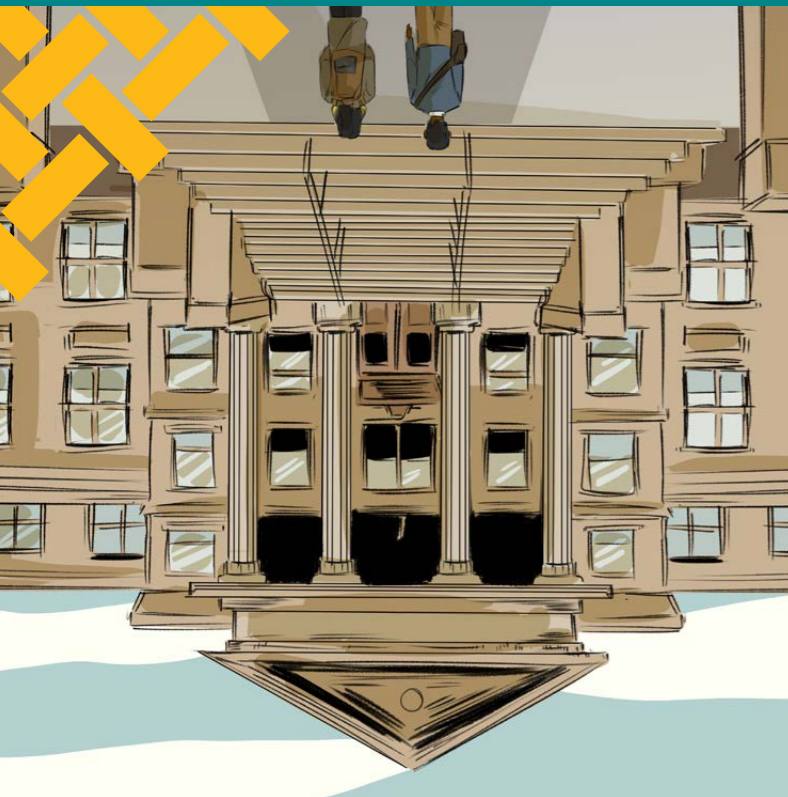


COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY...
THE START OF SOMETHING BIGGER?!



Artist **Dominique Ng** is a Dublin-based comic artist, who began creating characters and writing their stories at the age of 12 and discovered digital art at just 14 years of age. She went on to study Illustration in BCFE, graduating in 2022.

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College Connect is a Higher Education Authority funded project encompassing the four higher education institutions of Dublin City University, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Maynooth University and Technological University of the Shannon, Athlone Campus. We believe college is for everyone and #itcanbeyou.

A big thank you to all the participants who shared their thoughts and their time with us, and for showing us what we need to do to make university more accessible to FET students.

Check out the full report at www.collegeconnect.ie

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College is for anyone; IT CAN BE YOU

This comic zine came from research we carried out in 2022 with 58 college students in 7 Further Education colleges in the greater Dublin area, where we asked them about their experience in college and their thoughts around progressing to university.

They told us that despite college having restored their confidence in themselves and their joy in learning, Further Education and Training is sometimes seen as *'not real college.'* They also told us that university is *'for the rich'* and that *'normal'* people with bills and responsibilities struggle to find the means to continue in education. Despite this drawback, university was still perceived to be an important pathway to better life outcomes and opportunities, with the potential to be *'the start of something bigger.'*

Produced by arts-based researcher Dr. Sarah Sartori at Maynooth University for College Connect, in collaboration with Louise Boughton in Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

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WHAT AM I DOING HERE? EVERYONE IS YOUNGER THAN ME AND I HAVE SHIT TO PAY!

PARENT AND CARER TO FAMILY.



IS THIS WHAT I'M DOING FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...? HOW AM I EXPECTED TO KNOW?!

I'M ONLY 18!

STUDENT JUST OUT OF SCHOOL.



YOUR LEARNING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I'M HERE TO HELP.

IF YOU WANT IT.

WOW THE TEACHERS IN COLLEGE AREN'T THE SAME AS IN SCHOOL AT ALL.

THEY'RE TREATING US LIKE ADULTS!

HOW DOES ANYONE DO THIS WHEN THEY'RE WORKING? CAN'T KEEP MY EYES OPEN...

GREAT! IF ANYONE'S STRUGGLING, WE ALL JUMP IN AND PICK EACH OTHER UP. COLLEGE WORK, PERSONAL STUFF WHATEVER.

THERE'S THIS HUGE SUPPORT!

SORRY, I NEED TO COLLECT MY DAUGHTER.

I AM ACTUALLY IN COLLEGE.

I'M AT HOME EVERY WEEKEND DOING ASSIGNMENTS.



NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME BECAUSE OF MY ACCENT. THEY THINK I DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, I HAVE 30 YEARS WORK EXPERIENCE.

REFUGEE IN DIRECT PROVISION.



I'M NOT GOING TO FIT IN HERE, I'M NOT ACTING THE SAME WAY.

THEY'RE ALL KIND OF CALM.

FORMERLY HOMELESS.



I NEED TO SEE THE DOCTOR... BUT HOW AM I GOING TO AFFORD IT?

OH I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE, BUT EVERYBODY HAS SO MUCH GOING ON TOO.

IF THEY CAN DO IT, MAYBE I CAN TOO!



I'M ACTUALLY STARTING TO GET THIS!



HEY, I THINK I REALISED I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO GO TO UNIVERSITY.

MAYBE IN A FEW YEARS WHEN MY DAUGHTER IS GROWN UP, I'VE DONE MY LEVEL 5 AND I'M WORKING NOW.

BUT BY BEING HIGHER UP IN EDUCATION, YOU WILL BE HIGHER UP WITH INCOME.



OH MY GOD, I'M REALLY ENJOYING DOING THIS!



WITHOUT A DEGREE PEOPLE WILL VIEW YOU AS THE BOTTOM OF THE LADDER.

WELL IT'S UNAFFORDABLE FOR NORMAL PEOPLE IF YOU CAN'T GET A GRANT.



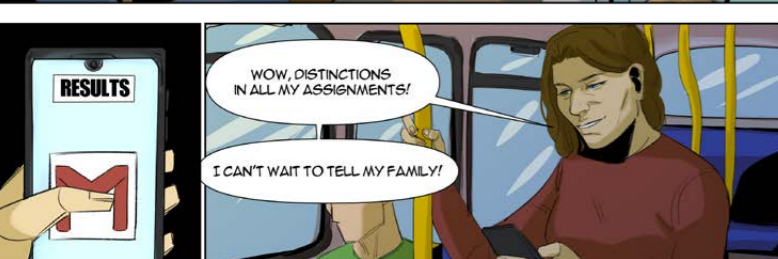
WE ALL GET ALONG SO WELL.

WE ALL FIT IN!



YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT UNIVERSITY...

...I THINK I'D BE SCARED WITH THE HUGE CLASSROOMS AND LECTURE HALLS.



WOW, DISTINCTIONS IN ALL MY ASSIGNMENTS!

I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL MY FAMILY!



YEAH I DON'T THINK I'D BE ABLE FOR THE WHOLE ONLINE PART OF IT AND THE MONEY.

THERE'S TOO MANY THINGS TO PAY FOR!



OKAY WHAT TIME DOES THIS FINISH?

AM I GOING TO MAKE IT TO COLLECT THE KIDS FROM SCHOOL?

I WONDER IF I'LL HAVE THE SAME SUPPORT THAT THE TEACHERS IN COLLEGE GAVE ME.



THIS IS THE START OF SOMETHING BIGGER.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE.