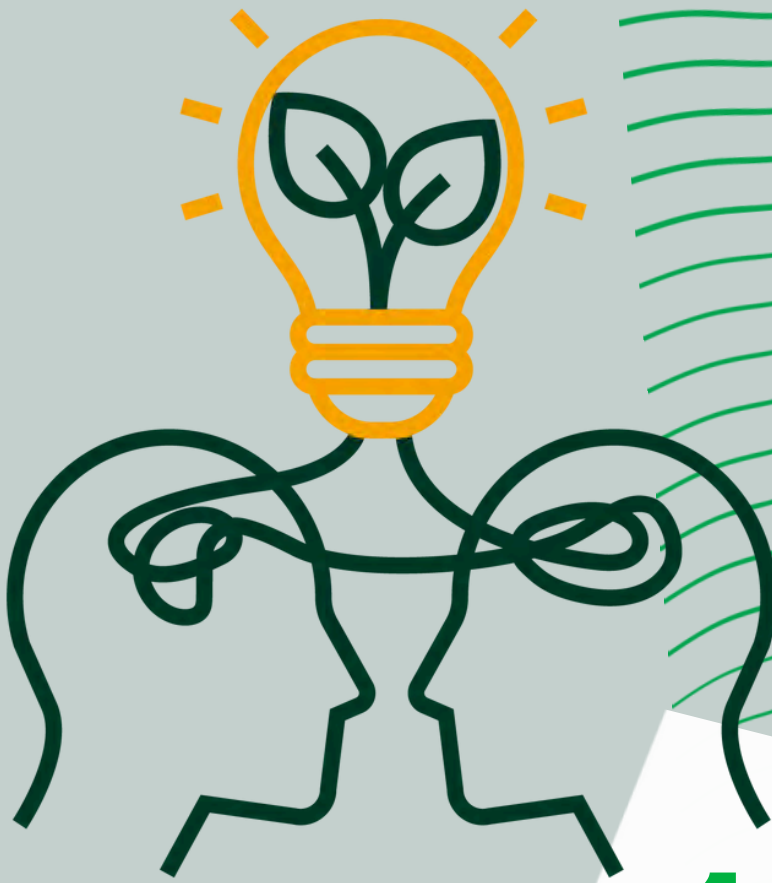


UL Citizens' Assembly



1 May
2025

Shaping our Shared Future

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015, leaders from 193 countries came together to face the future. And what they saw was daunting. Famines. Drought. Wars. Plagues. Poverty. Not just in some faraway place, but in their own cities and towns and villages. They knew things didn't have to be this way. They knew we had enough food to feed the world, but that it wasn't getting shared. They knew there were medicines for HIV and other diseases, but they cost a lot. They knew that earthquakes and floods were inevitable, but that the high death tolls were not. They also knew that billions of people worldwide shared their hope for a better future. So leaders from these countries created a plan called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is one of the leading organizations working to fulfil the SDGs by the year 2030. Present in nearly 170 countries and territories, they help nations make the Goals a reality.



For further information go to:

www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/



The UL Citizens' Assembly has established itself as a pioneering approach to university–community collaboration, placing the voices of Limerick's citizens at the heart of the UL research and innovation agenda.

Now in its third year, the Assembly has evolved into an annual platform for showcasing innovative, community-focused projects from UL researchers that align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Assembly brings together citizens from across Limerick city and county to review, discuss, and select academic proposals for financial support with the potential to drive meaningful local change.

By combining expert insight with democratic decision-making, the Assembly offers a powerful model of engaged scholarship—fostering partnerships that benefit both the university and the wider community. It also serves as a compelling touchstone for researchers to focus more on the “why” of their research, in addition to the “what” and re-emphasises the direct relevance of UL research to the people of Limerick.

I would like to commend the UL Engage team, and all who have supported the UL Citizens' Assembly in bringing it to fruition again this year and I eagerly await both the events of the day and to see the successful projects unfold over the course of the year...

Professor Colin Fitzpatrick
Vice-President Global and Community Engagement

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Welcome



Welcome to our third UL Citizens' Assembly! As with previous years, we've been privileged to work with a wonderful group of community collaborators who have all helped to create a great day out. We hope you'll enjoy catching up with on-going and new community-based work in UL and that you'll have fun judging which you like the best. By the end of today three projects will win cash prizes but nobody really loses at an event like this: we all benefit from the time and space to make new connections and consider future collaborations. Thank you for coming. I hope you have a lovely day.

Maura Adshead, Head of Community Engagement, UL

I think it's important that young people's voices are included in decisions made for Limerick city and county because we are the face and shape of Ireland's future. We bring forward fresh and innovative ideas promoting progression towards a brighter and inclusive future. Our fresh perspectives are changing old assumptions leading to wiser choices made for Limerick. We are delighted to be involved in the UL Citizens Assembly, it's a great day for Limerick.

Heather Dickinson, President, Limerick Comhairle na nÓg



LCEN are delighted to be collaborating on this event: it's a unique event for the citizens of Limerick; bringing together Limerick people and giving them a real influence over the SDG missions that the University will invest in for Limerick's future. For me, the best part of the Assembly is not the day – though I'm already excited for that – but outcomes that we will see as a result of today. Limerick PPN are looking forward to the implementation of the projects and to staying involved as we move towards a more sustainable future together.

Patrick Fitzgerald, Limerick Community Engagement Network

The Public Participation Network Limerick are delighted to once again be working with UL Engage on this, the third Citizen's Assembly. As coordinator for the PPN in Limerick I am always seeking meaningful collaboration opportunities for our Member groups. UL's commitment to community engagement and the Sustainable Development Goals in their research aligns with the goals of our PPN remit. Previous year's events were fantastic and we look forward to seeing the successful projects being implemented.

Lorraine Broderick, PPN Limerick



Agenda

- 10.00am Registration, refreshments & chat
- 10.30am Welcome
- 10.40am **Panel A: 3 x project presentations**
- Break - your chance to chat and review
- 11.45am **Panel B: 3 x project presentations**
- Break - your chance to chat and review
- 12.50pm Lunch - food & music
- 1.45pm **Panel C: 3 x project presentations**
- Break - your chance to chat and review
- 14.50pm Balloting - refreshments served
- 3.15pm Counting of votes
- 4.00pm Winners announced

What is a Citizens' Assembly?



- A 'safe and respectful space' for citizens to come together and discuss SDG focused actions for Limerick.
- A means to strengthen democracy and involve citizens in meaningful decision-making.
- An opportunity for collective learning and experimentation.

What must Assembly Members do?

The job of Assembly members is to choose three projects that will receive a €10,000 award. Assembly members are looking for a smart project – it doesn't have to be really complicated – but it should:

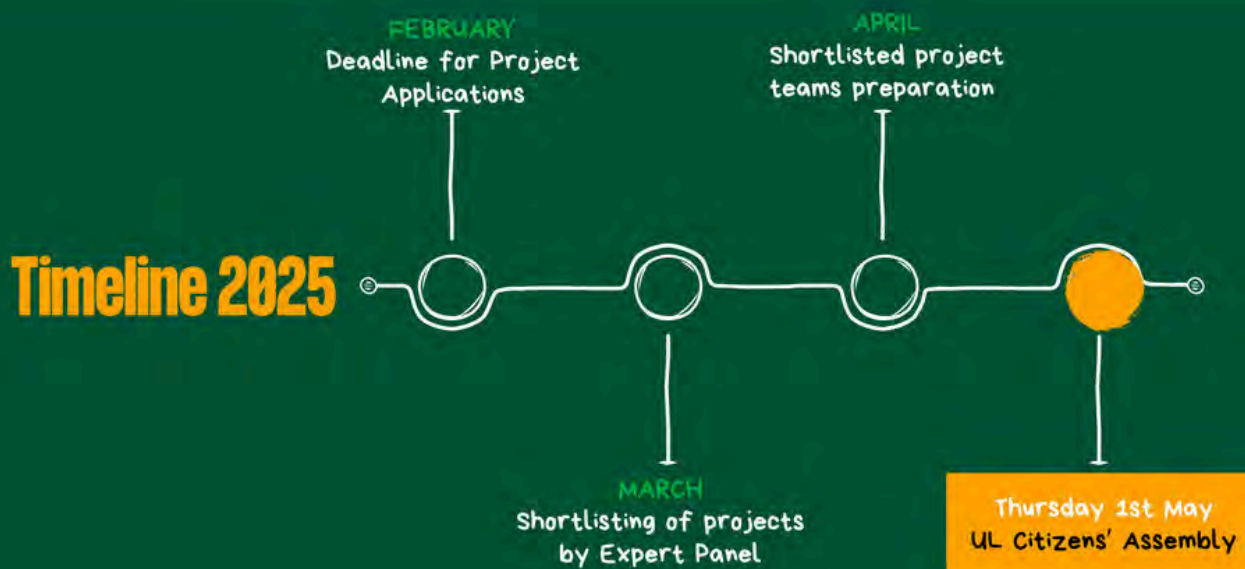
- Be focused on one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Include a clear plan for how the project will make an impact in Limerick
- Provide details about how the engagement envisaged for the plan will continue through the life-time of the project

The Assembly is arranged in a 'world café' style, leaving space in the schedule for participants to share their thoughts about the project presentations before casting their vote.

