



*Empowerment for a better world through  
Adult and Community Education.*

## STORIES OF ACTION 2020 - 2023



## SDG ADVOCATE TRAINING



This event is funded by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Irish Aid is the Government's overseas development programme which supports partners working in some of the world's poorest countries. Irish Aid also supports global citizenship education in Ireland to encourage learning and public engagement with global issues. The content of this communication represents the views of the author only and does not necessarily represent or reflect DFA policy.

### **Saolta – Stories of Action**

The SDG Advocate Training is part of a broader strategic partnership programme called Saolta; the Irish word for “Worldly- Wise” <https://www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta>. Development Perspectives is the consortium's lead partner, which also includes AONTAS, Concern Worldwide, Irish Rural Link and the Adult and Community Education Dept of Maynooth University.

#### **Saolta’s Strategic Goal**

*Increased accessibility, quality and effectiveness of development education within the adult and community education sector.*

#### **The Project**

The SDG Advocate Training offers 26 Active Citizens living in Ireland, an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and be supported in the design and implementation of informed Action Projects in the Adult and Community Education Sector. The 8-month Development Education training aims to engage participants in a learning journey that will challenge views, opinions, knowledge and awareness of the world around us.

The following document is a compilation of the SDG Advocates Stories of Action from 2020-2023

## Anne Hannan - SDG Advocate 2020

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I work in adult education so it was an obvious choice for me to base my project in this sector. Initial considerations explored how I might integrate my SDG Advocacy project into my existing teaching and learning practice within the centres I work with. The obvious choice to me in terms of SDG's was Goal 4 - Quality Education, which stresses the importance of providing equitable access to education and lifelong learning opportunities. The possibility of working with all 17 goals through the prism of education really appealed to me. I wondered if there was a way to increase awareness of all SDGs

which could (but not necessarily) lead to effective learning outcomes.

Some questions and considerations that emerged as my project gained momentum included *Was it possible to adapt the content of education to include relevant topics such as human rights and climate action? Would or could this enhance the learning experience?*

I am a tutor in adult education but I also work on the creation and implementation of new QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) policies for one centre. From my work on centre policies, I wondered if I might develop resources that could stand alone but also be linked to learning outcomes. I felt that as educators are grappling to rapidly upskill in VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) technologies, providing ready-made resources might be viewed as welcome rather than additional challenges. If I can provide ready-made resources that can be easily adaptable in different contexts, then this could be seen as 'helpful' rather than 'hindersome' to this current technological ramping up happening within education.

My participation on the DP Advocate Programme encouraged me to put wishful thinking into informed action. Current considerations for action include informing tutors in using authentic materials that are firmly rooted in evidence based research that suggests particular ideas are linked to positive change.

I have learnt that many resources exist and that there is no reason to invent the wheel. Also concepts like 'greenwashing' and 'fake news' have forced me to pay particular attention to any resources I share. My aim is to repackage existing resources into simple bit sized ideas that could be introduced in class. My objective is to increase awareness and discourse about our planet and how we live our lives through informed access to ideas and concepts that allow us all to contribute in small ways.

The next stage of my project is to have an information session with tutors across two adult education centres I work with. I want to share my ideas and thoughts and most importantly get tutor feedback so what I produce in the end is both informed by and improved upon by the practitioners.

The advocate programme has allowed me the space to commit to an action project and to develop it over time. It is still evolving but I have embodied the notion of change now, it has become part of who I am and what I do. That is the biggest change.

*"Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home" - Matsuo Basho*

## Aoife Jenkins -SDG Advocate 2020

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I was lucky enough to spend 2 years volunteering in Cambodia and having the privilege of learning how to live with simple means but with huge community support despite their limited means. This community life and support was a revelation to me and I saw how it benefitted the whole community from young to old. The wisdom of the older generation was passed on and the new learning from the younger generation was integrated to support the community to thrive.

On my return to Ireland and assimilating back into a community, I saw the good work that individual groups were doing and I hoped to harness this into a cohesive team so that different groups can support each other's aims in the community. For example, our local tidy towns committee, our local ladies football team as well as other youth groups are all very active. But our area lacks the facility to support these different type of groups to work together on something that would benefit all ages and categories of the community, such as a community garden or a community walk. This kind of collaboration would provide a lot of benefits to the area including keeping families involved in their community and learning how to take care of their natural environment, as well as the benefits for people's mental wellbeing.

### **Action:**

I started investigating in my own community and looked to get involved in local community groups. However due to Covid-19 restrictions, these groups were not meeting very often and it was a challenge that I had to work around. I have started an online Sustainable Development Goals action group for the wider community of Limerick through the 'Meet-ups' website. Meet-ups is a platform that allows people to organise events and get involved in their community by connecting them online. Currently our Limerick group has met twice through on-line meet-ups.

In the first meeting, I gave a brief introductory talk about the SDGs to the group and afterwards we shared ideas about what each of us were involved in and how we could make an impact towards certain SDGs, with specific focus on our county.

Again working around Covid guidelines, I have also set up a Facebook page for the SDG action group with the hope of sharing ideas and resources on straightforward, practical

ways to live sustainably and to foster a sense of community around those taking action on issues. These steps were as a direct result of taking part in the SDG Advocate training.

The SDG action group is still in its infancy but the exciting part of the project is knowing that there is a community of people that share these common goals and are motivated to get involved. The action is a small step but I am writing this piece in the hope that someone who, like myself last year, is thinking about *'how can I make an impact?'* and *'is there anyone in my area with similar ideals and how can I connect with them and make an impact?'*, can see that even in Covid times, it is possible.

The main goals that the group discussed taking actions towards were: SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities SDG 13 Climate action. We have submitted some proposals to the County Council towards the Limerick Development Plan with some of our ideas and hopes for the future of the county.

#### **SDG Advocate training with Development Perspectives:**

The training and development that I was lucky enough to be a part of this year was excellent. As an advocate we were given support, advice and regular inspiration to continue persevering with our action projects throughout the process. The training was extremely well thought-out and structured in a way that meant you could be at any stage of your project and still take something useful from the training to enhance it. In short, the SDG Advocate training empowered me with the knowledge that our actions matter, no matter how big or small and our impact is beneficial when we persevere.

## Christina Stephenson - SDG Advocate 2020

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At the outset of the Advocate Programme, I had been in the midst of my role with SOLAS\*, working with researchers on the development of resources and guidelines for tutors supporting vulnerable learners in further education. As the evidence stacked up, I was genuinely shocked to learn just how difficult daily life is for so many people here in Ireland, with adults from all walks of life struggling in silence to function, without the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. Reflecting on my own privileged position as the eldest of three for whom university was a natural rite of passage, I could only imagine the limitations that a lack of educational opportunity might impose on work and family life.

The DP Advocate Programme's call to action spoke to my desire to look at ways of redressing the balance through the means presented by my line of work. Also, being a natural introvert who gravitates towards the fence for the sake of harmony, I was interested in challenging myself to take a more proactive vocal stance on the side of an issue that spoke to me.

Previous career choices in teaching, mentoring and advisory roles have played to this diplomatic tendency which has often seen me revert back to listening and observing mode. Now feels like an appropriate time to engage in meaningful dialogue, and I found that the experience with DP was the perfect way to 'test the water' in a warm and respectful environment. Having this time to share ideas with a group of interesting people with viewpoints different from my own enabled me to step up and enjoy the conversation. As synchronicity would have it, one of these sessions led to fellow advocate Anne and I starting our own dialogue around potential future collaboration in the world of Further Education and Training.

For my action project, I've spent time delving into the rich evidence of inclusive, creative blended learning emerging from across the sector. My aim is to highlight those resources that meet the needs of adults seeking to improve their literacy skills with a view to collaborating with authors interested in producing accessible and engaging SDG-related materials. Networking within my existing circle and also building new relationships will be key elements of the success of this effort, and I feel well equipped to do this with my recently acquired DP advocate toolkit.

Next steps will therefore be to cast my net out wide and to link with colleagues working across SOLAS in order to spread the word and spark an interest in this project.

So what now? I look forward to continuing connecting the dots and exploring avenues for sharing Anne's wonderful tutor resources with those who may value such support for their learners, particularly during these trying times. I feel optimistic that despite the many challenges faced by the sector at present, there is a place for people to flourish and to discover their connection to the SDGs through the supportive environment of community education. I am hopeful that I can make a positive contribution to the virtual learning space by making the SDGs a little more open to all.

*\*[SOLAS](#) is the state agency responsible for funding further education and training in Ireland.*



## Fiachra Keogh –SDG Advocate 2020

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I started a podcast called Distant Voices with a view to teaching critical thinking skills to teenagers and young adults with regards to development issues. My plan is to enable people to connect the dots between their lifestyles (votes/purchases/investments) and the current trajectory of the planet. I believe if people are informed of the real long term consequences of actions they will do better. We present interviews and animations on topics accompanied (hopefully) by e-learning materials. My dream for the project is to have a website with regular animations and materials for helping students develop an investigative approach to deciphering online information, reflecting and taking action.

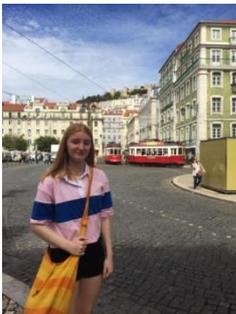
Our first episode (coming on October 23) is called "Odysseus and the Gran Chingon". This traces the origin of our concept of masculinity to ancient Greece and asks the question what it means to be human today, what heroes we have and if under examination they are really what we need as a species to survive.



The DP Advocate Programme helped me articulate ideas that were floating around in my head. For example, I knew about systems theory but I didn't have the language to describe what I saw as problematic. DP helped me do this. Also I'm now studying for an MSc in Sustainable Development at UCD for which I have the Advocacy program to thank for.

## Hannah Wales - SDG Advocate 2020

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My SDG action project is focused around creating a book club within the Politics and Sociology Society in my college, Maynooth University. I wanted to create this book club to use reading to explore the issues within the sustainable development goals. At the start of this process I thought I would be able to hold the book club in the University but now it's looking like it'll have to be held online through zoom and group chats.

