



# Communities Creating Jobs

Online Magazine Summer 2021 Issue 33



**Moate Action Group**  
*Regeneration and Innovation in  
a Midlands Irish Town*

**Bounce Back Recycling**  
*Social Change, Innovation &  
Forward Thinking*



**Community Finance Ireland**  
*Launch of €10m Recovery Loan  
Package*



**Social Enterprise Profile**  
*Yvonne Kieran Tully looks at  
Equal Ireland.*



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## Editorial

by Dr. Senan Cooke

When the first round of vaccinations is



complete by the autumn and herd immunity is achieved many of the adaptations that we had to make in our lives, at home, in work and at play will continue in some form or other into the future. The old ways are gone

forever. One of the major ‘**revelations**’ during the **Covid** period was the importance of the ‘**Local**’ the neighbour, friend, service, club, pathway, shop and so much more. It was revealing to see how local and national government turned to the people in their communities as self-sufficient entities.

Government and its agencies drew on the good will, expertise, and resources of local communities to protect, support, encourage, include, communicate, share with, and motivate the young, elderly, women, men, employed, unemployed, able and those with underlying conditions, migrant and native in coping with the global pandemic. The old Irish saying of people living in each other’s shadow was never truer. Communities of interest and geographical spaces has always been a strong feature of Irish life. It apparently took many by surprise at how true it remained in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which had seen some disastrous outcomes as a result of the **Celtic Tiger** and banking and developer led excesses.

Individualism and greed were allowed to infiltrate the body politic, business, and other aspects of Irish life to the detriment of the Irish people. The power and capacity of the **local** in securing lives and

protecting living standards for those facing additional difficulties due to the pandemic was a relief to the political class in its time of greatest need. This same community resource can play **a key role** in the national recovery programme over the coming decade if facilitated to do so.

**Social enterprise** with its mass of local voluntary resources on health, recreation, education, employment, environment, social and cultural projects will become even more pronounced in developing and maintaining the well-being of the people in their communities.

*Now is the time for Public  
Representatives to step up  
for the betterment of  
communities and the  
people – the voters!*

**Social enterprise** engages so many dormant resources and expertise to use it innovatively and entrepreneurially **to better lives**. It is an effective way to provide new services, solve problems, grasp opportunities, help people, improve landscape, restore derelict buildings, and provide those most in need with **a hand up rather than a handout** which just maintains inequality and control.

**Social enterprise** empowers, motivates, and creates good vibes through offerings of **hope and possibility within communities**. **Social enterprise** is a socio-economic transforming concept with positive life- long consequences for those involved. Many thousands of social enterprises in rural and urban communities are making life much more bearable and enjoyable for individuals and families. Many are under additional pressure due to

health and employment as a result of the pandemic. It is time for **Government agencies** to reach out and support those who want to help themselves as well as making special provisions for disadvantaged communities to stand up and take control of their destinies. It is time for our **public representatives to take a lead** in this regard and visit social enterprises in their constituencies to find out what is happening there. If they were to visit them and listen, they would be in a position to effect the changes required from the agencies. This would enable social enterprises to achieve much more with the same resources and better still with new and additional resources. **NOW** is the time for our public representatives to act in helping social enterprises to achieve a wider range of improvements in their communities for the betterment of the people – the voters!



### Designer and Editor Malcolm Paull Murphy

After leaving school at 15 and working in a variety of jobs, including cinema projectionist, builder's labourer, pub & craft shop manager, and as a TEFL

teacher in Paris, Malcolm enrolled at NUI Maynooth as a Mature Student and achieved degrees in History and English. He worked for a time with '*innuendo*' magazine in **Dublin**. He has worked with **Dr. Senan Cooke** in the **Dunhill EcoPark** for two years and last year assumed responsibility for the design & editing of the **CCJ Online Magazine**. He is a published poet and is currently working on *A History of the people of Castlereagh* as well as continuing to write poetry. He plans to continue working in the **EcoPark** where there are several new projects under development for **2021-2025**.

## Social Enterprise Policy Objectives & Definition

### Policy Objectives

Building  
Awareness

Growing &  
Strengthening  
Social Enterprise

Achieving Better  
Policy Alignment

### Department of Rural & Community Development

New Social Enterprise policy was launched on July 18, 2019, by Minister Michael Ring, TD, in Speedpack, Coolock, Dublin.

### Social Enterprise Definition

A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners and shareholders.

It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.

It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner, and it is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.



For social enterprise volunteer directors, volunteers and staff, support agency staff, private sector, colleges, and civic society to know and understand.

## Moate Action Group

### *Regeneration & Innovation of an Irish Town by Peter Dolan*

Since Its formation, in **April 2014**, **Moate Action Group (MAG)** has achieved the following: -

- Setting up a modern, fully equipped, **Community Office** operating 5 days a week.
- Preparing a **5-year Plan** for Action.
- Preparing a Community Needs Assessment.
- Preparing a **Feasibility Study** on Moate Railway Station.
- Establishing '**Partnerships of Respect**' with the **Westmeath County Council**, Westmeath Community Development, Local TD's and Councillors and State Agencies.
- Acting as an '**Umbrella**' body providing effective and relevant support to groups such as **Tidy Towns**, **Men's Shed Group**, **Dún Na Sí Amenity Park**, Resident Associations, **Foróige**, **Moate GAA**, **Moate Soccer**, **Moate is Open**, **Moate Historical Society** and **Tuar Ard Theatre**.
- Creating a **1916 Centenary Park** in association with **Foróige**, **Clara Road Residents** and **Moate Tidy Towns**.
- Setting up a **Men's Shed Group**.
- Securing and running a **One Act Drama Festival** as a qualifier for the **All Ireland One Act Drama Festival**.
- Hosting a '**Bike Fest**' in association with the official opening of the **Mullingar/Athlone Greenway** in **2015**.
- Hosting the **Irish Kennel Club**, **The Connemara Pony Society** and

The **Irish Hawking Society** in holding a **4-day Festival** in Moate in **November 2016** and subsequently hosting the **International Sniping Championship** in **2017**.

- Winning the All Island '**Pride of Place**' competition in **2016**
- Establishing a Code of Governance, Tax Compliance, Constitution, Garda Vetting and registering as a charity.
- Securing grants for Moate Action Group from a variety of sources and assisting groups such as Tidy Towns, Men's Shed and Dún na Sí Heritage Park in securing grants.
- Securing the following grant aid: **2020 – 2021 €70000.00** from the **Heritage Council**, **Westmeath Community Development**, **Creative Ireland**, **Peatlands**



**Enhancement Scheme, Westmeath Co. Co. Covid – 19** supports as well as smaller grants and donations.

- **The Harbour Project** -phase 1
- **Events:**
  - Christmas Market
  - Christmas lights
  - St Patrick's day
  - Tim Ross Memorial Cycle Rally
- Preparing a 5 – Year Project Plan
- Lobbying at National and Local Level



- Publishing **Moate Soldiers book** – World War 1.

**Moate Action Group** addresses the regeneration of **Moate** town and hinterland through social, economic, environmental, and built form. We are focused on creating our own solutions and are working at the forefront of local issues with an insight into the challenges and opportunities facing the community.



Moate, like many other small rural towns, is facing many **social and economic challenges**. We have experienced shop closures, the loss of two banks, the closure of industries, the closure of commercial premises and the loss of passing trade with the bypass. Retail habits have changed in recent years which has had a detrimental effect on local business. However, we also have a huge amount of **positive growth** with the *Heritage Park*, *The Greenway*, *Tuar Ard* and many others so we also want to work to enhance the benefit of these assets for the community. We also have a strong supportive community.

**MAG** exists primarily for a social and environmental purpose, we aim to tackle social problems, improve people's life chances, and **protect and enhance the local environment**. We are aiming to give people a stake in the local economy. By

acting as an umbrella body made up of representatives of groups in the town. **MAG** has the form, structure, and function together with a **multi-faceted approach** to dealing with local issues and challenges by people who have a track record in delivering large and small projects in the town. **MAG** holds regular monthly meetings. Meetings are conducted in accordance with our constitution and are guided with the advice contained in the publication [‘A Governance Resource Book for Small Communities Organisations’](#). An **AGM** is held every year where annual reports are presented. The representatives of groups hold their own meetings, all groups are autonomous and decide their own agendas having regard to **MAG**. It is also guided by [Westmeath County Development Plan](#), local plans, *Plans on Heritage, Tourism and Environment*.

**Income** consists of payment for goods and services, members fees, income from events, public collections, donations, administration charges on grants and awards. **MAG** is a **registered charity** with all appropriate governance. A Company Limited by Guarantee, (**CLG**) is being formed.

As a **Social enterprise** **MAG** recognises the interconnectedness between different area needs and potential solutions. We are trying to create locally responsive services that fit our community's context. Our innovation comes from the fact that we have created an **umbrella organisation** working closely with all the relevant agencies to allow multiple local groups a louder voice and bigger presence in determining the town's future direction.

As a social enterprise, we have the potential to **create jobs** and have already created employment through programmes such as **Community Employment**, **TUS** and **Pobal**. The Community Office

**employs 2 CE workers.** Our umbrella groups also create employment; **Tuar Ard employs 5 people, The Community Sports Centre employs 4 people, Dun na Si employs 14 people and Tidy Towns employs 4 people.** As the social enterprise grows, we believe that there will be further potential not alone with CE, TUS and Pobal but also in private sector. MAG has a policy of employing local people and local contractors to implement projects. The objective is to reopen the community office and make the structural amendments resulting from our review of the organisation over the **COVID-19** lockdown. We will also implement the following projects.

#### **Current Projects**

These projects are grant aid approved and will be completed in **2021**.

#### **The Peatlands Community Enhancement Scheme**

This project will be carried on the **‘Old Rail Trail,’** and will focus on the natural heritage of **Ballinderry/Ballinagraine bog (NHA)** 2 km. east of Moate and **Carn Park (SAC)** 5 km west of Moate. A secondary focus will be on the built heritage and history in the surrounding area. We have engaged an archaeologist, environmentalist, a NPW Ranger and a geologist. We will also be assisted by the **Heritage** officer and the **Tourism** officer **WCC**. Information signs will be erected and a one- day seminar will be held where the results will be presented. The proceedings will be recorded, and a book will be published. The overall cost of the project is **€13000.00**. We have been approved for **€10000.00**.

#### **Heritage Trail and Promotion Project:**

The overall cost of this project is **€34,900.00**.

The grant approved is **€27,500**. Matching funding for **25%** of the project needed.

The projects involve **Plaques, Information signs, Street signs and direction signs.**

WCC has agreed to erect the signs. Irish translation is required.

Signs will be consistent with other sign design - see above **Peatlands Project**. Part of this project will include a **video presentation** of what Moate can offer business and industry.

*The Peatland project and the Heritage project are posing the biggest problem. We had Hoped to start the Shopfront study and the Traffic study however we are now deferring these. If we get grant aid from Westmeath Co. Co., we will get through the Cois Locha' project by "cutting our cloth to suit our needs.". The shortfall for both projects combined, including interest at 6% is €12722.32.*



**Ballinderry House**

#### **The Harbour Project. – Phase 2.**

**Phase 1** of this project included tree felling and scrub clearance and opening views of one of the first **Quaker houses** built in Moate. A new wall was also constructed.

**Phase 2** of the project consists of **erecting 50M of railing** on the new wall and refurbishing an antique gate.

**Phase 3.** Provides for the future **erection of a Sculpture, Seating and Lighting** and access via stepped approach to the **Cloghatanny River**.



**Phase 4** is to secure the **undergrounding of overhead cables** in the area which is the centre of the '*Quaker Village*'.

#### **'Cois Locha' Project:**

This area at the foot of the **Lake in the Amenity Park** and running parallel to the **Knockdomney road** will form part of a **Linear Park** and will link the **Peatland project** with other existing and proposed projects along the **Greenway**. The main work will commence in **September 2021** which will include all native tree planting with several apple trees within the area, A shelter, the removal of ash trees affected by **ash die back disease** and tourist information signs. **Westmeath** is providing finance for this.

#### **Heritage Audit:**

This project has been approved **€4,500**. This project will start at the end of **May 2021**. No financial assistance required.

#### **Fr Jimmy Video:**

This grant has been approved as of the **19<sup>th</sup>. April**.

Grant is **€3,500**. This project has commenced. No financial assistance required.

#### **Town Centre Management (TCM):**

*Design Process by Moate Project Design Group (MPDG)*

This is the main over-arching project. **The Desk Studies** for the different parts of the **TCM** have been completed and are being added to in what is an interactive process. **A Scoping Brief** for the implementation of the strategies, goals, and objectives necessary for the TCM concept is following the above Desk Study process.

#### **Shop front Study:**

*Design Process by Moate Project Design Group (MPDG)*

This is particularly important regarding the **Architectural Conservation Area** status of the Main Street of Moate as outlined in the Westmeath Development Plan.

#### **Traffic Management Study:**

*Design Process by Moate Project Design Group (MPDG)* will be carried out with reference to the **Town Centre Management** project as above.

#### **Marketing Strategy:**

*Design Process by Moate Project Design Group (MPDG)* will be carried out with reference to the **Town Centre Management** project as above.

#### **Planning Audit:**

*Design Process by Moate Project Design Group (MPDG)* will be carried out with reference to the Town Centre Management project as above.

The overall TCM project will be carried out project by project over the next two-year period and will need the support of **Local and National Government**. We will in the meantime continue to source finance from **EU. Private** sources and fundraising



**The Heritage Park**



**Art in the Park**

[Link to Moate Action Group](#)



## Community Finance Ireland

### Launch of €10 Million Recovery Loan Package



As the country starts to phase back towards community gatherings, blended working models, vaccinated volunteers and the prospect of full community centres and busy pathways, we are delighted to announce the launch of our very first [All Island Recovery Loan Package](#).

This €10 million loan fund is open to the **Not for Profit** taking sector, including **Social Enterprises** right across the island of **Ireland**, who are considering a new greenway, building a new facility, or seeking to maximise recent grant funding rewards with a new idea. With applications welcome from **June 24<sup>th</sup>** onwards this timely finance solution might be just what you and your team are looking for.

Our finance options cover term and bridging loans and you can be guaranteed a fair, flexible and fast experience.

The following are some of the **key features** of the CFI All Island Recovery Loan Package:

- **Online loan facility** – making it easier and faster to submit your application.
- **Lower Interest Rates** – maximum loan rates of **6.25%** on loans from **€10k - €500k**, including lowest bridge finance rate across the entirety of the island.

- **Zero Arrangement Fee** applicable on all lending.
- **Fast Response** – Upon receipt of all information, a decision will be available within **48 hours** on applications **below €200k**.

**Our application form can be found here:**

<https://communityfinanceireland.com/loans/>

In other news we are delighted to welcome **Anne Graham**, (*pictured below*), to our client executive team. Anne joins the team with a particular focus on the support of clients located across **Donegal** and



**Connaught**. With her home base being **Donegal** itself, she is well placed to bring her wealth of experience to the region and had this to say on her recent appointment:

*"I'm excited about working with social enterprises and community projects across Donegal and Connaught. As we gradually recover from the impact of Covid, early client conversations suggest that many believe that with disruption comes great opportunity. I am here to help the sector make the most of the opportunities and social impact ambitions they see ahead".*

**We speak finance but we hear people and if you would like an early chat simply click onto our website and request a call back:**  
<https://communityfinanceireland.com/contact/>  
**Whatever your plans we are here to help with advice and support.**

## Trish's Honey Products

### *New Products & Partnering with SuperValu by Malcolm Paull Murphy*

It is a rare thing in these modern times when one purchases a product, having seen the advertisements that promise you the sun, moon, and stars, that you actually get what you pay for. Most of us have, at one time or another, been guilty of such gullibility that sees our cupboards populated with creams, gels and balms of all descriptions that promise everything from youthful skin to remedies that guarantee you will never catch so much as a light summer cold. It is therefore refreshing and restorative to one's belief in marketing when one gets exactly what one pays for.

This **authenticity** has been recognised by many when it comes to **Trish's Honey Products**. Founded by **Trish O'Neill**, an honest to goodness 3<sup>rd</sup> generation **Waterford beekeeper**, this labour of love has become a success story that any new business, or old, would envy. Uniting her love of the natural world and her deep respect for the bees she works with, all of Trish's products support both of those things which are becoming increasingly more important to us. Based in the heart of beautiful **Dunhill**, County **Waterford**, with nature and wildlife all around her, Trish spends her life working in a happy partnership with her bees.

Trish herself suffers from allergies and was unable to source a product that was both **natural and beneficial** to her own skin. Spotting this gap in the market for organic alternative wholesome products that **'care not damage'** she set to work. It was then that she discovered the healing power of beeswax and honey as ingredients in all her creations.

The good news for this small company just keeps coming. Recently Trish became the first **Irish Skincare Company** to be accepted on the **SuperValu Academy Programme**. She is one of **45** producers who will be starting their journey with **Food Academy** in **SuperValu Stores** in **2021**.

The Food Academy programme currently supports **290 Irish** food and drink producers including **140 female entrepreneurs**, generating **€170m** in sales.

In **2020**, there was a **15% growth** in SuperValu Food Academy sales with participants **earning €28m**. The Food Academy programme supports **1,500 jobs** in local communities nationwide.

### Food Academy Information

- Now in its **eighth year**, Food Academy is a unique food business development programme between **SuperValu, Bord Bia and the Local Enterprise Offices**. Participants in the programme **receive training** in food safety, market research and **branding, marketing, finance, sustainability, and business development**.
- **Food Academy collaborates** with small business on their journey from the start-up phase right through to getting their product on SuperValu shelves. There are currently **290 Food Academy** producers in SuperValu stores. Through workshops, mentoring and the opportunity to pitch to SuperValu store owners, this is a unique opportunity to see your product on the shelves of one of Ireland's leading retailers. **SuperValu, Bord Bia and the Local Enterprise Offices collaborate** to ensure you have



every opportunity to grow your business.

- Food Academy works with and nurtures small business on that same journey, from start-up to getting products on shelves.
- SuperValu Food Academy **works to support** local food start-ups and the programme is more important than ever as we see consumers continue to support our local food producers.
- SuperValu's network of independently owned and operated stores across **Ireland** means that they are best placed to **support local food start-ups** through the Food Academy.
- SuperValu independent retailers can provide local producers with their all-important **first supermarket listing**, helping them to create employment in local communities.
- The unique thing about the programme is that our products are available instore **52 weeks of the year**.

Trish's Honey Products have just been told that their **Beeswax Hand Cream** is a finalist in the **Freefrom Skincare Awards, UK**. SuperValu stores are selling this hand cream together with **Beeswax Lip Balm**. We at the **CCJ Online Magazine** want to add our congratulations to the many already received to **Trish's Honey Products** and we wish her continued success into the future following on what, is so far, proving to be a remarkable year for a remarkable product.



Trish at Work with her Partners



Beeswax Hand Cream



Finalist in the Freefrom Skincare Awards 2021

## Trish's Honey Products Information and Contact

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Facebook Link: Click [HERE](#)

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## Bounce Back Recycling

*Innovation & Forward Thinking*



The Galway Traveller Movement CLG (GTM) was set up in 1994 as an independent **Traveller organisation** by Travellers and settled people in Galway with the ultimate aim to achieve **equality and self-determination** for the Traveller community in Galway. Since then, we have been a force in creating positive social change for Travellers with a strong emphasis on **mobilising Travellers** to work collectively to **challenge discrimination in all its forms**.

Our flagship social enterprise, Bounce Back Recycling, has been recycling mattresses in the **Connaught/Ulster** waste region since 2017. Our social enterprise activity is driven by the following mission which is to:

- **Increase employment** opportunities for Traveller men and women.
- **Develop a powerful model** of economic self-determination to inspire the wider community.
- **Reclaim the community's role** in environmental and economic sustainability.
- **Promote the visibility** of our work in order to challenge racism and discrimination.

In three short years, **BBR** has become the national leader in mattress recycling in **Ireland** and has expanded its operations from **County Galway** to cover twelve counties for domestic collections. We are now delighted to have received our **National Waste Collection Permit** which will enable us to collect from **commercial clients** throughout **Ireland**.

Bounce Back Recycling aims to divert as many mattresses away from landfill as possible. We work with a number of local authorities and have assisted with successful mattress amnesty days.

Once the mattresses are collected from our customers, they are brought back to our factory in Galway City where they are deconstructed by hand for recycling. It takes an average of **7.62 minutes** to break down a mattress, but this method produces a higher rate and quality of recyclable materials in comparison to mechanical shredding. The recyclable components (**steel, textiles, foams**) are then baled and reprocessed into the material markets. The recycled components from the mattresses are **used in various industries** such as steel manufacturing, textile manufacturing and carpet manufacturing.

Our work allows us to claim the space of enterprise and work and to empower our community to control our economic destiny. It is a model of economic development which is focused on promoting equality. We have reinvested our surpluses to deliver the following social impacts.

- ❖ GTM has delivered the 'Power of Participation' Level 7 Diploma which saw 24 members of the Traveller community, (15 women and 9 men), graduated in 2019.
- ❖ The project has won a *National AONTAS award* for its innovation.
- ❖ We have organised *Galway Traveller Pride Awards*, supported the Traveller Living History Exhibition, (with the Galway City Museum), and we produced *Misleor* – celebrating nomadic cultures in 2019, (the first of its kind in Ireland).



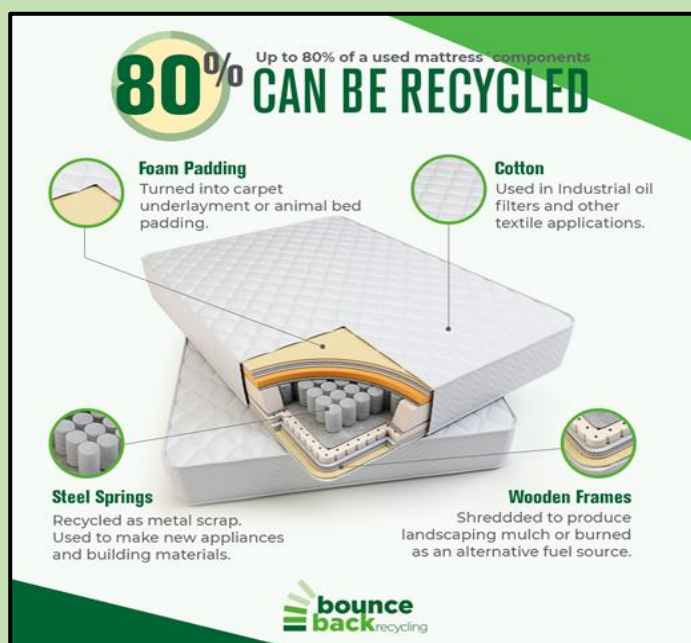
During **Covid**, we connected with **800** families in Galway city and county and delivered essential sanitation packs. Through our social enterprise, we take control of the narrative around Travellers and work, and we provide quality work to members of the Traveller community. Through our awards and publicity work, we **challenge prevailing discrimination towards Travellers**.

The model of Galway Traveller Movement's social enterprise activities (*First Class Insulation, Bounce Back Recycling*) featured as a key contributor at the first **National Social Enterprise Conference**, organised by **Department of Rural and Community Development** in November **2019**. Our work has contributed to case studies and is regarded as **a model of best practice** in social enterprise development. We participate in national policy development structures to ensure equality outcomes for Travellers in the area of enterprise and employment.

Bounce Back Recycling has diverted **50.000 mattresses** from landfill since **2017**. This has contributed to a greener and more inclusive economy by employing **14 members** of the **Traveller community** who manage and run the social enterprise. The social enterprise is committed to creating long term social, economic, and environmental impacts as well as promoting the visibility of their work to challenge racism and discrimination. BBR has delivered services to **12 local authorities** across the country and hopes to include more in **2021** to broaden their impacts. We have expanded our market to include household customers and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback on this service. In **2021** our work caught the attention of the media and the BBR Team have made appearances on the *RTE Six One News, The Ray D'Arcy*

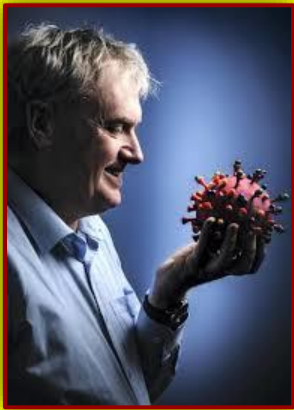
*Show* and in the *Irish Times*, to name but a few. Bounce Back Recycling has been nominated for **Green NGO of the Year 2021** at the **Green Awards** with the winner to be announced on **17<sup>th</sup> June** this year.

*"We have developed a powerful model that is enterprising for social change. We are reclaiming the Traveller community's role in recycling that contributes to Ireland's environmental and economic sustainability. We are delighted to be involved in Rethink Ireland's 'The Future is Social' campaign to help other social enterprises get established and get support. Social enterprises are well-positioned to deliver the right social innovation to their communities and this is important in the country's post Covid-19 recovery".*  
**Martin Ward – Manager, Bounce Back Recycling.**



**For Bookings/Queries:**  
**Online:** <https://bouncebackrecycling.ie/>  
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**Tel:** (091) 760 877  
**Facebook Click** [HERE](#)  
**Twitter:** [HERE](#)

**We have a bright future and aim to position BBR as a national brand and preferred partner with householders, County Councils, furniture shops & waste companies.**



## **Covid-19: What Now?**

*by Prof Luke O'Neill*

We have come such a long way with **COVID-19**. In some ways it seems years have passed since this all started and in other ways it has gone by in the blink of an eye. A

week can seem like a year, and a year a week. We all remember where we were when **Leo Varadkar** made his **St. Patrick's Day** speech saying the country was shutting down. And then we went through a reopening, another closing, another opening and the big close that happened because of the **December surge**. All through this I knew we would eventually beat the virus, because of all the great science that was going on. A key moment for me was in **November** when **Pfizer** announced the result of their clinical trial with their **vaccine against COVID-19**. It worked spectacularly well in the trial and that was subsequently borne out in real world data, first from **Israel** and then beyond. We now have **4 vaccines approved**, a remarkable achievement for the pharmaceutical industry. **All of them are very safe**, (despite the rare blood clots that can happen with the **AstraZeneca** and **Johnson and Johnson** vaccines), and all are **highly effective** at stopping people from getting severe disease and dying. That is actually the most important thing to watch for, they might differ in how well they protect from infection, but they all **break the chain** from being infected to getting severe disease.

