



ADDRESSING UN SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND: Students and the community working together to build eco-literacy, protect and sustain local forests, and halt biodiversity loss.



This module:

- motivates stakeholders to create safe, resilient, sustainable and inclusive cities/human settlements.
- collaboratively addresses the needs of local citizens, staff and students, through creating inclusive, sustainable and safe public spaces.
- provides opportunities for a participatory and inclusive experience for users through the Tairseach Tree Trail and the rooftop garden.

QUICK FACTS

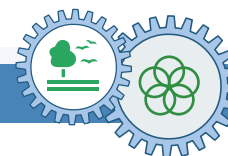
Lecturer: Dr Máire Nic an Bhaird and Laoise Ní Chléirigh

Dept./School: The Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, Maynooth University

Module Title: EDF485 Teanga an Ghrá

Community Partner: Maynooth Green Campus (MGC) and Kildare County Council

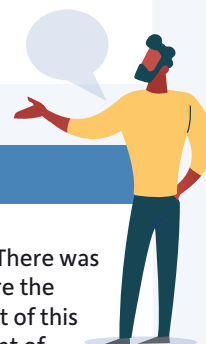
Purpose of Partnership: To embed the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in the curricula, and exchange knowledge through community engaged learning (CEL)



CONTEXT

Ireland is experiencing biodiversity loss at rates never experienced before. Plants, insects, birds and mammals are increasingly threatened as a result of destructive human activities. Academics from the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education responded to a need identified by Maynooth Green Campus (a Maynooth campus/community

strategic coalition that seeks to promote environmental sustainability and climate justice). The partnership worked to increase community awareness of biodiversity and encourage more interaction between Maynooth residents, students and staff and the natural environment.



DETAILS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING PROJECT

In 2020, final year students from the Froebel Department's Bachelor of Education and the Professional Master of Education programmes formed a partnership with Maynooth Green Campus and connected with Kildare County Council. This partnership set out to increase the biodiversity of the School of Education's rooftop garden and to create a Tairseach Tree Trail for Maynooth citizens, including university students and staff. It had the wider aim of building ecoliteracy for all participants and to heighten biodiversity awareness among future primary school teachers.

Multiple ways of tackling the issue of climate change were explored such as experimenting with sustainable materials, waste valorisation, and water conservation. Stephen Seaman (MGC) led a bird box workshop and students installed the boxes countrywide. The students' multidimensional learnings and expertise were directed into a range of resources for their schools. Resources included guides for use on the Tairseach Tree Trail, a geographic information system (GIS) capturing and analysing spatial and geographic data for the Tairseach Tree Trail, and a video about growing your own food. During National Biodiversity Week these resources were shared with second

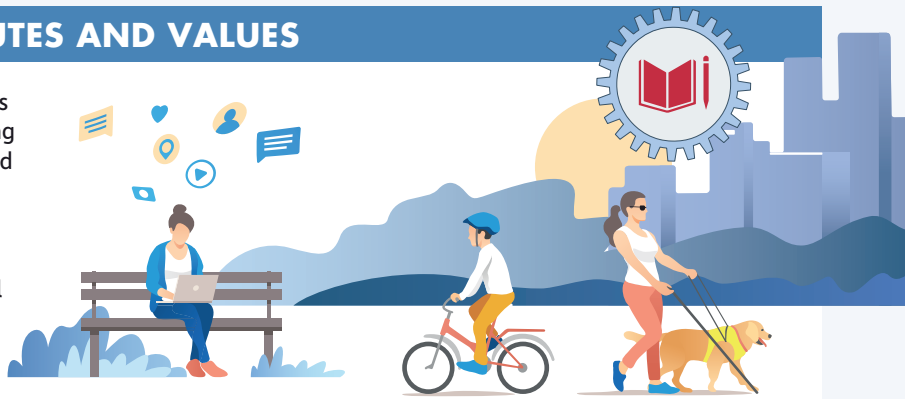
class children from Gaelscoil Uí Fhiaich, Maynooth. There was direct engagement with teachers and children where the resources were unpacked and integrated. As a result of this partnership, academics from the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, along with Maynooth Green Campus formed a strategic alliance to promote environmental sustainability and climate justice education. The partnership worked to increase community awareness and protection of biodiversity. It provided an opportunity for interaction between residents, students and staff and stewardship of the natural environment. This initiative is part of a Maynooth University Project Live partnership funded through the Higher Education Authority Future Ready fund.



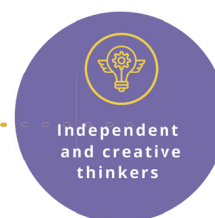
DEVELOPING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES

In this Community Engaged Learning initiative, students embraced their role as effective, global citizens, building eco-literacy, protecting and sustaining local forests, and halting biodiversity loss.

They were creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge, independent and creative thinkers. The participants also recognised their social, environmental and civic responsibilities. The students were self-motivated, able to work independently and contribute effectively to the team project.



GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES ACQUIRED THROUGH THIS PROJECT



ABOUT

Campus Engage is working to bring higher education teaching staff, students, and communities together to address societal challenges through the curriculum. The Campus Engage Steering Committee and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning are grateful to Dr Ruth Hally, Civic Engagement Programme Coordinator, UCC who led this project. This case study was written by Dr Hally

with Dr Máire Nic an Bhaird, Laoise Ní Chléirigh and Jennifer Lloyd-Hughes, Maynooth University; and was informed by the UCC Graduate Attributes Programme framework, funded by the Higher Education Authority and the Tomar Trust.

For more information go to:
www.campusengage.ie