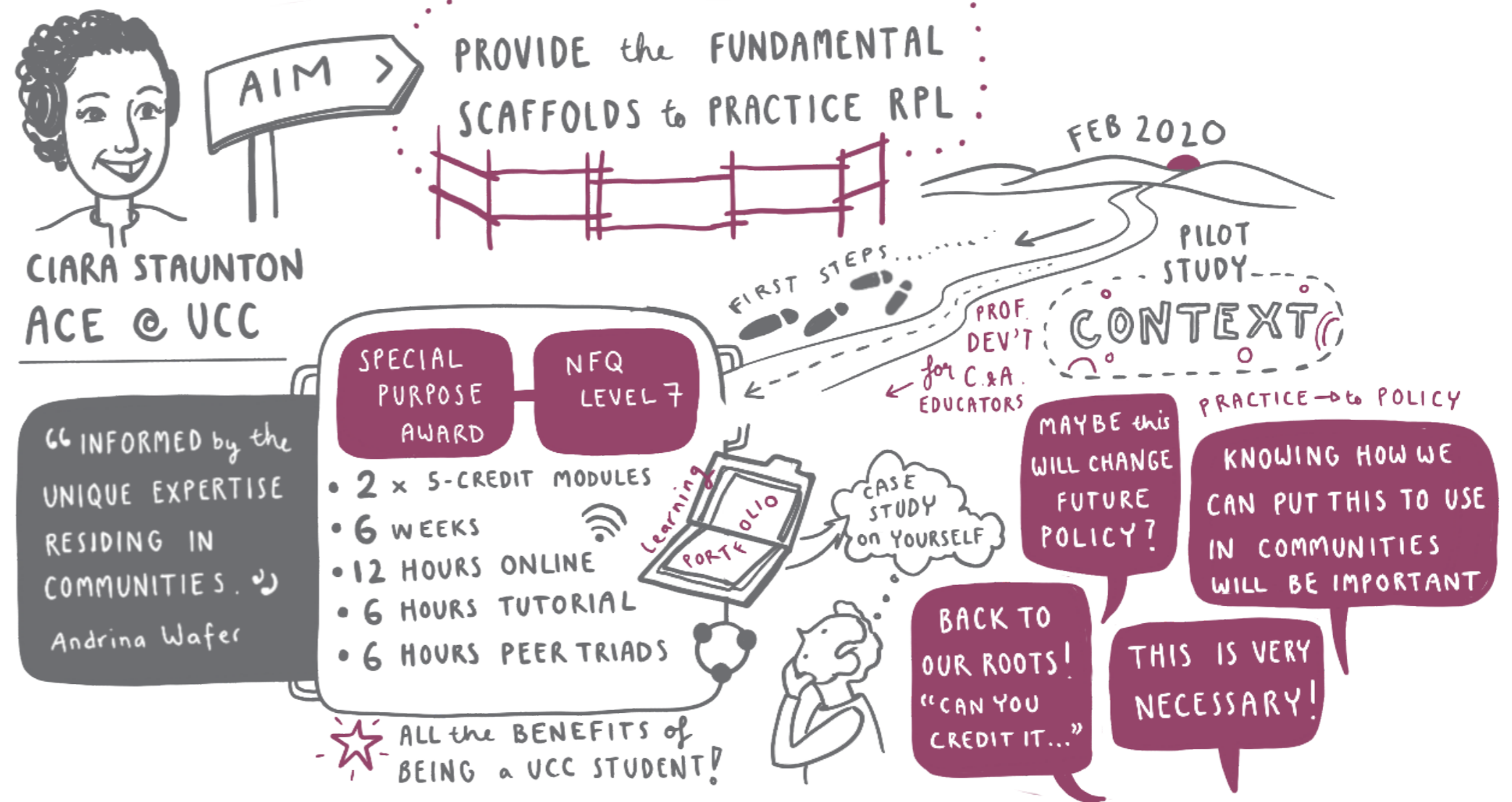
[Click to email](mailto:ecobain@aontas.com)

**New Certificate in Continuing Professional Development in RPL for Community Education Providers.**

*Dr. Ciara Staunton of the Department of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) in UCC spoke about an exciting new opportunity for AONTAS CEN members who wish to learn more about Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and how it can be applied in a community education context.*

- AONTAS commissioned ACE in UCC to develop this Level 7 course and all fees for the first round of participants will be covered under the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). The course will cover two modules and take place online over 12 weeks
- Ciara thanked members of AONTAS staff as well the CEN Steering Group for their feedback in relation to the programme during the consultation stage of its development. Thanks were also given to Josephine Finn of

RECOGNITION of PRIOR LEARNING  
UCC COURSE



Maynooth University, Deirdre Goggin of MTU, Mary Stokes of NCGE, and Andrina Wafer of QQI for their insights and recommendations

*More information will be shared with members over the coming weeks on course start dates and how CEN members can apply.*

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## LEARNING NEIGHBOURHOODS INITIATIVE

CORK

**The Cork experience of developing a learning neighbourhoods initiative:**

Jennifer Walsh of the Centre for Adult Continuing Education in UCC gave a very interesting and engaging presentation about Cork Learning Neighbourhoods initiative. We heard about the evolution of this initiative which began after Cork was one of twelve cities globally that was awarded the UNESCO Learning City Award at the International Conference on Learning Cities in Mexico City in September 2015.

- Learning Neighbourhood aims to localise Learning City initiatives in local communities in order to benefit residents by:
  - Awarding good practice in learning
  - Promoting and showcasing active local lifelong learning
  - Raising awareness of opportunities for learning
  - Developing new initiatives



- Each neighbourhood plans a series of activities throughout the year and this years' activities included school visits, a lecture series, a community exhibition, and a 'Faces of Learning' initiative involving a photographic exhibition featuring portraits of local adult learners.

Jennifer also spoke about a research report carried out by Eamonn Nash, which aimed to document the impact of Cork Learning Neighbourhoods on the local community. This research report can be found [here](#).

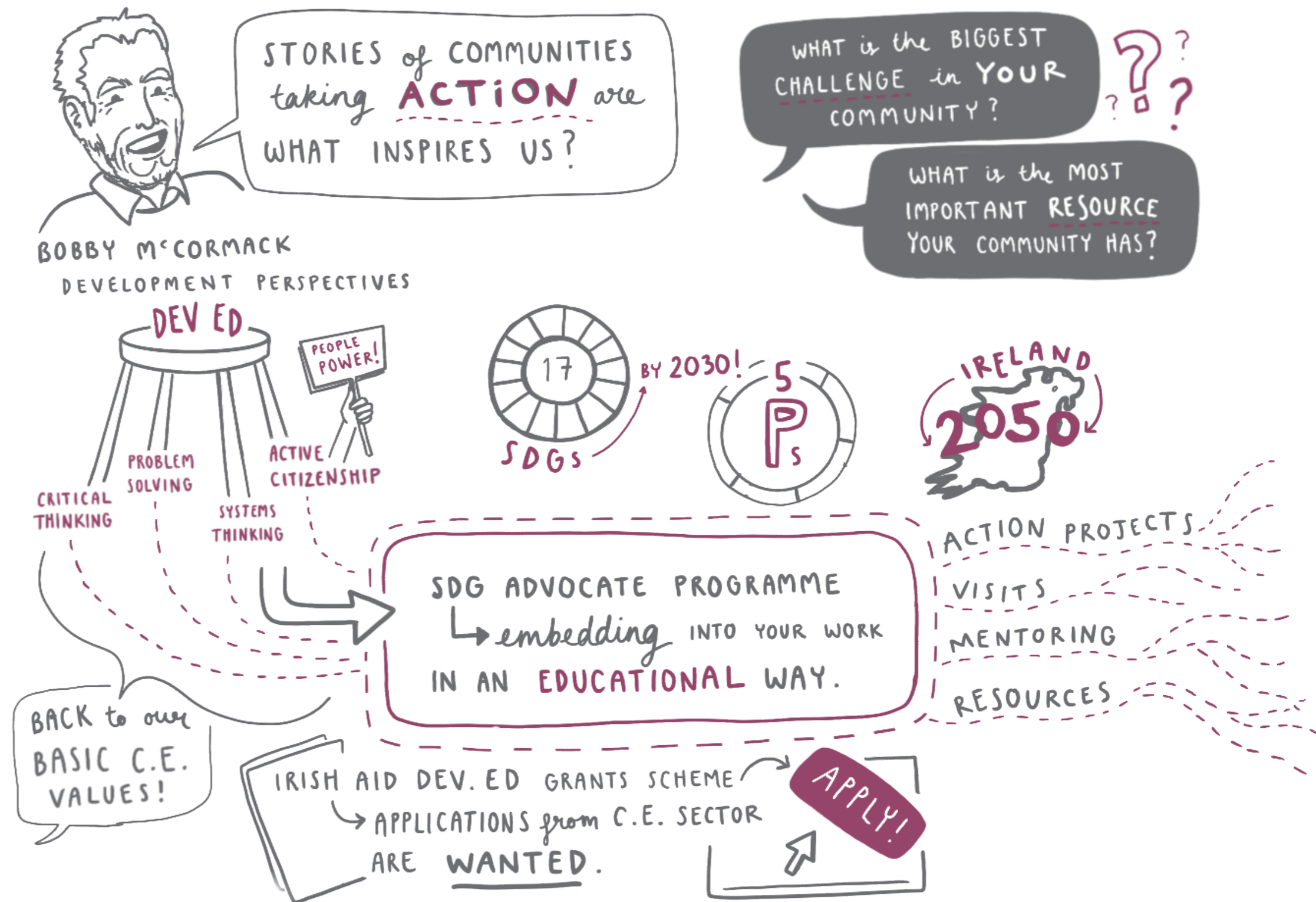
[Link to PDF document](#)