I decided on this idea for an action project as I wanted to create a project that could be done within the Politics and Sociology Society which is potentially a good place to discuss ideas around the SDGs in a fun and welcoming place. My plan is to organise the group to read a book a month and to have meetings to discuss the book for now on zoom and hopefully next semester we could move to meeting in person.



The DP advocates hub reading list has helped me in deciding on some books we should look at and I will also get suggestions from people in the book club. The idea of creating an action project within my community pushed me to come up with this idea and to implement it into the society which I otherwise would not have made happen.

## Heather Hadrill - SDG Advocate 2020

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From participating in the SDG programme, I have been motivated to create a project that uses my passion, experience, and skills in Theatre & Arts to mobilize change in my community.

I am passionate about Theatre and the Arts, its importance and significant relationship to the SDG Goal of Good Health and Wellbeing. It is a form of communication that brings people together and offers a communal experience which helps us to understand the people around us and the world we live in. It offers narratives that create meaning and the opportunity to see from different perspectives, reflect on events and stories, listen to different sides of conversations and empathise with the challenges of our fellow human being.

As a medium for self-expression and risk taking, Theatre and the Arts have the potential to influence how we think and feel about our lives, our behaviours and value systems. It is a powerful platform to advocate for new voices and new ways of being, which contributes to our vitality, ability to live sustainably and our evolution as a society, which is so integral to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDG programme taught me that I can leverage my skills, theatre experience and contacts network to create a project in a meaningful and impactful way. I decided on an Action Project whereby I will create a community theatre company of County Wexford residents. A theatre company that pinpoints local needs and social issues related to the SDG Goals, through the medium of theatre performance, with a focus on the SDG Goal 3, Good Health & Wellbeing, for 2020-2021.

A diverse range of participants aged 18 to 85 from all over Wexford will be invited to collaborate with a small team of creatives, and create a multi-disciplinary theatre performance, that is inclusive, ambitious and theatre for all. The company is open to all participants with or without any theatre experience. Up to 100 participants will be selected to take part, through a process of an application and a group audition and workshop type session.

Their stories, ideas and experiences related to Health & Wellbeing in County Wexford, will be explored and collated, in a group workshop format. This project will take the form of a collaborative process with a small professional creative team, and will empower participants to tell their stories through drama, movement, dance, spoken word, film and music to ensure their community voices are heard and understood. This project aims to build relationships with community members and theatre makers in our county.

Local representatives, members of our business and community organisations will also be invited to take part in a post-show panel discussion, exploring County Wexford's progress on the SDG Goal of Good Health & Wellbeing. This project aims to influence policy and decision makers in our county and have a positive social impact so that we can create sustainable communities.

The SDG programme provided me with valuable insight into development education and a comprehensive understanding of the SDG's, their significance and impact. I developed an awareness and understanding of systems, approaches, different perspectives, the 'Hero's Journey', and reflective practice, as well as increased awareness of my own values and capabilities.

It has been extremely uplifting to be a participant on this programme for its inspiring teaching and learning. It has offered me the chance to be part of a community of like-minded people, which has been so heart-warming and positive. I feel very privileged to have taken part and to share in the progression of fellow advocates and change makers.

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## Kamal Tribak –SDG Advocate 2020

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Over the past ten years, I developed a sense of responsibility towards the environment as we have witnessed deterioration of climate and the rise of inequalities on many levels between the Global South and Global North. Powered with knowledge from my academic studies - my undergraduate studies in sustainable architecture technology and post graduate research in Environmental Studies - sustainability, water, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation issues are important to me. The onus of guardianship to our mother earth arose in me and I felt I needed to do something to play my part in making earth a better

place and contribute to collective efforts to the just transition framework.

An opportunity was provided by Development Perspectives (DP) to join the SDG's Advocacy programme 2020, to learn and be more informed about the SDGs when I am taking actions and also to connect, network and be part of a likeminded changemaker's collective.

Choosing my project begun from an invite in my local library organized by Environmental Network Ireland (ENI) to join forces and establish a local network. As I looked around in my county I realised that there are plenty of scattered local groups doing their best, individually to combat environmental issues. This sparked an idea and I took the initiative from the ENI meeting to bring these groups together to join efforts under one umbrella organization. Through teaming up with likeminded enthusiastic and hardworking individuals, sharing the same goals, values and vision, we have formed Wexford Environmental Network (WEN). Through the WEN platform we are aiming to collaborate to promote sustainable practices in biodiversity, water, and climate.



*Artwork by Susanna D'Ascenzi WEN Team Member.*

WEN aspires to mobilise local community participation and increase community-based engagement to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with this action project we are addressing primarily SDGs 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17. We are working together on campaigns, projects and activities that draw on all local resources to protect our environment, bring about positive environmental change locally and have an inspiring impact globally. To date, we have made several public consultations and submissions - we held *Meet the Councillors* (Zoom) event to address local issues with the public representatives, and we are currently working on the County Development Plan submission.

Certainly, this year of 2020 has seen unprecedented 'out of our control' COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed the lifestyle and planning of many of us globally and moved all programmes to online delivery. Equally, Corona virus has impacted the objectives of my action project to connect and engage with wider community groups as I anticipated when designing SDG's Advocacy programme action project. However, I am grateful for the continuous support, guidance, learning, workshops, and mentoring provided by Development Perspectives, throughout the development of my action project to make it a reality.

The next phase is to continue working together with the WEN hardworking team on the ongoing planned campaigns and engagement, as well as carrying on building and empowering local community groups and individuals to bring about change to make a meaningful impact on protecting the future of the next generations.



**Wexford Environmental Network**

## Karen Kelly - SDG Advocate 2020

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I participated in the SDG Advocate Training programme in 2020. I returned to Ireland at the end of 2019 having spent a number of years living in the Middle East working as an Education Programme Manager with a specific focus on the SDGs. I also spent a number of years volunteering in an education capacity and I am passionate about accessible education for all. I applied for this programme as I wanted to develop skills and knowledge around the SDGs at local and global level. I also wanted to try and make a difference through positive action as a professional in an education community of practice.

I chose to focus my action project on SDG 4 Quality Education *"to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"* given my professional context as an Education Manager and tutor in Ireland. Specifically, I wanted my Action Project to centre around 4.4 'Relevant skills for decent work', 4.5 'Gender equality and inclusion', and 4.7 'Education for sustainable development and global citizenship.'

### Professional Context

I wrote two NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications 3 and 4) courses that focus on the SDGs and social innovation (SDG 4). I am currently working on developing educational resources for learners participating in these modules. I am writing a training manual for youth workers and tutors and creating CPD (Continuing Professional Development) training for facilitators to be able to deliver the modules at education centres around Ireland.

This project is ongoing in its development stages and will be piloted in the 2021/2022 academic year to introduce and bring awareness of the SDGs to youth and adult learners. I also created a digital course for young learners to introduce them to some of the SDGs within the context of Challenging Discrimination. This module offers youth learners an opportunity to carry out a research project topic of their choosing around discrimination and inclusion towards formal NFQ accreditation.

Since September 2020, I have programme managed an introductory coding programme around the narrative of social innovation and climate action (SDG 13 and 14) for youth in post-primary schools. I facilitated two teacher training CPD sessions in September to demonstrate how the module works and to explain the SDG Challenge. Once the students have completed the online coding module, they are set a challenge to focus on one of the SDGs and to develop a technological solution to that challenge. These projects are ongoing throughout the 2020/2021 academic year.

## Personal Context

The SDG Advocates Training programme also inspired me to look at my professional practice and to see how I could better incorporate messaging and ideas around the SDGs. To develop this further this year and next year, I enrolled in two programmes at Maynooth University – NUI Certificate in Global Youth Work & Development Education and MA in International Development. These courses will provide me with an opportunity to explore the root causes and consequences of inequality and global challenges from a global justice and development perspective as well as understanding the opportunities and challenges people face in a rapidly changing international context.

## Hopes for the future

I hope that my future studies equip me with the skills and knowledge around local and global issues and challenges in order to be able to take action and make a difference in future education-related projects. I hope that my current actions as part of the SDG Advocate Training programme successfully introduce learners to the SDGs, and empower them to be able to research and learn more about the SDGs and/or create a solution to solve an SDG challenge. I will use data and feedback from the projects to take key learnings from these action endeavours and make changes as necessary to develop each project further for learners.



## Matthew O'Neill -SDG Advocate 2020

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### Dis and Misinformation and its impact upon the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



My action plan has been to develop a tool kit for Non-Governmental Organisations working in the area of the Sustainable Development Goals, to actively battle dis and misinformation. As dis and misinformation becomes more prevalent, I believe that NGOs missions will increasingly require a cyber-element and that nations striving to achieve the SDGs will require physical and digital assistance to restore any form of peace and security.

The toolkits that I have begun constructing aim to firstly, investigate the differences between dis and misinformation so that organisations can take the appropriate action to resolve the mis/false communication, focusing on examining social media campaigns. Secondly, this toolkit would analyse in person mis and disinformation, a hack can be a catalyst which may call you to question your own values. A seed of doubt only must be formed to begin undermining an organisation's trust and ability to operate their mission mandate in the area of their expertise.

My original goal focus was SDG 8 *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, but it has also inspired understanding and developing SDG 16 *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*. My reasons for this are that mis and disinformation can impact regional and local ideas of what peace and justice looks like. These factors have shown they can be used to reshape different groups' ideas. With the pressure of growing a divided community such information can erode any strong institution from operating with any real functionality. Therefore, it will become important that we understand the means, operations and intent of mis and disinformation taking place. At the same time, it is clear from research that the effect of these hybrid tactics can have major impacts upon developing economies. Hence it would also be wrong of me to dismiss SDG 8 as a focus in the end.