The last remaining scientific question concerns the virus changing and turning

into what is called a '**Variant of Concern**'. There are **4 of these** but so far, the vaccines are holding up, and again are stopping people getting severe disease with any variant, including the latest, so-called, **Delta variant** that was first seen in **India**.

### **There are Three Things we Need to do When it comes to These Variants:**

- + **We must** hunt them down-detect them and find out where they are.
- + **We must** have universal vaccination-we need to get as many people vaccinated as possible in the world as soon as we can.
- + **We must** get ready for booster shots.

**Booster shots** will protect us even more as they get the immune system going even more strongly, and we might even **vaccinate against variants**. Not everyone again-just the older people and those who are vulnerable, just like we do with flu.

Because the vaccines are working so well, and because so many **Irish** people are happy to take them, **we can reopen our Society safely**.

**COVID-19** was all about stopping people getting sick and dying. That began with lockdown to protect people, but now it is because of vaccines shielding everyone, and that is exactly what they are doing. We are however not quite there yet, and we won't be until we have vaccinated every adult who wants to be vaccinated.

And that is happening. The prediction is that everyone will be **fully vaccinated by September** which will be a huge achievement indeed. Imagine – everyone walking around with a suit of armour on



against the virus, all protected. That's what we can look forward to now. Happily, when you get on a plane, (and that will come too), or go to a big event, you'll be wearing your armour, but it will be on the inside. You won't have to include it in your luggage allowance! That's what science has brought you and we should all celebrate because it has meant we are progressively getting our lives back again. We will keep a close eye on things in the coming months, and there might be one or two bumps along the way, but as ever together we will get there and look back on a period that will go down in history and which we will never ever forget.

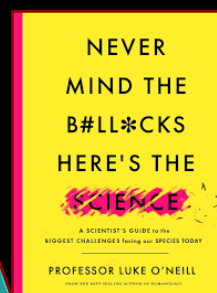


When you get your **COVID-19** vaccine you can now give a vaccine to someone in need by supporting **UNICEF** in the biggest vaccine procurement and distribution in history. Nobody is safe until everyone is safe and no child is safe until everyone they rely on is safe. With your support, **UNICEF** will deliver **2 billion COVID-19 vaccines** to the most vulnerable families, health workers and high-risk people on our planet.

For More Information:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Luke O'Neill is professor of biochemistry at the School of Biochemistry and Immunology in Trinity College Dublin and lives in Sandycove, Co. Dublin with his wife, fellow scientist, **Margaret Worrall**. They have two sons, Stevie, and Sam, who have both followed their parents into the medical world and are studying chemistry in Cambridge and Trinity, respectively. Luke has written three books including his latest, *Never Mind the B#ll\*cks Here's the Science*, which grapples with life's biggest questions and tells us what science has to say about them. He is also the lead singer in a band called *The Metabolics* who have performed for students and colleagues at the **Trinity Ball**.



If you have any comments on any article in this issue of our magazine or indeed any article you would like to submit or feel we should be covering, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to get in touch with Malcolm:  
[theccjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:theccjoffice@gmail.com)  
Or Telephone  
089 252 9885  
Visit us below at:



**Rethink Ireland's The Future is Social:**

Launch of the Social Enterprise Starter Guide

In the first of this series the Social Enterprise Starter Guide will be launched by Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland and George Jones, Chairman and Group Director, IPB Insurance.

More Information [HERE](#).

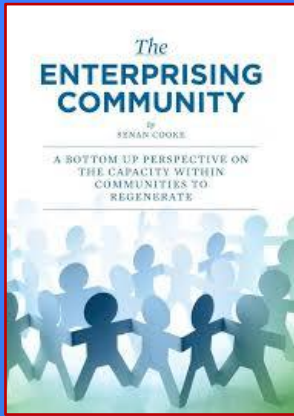
**'Build Better Together' Conference.**

'Rebuild Better Together'.

An online conference exploring co-operative responses to current economic and social challenges. Co-hosted by the Dublin Food Co-op this year the event will be held on Zoom & there will be an active chat function to make the day as interactive as possible.

More Information [HERE](#).

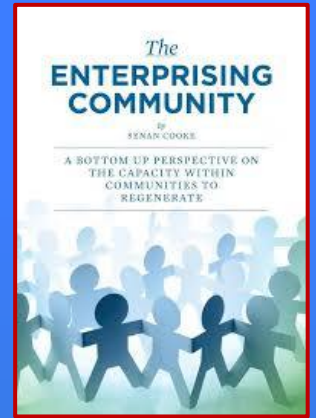
For more information on SERI and upcoming events click [HERE](#).



## ***The Enterprising Community***

**by Dr. Senan Cooke**

Senan has spent over 30 years directly involved in Social Enterprise, start-ups, consolidation, and expansion. He has consulted widely at home and overseas to produce this highly regarded book on social enterprise. The book is the go-to text for all those working in social enterprise in communities and for state agency staff who are supporting them.



**President Brian Mac Craith**  
-Dublin City University-

“As a community, we in DCU would argue that Ireland has a natural affinity with social enterprise. Indeed, we believe that we can become leaders in the development of social enterprise at a European level over the next decade”.



**Profs. Gerry McNamara & Joe O'Hara**  
-Dublin City University-

“The book illustrates a critically important issue for Irish society today, that of social entrepreneurship and provides readers with a roadmap for the development and enrichment of communities throughout our country and beyond”.



**Mr. Sean Kelly, -MEP-**

“Rural Ireland needs people; people need jobs. Jobs mean local enterprise, community, sporting, and cultural clubs. In this book, Senan outlines what has been achieved..... and more importantly, what can be achieved in the future”.

The Enterprising Community contains numerous case studies on rural and urban regeneration. It is the recognised text in third level colleges running relevant community development and rural regeneration programmes. To order your copy or avail of special student rates for the book, please contact **Malcolm at [theccjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:theccjoffice@gmail.com) or on 089 252 9885.**



## Rubizmo & Irish Rural Link by Brendan Mulry



**Irish Rural Link (IRL)**, formed in **1991**, is a national network of organisations and individuals campaigning for sustainable rural development in **Ireland and Europe**. **IRL**, a **non-profit** organisation, has grown significantly since its inception and now directly represents over **600 community groups** with a combined **membership of 25,000**. The network provides a structure through which rural groups and individuals, representing disadvantaged rural communities, can articulate their common needs and priorities, share their experiences, and present their case to policymakers at local, national and **European Level**. Irish Rural Link is the only group represented at the national social partnership talks solely representing rural communities' interests through the **Community and Voluntary Pillar**. **CEO of IRL, Seamus Boland**, was elected as **President of Group III (Diversity**

### **IRL's Overall Aim is to:**

- ❖ To help support viable communities in rural Ireland where every person would have meaningful work, adequate income, and social services, and where infrastructures needed for sustainable development would be in place.
- ❖ To highlight, publicise and respond to key rural issues through operational projects and programmes.

**Group)** of the European Economic and Social Committee and took up this position in **October 2020**.

### **About RUBIZMO**

Irish Rural Link are one of 16 partners across 11 EU countries involved in an EU Horizon 2020 funded **Project– RUBIZMO- Replicable Business Models for Modern Rural Economies**. This is a three-year project, which began in May 2018. It aims to identify the vital ingredients for developing entrepreneurship and successful business models across the sectors of food and agriculture, bio-based value chains and ecosystem services and in turn generate jobs and growth in rural areas.

To achieve this, Rubizmo will analyse business models from hundreds of previous funded and private enterprise initiatives. By examining the reasons for their success – or failure – in the context of their collaboration and support networks, the project will discover and share the key ingredients to recreate innovative business ideas all over Europe.

The RUBIZMO success factors will be shared with a wide number of rural actors through a set of practical tools supporting collaboration, entrepreneurship, and business development in rural communities. In addition, active coaching and peer-to-peer training will be provided to rural entrepreneurs and networks to instigate sustainable business transformation.

Irish Rural Link's main role within the project is to deliver training to entrepreneurs, farmers, and intermediaries and design and implement a train-the-

trainer scheme based on the tools and modules of Rubizmo. They are also involved in the testing and validating the tools developed with their National Stakeholder Panel and are the lead in the testing and validating of Business Tool 2 which looks at guidelines for the supportive business environment.

### Rubizmo Innovative Business Awards

As part of the Mid-term conference of the Rubizmo project, which was held in **October 2019** at the **European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels**, an **Innovative Business Awards** competition took place. This was open to the public to vote for the most inspiring business case in each of the three categories – food, bio-based value chain and ecosystem services. **Eighteen business cases** in total were put forward – six in each category. **Dunhill Ecopark** was the **only Irish Business** case nominated for an Award in the **Ecosystem Services category**. The competition was very close between Dunhill Ecopark and the winner of the category, **Comana Crafts Village, Romania**, with only a few votes between them.



Seamus Boland, CEO of Irish Rural Link



*Irish Rural Link*  
*Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann*

For information on EU Horizon 2020 Funded Project, (Rubizmo).

Click [HERE](#)

For more on Irish Rural Link, and upcoming events,

Click [HERE](#)

## Opportunities With An Cosán



- **Special Needs Assisting (SNA) course. QQI Level 5 and QQI Level 6** for anyone interested in upskilling or gaining knowledge and skills needed need for working in a SNA role in your organisation. Online delivery and starts July 6<sup>th</sup> and August 3<sup>rd</sup>, respectively.
- **Adult Education Calendar commencing in September 2021.** We are currently accepting applications to our full range of Access, Further or Higher Education Courses starting in September. **Please note** Deadline for H.E. programmes is Friday July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Deadline for Access and Further Ed is later in the summer.

Full details on our website [HERE](#)

**Job Alert-Join our team:** We're hiring for a number of exciting roles to join our growing team, including Adult Education manager, Finance manager, Communications & Information officer & Higher Education Community Educator.

Find out more and apply [HERE](#)

**Online Open Day Information Sessions: Every Friday at 11 a.m. To Attend register [HERE](#)**

**View our latest Pathways E-Zine online and sign up for future issues [HERE](#)**



## Social Enterprise Profile

### *Equal Ireland by Yvonne Kieran Tully*



EQUAL Ireland Education Research and Related Services Co. Ltd is a ‘**not for profit**’ charitable trust trading under the name **EQUAL Ireland (EI)**. EQUAL Ireland was founded in **Ireland** in **2001**

by **IBEC, SIPTU, Solas (Then FAS) and Lionra** – a Higher Education Network of seven third level colleges for the Borders, Midlands, and West region in addition to a range of community organisations and representative bodies.

The founding executive director, **Eddie Higgins** and the academic and research director, **Nuala Keher**, of EI, (*pictured right*), were both actively engaged in **Adult Education**, prior to establishing EI. They strongly believed that access to accredited education for working people and women could be improved and they had plans and ideas as to how to do just that.

[The EQUAL Community Initiative of the European Social Fund](#) presented the opportunity to obtain sufficient funding to put in place an accredited 3<sup>rd</sup> level programme specifically designed to meet the actual needs of adult learners. Research carried out among **SIPTU** members and Community Activists identified the following needs of adult learners; local delivery, flexibility, exam free, cost effective and time effective. With this in mind EQUAL Ireland was founded.

**What Equal Ireland do.** EQUAL Ireland’s charitable purpose and objectives include the design, development and delivery of flexible innovative accredited education and training programmes aimed especially but not exclusively at those adults who, for whatever reason, missed out on earlier educational opportunities in life. The organisation seeks to provide adults with a second chance for learning.

Its charitable activities are the provision of 3<sup>rd</sup> level education for disadvantaged groups,



those without access to 3<sup>rd</sup> level education and women who took time out of the workplace to rear their children. Through providing accredited education and training programmes in local settings, EI is driven by one single public goal, to play their part in making the world a better place for all.

### **Equal Ireland**

**Values.** A key value underpinning EI activities is

**equality**, which is demonstrated in its work with rural communities, the Traveller



community, women

outside the workforce, migrants, and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Other hallmarks of EI are quality, affordability, and practicality. All programmes are accredited, are most often funded, or subsidised and can be paid for in instalments, and with an overarching focus on business, enterprise and community development, learners can enjoy an exclusively practical learning experience.

EI strive to build productive relationships with learners, tutors, and the communities and enterprises with which they engage, shaping lives and making changes, wanting to help people overcome challenges faced in the wider society. Many of these challenges are very much in line with the organisation’s values and ethos, such as the broad struggle for equality, unemployment, quality of life issues, rural regeneration, access to education and self-development. Essentially, EI is a group of people helping other people to further develop themselves, so, as to make their lives happier and more secure in their local communities and in today’s everchanging society.