Who makes up the Citizens' Assembly?

Our Assembly is comprised of stakeholders and citizens from Limerick city and county, taking representation from all six Limerick municipal districts, based on county demographics and principles of inclusivity. Limerick's Public Participation Network (PPN) and Comhairle na nÓg have collaborated to ensure the Assembly is as representative as it can be, supported by Limerick City and County Council and Limerick Community Educational Network (LCEN).

The process



Expert panel

Chaired by the Vice President Global and Community Engagement, the expert panel comprises six representatives from UL and six external panel members reflecting public, private and community sectors and relevant experience in public engagement and educational outreach, the Expert Panel short-listed the projects for participation in the Assembly and gave their feedback on all project proposals.



Kevin Burke

Department of Mathematics and Statistics, UL



Andrea Deverell

Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation, UL



Patrick Fitzgerald

Limerick Community Education Network



Prof. Colin Fitzpatrick (Chair)

VP Global & Community Engagement, UL



Liz Gabbett

Maigue Rivers Trust Project Officer



Simon Jennings

Executive Scientist, Limerick City & County Council



Lorna Kerin

Manager, Participatory Health Research Unit, UL



Niall O'Callaghan

Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP)



Seamus O'Connor

Limerick City and County Council



Sharone O'Loughlin

Research Funding Manager, UL Research Office



Prof. Helen Phelan

Irish World Academy of Music & Dance (IWAMD)

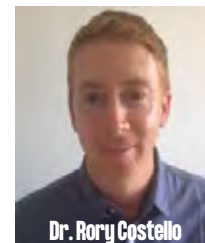


John Real

Limerick Youth Services

The voting process

The counting of votes this year will be overseen by Dr Rory Costello and Kevin Saude, from the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Rory was one of the winners in last year's Assembly and is responsible for developing for www.whichcandidate.ie This brilliant website and app invites all candidates to answer a short survey on a range of topical issues and then offers users the chance to answer the same questions to see who is their closest match.



When he's not creating voting apps to help people vote, Rory's research focuses on electoral and legislative politics in Europe, with a particular focus on Ireland and on the European Union. Before coming to UL in 2011, Rory worked at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and at the London School of Economics and Political Science. As well as research on the European Parliament, the division of power among EU institutions, bicameralism, political representation, and coalition formation, Rory's research also measures how many promises our politicians keep!



Kevin is an outgoing doctoral researcher working under the supervision of Dr. Rory Costello, UL on the causes of rising antipathy towards political parties in recent decades in Europe, and their consequences on how people vote. His proficiency in data analysis and keen research interest in democracy recently led him to collaborate with Prof. Jane Suiter, DCU.

How does the voting work?

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation (PR) is used throughout Ireland to create as close a relationship as possible between the proportion of votes cast and the election winners. In the unlikely event that everybody voting made the same first choice, this system uses second and third preferences to determine the runners up with the most support.

Using this system, the project names are listed on the ballot sheet in alphabetical order. The voter places a number one beside their first preference project, a number two beside their second, and so on.

In order to be selected, projects must reach a pre-determined quota, calculated by adding one to the sum reached by dividing the total number of valid votes by the total number seats plus one.







$$\text{Quota} = \left[\frac{\text{Total number of valid votes}}{\text{Number of Awards} + 1} \right] + 1$$







A project that reaches this quota is automatically elected. Where the project registers more than the necessary quota, the 'surplus vote' is reallocated to the other projects according to voter preferences. This ensures that the surplus votes for projects are not wasted. If no project reaches the quota at the 'first count', the project with the least votes is eliminated from the poll and their second preference votes are transferred to the remaining projects in the 'second count'. These counts continue until enough projects meet the necessary quota to be elected.







Projects







At the end of the day you will be provided with a ballot sheet in order to list your preferences for receipt of the three funding awards, starting with your most favourite project (1) and going down in order of preference from 1-9. These will be counted using the same proportional voting system used for Irish elections. A short explainer for how the system will work for the Assembly is provided on page 7. With this in mind, you may find these pages useful to make notes about each of the presentations as you watch them during the day.







Score Sheets







	ARISE- Activity and Recreation in an Inclusive Sensory Environment						Notes	
		1	2	3	4	5		
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick							
	Engagement / Collaboration							
	Sustainable partnership / project							
Total score:								







	Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas						Notes	
		1	2	3	4	5		
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick							
	Engagement / Collaboration							
	Sustainable partnership / project							
Total score:								







	Design a Sustainable Eco Village in Ireland 2050						Notes	
		1	2	3	4	5		
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick							
	Engagement / Collaboration							
	Sustainable partnership / project							
Total score:								

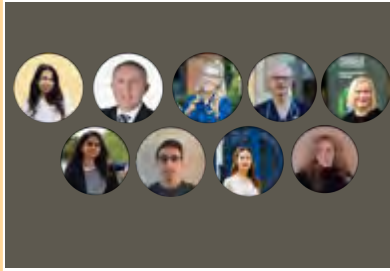





	Exploring the Potential of Music Therapy in Chronic Pain Treatment						Notes	
		1	2	3	4	5		
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick							
	Engagement / Collaboration							
	Sustainable partnership / project							
Total score:								

	Growing Resilience, Wellbeing and Confidence Together in Southill	    	Notes				
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick						
	Engagement / Collaboration						
	Sustainable partnership / project						
Total score:							

	Lullaby Leaf: Community Arts Residency at the Irish World Academy	    	Notes				
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick						
	Engagement / Collaboration						
	Sustainable partnership / project						
Total score:							

	PRIME – Progression Risks/Resilience in Marginalised Environments	    	Notes				
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick						
	Engagement / Collaboration						
	Sustainable partnership / project						
Total score:							

	ROVs in STEM Education: Hands on Learning for Schools	    	Notes				
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick						
	Engagement / Collaboration						
	Sustainable partnership / project						
Total score:							

	SCOPE – Sustainable Healthcare for Population Demographics	    	Notes				
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Benefits / Impact for Limerick						
	Engagement / Collaboration						
	Sustainable partnership / project						
Total score:							

ARISE – Activity and Recreation in an Inclusive Sensory Environment

Exercise and recreation are fundamental to good health and well-being across the lifespan. Older people and people with disabilities experience barriers to accessing suitable exercise and recreation opportunities. We will bring people with a variety of expertise together to co-design an inclusive outdoor activity and recreation space to support health and well-being for all members of our society.



Professor Rose Galvin (UL), Michaela Downey (Parent), Lara Grufferty (Dóchas Midwest Autism Support), Dr Cristiano Storni, Tanya McGarry & Dr Michelle O'Donoghue (UL)

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK | **UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK**
 Dóchas Midwest Autism Support | U.L. Trinity

UL Citizens' Assembly

ARISE
 Activity and Recreation in an Inclusive Sensory Environment

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
10 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Issue
 The needs of young people and adults with disabilities, people recovering from illness, and older people are not sufficiently considered in the design of outdoor spaces. Physical activity has positive impact on health, wellbeing and social connections (Active Disability Ireland 2022).

The Vision
 We will develop a proposal for a first-of-its-kind outdoor activity and recreation space designed for all members of our society. This space will offer opportunities for exercise and to connect with nature. The space will feature state of the art interactive interfaces, installations, visualisations and ambient displays.

The Project
 Phase 1: Engage with stakeholders and domain experts to gather requirements and insights on their experiences of outdoor activity.
 Phase 2: Host a design workshop, with experts in architecture, design, sport science, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, disability neurodiversity, older age and alternative and augmentative communication.
 Phase 3: Re-engage with stakeholders to review and comment on the draft design proposal.