The DP advocate programme was able to introduce me to the SDGs and enabled me to think about what they mean in terms of education as well as development. During this process we were asked to challenge ourselves in understanding the ideologies and prejudices we may have and how this can affect our thinking. As well as how these can impact upon the different mandates we set ourselves and how we can confront these, so they no longer impact upon our learning and commitments.

For me, this meant changing my ideas about international development and how this needs to be based around a human centric approach. It is from this space that I was motivated and guided in my own action project in developing the tool kit. Understanding the need to be aware of different cultures and utilising a human approach, has informed me in developing a human rights-based tool kit which can work in challenging the issues of mis and disinformation.

Moving forward, I hope to be able to build on the user validation I have been able to gain from interviews as well as work towards forming a prototype for the tool kit to engage with NGO's to protect information about the SDGs and how to enact an ethical and approachable way of working.

## Melanie O'Driscoll -SDG Advocate 2020

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The SDGs 13 Climate Action, 17 Partnership for the Goals and 3 Good Health and Well-being were my focus from the beginning. Alongside many others I wondered “*How can we build community resilience in the face of the climate and biodiversity crisis?*”

I identified ceremonial and ritual space, storytelling and native biodiversity enrichment as key tools to help support people as we integrate and respond to the emotional intensity of the global crises we face. Now with COVID pandemic this has become even more acute.

During the DP Advocate Programme I have focused intently on ecological grief (EcoGrief) it’s causes and results alongside ways to understand and ease it with my start up business,

*The Green Step*. Defined as a sense of mourning felt in response to experience or anticipated ecological loss, our disenfranchised EcoGrief contains in it all the typical and atypical responses to interpersonal grief. From denial, isolation and anger to bargaining, depression and acceptance, EcoGrief carries it all.



Ultimately our grief is our love and a crisis caused by the actions of humans can also be mended by the same, to that in effect our work remains tinged with hope and dare I say... faith.

My work has been about finding ways to honour and process our grief and find ways to build bridges between different communities to understand and take collaborative action. I have developed and piloted an EcoGrief workshop online and off. I am now modifying the session to be suitable for secondary school students. This space includes Joanna Macy’s Active Hope work, guided meditations, art therapy and active listening.

Currently I am training as a funeral celebrant to further my ability to create ceremonies that honour grief and death and help to support in time of loss. I am also in the process of creating a business plan, a 5-year vision, to open and manage Cork’s first natural burial ground which will serve as a space for us to pay our respects to the deceased and re- establish a thriving native ecosystem that will be indefinitely protected as a burial ground.

During my research and development I have envisioned a story-telling event designed for farmers and eco-activists to come together and learn from each other in a traditional Irish setting—of course with tea, ceoil and craic galore. Due to the in-person nature of this event and the older farming community, it will be held outside next year when COVID restrictions allow for it. For now I am welcoming and allowing my emotional response to the changes in the world and helping others to do the same.

Instagram/FB @[thegreenstep.ie](https://www.instagram.com/thegreenstep.ie)

## Michelle Phillips - SDG Advocate 2020

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### Diversion Green “Food Waste Prevention & Education Services”



Diversion Green is a Social Enterprise that offers “Food Waste Prevention and Education Services” which was originally set up as the “Food Waste Diversion Project”. In 2018 I went to the UCD Innovation Academy and we were asked to present a problem and a solution. My problem was food waste in Ireland with attitudes and knowledge of the general population playing its part in this problem.

The “Food Waste Diversion Project” was set up in response to the amount of food that is wasted or lost in Ireland every year. Back in 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stated that 1.1 million tons of food was wasted in Ireland every year. I am still waiting on the latest figures!

Over the course of doing my post-grad in UCD in 2018, I spent a lot of time speaking with people each day about food waste, the brown bin and composting. Listening to what people had to say allowed me to gain some qualitative insights as to why there was so much food waste in Ireland in the main areas of consumption and production. By the end of 2018 I had spoken to a lot of people, having conversations with anybody willing to talk to me!! The one common theme that kept emerging was “CONFUSION”.

As time went on I started to give talks, deliver workshops, organise events with Diversion Green and 2019 was a very positive year for my enterprise. I then completed the Master Composter Training at the end of 2018 with [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie) (an EPA programme) and with their support, this programme gave me access to more people to engage with talks & workshops.

By the end of 2019 I had achieved a good bit with my small enterprise. I then got an opportunity to do a four-week workshop with a secondary school in Blakestown, Dublin. It was an amazing yet eye opening experience as I realised that I had been mostly speaking with and too the same audience, some could say the converted? It struck me then that a large portion of the population had/were been left out of the green conversation or there was some sort of disconnect. Opening the conversation about food waste is the primary goal of Diversion Green in whatever setting that may be.

The opportunity came along to do SDG Advocate Programme with Development Perspectives. The SDG’s are very important to me and Diversion Green and I was becoming more aware of their importance in a global and local context. My first instinct was to do the programme to learn more about the 17 SDG’s and to align the enterprise with the goals.

An action project provided part of that learning of the advocate training and I realised this was my chance to try to address the disconnect that I felt existed within certain communities in my locality and beyond. I wanted to be careful about language as I do/did not want to place certain places and communities into boxes. I had also realised back in 2019 about my own personal privilege and tried to work on my social media content being accessible for all. The words minority, poor, disadvantaged, working class areas, council estates do not play a part in my action project, but in theory they are what drive me to seek change and access to conversations with these communities.

My action project went on hold due to the covid-19 situation. My plan is to connect with the five local community centres in my town which is Bray and offer workshops for teenagers and adults. A few weeks ago I started making connections with the centres and I am in the process of booking in workshops but at this present moment I feel I may have to wait another while before I can do Food Waste Prevention and Compost Awareness Workshops.

*#note I plan to offer these workshops for free as part Diversion Green's outreach action project.*



Michelle @Diversion Green

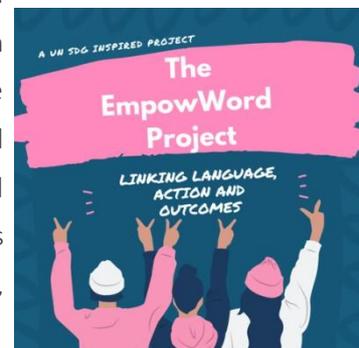
### *The EmpowWord Project*



I chose to do a project that would explore how language is used to communicate social norms through social relationships and interaction. Specifically, how these outcomes can be understood as playing a part in maintaining inequalities based on a person's gender and minority group membership. The themes to be explored relate to all the 17 SDGs, considering the indicators set out in Goal 5 Gender Equality with an emphasis on intersectional feminist perspectives.

Relating policy to action and vice versa are a part of the fundamental principles of the SDGs and are key to imagining new directions for living in Ireland. This is where individual adaptations for sustainable living can be used as a force for positive change, without losing sight of the structural and material factors that are responsible for current social and ecological reality. *The EmpowWord Project* hopes to communicate ways in which Goal 5 can be interpreted in the Irish and global contexts, providing

readers with resources such as blog posts; sustainability focused DIY projects; and opportunities for action such as petition signing, writing to TDs to promote equal and equitable changes, or group actions to support local needs.



Follow on Instagram: [empowwordproject](https://www.instagram.com/empowwordproject)

The first topic will focus on Goal 1 “No Poverty” and looks specifically at the gendered experiences of ‘Period Poverty’ to explore how stigma and taboo around menstrual health can affect people’s quality of life. Themes around inclusive language, access to products, the privilege gap, and environmental impact are discussed to open up dialogue about how Irish society relates to people having periods. The aim is to present a wider scope of reference to understanding the issues of underlying period poverty, the state of education on menstrual health, and reflects on how to move forward to eradicate this burden with inclusivity, equality, and environmental protection at its heart.

Shifting behaviours and beliefs to meet the 5 P’s of SDG’s (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships) can also tap into people’s creative sides. Learning to develop new skills such as repairing, reusing, repurposing can empower people trying to incorporate SDG 12 to Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns in their own lives. A tutorial video on making a reusable menstrual pad hopes to inspire people to try them out,

and also provide an opportunity to work with others to make reusable pads that can be donated to members of our communities who experience period poverty.

I think it is important to reflect on how gender role expectations are at play in Irish society today as we move into a new decade of development. This is crucial for a just transition in response to Ireland's commitments to mitigate climate change and climate change effects. Consequently, actions bringing Irish society forward and protecting Ireland's environment to meet the 2050 goals must consider how Irish citizens' needs are met through sustainable, inclusive and just means. As Ireland's rankings on SDG measures for Gender Equality show that significant challenges remain, the project hopes to explore how these challenges can be understood in ways that communicate and connect to the lived experiences in Ireland. Gender Equality should not be seen as a specific focus on women and girls but should be understood in terms of how intersectional equality is of benefit to all genders and society.

I was motivated to focus on SDG Goal 5 Gender Equality as I believe that the route to equality is through feminist perspectives and activism. While feminism and equality discourses do appear more frequently in the mainstream, there is still low interaction or implementation of feminist led policy on a national level. The transformational change needed for Ireland to meet the 2030 goals is dependent on the amplification of a diversity of voices and experiences. I hope that *The EmpowWord Project* can contribute to this in some way.

I am extremely grateful to be a member of the 2020 advocate cohort. The programme helped me to develop the format of the action project through engaging workshops, mentoring sessions and study visits over the past few months. It was a rich source of knowledge building and sharing. The workshops were fun, energetic and a place for dynamic thinking as we adapted our projects to the changing realities due to the pandemic.

The leadership and generosity shown by Mog, Bobby, Stephanie, Nick and the DP team, the Advocacy Programme Leaders, and the trainees has been incredible. I have firm belief in each of the advocates' ability to make positive change and impacts through their own projects and look forward to supporting them. The work that has been done already while people have full time jobs, families, and during the restrictions of the last few months, is inspiring.