# SAOLTA SDG ADVOCATE PROGRAMME

## Saolta SDG Advocate Programme

Bobby McCormack of Development Perspectives introduced us to the Saolta SDG Advocate Programme, with Patrick Mulvihill of Amictia Social Enterprises and Ann Hannan of Warrenmount Community Education Centre sharing their experiences as participants on the programme.

Saolta is a consortium project with the goal of increased accessibility, quality and effectiveness of development education within the adult and community education sector. Development Perspectives is the lead partner in the consortium, which also includes AONTAS, Concern Worldwide, Irish Rural Link and the Adult and Community Education Dept of Maynooth University. Activities of Saolta include research, SDG advocate training, development of resources, and delivering workshops and training to organisations involved in the delivery of adult and community education.



**Bobby spoke about Development Education**, drawing on the Trócaire definition as follows:

‘Development Education (DE) is an active and creative educational process to increase awareness and understanding of the world we live in. It challenges perceptions and stereotypes by encouraging optimism, participation and action for a just world’.

Key features of DE include:

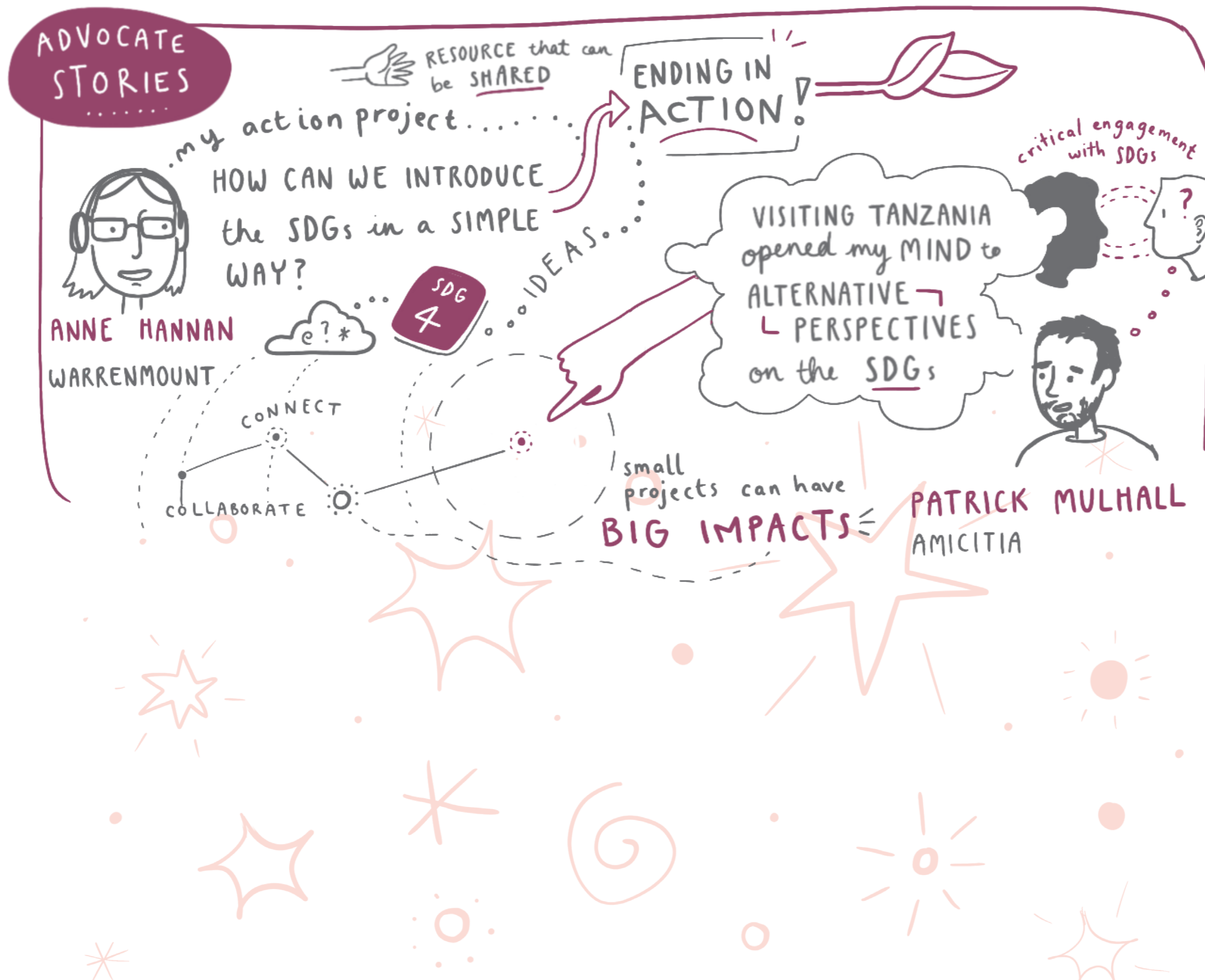
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Systems thinking
- Active citizenship

The aim of the SDG Advocate programme is to build an understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to support participants of the programme to integrate the SDGs in to their practice in adult and community education through the development of an action project.



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## SAOLTA SDG ADVOCATE PROGRAMME



**Ann's action project** focused on SDG 4: Quality Education. She developed visual and easy to use resources for use by adult education practitioners in their work in order to build knowledge of the SDGs among adult education tutors and learners.

**Patrick's project** involved building on the work they are doing through their community hub, craft markets, climate projects and community kitchen and garden. The project examined how they can bring people together to build on their passion and commitment in order to develop a collective response to the SDGs.

You can find more information on the Saolta programme here: <https://www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta>

[Click to open link](https://www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta)

FEB 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021

# OPPORTUNITIES

## INTRODUCTION

welcome

SUZANNE



@ADULT LEARNER festival

MAR 3<sup>RD</sup>

## UPDATES

### ADVOCACY



DEARBHAIL

#### OBJECTIVES

6

- 1 IMPACT of COVID
- 2 MED FUNDING to CONTINUE
- 3 C.E FRAMEWORK → multi-annual funding
- 4 ED. EQUALITY STRUCTURE
- 5 PROGRAMME for GOV'T
- 6 ERASMUS+ → N.IRL

YOUR VOICE IS BEING HEARD at GOVERNMENT LEVEL



YOUR EXPERIENCE

COMING SOON...



### RESEARCH



EVE

CENSUS DATA

PLANS:

- 1 RESEARCH on MAED FUND 85 SURVEY RESPONSES
- 2 IMPACT of COVID Launch APRIL
- 3 MAPPING the SECTOR
- 4 IMPACT of C.E. ON OTHER SECTORS IN A DIGITAL AGE FOR DEMOCRACY

## RECOGNITION of PRIOR LEARNING UCC COURSE



CIARA STAUNTON ACE @ UCC

AIM →

PROVIDE the FUNDAMENTAL SCAFFOLDS to PRACTICE RPL



FEB 2020

SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARD

- 2 x 5-CREDIT MODULES
- 6 WEEKS
- 12 HOURS ONLINE
- 6 HOURS TUTORIAL
- 6 HOURS PEER TRIADS

NFQ LEVEL 7

INFORMED by the UNIQUE EXPERTISE RESIDING IN COMMUNITIES. → Andrina Wafer

ALL the BENEFITS of BEING a UCC STUDENT!

MAYBE this WILL CHANGE FUTURE POLICY?