The Results
 Detailed design proposal to be presented to Limerick City & County Council for an inclusive outdoor activity and recreation space that outlines the functional, financial, legal and social requirements of this much-needed space.
 Additional Outputs:
 - Academic paper & infographic on engagement with stakeholders in Phase 1;
 - Seminars from Phase 2 available to members of the public;
 - Findings and details available in an open access format for others to utilize;
 - Policy brief that is directly relevant to Healthy Ireland.

The Team
 Project ARISE brings people with a variety of expertise and backgrounds together to co-design this inclusive outdoor space. The project has been developed in partnership between the Autism@UL Special Interest Group, Dóchas Midwest Autism Support and UL's Age Friendly University Committee. Niall Collins, TD for Limerick County, is a supporter of the ARISE project.
 Project Team Members: Dr. Michelle O'Donoghue (Speech and Language Therapy), Dr. Cristiano Storni (Interaction Design), Dr. Sean Healy (Physical Education and Sports Sciences), Prof. Rose Galvin (Physiotherapy), Tanya McGarry (Occupational Therapy), Cyril Killen (Centre Manager for Dóchas Midwest Autism Support), Michaela Downey (Parent representative from Catherine McAuley School).

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK | **Dóchas**
 Midwest Autism Support

Logic model ARISE - Activity and Recreation in an Inclusive Sensory Environment

Situation Analysis Exercise and recreation is fundamental to good health and well-being (physical, mental, social). Older people and people with disabilities experience barriers to accessing activity and recreation opportunities. One in five people in Ireland (22% of the population) report having a disability (CSO 2023). People aged 60 or over represent one in four adults in Ireland (CSO 2023). Physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (WHO 2010). Limerick does not have an outdoor facility that meets the needs of all its citizens.



Inputs Autism@UL Special Interest Group - comprises individuals and organisations from UL and the broader community. Dr Michelle O'Donoghue, Health Research Institute. Dr Cristiano Storni – Interaction Design. Dr Sean Healy, Physical Activity for Health Research Centre. Professor Rose Galvin, Aging Research Centre. Tanya McGarry, Occupational Therapist. Cyril Killeen, Centre Manager for Dóchas Midwest Autism Support. Michaela Downey, Parent representative, Catherine McAuley School. UL Age Friendly Committee – promotes participation for all. Niall Collins, TD.



Activities / Outputs Collaborative research with community stakeholders at every project stage. Insights on stakeholder requirements for an inclusive outdoor activity and recreation space. A detailed proposal for an inclusive outdoor activity and recreation space that meets community-driven needs and that outlines the functional, financial, legal and social requirements of this much-needed space. Publicly accessible webinars from experts relating to universal design, play, inclusion and the relationship between architecture and neurodiversity. Policy brief to inform evidence-based policies.



Short-term Outcomes Improved understanding of the barriers and enablers people experience when accessing outdoor activity and recreation opportunities. Dissemination of a co-produced list of requirements for an outdoor activity and recreation space in an inclusive sensory environment. Publication of a policy brief to influence policy at a local and national level. Enhanced collaboration between university and community groups. Building a local network focused on reducing the marginalisation people can experience when accessing outdoor activity and recreation.



Long-term Outcomes Sustainable Development Goals 3, 10 & 11: addressing good health and wellbeing, reduced inequalities and sustainable cities and communities. Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028: informing how to support people from different backgrounds to access spaces and places for recreation and have opportunities to participate in community life. Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025 aims to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life and reduce health inequalities.

Monitoring & Evaluation – The Project Team will provide oversight for the project; a research subcommittee of university and community organisations is already established and developing the research plan; fortnightly meetings will take place between the academic and community PIs throughout the project.

Evidence - Consultation with People with Disabilities (Active Disability Ireland 2022); Every Move Counts (Department of Health 2024); Global Recommendations (World Health Organisation 2010); Mind the Gap (Institute of Public Health 2023); Walking to Wellbeing, (TILDA team 2016)

Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas

Our children represent the “generation most affected” and hold a unique position within their families, schools, and wider communities to promote pro-environmental behavioural change. This project will develop climate leadership among primary school children in Limerick through a set of creative activities, culminating in a collective green art canopy installation.



Dr. Jean McCarthy, Dr. Christina O'Connor and Dr. Mary Curtin with a pupil from Monaleen National School



UL Citizens' Assembly

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas



Developing climate leadership capabilities among young people across Limerick through play and creativity



Our children represent the “generation most affected” by climate change and so hold a unique position within their families, schools, and wider communities to promote pro-environmental behavioural change

This project will develop climate leadership among primary school children in Limerick through a set of creative, research-led activities, culminating in a collective green art canopy installation

Collaborators



Artists



Primary Schools



Academia



Industry



**An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council**

-  Play-based climate science
-  Collaborative green art canopies
-  Impacting research, policy, and practice
-  Collective responsibility
-  Individual growth
-  Empowering young voices
-  Building leaders of the future

Logic model Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas

Situation Analysis Recent research shows the importance of developing climate leadership among children, who can play an effective role in sustainability advocacy. Our children represent the “generation most affected” and hold a unique position within their families, schools, and wider communities to promote pro-environmental behavioural change. The development of climate leadership among children is dependent on two things: 1) their accurate knowledge of climate change, and 2) on their involvement in creative sustainability activities. Our project offers both to children in Limerick.



Inputs Our multidisciplinary project team comprises the expertise and passion to break new ground across the fields of climate, leadership, education, cultural heritage, and social activism. Dr Mary Curtin (KBS, UL) Dr Jean McCarthy (KBS, UL), Dr Christina O'Connor (KBS, UL), Fion Gunn, Artist-in-Residence, Museum of Childhood Ireland, Dr David Stone, The Heritage Council; Prof Michael Fleming, UCLA, former Obama Administration; Primary school children and teachers in Limerick. Pilot School: Monaleen NS, the largest school in Limerick.



Activities / Outputs We will: 1) Design and deliver a play-based climate science game to develop accurate knowledge of climate change among primary school children in Limerick; 2) Create a collective green art canopy installation to develop climate leadership skills and attitudes among primary school children in Limerick. Together, these activities will help our children to become more knowledgeable, more self-aware, to navigate challenges, to influence others, and to drive meaningful change on the increasingly urgent climate crisis, now, and in the future.



Short-term Outcomes * Produce a project website; * Write and disseminate a research report and associated policy brief(s) and abridged media piece(s); * Write and disseminate a set of leadership development teaching cases focused on “Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas” for use among educators in primary, secondary and third level HEIs; * Produce a short poetic film of the art canopy creation; * Host an end-of-project dissemination event, which will include an unveiling of the final art installation and a screening of the film.



Long-term Outcomes We anticipate the development of a “blueprint” for climate leadership development among children – to scale the project with further collaborations and roll it out in primary schools on a regional and national level. Developing our children as climate leaders, fostering a sense of responsibility from an early age, will pave the way for a more informed community and sustainable environment for future generations in Limerick, and beyond.

Monitoring & Evaluation – Our communication and dissemination team will: analyse our local beneficiaries and anticipate their questions; produce a “Climate Leadership through Nature's Canvas” project website; seek out dialogue with local and national stakeholders; and arrange briefing and feedback sessions and dialogue panels with community members.

Evidence - The issues and solutions are identified by our team comprised of research experts, climate leaders and artists. We will continually seek feedback throughout the project for further development and dialogue with key stakeholders.

Design a Sustainable Eco Village in Ireland 2050: A School/University/Museum Project

Imagine a futuristic society where STEAM knowledge works alongside social justice and ecological justice. This aim became a novel partnership between UL, Hunt Museum and the Limerick Education Support Centre. The project empowered Transition Year pupils to design and showcase their ideas and models to the public, sparking new conversations.



Professor Geraldine Mooney Simmie, Dr. Michelle Starr, EPI•STEM, UL; Norma O'Brien, Limerick Education Support Centre; Maria Cagney, Emma King, The Hunt Museum

UL Citizens' Assembly

DESIGN A SUSTAINABLE ECO-VILLAGE IN IRELAND FOR 2050

A School-University-Museum-Enterprise Project

Led by Professor Geraldine Mooney-Simmie & Dr. Michelle Starr (EPI•STEM Research Centre), Norma O'Brien (Limerick Education Support Centre), Maria Cagney & Emma King (The Hunt Museum)

Imagine a community built on CARE, EQUALITY, and SOCIAL JUSTICE at the heart of your town or village.

Through STEAM research, this project empowered students to build resilience and give voice to how a futuristic eco-village for Ireland in 2050 could be creatively designed, with social justice at the heart of their innovation.



VISION

- Equity & Justice – Ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for all.
- Sustainability – Incorporating renewable energy and eco-friendly infrastructure.
- Community-Centric Design – Fostering inclusive, participatory decision-making.
- Ethical Responsibility – Promoting care for people, other species, and the planet.