## Dan McInerney- SDG Advocate 2021

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*It became clear to me that being an active citizen was more than just a 'nice idea', rather it requires emphasis on "critical analysis, discussion and problem solving".*

In 2019 I reached the end of a long career in Local Government with Carlow County Council. One of my final career achievements was to submit a successful application, to the then Department of Communications, Climate and Environment, for Carlow County Council to be appointed by the Minister as an SDG Champion. The next year, 2020, brought COVID -19 and the opportunity of lots of time for reading. Among the many books I read was Mary Robinson's excellent book "Climate Justice", which really stirred deep emotions within.

In November 2020 I was lucky enough to stumble across the wonderfully inspiring "Are you ... Saoita?" video. This prompted me to send an email to Development Perspectives expressing my interest in participating in the next available SDG Advocate Training. Roll on to March of this year and I was delighted to be offered a place on the 2021 Training.

For many years I had nagging thoughts that my generation was not doing anything near enough to make sure that we would leave the earth in a better state for our children, our grandchildren and future generations. A definition of Sustainable Development, that I had read many years ago, in the contexts of the Brundtland Commission and the Kyoto Protocol, has come to the forefront of my mind on many occasions. It's a definition that is always worth repeating - "Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their need".

Of course my concerns had, in recent years, become very topical in the context of the Climate Crisis. My general interest in reading and watching coverage of the topic had heightened my urge to participate, some way, in Climate Action. So, I embarked on the SDG Advocate Training and among my expectations I hoped that the course would provide me with 'tools' to help me to critically think about how I could contribute to a heightened awareness of SDGs at my local level.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 situation, we were required to commence our course on-line. At our first 'zoom' session I became aware that the screen in front of me contained many like-minded people who, like me, wanted to learn and explore how to work towards bringing about change for the common good. In our first full session I found it very interesting to learn about the different 'development theories' and this helped me to re-consider my attitudes and values. It became clear to me that being an active citizen was more than just a 'nice

idea', rather it requires emphasis on "critical analysis, discussion and problem solving".

At this stage I was already playing an active role in community groups such as Carlow Lions Club and An Gairdín Beo Community Garden. In addition, I had 'put my shoulder to the wheel' with a group of people looking to form a Sustainable Energy Community for Carlow Town. My participation in the SDG Advocate Training resulted in my having a renewed motivation regarding my role with these community groups.

As the course progressed throughout the summer I became increasingly aware that it is only through collective efforts of many people, at community level, that we can achieve real change that will lead to a more open and active participation by all. The 'Action Phase' of the course introduced me to the concept of 'Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey', and a number of opportunities began to open up for me:

- I was requested to chair a new national Environment Team for Lions Clubs Ireland
- I was requested to fill the role of Secretary to the new Carlow Town Sustainable Energy Community
- I applied for and was approved as an EU Climate Pact Ambassador.

My role in each of these will require my active involvement in planning and implementing community projects. One of my objectives is to put a project review procedure in place to clearly indicate how the project is aligned with the SDG's.

I realise that success in these roles will only be possible through the collective efforts of a number of hardworking individuals sharing similar visions, goals and objectives. The reflection phase of the SDG Advocate Training however, and the experience of having completed the course, with a group of like-minded and enthusiastic people, has strengthened my conviction to seek to bring about change by, and I quote Wangari Maathai, '*doing the best I can*'.

I feel that what I have learned, and the resources that I now have access to through my participation in the SDG Advocate Training, has improved my knowledge and skills on sustainability matters, with a particular emphasis on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I am confident that I am now better equipped to be an informed leader of change in my locality and beyond.

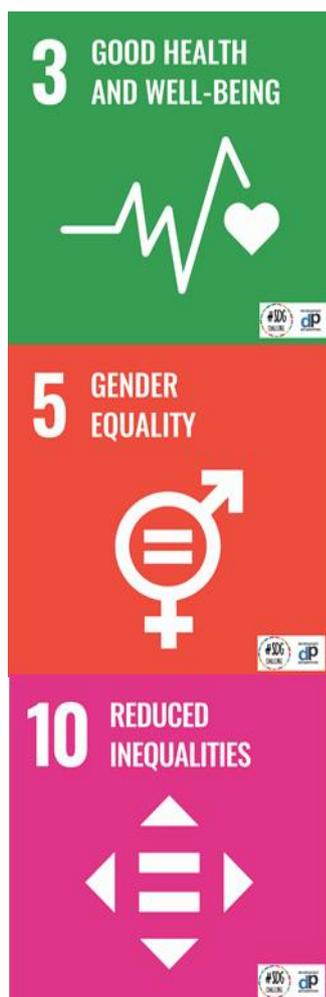


## Mary O'Connor and Martin Dillon - SDG Advocate 2021



*We believe that the actions from the National Sport Policy if delivered can play a role in reducing inequalities through sport within and among communities.*

We were motivated to link SDG's 3, 5 and 10 because we felt that Sport has a big part to play in raising awareness of the SDG's but also the practical role sport and physical activity can play in achieving the SDG's. We believe in Ireland there has not as of yet been a connection or focus on the goals where sport is concerned. Through our action project -*Sport, Physical Activity and SDG's a Winning Formula* - we hope to address this disconnect.



We are focusing on SDGs 3, 5 and 10 which we believe would be a great starting point for sport to become acquainted with the goals. Further organisations such as National Governing Body of Sport (NGBs) and Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) will instantly understand how they can link their work to these specific SDGs. In Ireland there has been a big focus on coach education in recent times. We believe that by supporting coaches through educating them on the SDG's and providing them with a practical toolkit they can bring awareness to the children they are coaching on the SDG's. This would contribute to the aim of disseminating the message of the SDG's to a new and broad demographic of the population

The main objectives of a *Sport, Physical Activity and SDG's a Winning Formula* are:

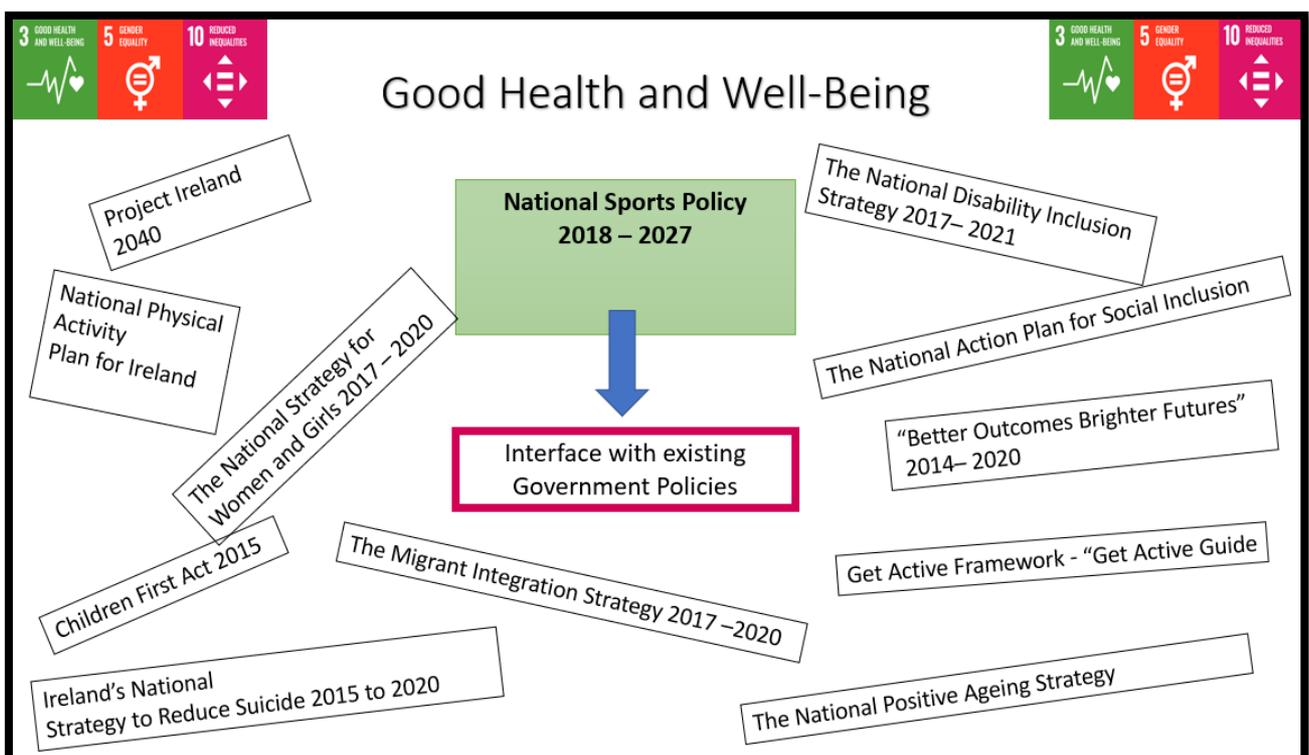
- Raise the understanding, status and profile of SDG's 3, 5 and 10 in Irish Sport
- Lead the development of coach education in SDG's through the implementation of a quality workshop and toolkit to support coach understanding and implementation at grassroots level
- Work in partnership with LSP's to deliver a mutli-sport education programme for coaches of participants aged between 13 – 16.

We believe that the actions from the National Sports Policy (NSP) if delivered can play a role in promoting Good health and wellbeing, addressing gender equality and reducing inequalities within sport and among communities. The purpose of this SDG action project is to actively engage with stakeholders and partnerships to apply the SDGs within sport education. This process will include discussions with explorative questions such as what does ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in sport’ mean to NGBs and LSPs and how do they believe the SDGs can play their part in reaching the objectives of the National Sports Policy, A snapshot or example of what we are asking NGBs and LSPs to consider and reflect on under Goals 3, 5, 10 are:

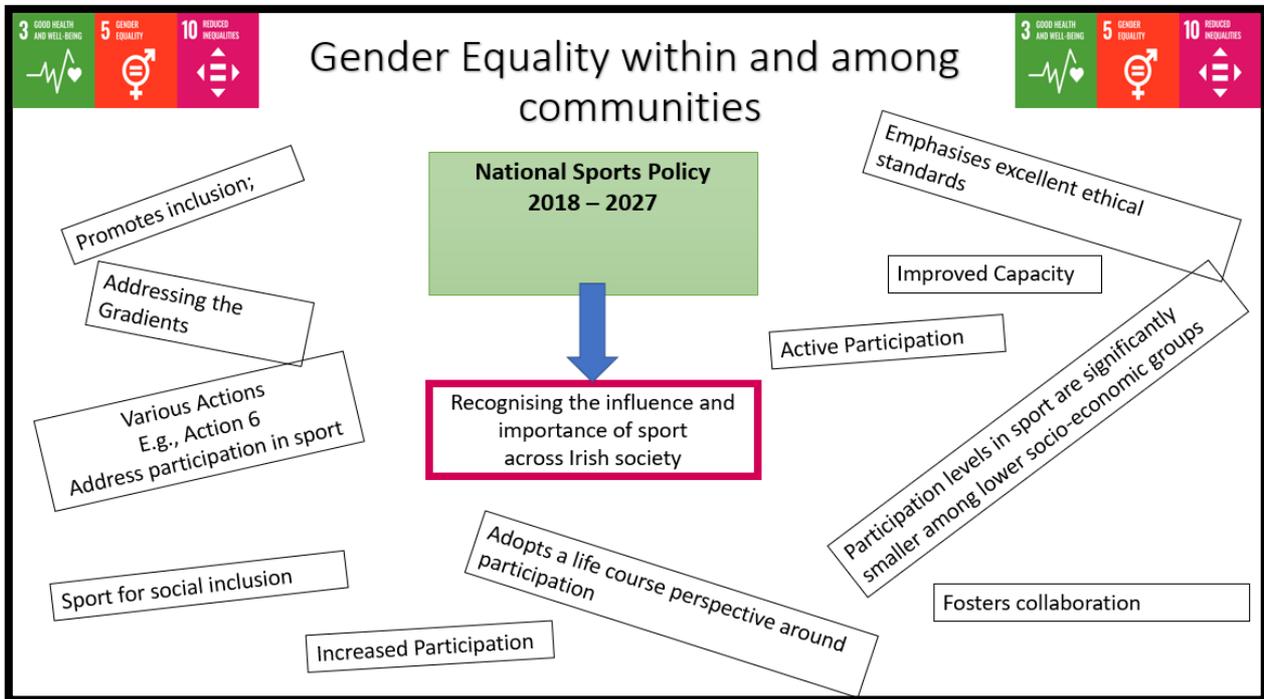
- Sport Access
- Sporting Opportunity
- Health and wellbeing through sport for all
- Sport for quality education and lifelong learning for all
- Sport for economic growth and productive employment
- Sport for Building capacity
- strengthening governance and protecting the integrity of sport.

Each picture below draws on the various policies listed within the NSP and links SDGs 3,5 and 10 to the many strategies and actions within this document.

*SDG 3 – Policies and strategies that promote good health and wellbeing.*



SDG 5 – Sample actions within the NSP that promote gender equality



SDG 10 The National Sports Policy (NSP) and associated plans highlighting what can be achieved



We believe the creation of a coaches’ toolkit focusing on engaging young people on these 3 SDG’s will engage, encourage and deliver change in every community through the medium of sport. We are very excited and committed to these actions which are still a work in progress!

## William Sainsbury - SDG Advocate 2021

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*Multiple times a day I would serve single use food containers, compostable cutlery, a napkin, a brown paper bag and a coffee cup to customers ... when finished all of that waste would go into the public bins.*

Over the past few years I have become disenchanted, frustrated, sometimes even angry at the rampant consumerism that is leading us down a path of an environmental and climate disaster. Feelings of powerlessness started to grow and were impacting my mental health. I applied to the SDG Advocate Training without much insight as to what it would entail. I just knew I had to do something, no matter how small, if only to ease my own feelings of powerlessness.

I went into the information session for all applicants in early March with an open mind as to what the training would offer. I was concerned about the workload and deadlines the training might require. I came out of that session sure that this was something I needed to do. The coordinators, Mog & Bobby, seemed like my sort of people and I immediately had a sense that simply being part of a group like this would be an experience that would instil some hope and positivity in me.

Moving into the explorative phase of the training I was at a complete loss as to what shape my Action Project should take. I went into our first weekend together (via Zoom) nervous that I was unprepared. I questioned whether I had just added another commitment to an already busy schedule, that I was going to feel guilty about not giving my all. By the end of that weekend it was becoming clear that I needn't have worried. The coordinators and mentors radiated reassurance, support and a commitment to this training being an individual journey with no set expectations. This was my journey and I could take it at a pace that felt comfortable for me. I began to relax and to consider what had brought me here in the first place. What was important to me? What was I passionate about? What change could I possibly make?

I was working in the food industry managing two cafés and I was increasingly aware of our industry's role in producing needless waste and packaging. That guilt was growing! Multiple times a day I would serve single use food containers, compostable cutlery, a napkin, a brown paper bag and a coffee cup to customers who would often sit not 50 yards away to eat their lunch. When finished all of that waste would go into the public bins. This was something I could begin to change. I decided my action project would involve combatting the amount of waste cafés produce.

Moving into the Summer we finally had the opportunity to meet some other advocates in person outdoors in Co. Sligo. The day was wonderfully relaxing while getting lots accomplished. We carried out different activities to challenge and support and add to each other's potential project ideas. We were constantly encouraged to keep considering our own biases and to look at things from a variety of perspectives. Being surrounded by so many like-minded people was a truly cathartic experience and I came away from that day energised.

Over the following weeks I decided what shape my project would take. Beginning with a pilot project in our own cafés I want to remove single use food packaging from Kilkenny City. The idea is that people would be served their takeaway food in reusable containers which they can then drop into drop boxes located around the City, these would then be washed and redistributed to the cafés. But, as they say, Rome wasn't built in a day!

My fantastic mentor Sara encouraged me to get the ball rolling on some of the more practical sides of my project. This meant analysing how many boxes we might require for a pilot project, researching the type of container, seeking funding. The support I received from the County Council, The Conscious Cup Campaign and my own employers showed me that if I can just keep pushing gently then doors will open and I can keep making positive change.

I am still working away in the background despite a change of job and I am confident that this project will continue to grow into next year.

The SDG Advocate Training has been an extremely positive experience for me. It's opened my eyes to a variety of viewpoints and areas of expertise that I didn't know existed. It is lovely to know there are so many other people out there with similar fears and worries but who are trying to do good.

I want to thank Mog, Bobby, Nick, Sara, Mel and all my fellow advocates for making this such a brilliant experience.



## Niamh Flynn - SDG Advocate 2021

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*I wanted to create a tangible resource that makes the goals more accessible to the wider public and could serve as a well-being tool to all people*

Where to start? How can I help? What's my passion? What cause do I champion? Or maybe it's all too much, what are the goals? Why are we pursuing them? Are they even possible? These questions can leave us thinking that maybe we are just one person and how much of an impact can I have on my community, never mind the global community.

Or perhaps you have been dedicating as much time as possible to engaging in as many acts as possible to champion as many things as possible and are hoping to help achieve as many of the sustainable goals as possible and now, you are just a little tired and are looking for a reminder about what got you motivated in the first place and need a little time to re-energise and re-ignite that passion you have for being part of the world which strives for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be met.

I meet people from all walks of life that express the above to me. I wanted to create a tangible resource that makes the goals more accessible to the wider public and could serve as a well-being tool to all people, especially those who are currently working towards combatting the underlying global challenges of which the goals are a product. Over the pandemic year (2020), I joined a meditation and yoga group, which was a huge benefit to my health and well-being, and I wanted to spread this with the world, just as much as I wanted to share the SDGs.

At the beginning of our SDG Advocate Training, we took part in Joseph Campbell's (1987) 'Hero's Journey' activity in preparation for our SDG action project. Along this journey we encountered friends and foes, and were encouraged to consider potential allies for our continued onward journey. It is at this point that I thought of Niamh Hennessy, an engineer, and practicing mediation and asana teacher. Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17), took full flight as we began to collaborate on what became *SDG Meditate*, my current action project.

*SDG Meditate* is a meditation podcast series, that we have developed, which aims to give you the chance to care for your mental health, in alignment with SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and will offer you the opportunity to consider each of the SDGs both as an individual and as part of the collective. This is a no-pressure podcast. It aims to bring the goals into your life in a gentle way which will be beneficial for your health and happiness! We hope to empower you to achieve the SDGs through societal action starting with

your own mindset towards the challenges which we face and thereafter building on our collective understanding through sharing and connecting with our local and global communities. We hope that this podcast will ignite action amongst society and will encourage people to think about the actionable ways in which they can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

We hope that this meditation series will reframe the SDGs from 'out of reach, impossible tasks' to 'achievable through collective action'. We encourage you to take the time to slow down and act consciously. We invite you to imagine a new future for our world. Who knows what the impact of that will be.



The best way to listen to 'SDG Meditate' is as follows:

Listen via Spotify (Application streaming service):

[https://open.spotify.com/show/3TBvCZYXtNcugFUPnqF8m4?si=kLGds48jQxKhvBz\\_Tu3CWA](https://open.spotify.com/show/3TBvCZYXtNcugFUPnqF8m4?si=kLGds48jQxKhvBz_Tu3CWA)

Set up a queue on Spotify starting with: 1) Opening meditation 2) The SDG that you want to listen to eg. SDG 4: Quality Education Collective 3) The Closing Meditation

(No Spotify! No Problem!) Access via Website Link here: <https://www.balanceinchaos.me/sdg-meditate>  
'SDG Meditate' Audio Introduction:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3o1qFyOAmGA9ZoIMtLTv0Q?si=cgG4SbKIQEiiZe7Mt0-wSg>

Credits / Social Media handles:

Instagram: SDG Advocate @niamhflynn\_ / SDG Ally @balancein.chaos

Facebook: SDG Advocate Niamh Flynn

Twitter: SDG Advocate @NiamhFlynn\_





*...the simplest of objects can have a much greater impact on the planet than we realise*

In today's fast-moving world, we are bombarded with information, advertising, opinions and comments on all types of subjects. However, this is not necessarily a good thing, we can be very confused in who, or what to listen to. Information on climate change is an excellent example of the myriad of information that can be manipulated by organisations, groups, or individuals to deliver a variety of messages that can be somewhat thin on scientific and factual information. How can the ordinary citizen know or understand what is being said? Even the language of the scientific community and based in facts can be a major turn-off for many people. We cannot allow this to happen, we need to bring as many people along with us as we can, we must examine the information that is already out there and try to relate it to a person's everyday life. We have never had as many means of communication as we have today, yet factual information can fall between the cracks, or get drowned out by the noise that proliferates our communication and information streams.



Our consumption of goods and products is increasing by the day, but do we ever stop to think about where it comes from and how it is made? I think probably not.

My project *Stuff* aims to inform communities, organisations and the general public on how the simplest of objects can have a much greater impact on the planet than we realise. Everyday objects such as the coins, the keys in our pocket to jewellery, mobile phones, or the car in our driveway, contain metals and minerals that

are extracted from the earth and are finite in nature. The object of the project is to relay this information in a clear and easily understood way without jargon, buzzwords or technical terms that can create confusion for many people. The idea is not to provide a lecture on the topic, but to create a greater awareness among the participants and show them how they can apply the knowledge gained to implement sustainable activities in their daily lives. It is hoped that participants will acquire a greater understanding of sustainable development and the SDGs and that they will be able to apply a more critical and analytical approach to sustainability issues. It does not mean we stop buying goods and services, but that we can make a better and informed choice when we do.

The SDG Advocate Training has taught me to critically assess the idea of how to deliver my action. Outlining learning theories and engaging in practical exercises has given me the confidence to know that I am on the right path to create a change in people's concepts on consumerism. I know that this is a very challenging task, but the SDG Advocate Training has been a great help in connecting me with like-minded people and creating a network of support and advice that I know I can turn to when needed. It is very heartening to know that there are people out there that want to make a change for the better for everyone regardless of who they are and where they come from. It was great fun too, I enjoyed every moment.

SDG 12 addresses the ways in which humanity is driving the three planetary crises of climate, biodiversity and pollution, all of which are linked to unsustainable production and consumption.



*SDG 12 addresses the ways in which humanity is driving the three planetary crises of climate, biodiversity and pollution, all of which are linked to unsustainable production and consumption.*

## Ellie Donovan - SDG Advocate 2021

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*Being part of the SDG Advocate Training definitely helped me focus on the value of active citizenship, both for the individual and in achieving the global goals.*

I have just come to the end of a 5-month contract as a Tutor and CE Scheme Trainer in a Further Education Centre which offers training and employment opportunities for people engaged with The Probation Service and addiction treatment services. The Outreach programme aims to provide training, personal development, and employment around sustainability in a safe and non-judgmental environment. From June to August we worked on outdoor projects across the 20-acre campus with the aim of supporting biodiversity and enhancing sustainability.

We built a composting unit from salvaged wood from around the campus. Coffee grinds from the Café, peelings from the kitchen, cardboard and garden waste can be composted here, helping to reduce waste and feed the garden organically. SDG 2- Zero Hunger raised its head during our discussions on Food Waste.



We created a Pollinator Plan for the Campus in support of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. We made a map of the campus, a grass cutting schedule and a planting plan. I trained Gardeners on Community Employments Schemes in Organic Gardening Practices and Sustainable Grounds Maintenance to ensure our plan was implemented. We actively engaged in Citizen Science taking part in 6 FIT(Flower Insect Timed) counts and uploaded our findings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.



During September and October participants completed the QQI Level 4 Module in Teamworking. This required a Collection of Work on the theoretical elements and a Skills Demonstration in Teamwork Activities. For our Teamworking task we took the planting plan from our summer workshops and planted Spring Flowering Pollinator Friendly bulbs around the campus. This was an opportune time to highlight SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and emphasise how vital partnerships are if we are to meet the specific targets set out by the goals.

My work has always incorporated one or more SDG's, but often without attempting to get more people on board to help meet the targets. Being part of the SDG Advocate Training definitely helped me focus on the value of active citizenship, both for the individual and in achieving the global goals. I now feel compelled to venture outside my comfort zone, or echo chamber of people who share the same values and beliefs. It is hard not to be inspired and motivated by the DP Saolta team and my fellow advocates. For this I am very grateful.



*Target 12.5: substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse*



*Target 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species*



## Críomhthann Morrison - SDG Advocate 2021

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*...promoting a holistic view of and partnership in addressing social problems in Ireland.*

I met my friend Brian when we were both studying the Bachelor of Social Science in UCD. In 2019, together we joined the Ideas Collective, Suas/STAND's social incubator programme, and worked with the insightful and passionate facilitators and participants to develop what would be the early foundations of [Policy Peep](#).

*Policy Peep* is rooted in our own experience seeing and feeling the problems in Irish society and across the world and not knowing where to start. The wealth of information on what's going on can be overwhelming and unhelpfully technical, becoming a barrier to understanding the world around us and how we fit into that world. How can we meaningfully engage with, for example, solutions to homelessness, if we can't grasp what it means to live without a home, the root causes of homelessness, and what can be done for our fellow human beings in the short- and long-term? We understand that people often just need a solid starting point to get moving on what matters to them.

Over the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns, we set out to make good use of the skills and insights gained through our studies, volunteering and our work across the youth mental health, global citizenship education, and student representation spheres. I was finishing up a Master of Public Policy in UCD while Brian was finishing up work in UCDSU and preparing to study a MSc in Comparative Social Policy in Oxford.

I was later accepted into Saolta's 2021 SDG Advocate Training, with *Policy Peep* as my action project. Through the Advocate Training, the design and spirit of *Policy Peep* was developed and refined, with the 2021 Advocate Showcase Event marking the launch of our website! Some of the biggest insights I've gained have been in engaging with systems of power and grounding the project as an enabler for people's learning and growth, far from a final destination. I've also had the luck to have insightful conversations with and learn from participants' unique backgrounds and experiences, spanning from community theatre and social work to fashion and raw material mining.

*Policy Peep* aims to get people started on what they care about through offering meaningful information and suggestions for next steps - more specifically, we seek to create a space where people can get clued-in about

everyday problems for people in Irish society and how to get active on them. Importantly, we emphasise that *Policy Peep* is not the end-all, rather the whole point is to help get people moving.

We want to directly engage with people and groups who may find *Policy Peep* useful. At the time of writing, we have an online platform with ‘rundowns’ of some leading social problems in Ireland. These are ‘living documents’, meaning they are regularly refined and updated as important events and insights arise. We are also exploring other ways to making ‘getting clued-in’ easier, such as through using different creative media, social media platforms and workshops.

While *Policy Peep* seeks to eventually relate in some way to each Sustainable Development Goal, SDG 4 “Quality Education” and SDG 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” are especially relevant to our approach, revolving around knowledge- and skill-building for a better present and future, and promoting a holistic view of and partnership in addressing social problems in Ireland.

You can see our website at [policypeep.ie](http://policypeep.ie) and social media on Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, or contact us by email [hello@policypeep.ie](mailto:hello@policypeep.ie). You can get in touch with me directly through [crio@policypeep.ie](mailto:crio@policypeep.ie) or find me online!



## Williams J. Gadimoh MSc, MSc, BSc (Hons) - SDG Advocate 2021

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*I will continue to organise conferences and play my role in the quest for a more sustainable society by advocating for using more sustainable building methods*

The SDG Advocate Training taught me that I could leverage my skills in Sustainable Construction, Building Information Modelling (BIM), Construction Project Management, Building Conservation and construction management in an impactful way beyond the conventional and typical day to day activities in the Architectural Engineering and Construction sphere.

The training provided me with an insight into how the various UN SDG target links in so many levels with my profession, and I was made further to understand the impact and significance of the SDGs. During the Hero's Journey activity, I identified my strength, became aware of my beliefs and the value of my abilities to make or contribute to a more significant cause. My participation in this year's SDG Advocate Training further motivated me to showcase my interest to benefit humanity and ultimately contribute to the quest for a more sustainable community and society. I am very passionate about sustainable construction, and my core area of expertise includes Sustainable Construction, Building Information Modelling (BIM), Construction Project Management, Building Conservation and construction management. And I am well informed about the new directive on the Near Zero Energy Building (nZEB) standards, amongst other areas.

It has a significant relationship to the SDG Goal of Sustainable Communities and other SDG targets. My action plan involves organising lectures & conferences for the construction and environmental professionals on the environmental benefit of Cross Laminated Timbers CLT for construction, and explaining how it can contribute to several areas in the LEED Credits, and ultimately support the UN Agenda for a more Sustainable Community by the year 2030.

I have presented this project at the Associated Schools of Construction in Minneapolis in the USA, Johannesburg in South Africa and at the International Sustainable Ecological Engineering Design for Society (SEEDS) conference, hosted by Technological University Dublin and Leed Beckett University in the UK. My focus is in emphasising the energy efficiency, carbon and modelling energy performances of structures, highlighting the benefit of more sustainable buildings and exploring the well-being of end-users of modern building facilities.

The significant rise in population will present considerable challenges in several areas. including housing and structures that use high carbon footprint building materials to construct and facilitate accommodation for billions of people could negatively affect the environment because of the urgency that surrounds the need for

a more environmentally sustainable approach to the built environment. That makes my action plan a critical one in progress towards a more sustainable future. I will continue to organise conferences and play my role in the quest for a more sustainable society by advocating for using more sustainable building methods, like the utilisation of cross-laminated timber (CLT) for construction, which is an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals. I firmly believe this action plan will be a powerful platform to advocate for an adoption of a mechanism that aids and contributes to the actualisation of more sustainable housing and possibly help develop a policy framework that could improve the use of CLT for residential and commercial buildings.

It has been incredibly uplifting to be a participant in this year's 2021 SDG Advocate Training. The training has allowed me to be part of a community of like-minded people and helped me further see how my area of interest links with several factors of the UN SDG Goals. It has been a great privilege to take part in this, my special appreciation to the organisers and my fellow SDG Advocates.