BACK TO OUR ROOTS! "CAN YOU CREDIT IT..."

KNOWING HOW WE CAN PUT THIS TO USE IN COMMUNITIES WILL BE IMPORTANT

THIS IS VERY NECESSARY!

## LEARNING NEIGHBOURHOODS INITIATIVE

CORK



JENNIFER WALSH UCC



### PARTNERSHIPS

UCC - MTU - Cork ETB - GLLIC = wider

### WHAT IS IT?

- ★ IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS
- ★ ACTIVE • LOCAL • LIFELONG
- ★ AWARDED GOOD PRACTICE
- ★ NEW INITIATIVES

ALL AGES ALL STAGES FUN!

FACES of LEARNING

BRINGING YOUNG & OLD TOGETHER IS KEY!

CURRENTLY: 6 LEARNING NEIGHBOURHOODS

LIMERICK

STEERING COMMITTEE

DEDICATED WORKER?

EXPO

## SAOLTA ADVOCATE PROGRAMME



BOBBY MCCORMACK DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

STORIES of COMMUNITIES taking ACTION are WHAT INSPIRES US?

WHAT is the BIGGEST CHALLENGE in YOUR COMMUNITY?

WHAT is the MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE YOUR COMMUNITY HAS?



SDG ADVOCATE PROGRAMME embedding INTO YOUR WORK IN AN EDUCATIONAL WAY.

ACTION PROJECTS VISITS MENTORING RESOURCES

BACK to our BASIC C.E. VALUES!

IRISH AID DEV. ED GRANTS SCHEME APPLICATIONS from C.E. SECTOR ARE WANTED.

APPLY!

### ADVOCATE STORIES



ANNE HANNAN WARRENMOUNT

my action project... RESOURCE that can be SHARED

HOW CAN WE INTRODUCE the SDGs in a SIMPLE WAY?



ENDING IN ACTION!

VISITING TANZANIA opened my MIND to ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES on the SDGs

small projects can have BIG IMPACTS

PATRICK MULHALL AMICITIA

### CLOSE



TODAY WAS ALL ABOUT BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES.

BUILDING & GROWING FROM BELOW

## Community Education Network Meeting

### Conclusion

The purpose of the meeting today was to provide CEN members with AONTAS updates and to share new opportunities, projects and practices in community education. CEN members were updated on the new Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Level 7 course commissioned by AONTAS and developed by ACE in UCC. Information will be shared with CEN Members on how to apply in the coming weeks. The meeting was also used to discuss the Cork Learning

Neighbourhoods initiative aimed at promoting and awarding good practice in local community education projects. Hopefully, Learning Neighbourhoods will provide ideas for CEN members on how they can showcase local opportunities in learning, develop new projects and meet new partners.

The meeting concluded with an input on the Saolta Advocate Programme aimed at increasing access to quality driven development education by embedding information on the UN SDGs into

educational programmes. The session ended with an interesting conversation about the power and influence of storytelling on learning and how it can influence populations both negatively and positively. Stories can open or change our minds, teach us about new things but alternatively, they can be used to create structures that allow the spread of false narratives. The power of storytelling and creativity as a tool to teach learners about key global issues is a consideration for the next CEN Meeting.

CLOSE

TODAY WAS ALL ABOUT  
BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES.



FEB 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021

**AONTAS would like to thank** our guest speakers Ciara Staunton, Jennifer Walsh, Bobby McCormack, Ann Hannan, Patrick Mulvihill and all our CEN members whose knowledge and contributions make the CEN what it is today. Many thanks also to our CEN Steering Group members for guiding and supporting the work of the CEN:

Anne Flannery,  
Larkin Unemployed Centre

Catherine Aylmer, LCEN

Cathleen McDonagh Clarke,  
Exchange House

Ciarán McKinney, Age & Opportunity

David O'Brien, Soilse

Lia Clarkson, Warrenmount CED

Mary Maher, DALC

Maura Kearney, Acorn Project

Rachel Morrissey, D8CEC

Community  
Education  
Network  
Meeting



We recommend that AONTAS CEN members join EPALE (the European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) so that you can be included in our CEN EPALE groups and receive more information on our CEN meetings, including presentations and other relevant news and events.

*You can register on EPALE by clicking here:*

[Click to open link](#)

**For more information** on the AONTAS Community Education Network, or to become a member, please click here:

[Click to open link](#)