**The Equality Statue, (pictured below).** So strong are the values of equality in EI, the statue *'Equality Emerging'* was inspired by the founders and current directors, Eddie, and Nuala. It was created by **John Behan**, presented, and unveiled opposite the **Cathedral in the City of Galway in November 2001.**



The statue is dedicated to people everywhere who are struggling for equality and to those suffering because of its absence. The emerging figure represents the force for equality, the wall, those people, and systems in opposition. The sculpture depicts equality both in a celebration of achievement whilst also acknowledging the struggle that still lies ahead for people. At the base of the statue is the simple dedication verse below, inspired by the work of EI and the concept of both the equality emerging statue and that of the statue of liberty in **New York.**

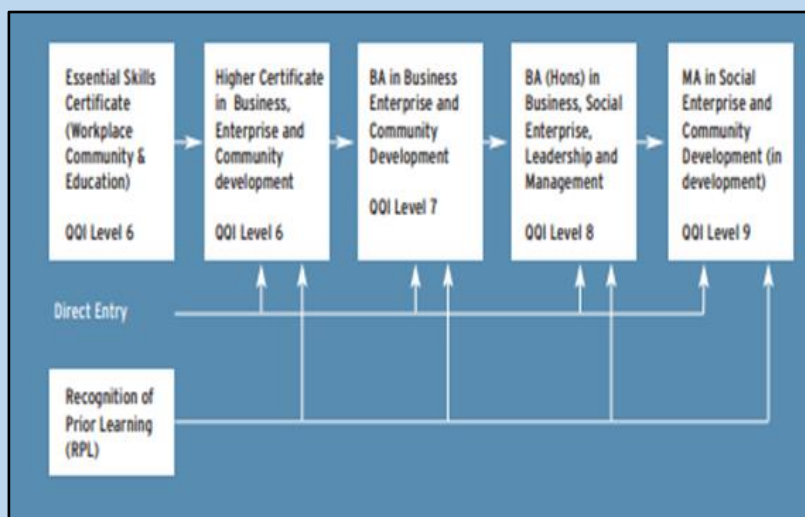
**'Equality Is but Difference- Respected and Celebrated'.**

**What Equal Ireland Offer.** EI is made up of a dedicated hands-on team, from its executive director, academic and research director to administration, programme coordinator and programme tutors. The team offer useful practical programmes for adults enabling them to acquire qualifications at **QQI Levels 6, 7, 8 and 9** or in other words, at **Higher Certificate, Ordinary BA, Honours BA, and Masters Levels** as can be seen on the chart opposite. The subjects they teach include business, social enterprise, leadership, management, and community development.

Programmes are delivered locally and more recently during Covid 19 online on a part time basis. These programmes are accredited by Athlone and Letterkenny Institutes of Technology.

EI believe in gaining value for prior learning and experience and getting Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). With this process, EI's goal is to promote great opportunities for those with prior certified or uncertified relevant learning and experience as depicted in the chart below. EI provides professional 'one to one' support in the form of a mentor to those availing of this process. Utilising the RPL process can:

- Give credit for previous work learning and experience.
- Facilitate advanced entry onto programmes.
- Eliminate unnecessary repeat learning by facilitating exemptions from modules within programmes, and
- Reduce cost in terms of time and money for the learner.



EI are constantly striving to find new strategies for dealing with old challenges adult learners face especially; time, costs, travel, motivation, and support in a bid to fulfil its core mission and create potential social and economic change. As a result, EI address inequality and social exclusion by providing cost and time effective second chance educational opportunities and programmes for adults who require them.

They do this in a number of ways, (see below).





- Saving time and travel by delivering blended programmes locally/online throughout Ireland and on a part time basis.
- EI is a 'not for profit' organisation, so costs are kept to an absolute minimum.
- EI specialises in adult learning and fully appreciates the fact that people live busy lives as well as having their learning ambitions.
- In particular EI understand that a return to learning can be a daunting undertaking and that from time to time a person will need personal encouragement, help, and support, which is something EI are always ready and willing to provide.
- The EI adult learning model combines friendly accessibility with supportive respect for learners and their circumstances, which has resulted in positive life changing outcomes for hundreds of learners who otherwise might not have re-engaged with education.

After each academic year the learner achieves a certification, the learner can use this learning to gain entry into another course or take time out and recommence again on the EI adult learning pathway when they wish to do so. Each completed year qualifies them for a certificate/diploma or degree. It is very flexible and very much lead by the learner in terms of length of study.

EI's most important partnerships are their long-term collaborative agreements with **Athlone** and **Letterkenny Institutes of Technology**. They also depend on a wide range of local and national partnerships, and associations which provide invaluable assistance both in terms of funding and participant recruitment.

### **Why choose to study with Equal Ireland?**

Having gone back to education in a bid to retrain and pursue a career change I can safely say from my own personal experience that EI is an amazing organisation. The service they provide is much more than that of an

educational kind, I have met amazing lecturers, inspirational learners and most importantly have made lifelong friends on my journey with EI. When you choose to study with EI you are not a number, the service is personal, it is based on success for all, '*people developing people*', one of which is brought to you either locally in the community or in the comfort of your home via zoom.

The programmes are cost effective, often subsidised, and run on a flexible timetable. What really worked for me was there were no exams, courses are taught through blended learning with grades based on assignments and not exams. Don't just take my word for it, I took the liberty to get in touch with **Caroline O' Shaughnessy**, an adult learner with EI who is currently completing her BA Honours Degree and she had this to say; *"EQUAL Ireland is so much more than a learning facility. They truly want everyone to reach their full potential. They build you up at your pace, show you what you are capable of. On reflection 2017 was the year that changed my life as this was the year, I enrolled for a BA in Business, Enterprise and Community Development with EQUAL Ireland"*. Caroline like most others returning to education in adulthood was very open and honest about her past experiences with education; *"I always thought I wasn't capable of getting a degree mainly due to what I had been told during my teenage years and because of this I was hesitant in applying for a BA in Business, Enterprise and Community Development with EQUAL Ireland. I didn't apply to get a 'Degree'; I wasn't clever enough for that. I applied hoping to meet some local people, I'm not from the area and the workshops were in the town I live. Hopefully, I would be able to complete year 1 and get a certificate. I bit the bullet and signed up to the course"*.