## Niamh O'Connor - SDG Advocate 2021

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*Living as I do, in the Developed North where we consume so much of the world's resources and hoard excess wealth, I am minded to reckon with those most basic of needs – to have sufficient of the essentials to life.*

*The 5<sup>th</sup> Day Action Project* is a day each week that I give to sustainability projects. It is not the *only* day that I try to achieve sustainability goals, but it's a day where I give some dedicated time to sustaining myself in the voluntary work that I do - time to think, nurture and plan. And then put that into action.

I'm busy with various things outside of paid employment and find that the time given to voluntary work can be fragmented and often a case of responding to the things that need to be done immediately and then on to the next immediate thing, without giving much time for reflection and planning and strategic thinking.



Rather than dreaming up another project to take on, I wanted to take the opportunity that the SDG Advocacy Training affords to test out some ideas for structuring my work and sustaining myself and let that feed into the projects that are on my plate. *The 5<sup>th</sup> Day* has been an essential resource that assists me in being more effective and, surprisingly for me, in thinking about effectiveness in new ways.

Let me explain... throughout the SDG Advocate Training, I've been reminded that filling my hope-jar is absolutely necessary, as a kind of maintenance plan. Encounters with other advocates and project leaders have been significant in this and so, I've resolved to intentionally nurture connections (with anyone or anything that is life-giving) as one of the elements of *The 5<sup>th</sup> Day*.

My action project is largely about my own health and wellbeing and education. The work that I am currently doing along with co-workers and other collaborators, are mostly concerned with reducing inequalities and in the enhancement or maintenance of sustainable communities. Initiatives overlap with SDGs 15, 13, 12 and 7 and of course Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

Living as I do, in the Developed North where we consume so much of the world's resources and hoard excess wealth, I am minded to reckon with those most basic of needs – to have sufficient of the essentials to life. I can say that I do little, where that need is most keenly felt, for it surely exists close to home and elsewhere. This is something that I'd like to change.

During the SDG Advocate Training, I've loved the thoughtful progression of the various components and inputs by different people. Most of all, it was a pleasure to meet my mentor and the other advocates and to hear first-hand their aspirations, challenges and successes. There was an open-ness to exploring together, how we

could each embody our goals, that was deeply human and affecting and for which I am grateful.

*The 5<sup>th</sup> Day* chooses to recognise and reframe my own needs as legitimate, no more or less than others. It is about personal growth and active citizenship and how to not get in my own way!



## Theresa O’Leary - SDG Advocate 2021

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*I look forward to continuing this work and further exploring how volunteerism, in particular student volunteering, can inspire others and bring about the change that is needed for the SDGs to take root in communities across the globe.*

My action project is an SDG awareness project for third-level student volunteers that also looks at how universities can better incorporate knowledge of the SDGs into their community engagement activities.

Many of the SDGs call for long-term attitude and behaviour changes, and volunteering facilitates changes in mindsets by raising awareness, championing change and inspiring others. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also explicitly recognises volunteer groups as stakeholders to achieve the 17 SDGs.

From my own personal experience, I have seen first-hand that third-level students are directly addressing the SDGs through their volunteering but many of them may not have the knowledge and language to articulate or make the connection to the SDGs. Through linking volunteer opportunities to their relevant SDGs I believe students will have a greater understanding of the impact their volunteer work is having locally AND globally. I work in community engagement in University College Dublin and I also sit on a national working group for third-level student volunteering under Campus Engage in the Irish Universities Association. As part of that group we manage the [StudentVolunteer.ie](https://www.studentvolunteer.ie) platform, which is a one-stop-shop that connects students with volunteer opportunities, on and off-campus. It also provides students with a platform to record their volunteering hours and reflect on their volunteering activities. This is a bespoke, state-of-the-art platform, the first of its kind for student volunteering anywhere in the world.

I am looking at linking the SDGs to volunteer opportunities through the [StudentVolunteer.ie](https://www.studentvolunteer.ie) platform, because at present the platform doesn’t provide a means for students to make these connections or links to

their volunteering. This will allow students to be provided with a visual of how the volunteer opportunity they apply for is linked to an SDG. The aim is to integrate the SDGs into the site, combined with a suite of interactive images and videos to support learning and understanding of the SDGs, including stories and examples from students. Through their own institutional volunteer awards programmes, the students will be given the opportunity to reflect on how their volunteering has contributed towards achieving the SDGs. In order for this to become a reality we will need financial support and I am currently investigating different funding avenues.

With my SDG Action Project, I am also looking to:

- Create badged SDG content to promote peer-to-peer learning and engagement.
- Host a series of workshops with the aim of enhancing awareness of the SDG's relevance to student volunteering.
- Work with student societies and clubs to raise awareness of the SDGs and link it to their existing volunteering.
- Incorporate the SDGs into UCD's annual Community Engagement Report

My time as an SDG Advocate has been very rewarding but also challenging and has opened up my eyes to a new way of looking at development education and global citizenship. I look forward to continuing this work and further exploring how volunteerism, in particular student volunteering, can inspire others and bring about the change that is needed for the SDGs to take root in communities across the globe.

## Sanghamitra C. Mukherjee - SDG Advocate 2021

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*Surely the amount of food waste we generate as a society and dispose of in landfills cannot be sustainable.*

The Chikyu Project (meaning “Earth” in Japanese), emanated from a personal experience when living in shared accommodation in Dublin as a student. I was both surprised and disheartened that the property owners didn’t provide brown bins to dispose of our collective organic waste because of the mess it created and because of the perception that students typically did not segregate their waste properly. This, they pointed out, led to the contamination of brown bin contents, spillage, smells and flies in the front garden. All of this perfectly compostable waste thus ended up in the landfills where it generated massive amount of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Surely the amount of food waste we generate as a society and dispose of in landfills cannot be sustainable.

As I became more and more aware of the causes and consequences of climate change, I decided that I could be part of the solution rather than the problem. I participated in several student enterprise competitions earlier this year and fell in love with the process of problem solving and coming up with entrepreneurial solutions to real world problems. I decided I could use a similar process to tackle the food waste crisis.

My project aims to introduce a clean, compact waste segregation and composting solution for households that would be better both environmentally and socially. I have a unique bin design for a Japanese composting method called Bokashi that makes food waste disposal much more efficient than current practices, in addition to being easier to use. The process uses alternating layers of food waste and bran inoculated with bacteria to generate a nutritious pre-compost within days. This can then be used as an organic soil additive or green matter for composting heaps and cuts weeks from traditional composting processes. Households could fully compost their waste for use with houseplants or in a garden thereby saving on fertilizer expenses and use of chemical alternatives.

Importantly, the Bokashi method composts all types of food waste including meats and cheeses, reduces stink, doesn’t attract critters, and takes up little space, all in all, perfect for the time and space-constrained busy professional. The Chikyu project specific bin design aims to be even more compact than those on the market, by combining all components necessary to make the process work within one unit, making storage easier.

In the spirit of the circular economy framework, we would also recycle waste streams to manufacture our bins,

using recycled and industrially compostable plastics and durable materials. The project would also provide opportunities to share food waste with local community gardens and farms to help reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and bring back the value of waste to local communities. Currently, the project is still in the early stages. I hope to have a prototype of the design out soon and test the product-market fit before I proceed to set up a social enterprise around the idea.

The SDG Advocate Training provided me with a great deal of clarity on the breadth and depth of the SDGs that my project could address. Talking to other advocates and mentors also made me aware of the fact that a solution in this area is very welcomed, which is extremely encouraging. Further, I learnt about leadership and ways forward, especially in relation to building a network of allies and supporters to further my goal.

Food waste accounts for 10% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, meaning that if food waste were a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter after the US and China. Shockingly, about a third of all food produced is never eaten, meaning that much of the energy and resources that go into food production is wasted worldwide.

The Chikyu project will contribute to help strengthen the existing food waste recycling infrastructure and encourage more people to repurpose their food waste, thinking twice before wasting food needlessly. Our mission reflects Chikyu's Japanese origin both in its name and purpose in the way it mimics the natural cycles that exist in nature and offers an affordable and accessible nature-based solution. Eventually, if we are not mindful of where our waste goes, we are unintentionally trashing our precious environment and losing all that lovely rich home-grown compost that our plants would've adored and thrived in!

Contact us on Instagram @chikyu\_project for any questions or comments!



- *SDG 11 - Target 11.6 Reduce the environmental impacts of cities*



- *SDG 15 - Target 15.5 protect biodiversity and natural habitats*



- *SDG 3 - Target 3.9: Reduce illnesses and deaths from hazardous chemicals and pollution*



- *SDG 2 - Target 2.4: Sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices*



## Julie Aspell - SDG Advocate 2021

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*A positive performance will offer audiences the space to reflect on how they can make positive changes within their communities.*

My goal or vision for my action project is to encourage and promote the SDGs within all communities. I have a fear that some voices may be lost with the consequences of climate change, and we have seen this happen already across the globe. It has been proven that those who are more vulnerable in society are more negatively impacted by climate change.

This project will introduce SDGs to communities through artistic means to promote awareness of the SDGs by promoting active citizenship and positive engagement to the matters that resonate for individuals and their communities. A positive performance will offer audiences the space to reflect on how they can make positive changes within their communities.

I currently work in Connect Family Resource Centre (Connect FRC) Drogheda where we have created a greater awareness of reaching SDG targets, as well as acknowledging which targets we have already achieved. Connect have been a great support to me in this development stage of my project.

My background is theatre and acting where I spent many years devising and performing nationally. I also worked as a drama facilitator for many years before moving into youth work, family support and community work. I feel this action project will tie in all my work experience which I am excited about.

I would like to call this action project *Home*. My vision so far is to stage a performance in a house and that this house could be anywhere. The idea is that this performance can tour to different housing estates as well as rural dwellings. The audience will be guided through different rooms of the house where subtle to clearer issues of the SDG's will be covered. The stories within this performance will be entertaining, and fun but will offer the audience the space to reflect on current issues that they can relate to in their lives. The production of the show will be sustainable through sourcing props to set and costume from sustainable means.