IMPACT

- Critical Thinking, Problem-Posing and Real-World Problem-Solving approaches.
- Collaboration & Communication – Encouraging teamwork, peer discussions, and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Community Engagement – Raising awareness and fostering meaningful dialogue on sustainability issues, equipping students with the skills to advocate for change in their communities.
- Gender & Social Inclusion – promoting targeted interventions to support underrepresented groups, including women and disadvantaged communities.
- Local Enterprise engagement – ESB, SEROSEP, Boston Scientific, Analog Devices, & Eli Lilly

OBJECTIVES

- Engage Students in STEAM Research, and critical thinking for Active Citizenship in designing a sustainable eco-village for Ireland in 2050, aligned with the UN's SDG's
- Empower Teachers in Interdisciplinary Pedagogy
- Community & Public Engagement
Showcasing students' eco-village designs in the Hunt Museum to spark discussions on environmental and social sustainable living.

Some of the students' voices about their sustainable eco-village design



Learn more about the project and how you can get involved in a sustainable eco-village project

Logic model

Design a Sustainable Eco Village in Ireland 2050: A School/University/Museum Project

Situation Analysis Limerick, like all of Ireland, faces growing environmental, social, & economic challenges. Climate change, global political instability, and housing shortages are placing increasing pressure on communities and resources. Education - both nationally and globally - is central to ensuring a successful green and digital transition while building resilience to demographic shifts and unforeseen crises. The Design a Sustainable Eco-Village in Ireland for 2050 project empowers young people to contribute their vision for a sustainable future, rooted in social justice, equality, and environmental connectedness. Addressing climate change mitigation within the context of Limerick's local community is essential for fostering lasting awareness and resilience. Designing a sustainable eco-village for 2050 presents a forward-thinking solution—integrating renewable energy, eco-friendly housing, and community-led living in harmony with nature.

Inputs Project team comprising: EPI•STEM National Centre of STEM Education Director and Liaison Research Officer; STEM Education Researchers; Limerick Education Support Centre Director; The Hunt Museum Education Curator and, Education Coordinator; Local Sponsors and Enterprise partners [SEROSEP, ANALOG, ESB, Eli LILLY, BOSTON SCIENTIFIC]; Teachers (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Arts, Geography, History, Economics and Political Science); Second Level Students; Established links to knowledge, experience and expertise supports; Established links to local industries and businesses

Activities / Outputs Inform all second level schools across Limerick city and county. CPD workshops on climate action, social justice and sustainability with the teachers. Support provided to schools that do not have TY, engineering, technology or other subject choice. Contact with teachers/students throughout the project. Museum workshops on sustainability. Resource book developed & sent to all the students participating to support the project. Students Portfolio submission. 1. A write up of the agreed plan and design and the group learning from this process. 2. A short video from their locality of items or people that inspired them (e.g. seven minutes). 3. An artefact in a selected medium designed by the group showing their vision for a sustainable eco-village in Ireland for 2050 (e.g. technical drawing, wood, metal, cardboard). 4. A written reflection agreed by the group and sharing (a) the 'personal learnings' from taking part in this TY project, and (b) how their local project can make a difference and influence not only their locality but beyond toward a just society and a just global world.

Short-term Outcomes Engage students in interdisciplinary STEAM research, and the creative design and communication of their ideas of a what a Sustainable Village in Ireland in 2050 would look like and work. Encouraging students to employ innovative STEAM technologies to devise a community centric, sustainable village in line with the UN's Sustainable Goals. Empowering Teachers in Interdisciplinary STEAM Pedagogy – Supporting educators in integrating equity, social justice, and sustainability into their teaching. Community & Public Engagement – Showcasing students' eco-village designs in public exhibitions to foster broader discussions on environmental and social sustainability.

Long-term Outcomes Critical thinking & problem-posing and -solving through engaging in STEAM-driven, future-focused solutions. Collaboration & communication – Working in teams to design and present solutions. Community Engagement – Encouraging awareness and dialogue on sustainability. Gender & Social Inclusion – Addressing STEM participation gaps (e.g., underrepresentation of women and disadvantaged groups) by encouraging participation by students/schools who do not have TY and/or the subjects to support STEAM education projects. Local communities benefit from new ideas and awareness around sustainable living, social inclusion, and the green and digital transition.

Monitoring & Evaluation – The governance arrangement for the "Designing a Sustainable Eco-Village in Ireland for 2050" project can be described as a collaborative, multi-stakeholder, and participatory structure, ensuring effective project management, shared responsibilities, and regular progress evaluation.

Evidence We use a multiplicity of approach to evidence as a Research and Development team working in a community based partnership that has a unique interest in social justice. We draw from scoping literature reviews, surveys, interviews, and formal and informal feedback from students, teacher educators, researchers, museum personal, and teachers throughout the project, We also have connected to our local enterprise partners who provide support and funding for aspects of the project, including prizes and commendations.

Exploring the Potential of Music Therapy in Chronic Pain Treatment

Music therapy can be a non-invasive non-pharmacological therapy in the treatment of chronic pain. People living with chronic pain can have exacerbating pain and different comorbidities. This research intends to explore the use of music therapy as an intervention to help alleviate and manage pain.



Prof. Hilary Moss & Míriam Cano Esteller




UL Citizens' Assembly





Healing in Harmony

Exploring the Potential of Music Therapy in Chronic Pain Treatment



What is Music Therapy?

Music Therapy is an evidence-based profession.

Delivered by an accredited music therapist, uses planned and creative music-based interventions.

Supports people to improve, restore or maintain health, functioning and well-being.



How can Music Therapy help in the treatment of Chronic Pain?

It is a safe, medication-free, low-cost therapy.

It can help reduce pain, stress and anxiety for people living with chronic pain.



How will our project help?

Providing live music inside the operating theatre to reduce anxiety and perception of pain during medical procedures.

Initial findings are highly positive. It will put Limerick on the international map for innovative pain procedures.



Who is involved?

The multi-disciplinary team at the Croom Pain Management Service, led by Professor Dominic Harmon, are supporting this project.

The service is a national leader, addressing the physical, psychological, and social aspects of pain.






Logic model Exploring the Potential of Music Therapy in Chronic Pain Treatment

Situation Analysis People living with chronic pain can have exacerbating pain and different comorbidities. Music therapy can be a non-invasive non-pharmacological therapy to help deal with the symptoms and issues of living with chronic pain. Previous research shows potential for the use of music therapy intervention as a means to help alleviate or manage pain symptoms in people living with chronic pain. This research intends to implement a protocol to help lower levels of pain and anxiety in the operating theatre when people living with chronic pain go in for treatment interventions.



Inputs Previous research and studies will be analysed, studied and compiled into a comprehensive literature review to inform my research.
Feedback from lived experiences of people living with chronic pain.
Feedback from the Public Patient Involvement (PPI) group. Feedback and input from my supervisors Professor Hilary Moss and Dr. Katie Fitzpatrick who are at the top of their fields.
Feedback and input from the medical staff at the pain clinic in UHL.



Activities / Outputs The music therapy intervention during the medical procedure protocol will be as follows:

- Approach patient pre-procedure to build rapport and for musical preference assessment from song menu.
- Music therapist inside the theatre and prepared before pain procedure.
- Start patient preferred live music as the patient came into the room.
- Instrumental music and humming of the song melody while the doctor and nurses are giving instructions.
- Patient preferred live music performance.
- Keep the music going until after injection.
- Instrumental music and humming of the song while the patient is coming out of the procedure and theatre room.



Short-term Outcomes Short-term outcomes will be helping people living with chronic pain manage their pain through a music therapy intervention during their pain procedures.

The music therapy intervention is designed to help lower levels of pain and anxiety during the medical procedure.

It has the power to transform a traumatic experience into a meaningful music interaction.



Long-term Outcomes Long-term outcomes would be the implementation of this intervention across populations and different medical centres.

Spreading and popularizing the use of music therapy as a non-invasive non-pharmacological intervention for pain conditions.

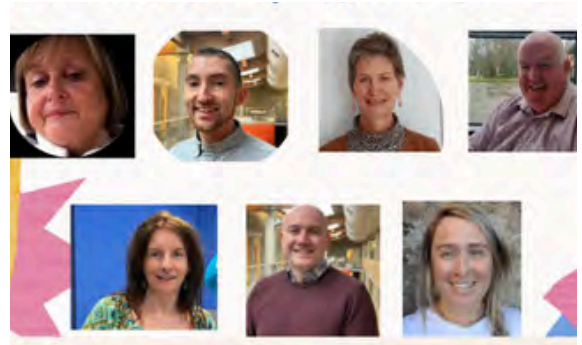
Help develop music therapy research and innovation.