Caroline's heartfelt commentary of EI is almost palpable in her next comment; *"Receiving my first grade and feedback was the first step on my pathway to self-belief. I couldn't believe how good I did and Nuala saying, 'you are very capable of completing this course'. At present I am enrolled in a BA (Hons) in Social Enterprise, Leadership and Management with EQUAL Ireland and later on this year I hope to establish a Social Enterprise to help disabled people become*

*self-employed. This is all thanks to the support and encouragement I receive from EQUAL Ireland and their tutors. To anyone thinking about enrolling for an EQUAL Ireland course; Do it – you won't regret it".*

In a bid to provide you with a wider perspective of EI as an organisation offering a second chance to those who for whatever reason missed out on it in the past, I caught up with one of the tutors at EI, **Eilis Biggs** and she had this to say about EI:

*"I have been working for EQUAL Ireland for the past 10 years as a tutor facilitator. In that time, I have seen so many amazing people come through the course. People who have started their own business, who have become agents of change in their communities and who have made a huge impact to themselves and their communities".* Eilis continues, *"Many people coming back to education later in life have a fear around the academic bit, they have an incredible amount of knowledge and life experience which they often don't value enough because they don't have the bit of paper to back it up. They are often nervous about the time and financial commitment when they are juggling work family caring and so many other responsibilities. Eddie and Nuala have done so much to help participants overcome these barriers. Each student is met where they are at, encouraged and supported, they are treated with respect and each participants knowledge and experience is highlighted and valued".*

*The degree is the same as any university degree, but the experience is so much more. Anyone who would like to earn a degree can do it with EQUAL Ireland and they will be with you every step of the way.*

**-Eilis Biggs, Tutor at EI-**

#### **Eddie and Nuala's hopes for the future:**

*"We would hope and are working towards the continuation and strengthening of the organisation so that it will remain as a useful vehicle for the non-traditional adult learner for many years to come".*

#### **Advice to those considering going back to education:**

*"If you have lived a life, want to gain a 3<sup>rd</sup> Level qualification, and have a reasonable level of determination about it, then, EQUAL Ireland is a really good opportunity. Get in Touch!"*

**With thanks to all who contributed to this article. If you would like more information on EQUAL Ireland's key programmes, please see the links below, top of page 23.**

***The purpose of adult education is to help them learn, not to teach them all you know and thus stop them from learning.***

**-Carl Rogers-**

#### **Eddie and Nuala noted the following as proud moments among their most notable successes to date:**

- ✓ Over 1000 people, mostly women, have passed through EI with 3<sup>rd</sup> level qualifications, which, without EQUAL Ireland, many would not have achieved.
- ✓ The downstream effect of these most successful non-traditional adult learners on their friends, children, family, work mates etc., which undoubtedly encouraged others to venture back into education.
- ✓ The development of our programmes from QQI Level 6 to Level 8.
- ✓ Our commitment to Recognition of Prior Learning and its real value to people wanting to get back into education without having to relearn all their work, home, and social life and experiences had already taught them well.
- ✓ The EQUALITY EMERGING Statue in Galway, Ireland's only statue dedicated specifically to the ongoing struggle for equality.



START NOW AND IN 12 MONTHS

THIS COULD BE YOU!



For more information on EQUAL Ireland's key programmes just click the links below.

- ✚ [Essential Skills Certificate \(Workplace, Community & Education\)](#)
- ✚ [Higher Certificate in Business Enterprise & Community Development](#)
- ✚ [BA in Business Enterprise & Community Development](#)
- ✚ [BA \(Hons\) in Social Enterprise Leadership & Management](#)

Website Click [HERE](#)

Email: [applications@equalireland.ie](mailto:applications@equalireland.ie)

Telephone: 00353 (0)91 778682

Text: 00353 (0)87 223 7231

Post: Building 8, 6D, Liosban Business Park, Tuam Road, Galway.

**Spotlight: Focusing on the Future**  
*Developing & Demonstrating 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Skills by Emer O'Keeffe*



Proactively identifying a skills gap, engaging in opportunities to upskill, and monitoring CPD are becoming a necessary part and parcel of all professions. As our students approach a new world of work and education, they will now more than ever benefit from opportunities to develop and demonstrate essential competencies – the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help students thrive in the **21st Century**.

Specifically designed for **Transition Year and Senior Cycle** students, **Spotlight** provides a skills development programme that helps students to improve their ability to think and learn, to communicate, connect and work with others, to increase their personal and professional effectiveness, to enhance their use of

digital technology, and to **embrace lifelong learning**.

**Spotlight weaves curriculum content, skills practice, reflection, and assessment into manageable learning modules such as:**

- Innovation
- Analysing Information
- Adaptability
- Work-Life Balance
- Interpersonal Communication
- Selecting Information
- Digital Communication
- Leadership
- Building Relationships
- Presenting Information.

**Engaging Content**

The Spotlight programme can be used on a whole-school basis and easily integrated **into existing or new elements** of Transition Year and Senior Cycle. Spotlight employs **novel content delivery** and a diverse range of student experiences. The use of **engaging rich media**, such as animation and video, acts as a key instructional feature. Allowing for the need for flexibility, the modules can be



delivered in a blended learning, flipped classroom or fully online environment.

### **Immersive Learning**

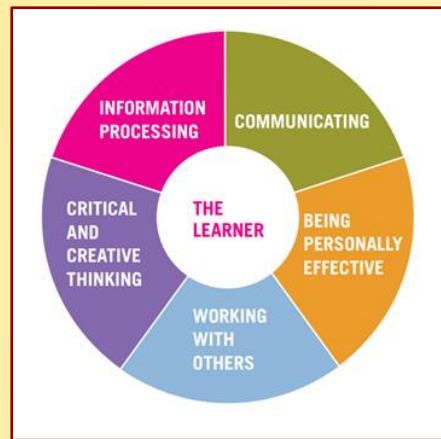
Through Spotlight, students engage in self-directed reflection, planning, monitoring, evaluation and demonstration of their learning and progress. These features empower students to use their own initiative, learn at their own pace, actively put skills into practice, and tell their own story.

The teacher acts as facilitator of the learning; providing feedback, controlling the pace, and supporting students in meaningful and authentic engagement with the material. School's award digital badges to their students based on the evidence of learning that has been submitted. These micro-credentials can be shared by students with future employers and college personnel to provide a sophisticated picture of their full capability.

### **Evidence-Based**

Spotlight is grounded in **evidence-based research**. The overall curriculum framework has been developed in collaboration with research innovation centres and academic leaders from **Trinity College Dublin, DCU, and Maynooth University**. The content is created with an expert team from various fields; higher & further education, career guidance, teaching, occupational psychology, and subject knowledge experts. The first of its kind, Spotlight offers a truly engaging and educational solution for schools to initiate a curriculum-linked skills development programme with learning outcomes in line with the **NCCA Senior Cycle Key Skills** framework.

Spotlight is spearheaded by **Emer O'Keeffe, a Career Guidance**



**Counsellor** and teacher with over **12 years' experience** at both second and third level. It has been developed in response to the need to help prepare students for life outside of school and is currently partnering and providing classroom lessons on the **NCGE / Department of Education Pilot Programme 'Re-imagining Work Experience'**.



For more information on Spotlight please visit us by clicking **[HERE](#)**

Feel free also to pass this information to a school you are connected to.

Email: [eok@spotlightskills.com](mailto:eok@spotlightskills.com)

Telephone: 00353 (0)87 961 0975



*Preparation for life, education,  
and work.*