Monitoring & Evaluation – This research will be part of my PhD in UL, so it is supervised and reviewed by professionals at the top of their fields. Developing this research as part of the PhD ensures high quality of research, ethics, and innovation.

Evidence Music therapy is an under-utilized intervention in the treatment of pain (Fitzpatrick et al., 2023). Multiple studies indicate that the use of music can modulate mood and emotion and induce dopamine release which can have analgesic effects and help manage pain and anxiety (Garza-Villarreal et al., 2017; Ghetti, 2012; Walworth, 2005; Fitzpatrick et al., 2023).

Future on the Hill: Growing Resilience, Wellbeing & Confidence Together in Southill

This project supports children and families in Southill through fun, co-designed therapeutic interventions that strengthen emotional, physical, and social wellbeing. The project brings together allied health students and the local community, offering therapy, creativity, connection, and learning opportunities. Together, we aim to create a lasting impact and help build brighter, healthier futures for all.



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK | **UL Citizens' Assembly**

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | **10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES** | **16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**

The Future is on the Hill!

Southill Afterschool Club

What is this project all about ?

This project is all about fun, creativity, and connection – drawing people together across generations. Through playful, therapeutic activities, we'll learn with and through each other, building confidence, wellbeing, and a stronger sense of community.

Project values !

- Fun and creativity
- Wellbeing
- Collaboration
- Intergenerational Connection
- Empowerment

Our Approach

- 01 Therapeutic Interventions & Support: Children's learning and wellbeing.
- 02
- 03 Collaboration & Empowerment: Building intergenerational resilience.

Bringing It All Together: A Celebration of Connection & Growth

The Future is on the Hill creates a safe, inclusive, and interconnected space where children, families, students, and community members grow together. It all builds toward a powerful intergenerational celebration – a shared moment of learning, storytelling, and connection that unites generations and strengthens the heart of the community.

Meet the project team

Edwina Rushe
Ciarán Purcell
Tess Walsh
Jane Kavanagh
Grainne Quinlan
Donal O'Leary

pobal
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
l3dp

Logic model

Future on the Hill: Growing Resilience, Wellbeing and Confidence Together in Southill

Situation Analysis Southill Afterschool Club provides essential after-school services for children, many of whom come from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds. These children face unique challenges that affect their overall wellbeing. There is a need for therapeutic interventions to support these children's development, particularly in areas crucial to their learning and emotional growth. This collaboration provides early interventions to enhance children's wellbeing and development by linking University of Limerick students with Southill Afterschool Club staff, parents, and community workers, creating a supportive, sustainable, integrated system.

Inputs The project involves students from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Dietetics working over 10-weeks with Southill Afterschool Club children, staff, parents and guardians. UL students gain practical lived experiences regarding children's development as well as social justice, inclusion, and working in small communities. The children will receive therapy focusing on motor skills, self-regulation, mindfulness, physical activity, and nutrition within co-design workshops. The project will culminate in an intergenerational celebration event. The event will bring together people of all ages — from children to older adults — to share stories, learn from one another, and build meaningful connections across the lifespan.

Activities / Outputs Co-designed fun, engaging multidisciplinary interventions for children focusing on supporting emotional, physical, and cognitive development. These currently include students from occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and human nutrition and dietetics. There is also potential to involve students from nursing, speech and language therapy, public health, psychology in the future. Educational workshops co-designed with parents, staff, and students on emotional regulation, mindfulness and physical activity. Practical strategies for emotional regulation, social skills, and academic support. Development of accessible resources such as leaflets, posters, and online content (e.g., YouTube channel). Intergenerational community event.

Short-term Outcomes Supporting children's emotional regulation, physical activity, reading, writing, and social skills at home, in school and in the afterschool club. Strengthened relationships and collaborative learning between UL students, Southill Afterschool Club staff, parents, and community stakeholders. Allied Health students gain practical, hands-on experience, enhancing their future employability in marginalised communities. The intergenerational event celebrates all members of the community, bringing together both youth and older generations in a shared celebration. It highlights the contributions and stories of all participants, fostering connection and unity.

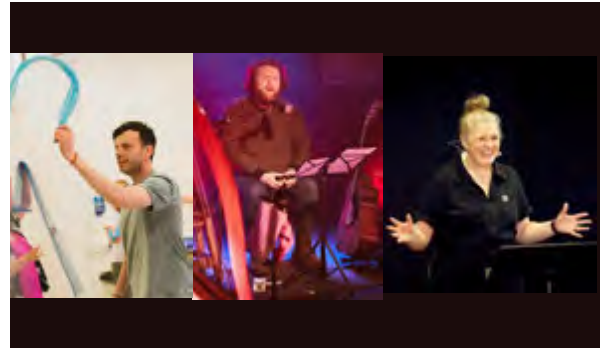
Long-term Outcomes **Wellbeing** - The goal is to support children and families by building wellbeing. In the long term, we hope to empower parents and families through the work we do with their children, fostering stronger support systems for everyone. **Sustainability** - The development of a sustainable model for community-engaged interprofessional education, benefiting future generations of students and children in Southill. **Intergenerational connection** - Stronger connections between the University of Limerick and the Southill community, creating an ongoing collaborative relationship that supports educational and developmental goals.

Monitoring & Evaluation – We will gather qualitative feedback from children, families, and staff at both the start and end of the placement. This will be collected in a sensitive, age-appropriate way through enjoyable tasks, including movement activities and reflective exercises. By capturing the experiences and perspectives we aim to assess the overall impact of the interventions.

Evidence This project builds on experience of working within this community since 2009, along with recent research, focus groups, and an ongoing systematic review. It focuses on the social determinants of health, supporting health and well-being initiatives aiming to reduce inequalities by addressing the health and development needs of children in this disadvantaged community.

Lullaby Leaf: Community Arts Residency at the Irish World Academy

Lullaby Leaf is an immersive sensory theatre experience for children with complex needs designed by Ceol Connected. Through this year long community arts residency with Ceol Connected, we will provide school performances for children in Limerick, alongside an aligned series of professional training opportunities and resources for UL students.



Dr. Thomas Johnston, Patrick O'Brien and Dr. Kathleen Turner

UL Citizens' Assembly

Lullaby Leaf
A Community Arts Residency

Our Commitment
If we say we want the arts to be available for all, we must do the work to ensure that is the case.

Our Partnerships
ceol
Music Generation Limerick County Chortas Limerick
IRISH WORLD ACADEMY

Lullaby Leaf will provide an immersive sensory theatre experience for children with complex needs in Limerick, and aligned professional training opportunities and resources for UL students.

Our Aim → **Our Activities** → **Our Impact**

Create a year-long community arts residency at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at UL, for Irish performing arts and education company, Ceol Connected.

- Deliver a series of performances of Lullaby Leaf, a sensory theatre experience specifically developed by Ceol Connected for children with complex needs
- Deliver a related series of training opportunities for students and practitioners at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, including seminars, practical workshops and observed performances
- Develop resources for artist practitioners, to share resulting knowledge and expertise that will inform curricula development at the Irish World Academy and beyond
- We will ensure that children who might not typically feel welcome or supported in public arts spaces are celebrated and supported, through an artistic experience designed with them at the heart
- We will enhance the skills and experiences of our UL students, enabling them to embed inclusive expertise in their future work as graduates
- We will respect and support neurodiversity, physical disability and complex needs in our artistic work, teaching and research

Images © Anita Murphy

Logic model Lullaby Leaf: Community Arts Residency at the Irish World Academy

Situation Analysis Limerick Cultural Strategy A Framework 2016-2030 prioritises a sense of belonging, and notes that “all of Limerick’s citizens should have equality of access to cultural activities” (p.21). Whilst Limerick has a strong history of arts provision for children, content and spaces designed specifically for children with complex needs, or with an emphasis on multi-sensory work is limited. Notable existing provisions are the annual Bualadh Bos children’s festival, hosted by the Limetree theatre. Students at the Irish World Academy have some access to working multi-sensorily, but currently this is limited to small pockets of the MA Community Music and MA Music Therapy. There are currently artistic residencies at Irish World Academy. However, whilst all have some community engaged activities, we have yet to engage an artist in residence whose work is solely dedicated to provision for children. This residency would allow for broader and more concentrated learning across programmes and access to specific expertise..

Inputs The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance has a strong track record of engaging meaningfully with local and national community partners. Our students and faculty have an established history of working with and in community, through projects such as Irish World Music Café, C-Well and ICO Schools. This residency demonstrates our furthering of that commitment through the establishment of a new suite of activities with an expert in the field. The Lullaby Leaf residency would engage the expertise of all stakeholders, recognising the importance of reciprocal and shared learning with and from children, schools and teachers, with and from Ceol Connected facilitators, and with and from Music Generation Limerick County (UL is partner, not expert)

Activities / Outputs

- Lullaby Leaf Performances for primary schools in Limerick City and County;
- Two immersion week events for UL students
- Two free public seminars for UL students, staff and members of the public
- Observed rehearsals for students and Q and A
- Case study or podcast sharing outcomes and learning
- Resource publication to share with arts practitioners

Short-term Outcomes

- Meaningful musical experiences for children and their teachers;
- Demonstrable commitment to UL and Limerick’s strategic goals of community service and belonging for all
- Supporting existing and developing new relationships between the Irish World Academy with local schools
- Constructive learning outcomes for UL students
- Establishment of a new artistic residency that prioritises the artistic experiences of children, particularly those with complex needs

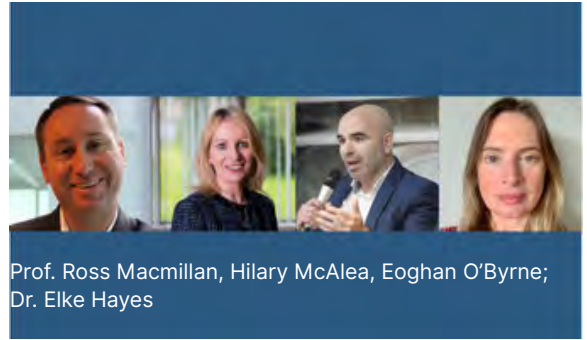
Long-term Outcomes · Children with complex needs and their schools and families see arts as available for them; · Increased visibility and content for arts activities designed for children with complex needs · Increased long-term engagement with UL as a community partner; · Legacy impact through and for UL graduates, who value and act on inclusivity in their future artistic practice; · Provision of supporting resources for arts practitioners; · Strong evidence base for future funding to continue an established artistic residency housed at UL to support continued legacy impact

Monitoring & Evaluation – This will include regular meetings with project partners to ensure planned activities are delivered. Each activity will include reflection and be followed by context-appropriate methods of evaluation.

Evidence As well as engagement with local and national cultural policy, and University of Limerick’s strategic plan, the partnerships involved in this project have significant professional experience in relevant fields of community arts, education, and music. All partners are committed to working inclusively and this is demonstrated by our collective work to date.

PRIME – Progression Risks/Resilience in Marginalised Environments

The PRIME project assesses children’s basic skills – physical, cognitive, and social – at school entry and in the first years of primary school through a series of interactive games. Such information is vital for understanding developmental variations, as well as well as the planning and execution of school activities for better developmental progression.



Prof. Ross Macmillan, Hilary McAlea, Eoghan O’Byrne; Dr. Elke Hayes

UL Citizens' Assembly

PRIME
Progression Risk/Resilience In Marginalised Environments

the challenge

Schools are primary vehicle for skills acquisition and human development in young children.

Every year, schools admit children with highly variable skills and needs.

Schools need to know and evidence children’s needs to plan effective teaching, supports and interventions

the solution

Play-based skills assessment at the point of school entry – with repeat assessments every May and September.

Children followed through their primary school experience

True longitudinal design, evidencing needs and effective interventions

the innovation

Instead of sending surveys home, which may seem complicated and often don’t get returned, we re-create the skills assessment as a series of interactive, fun games and puzzles for children to play.

This takes place in the school, during the school day.

what skills?

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- problem solving
- personal social skills
- communication

the team

University of Limerick, Corpus Christi Primary School, St. Gabriel's Foundation, HAPPEE, and other partners.

Logic model PRIME – Progression Risks/Resilience in Marginalised Environments

Situation Analysis · Lack of standardized assessment to understand children’s progress, the drivers of progress, and variations in progress due to social inequalities across families and communities in early life. This is particularly pertinent in Limerick, where many DEIS schools are located in communities of extreme disadvantage. These schools are particularly challenged because they confront a combination of family and community risk factors combined with a lack of services for developmental challenges. There are currently over 100,000 children waiting for primary care services that are critical to their development, including OT, PT, and SLT.



Inputs

- Project team:
- Members of Dept of Sociology, UL Engage, and Health Research Institute
- Principals and staff in six participating primary schools
- Trained UL students assessors



Activities / Outputs Stakeholder consultations; Survey design; Safeguarding training for all team members; New UL module in social and data sciences for participating students providing training on standardized collection, assessment and analysis of high quality observational data; Research Dashboard presenting key findings in real time; Annual Report to key stakeholders; Annual stakeholder forum; Research publications; Communications strategy for dissemination of key findings



Short-term Outcomes · Stronger ties between UL academics and ‘hard to reach’ populations;

- Original survey administration translating existing survey items into interactive schools-based activities;
- Students gain real-world applied training in survey methods and analysis;
- Participating schools will have access to rich and context specific analysis of children’s needs, effective curricular supports, and evidence-based interventions;
- Evidence to facilitate optimum resource allocation for improved child development and enhanced school progression.



Long-term Outcomes Longitudinal multi-cohort study evidencing children’s developmental and academic progress and potential; Robust evidence based analysis of what activities, programmes and interventions work best in mitigating early life risk factors and fostering more successful progression; Creation of SMART targets and better data analytics and evaluation for school effective planning; Systematically measure pupil progress and tailor school actions and interventions to meet individual needs; Effective data and systematic analysis of the drivers for pupil progress and performance; Potential for scaled up national PRIME programme; SDG 4

Monitoring & Evaluation – The project will be overseen by an Advisory Board comprising all stakeholders. Data from all participating stakeholders will be collected for routine monitoring and review.

Evidence - This project responds to the articulated needs of school principals, teachers and clinical support staff working in Limerick primary schools serving severely disadvantaged communities, with a project using cutting edge data collection and analytic strategies from developmental science.

ROVs (Remote Operated Vehicles) in STEM Education: Hands on Learning for Schools

This project engages Limerick secondary school students in STEM through designing, programming, and testing modular underwater drone kits. It fosters skills in engineering, coding, and marine science while promoting sustainability and gender equality. The initiative supports future careers in Ireland's blue economy and offers curriculum-aligned resources for teachers and schools.



Cillian Fahy, Tom Dorian, Prof. Ger Dooly and Ben Bartlett



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK Consistent Excellence O.C. U.S. President

UL Citizens' Assembly

ROVs for STEM Education – Hands on Learning for Schools

4 QUALITY EDUCATION **5 GENDER EQUALITY** **14 LIFE BIODIVERSITY**

What if a lunchbox, a few electronics, and the right mentor were all it took to inspire Limerick's next great ocean scientist?

Facilitated by Ben Bartlett, Cillian Fahy and Tom Dorian. Supervised by Prof. Ger Dooly.



A Regional Underwater Robotics Competition.

Guided Online Videos.

Limerick Pilot Competition in Spring 2026.

Teacher Facilitation Workshops.

Promoting stewardship and curiosity.

Led by Ireland's Leading Underwater Robotics Centre based in UL.

By encouraging gender equality in STEM, the Subsea Showdown equips Limerick's students with skills to lead Ireland's growing offshore wind sector through marine robotics, boosting local innovation and economic opportunity.

Keep up to date at subseashowdown.ie

Foras na Mara Marine Institute

CRIS Centre for Robotics & Intelligent Systems

Logic model

ROVs (Remote Operated Vehicles) in STEM Education: Hands on Learning for Schools

Situation Analysis

- Lack of accessible marine technology programs in secondary education despite Ireland's maritime potential and blue economy growth.
- Underrepresentation of hands-on marine STEM projects, particularly those linking programming, engineering, and marine science.
- Persistent gender imbalance in STEM pathways, highlighting the need for early engagement.
- Opportunities for alignment with new curriculum areas (e.g., Computer Science, DCG, Engineering)

Inputs Expertise: CRIS researchers, UL lecturers, PhD students, and IEEE Student Branch undergraduates.

Funding: o€2k from IEEE OES, plus additional UL Citizens' Assembly funding.

Facilities: CRIS test tank for initial development and testing phases; UL campus outdoor pool for the final competition—chosen for safety and sustainability, as it can be filled and returned to a nearby river, minimizing environmental impact.

Resources: 3D printers, Micro:bit controllers, affordable marine sensors, and open-source CAD tools to ensure accessibility.

Activities / Outputs

1. Develop Baseline ROV Kits: Modular, 3D-printed components and affordable electronics. Use of open-source software for CAD modeling and programming.
2. Create Educational Materials: Curriculum-aligned teacher guides, student workbooks, and open-source online resources.
3. Teacher Training: Hands-on workshops covering ROV assembly, programming, and sensor analysis.
4. School-Based Testing: Testing in small pools or bathtubs within schools for initial trials.
5. Final Design Challenge: Competition using the outdoor pool at UL, incorporating design performance, data analysis, and innovation awards.
6. Evaluation: Student and teacher feedback, with open-access publication of winning designs and data insights.

Short-term Outcomes

- Increased student engagement in STEM through hands-on ROV projects.
- Development of programming skills using Micro:bit.
- Acquisition of 3D design and basic robotics assembly skills.
- Improved understanding of marine science through water quality analysis.
- Greater awareness of sustainability and environmental issues.
- Enhanced problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.
- Increased female participation in engineering and marine technology activities.
- Strengthened teamwork and communication skills.
- Early exposure to career opportunities in Ireland's blue economy.

Long-term Outcomes

- Increased female participation in engineering and marine STEM careers, contributing to gender balance in the technology and marine sectors.
- Growth of Ireland's blue economy, with more students entering marine robotics, offshore wind energy, and sustainable marine industries.
- Development of a talent pipeline, connecting secondary school STEM initiatives with third-level programs like UL's Digital Mechatronics.
- Sustained education-industry collaboration, leading to innovation and growth in Ireland's marine research and renewable energy sectors.
- National scalability, with the project serving as a model for marine STEM outreach, integrated into the Transition Year micro-module framework.

Monitoring & Evaluation – Progress will be tracked through pre- and post-program assessments measuring student engagement, skill development, and interest in STEM pathways. Teacher evaluations will focus on the development of new teaching skills, particularly in programming and robotics, addressing current gaps in teacher readiness for the Computer Science curriculum. Performance indicators will include ROV design functionality, sensor data analysis, and student participation levels, with gender participation tracking to support SDG 5 outcomes. Regular progress reviews involving the UL IEEE Student Branch, CRIS researchers, and UL staff will ensure the project remains on track. Feedback loops with teachers will allow for real-time adjustments, ensuring the program effectively supports curriculum integration and teacher professional development.

Evidence The recent introduction of Computer Science as a Leaving Certificate subject in Ireland highlights a significant need for teacher support and practical, hands-on projects to ensure a smooth transition into this new curriculum. Currently, there is a shortage of accessible resources and practical applications that help teachers develop the necessary technical skills, especially in programming and applied robotics. Additionally, Ireland's growing blue economy and emerging opportunities in marine robotics and offshore wind energy require a pipeline of students equipped with relevant STEM competencies. Global best practices, such as the SeaPerch framework, demonstrate that hands-on ROV projects effectively enhance STEM engagement and bridge classroom learning with real-world applications. Feedback from local educators, students, and industry partners further indicates a demand for accessible STEM outreach programs that align with national educational goals and UN SDGs 4, 5, and 14.

SCOPE — Sustainable Healthcare for Population Demographics

The research uses machine learning to predict demographic shifts among older adults and ethnic minority older adults in Limerick. It involves collaboration between computational scientists, healthcare providers, hospitals, and the public to generate actionable insights and allocate resources effectively, improving preparedness for increased diversity and an aging population.



Meghana Kshirsagar, Fergal Cummins, Alison O'Connor, Damien Ryan, Rose Galvin, Gauri Vaidya, Bayan Nezamabad, YuanYuan Chen, Carrie Garavan

Elderly Population Growth and ED Impact

- The 65+ population has grown by **23% since 2016**.
- In **2024**, **87,366** people visited the ED at **University Hospital Limerick (UHL)**; **6,062** left without completing treatment.
- Over **50%** of adults aged **75+** presenting to the ED were **admitted to hospital**.

Demographic Modelling of Hospital Demand

3

9

11

Meghana Kshirsagar

Fergal Cummins

Alison O'Connor

Damien Ryan

Rose Galvin

Gauri Vaidya

Bayan Nezamabad

YuanYuan Chen

Carrie Garavan

Computer Science and Information Systems, University of Limerick | **Ageing and Health research cluster, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick** | **Emergency Medicine, University Hospital Limerick**

A record **87,366** patients attended the ED in 2024, an increase of more than **10 per cent** on the year before.

University Hospital Limerick CEO Lan Carter, Limerick Post, March 2025

These are not just statistics, these are people deemed in need of a hospital bed and yet no bed was available to them.

Limerick TD Maurice Quinlivan, Limerick Post, March 2025

Interactive Dashboard of Population Modelling

Planning Future Healthcare with Machine Learning and Demographic Modelling of Limerick's Aging Population

Aging Population Growth Over Time

Male vs. Female Population Growth

Emergency Department (ED) Strain: Patient Wait Times

Impact of Elderly Population Growth on ED Burden with Hip Fractures Case Study

Continuous rise in elderly populations

Hip Fractures Most Common in the Elderly

Tracking Population Changes to Forecast ED Visits Among Older Adults

Outcome

Timely and appropriate care for the elderly requires strong policy planning and efficient resource management to address the growing demands of an aging population.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OILSCHOOL LUMINAH

Ageing Research Centre

Ospidéal OL
UL Hospitals

NATIONAL CHALLENGE FUND

Government of Ireland

Taighde Éireann
Research Ireland

European Union

Logic model SCOPE – Sustainable Healthcare for Population Demographics

Situation Analysis The population of Limerick grew by 8% between April 2016 and April 2022.

- The number of people aged 65 and over increased by 23% since 2016.
- Non-Irish citizens account for 11% of the county's population.
- 80,000 patients attended the Emergency Department (ED) at UHL in 2022, with 15% aged 75 and over.
- Older adults (75+) are more likely to be admitted to the hospital, with over 50% of all over-75s attending the ED being admitted.
- Need for resource-efficient healthcare planning due to changing demographics.



Inputs Strategic alliance between University of Limerick (UL), University Hospital Limerick (UHL), Ageing Research Centre Group.

Research Team, CSIS department, UL - Dr. Meghana Kshirsagar, Dr. Alison O'Connor, Gauri Vaidya, \ Bayan Nezamabad, Yuanyuan Chen
UHL Team - Prof. Fergal Cummins and Dr. Damien Ryan Consultants, Emergency Medicine, Dr. Carrie Garavan, ALERT Coordinator
UL lead for the Ageing Research Centre Group Prof. Rose Galvin



Activities / Outputs

- Multidisciplinary research involving all the stakeholders at each stage of the project.
- Data-driven insights into demographic shifts in Limerick and their impact on healthcare services.
- Knowledge transfer and dissemination through publicly accessible interactive dashboards and visualization tools; Crucial insights showcasing demographic shifts and healthcare resource utilization, including bed assignments, patient transfers, and discharges in the UHL emergency department.
- Stakeholder and academic reports and presentations reflecting diverse perspectives and priorities



Short-term Outcomes • Enhanced knowledge of demographic trends and their healthcare impact.

- Improved evidence-based understanding of the bottlenecks causing waiting times in the emergency department at UHL.
- Stakeholder workshops to share findings and refine healthcare models.
- Increased collaboration with patient and public groups in Limerick to address the healthcare needs of the older adult community, ensuring easier access to services.
- Public outreach and education on project goals and findings.



Long-term Outcomes • Reduction in ED wait times through data-driven insights. (SDG 3: Good Health & Well-being) • Predictive modelling for resource forecasting, ensuring healthcare access for aging and immigrant populations. (SDG 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure)

- Sustainable healthcare infrastructure to support Limerick's evolving demographics and service demands. (SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities)
- Policy-driven decision-making using real-time data for proactive healthcare management and long-term resilience. (SDG 16: Strong Institutions)

Monitoring & Evaluation – The UL research team will design and deploy the models and will meet monthly with all the external collaborators for updates and feedbacks throughout the projects timeline. Patient and public group insights will be gathered through surveys and feedback for iterative refinement of models.

Evidence

<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2023pressreleases/presstatementcensusofpopulatio n2022-summaryresultslimerick/>

[2] <https://healthservice.hse.ie/healthcare-delivery/ul-hospitals-group/ulh-blogs/uhl-expands-unit-improving-outcomes-and-reducing-wait-times-for-older-adults-attending-emergency-department.html>

[3] <https://www.limerickpost.ie/2024/10/08/3000-patients-waiting-over-a-year-for-care-at-university-hospital-limerick/>

Introducing our Community Collaborators

Public Participation Network Limerick (PPNL)

What does your organisation do?

Public Participation Network Limerick (PPNL) is a network of community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations in Limerick. Facilitating Participative Democracy is primary purpose of the PPN; enabling the PPN member groups to input into and have their voices heard within the formal decision-making structures of the local authority. The PPN is expected to be the primary route through which local authorities connect with groups active in their area. Our PPN Linkage Groups nominate representatives to sit on the Strategic Policy and other Committees (SPCs) of Limerick City and County Council. These SPCs assist the council in the formulation, development and review of policy and strategy in their areas. The other Committees are the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Community Safety Policing and the Active Cities Steering Group.

Another role of the PPN is to provide a space for community groups to grow and develop through various training supports. We also act as an information hub, keeping the community informed of relevant local issues, news, events, resources and supports. We collaborate with a host of organisations to provide these supports and information.

Why is university/community engagement important for your organisation?

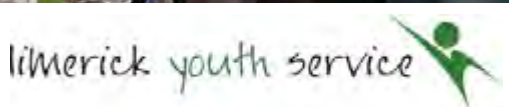
The PPN cannot function without strong community engagement and we take every opportunity to engage with like-minded organisations to provide opportunities for our member groups to participate meaningfully in activities and events that support their interests and development.



Special thanks to our strengthening partnership with PPN Limerick to deliver this event



Limerick Comhairle na nÓg



What does your organisation do?

Limerick Youth Service (LYS) is a leading provider of youth work, education, training, employability & volunteering opportunities for young people in Limerick City and County. and is to the fore in providing quality youth led programmes. LYS supports a number of diverse youth work projects including: Comhairle na nÓg, Garda Youth Diversion, youth cafés, Youth & Family Support, a Youth Mental Health Service, UBU youth projects, a Youth Information Centre, international youth work & volunteer led youth clubs across Limerick City & County.



Why is university/community engagement important for your organisation?

LYS was established in the same year as UL, 1973, and has a had strong community engagement and empowerment as a core principle in all it does. I believe these values to be shared by UL too. LYS and UL have spent 51 years in Limerick together - learning, helping, expanding and adapting to the ever changing face of Limerick. It is important to maintain a healthy relationship between the education sector and the youth and community sector in Limerick, the young people of Limerick deserve to see collaborations like this one.

Limerick Community Education Network

What does your organisation do?

Our organization, the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN), serves as a pivotal hub for facilitating community education initiatives across Limerick city.

Through collaborative efforts with our diverse network of members, we strive to promote lifelong learning opportunities and empower individuals to achieve their educational goals. Our core activities include facilitating accredited courses, organizing workshops and events, and advocating for equitable access to education for all members of our community.



Why is university/community engagement important for your organisation?

University and community engagement are crucial for our organization as they bring together diverse expertise and resources to address community needs effectively. Collaborating with universities allows us to access specialized knowledge and innovative approaches to enhance our programs. Engaging with the community fosters inclusivity, ownership, and collaboration among stakeholders, empowering individuals and communities to shape their educational pathways. These partnerships drive positive social change and create a vibrant learning ecosystem. In summary, university and community engagement are essential for leveraging collective strengths to benefit our community's educational initiatives.



Limerick Youth Service

What does your organisation do?

Limerick Youth Service (LYS) provides youthwork, education, training, employability and volunteering opportunities for young people and is a leading provider of quality youth led programmes and activities.

LYS youthworkers deliver diverse projects that provide a vital outlet for young people. Among the many opportunities are: Comhairle na nÓg, Youth Diversion Projects, Youth & Family Support project, a Youth Mental Health Project, UBU Youth Projects- including youth cafés, a Youth Information Centre, international youth work & volunteer led youth clubs across Limerick City & County.

We also provide further education and training courses for young people, some of whom may not be in education and/or employment. Our QQI accredited courses include: Construction Skills, Catering Skills, Pathway to Progression, Retail Skills, Professional Bakery Skills (FDQ Accredited), ESOL and the Leaving Certificate Applied. The iScoil initiative & WorkAbility Programme, (formerly Ability+) programmes for young people are also offered by LYS.

The above courses are available at the LYS Community Training Centre, Lower Glentworth Street, Limerick V94 YF95.



Why is university/community engagement important for your organisation?

LYS works closely with the University of Limerick on many initiatives including: Limerick Be Heard, the MY STORY Photovoice Project and a series of collaborations with Comhairle na nÓg. We see the UL Citizens' Assembly as a wonderful opportunity for LYS and UL to support each other!

The refreshments and catering at today's Citizens' Assembly have been prepared by LYS trainees in Catering Skills and Professional Bakery Skills courses at the LYS Community Training Centre. The Catering Skills Course is for young people who would like to pursue a career in the catering industry. As part of the course learners study modules such as: food preparation, short order cooking, restaurant skills, barista training, customer service, catering theory and more.

The Professional Bakery Skills Course equips learners with the skills in bread making and flour confectionery with learners study modules on product production and their such as: including: Morning Goods (doughnuts and sweet bread) Bread Make (traditional and modern), Scone Products (Savoury, Sweet and Griddle) Knife Skills and more. www.limerickyouthservice.com



Centre for Sustainable Futures & Innovation (CSFI)

What does your organisation do?

University of Limerick is deeply committed to sustainability, recognising its vital role in shaping a better future for its staff, students, and the wider community. To drive this commitment forward, UL established the Centre for Sustainable Futures & Innovation (CSFI)—the university’s hub for implementing sustainability projects and building capacity on campus and beyond.

CSFI leads and supports initiatives that embed sustainability across UL’s operations, teaching and learning, student experiences, and community partnerships. Through the UL Student Sustainability Challenge, the Centre supports students to tackle real-world environmental and social challenges, providing funding and mentorship to bring their ideas to life. It also advances Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by equipping staff with the tools to integrate sustainability into their teaching and developing student programmes that prepare future leaders in sustainability.

Beyond education, CSFI helps colleagues to communicate their sustainability efforts, engage diverse audiences to inspire action and increase impact, and to secure funding and other resources. CSFI also plays a key role in shaping policy through participation in national and international networks and by exploring regenerative futures and the evolving role of higher education in sustainability. To ensure accountability, the Centre also delivers mandated reporting requirements, reinforcing UL’s transparency and commitment to sustainable progress.



Why is university/community engagement important for your organisation?

Collaboration is at the heart of CSFI’s mission. The Centre works closely with students, faculty, local organisations, and industry partners to ensure sustainability efforts create meaningful, lasting change. By fostering connections and co-creating solutions, CSFI helps translate sustainability goals into tangible impact both on campus and in the wider community.

CSFI actively seeks to engage with educational institutions, government bodies, businesses, research and policy organisations, and civil society organisations to drive sustainability transformation at UL and beyond. By working together, we can accelerate progress toward a more sustainable and regenerative future. Find out more on the CSFI website ul.ie/sustainability.



#StayCurious

At UL we are constantly pushing the boundaries, creating new discoveries and innovations, and it is all for the greater good.

Research Week provides a fascinating insight into the diverse range of leading-edge research being carried out across the university that impacts our society at a local, national and international level.

ul.ie/researchweek

#ResearchWeekUL

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**RIW
25**

A word of thanks...

Events like this don't happen without a lot of unseen work and ours is no exception.
Our thanks go

To the Expert Panel

Kevin Burke, Andrea Deverell, Patrick Fitzgerald, Liz Gabbett,
Simon Jennings, Lorna Kerin, Niall O'Callaghan, Seamus O'Connor, Sharone O'Loughlin,
Prof. Helen Phelan, John Real

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Tracey Gleeson, Eileen Hoffler, John Real

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To our collaborators and partners

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To our musicians

Roisin Broderick, Simon Crehan & Ciarán O'Connell

To the Project teams

Without whom there would be no event!

And most of all YOU

Our Assembly members

Thank you for spending a day with UL, we hope it's the first of many!



**Professor Colin Fitzpatrick,
Vice President Global and Community Engagement, UL**



Comphárteachas OL
UL Engage

If you're interested in developing a community project with UL support, the UL Engage team - Eileen, Maura, Niamh & Tracey - are happy to explore your ideas and see what we can do together.

You can reach us at: ulengage@ul.ie

If you would like to subscribe to our community magazine, please send your e-mail to ulengage@ul.ie