I recently made a short film call 'Around the Corner' it was a reflection piece about the pandemic within the community and how communities responded to the pandemic. During this production and while working within communities, I have met many great story tellers who I would like to invite into the development stage of this project and have their insight on issues that are relevant to them. The next stage in my action plan vision is to hold a series of storytelling and drama workshops open to the community.

I feel very grateful for the support I received during my SDG Advocate Training as well as the support from

Connect FRC and the community.

## Eileen O'Carroll - SDG Advocate 2021

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*These students, who will become psychologists, social workers, counsellors and youth workers, realise that poverty lies at the heart of the problems they will encounter in the future.*

Waterford College of Further Education (WCFE) kicked off its education around the SDGs on Friday 3 December by taking part in the ETBI (Education & Training Boards Ireland) Take 1 Programme.

The Applied Psychology group took part in a lesson entitled **Family Studies and the SDGs**, where we looked at SDG1 No Poverty in our scheduled Family Studies class. The most interesting contributions from students occurred when we looked at the question: *'What can I do?'* These students, who will become psychologists, social workers, counsellors and youth workers, realise that poverty lies at the heart of the problems they will encounter in the future.

Due to the great interest in the SDGs evident in class, we decided to look at SDG3 Health and Wellbeing as part of another Family Studies class in early 2022.



*ETBI 'Take 1' initiative on the SDGs*



*Eileen O'Carroll, Family Studies teacher, with Applied Psychology Students at Waterford College of Further Education*



*Eileen O'Carroll, Family Studies teacher, Waterford College of Further Education*

The Student Council at WCFE will become the leaders of SDG awareness in the college in the new year, when we start with an information session delivered to the Student Council itself, then rolling this out to staff and the wider student body. This initial contact with the Student Council will consist of a presentation to the group, followed by an event to be run by the students. This is in the early stages of preparation, but we will provide updates as the academic year rolls on.

The third part of our SDG focus in WCFE will be focused on the staff and will start at a staff meeting in January or February 2022. The aim of this first session will be to foster enough awareness in staff that they too can make connections between their course material and the SDGs. All teachers can then choose to integrate the SDGs into their courses in connections that they identify themselves.

This is just year one of a long-term strategy to keep awareness of the SDGs at a high level in WCFE. It has been a tough year for students and staff, with delivery taking place both online and in-person. We can look forward to increased momentum around the SDGs in the 2022-23 academic year, when we hope to have all students back on campus on a full-time basis, but we are laying the foundations this year. Small steps, taken with care, will lead us where we need to be.



## Cliona Kelliher - SDG Advocate 2022



*I hope to further develop the toolkit so that it can be used as a template for all PPNs, and possibly also for community groups who might like to use the SDGs as a framework for their actions.*

The project I chose to undertake as part of my SDG Advocate Training was to create an SDG toolkit for the Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN). I have been a Secretariat Representative with Kildare PPN since 2019 and I felt that putting the SDGs into a simple visual format would be useful and informative.

I began by using an online impact assessment tool to gauge which goals were most relevant to the work that Kildare PPN does. Although all the SDGs are relevant, I chose those that seemed particularly pertinent. The PPNs work under 3 pillars, which are Environment, Community & Voluntary, and Social Inclusion, and I felt that the SDGs were a great way to make the connections between the pillars and to demonstrate the interconnectedness of all the different strands of work that PPNs do.

Kildare PPN



## Sustainable Development Goals

Toolkit

Image below shows Ballynafagh Lake in County Kildare. A blue stretch of water reaching to the skyline.



I matched each of the goals with specific actions that the PPN could do and tried to create an overall ethos that would capture the values of the SDGs. I also tried to make the document itself accessible for those with sight impairments.

In concluding the document, I added a measurements indicator page and a page for future aspirations and also provided a resource list for further reading.

What motivated me to do this work was my membership of the PPN and an appreciation of its values of inclusion and participation. PPNs are also really well placed in terms of Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals, as they work closely with local authorities, communities and many other stakeholders.

The SDG Advocacy Program supported me in many ways, from connecting with other advocates, and with the support team and my own mentor, to learning about systems thinking and how to deeply examine issues with an open mind. Overall, it was an inspiring experience and so positive to be able to share stories and spend time with people who are working towards a better future.

I hope to further develop the toolkit so that it can be used as a template for all PPNs, and possibly also for community groups who might like to use the SDGs as a framework for their actions. I had the opportunity to introduce the toolkit at a Kildare PPN workshop and I would like the chance to be able to do this again at a future date, and to build awareness of the SDGs within the organisation, and extending out to all the member groups.

Doing the advocacy training also inspired me to apply for the Certificate in Global Citizenship Education in Maynooth University, which I have now commenced, and I'm looking forward to building on my knowledge and understanding of development theory.

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## Colette Ainscough - SDG Advocate 2022



*....if I can motivate change in one or hopefully more people my learning as an 'SDG Advocate' will not have been in vain.*

We inhabit a planet that is in the midst of an existential crisis as the catastrophic impact of climate change continues. There are two aspects to my SDG Advocate Training Story of Action Project 2022.

Firstly, my aim is to educate and inspire people to take even small actions in their daily lives that will combat the effects of global climate change by delivering speeches on the subject at Toastmaster Clubs in person and online. Toastmasters is a non-profit worldwide organization that educates in public speaking and leadership skills.

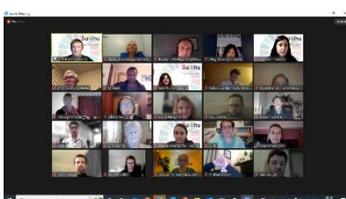
The second part builds upon that theme, I have become involved in an educational project whereby students, over a period of six weeks embark on a Toastmasters 'Speechcraft Course'. Adult students of 'Speechcraft' learn to speak with confidence and clarity on their chosen sustainability field of expertise.

Having heard a presentation delivered by a friend on the effects of global warming, I began to question myself on the choices I make on a daily basis, be it in how waste is managed at home, my shopping habits and energy consumption and realising that my family and I were not doing nearly enough.



And my family are not the only ones who are not doing enough, as across the country, across the world, people are not engaging in sustainable practices. When I visit my family and friends I notice the poor habits and lack of awareness of better environmentally friendly practices. When I think about this, I think if I can motivate change in one or hopefully more people my learning as an 'SDG Advocate' will not have been in vain.

The education I have received during this Advocate Training has furthered my confidence in speaking about Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 Climate Action and has given me the impetus to become part of a team to enthuse others to believe they too can be inspiring communicating sustainability issues. I firmly believe it is important to utilize all platforms to deliver the SDG13 message regarding Climate Action.



SDG Advocate Training facilitators Margaret Downey, Bobby Mc Cormack, Nick Doran, Sara Hurley and Melanie O Driscoll were responsible for delivering the course objectives, sharing their knowledge with relevant methodologies. My knowhow regarding SDG13 has improved greatly, inspiring me to be action-focused on both of my projects, one step at a time.

It became clear to me over the months that the training was very 'person centred' even though as students we regularly worked in groups! It was amazing to pick up on the fact that every learner was an important 'cog in the wheel' of action on the SDG Advocate Training.



To date I have delivered one speech at an online Toastmaster Club encouraging people to 'start small' to make some changes in the fight against climate change. My plan is to build a series of speeches that I can deliver to Toastmaster Clubs in person across Ireland and Globally online.

The not-for-profit Speechcraft Course's theme, 'Public Speaking – Let's Talk Sustainability' ended on 8 November 2022. This initiative was a collaborative one and a large undertaking in terms of the work involved. My initial role was one of support to coordinators Dr. Shirley Gallagher and Kavita Dulai. Responsibilities included administration, public relations, zoom master and emcee at different aspects of the meetings. It is envisaged that it will grow as more people endeavor to sign up with the view to improving their communication skills specifically related to various areas of sustainability expertise.

My hope is that by drawing upon my values I can enthuse and inspire transformation of people's behaviour regarding climate change. This can be done by talking persuasively in a public setting, having learned as an SDG Advocate, '*words really matter*'. I think that if globally we begin 'small' together we will grow 'big'.

Moreover, my role at 'Speechcraft' evolved over the duration of my participation in the SDG Advocate Training. Learning about the SDG's improved my confidence in all matters sustainability related. I am a believer that education empowers, hence I will also continue to work on this action project, being part of a team which plans to grow the availability of online Sustainability Speechcraft. This two-part Action Project will continue indefinitely.

## Clodagh Meade - SDG Advocate 2022



*My motivation to action was that almost all the coffee shops in Cobh were providing compostable cups that were all going into landfill.*

As Litter Warden with Cork County Council in Cobh, I choose this action to help reduce waste in my community and to assist the public in recycling or composting while visiting the Cobh area. The action is REDUCE REUSE AND LASTLY RECYCLE to support the reduction of our waste by reusing for example coffee cups within the Cobh community and to inform people on how to correctly recycle or compost our waste. The **Cobh Recycling and Composting Project** was a collaboration between Cork County Council, Down 2 Earth and Wiser Bins.



*(by Olan Hodnett on 31st March 2022 in Company News, Eco Aware, Events, General)*

My motivation to action was that almost all the coffee shops in Cobh were providing compostable cups that were all going into landfill. We felt that by providing a recycling and composting area on the promenade in Cobh, we could correctly recycle or compost our waste. This initiative aims to address issues raised in SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production and these were my targets.



We introduced a segregated bin system to encourage the correct recycling of plastic, paper, cans and food waste. We also gave out several reusable coffee cups to the local coffee shops to give to their customers in an effort to encourage people to reduce their waste. As expressed by one local business ‘the more education on how to properly dispose of compostable packaging and the ability for consumers to identify what symbols to look out for to distinguish a compostable cup from a single-use cup, the better’.

The composting unit for food waste and compostable food packaging is an effort to reduce litter, particularly on the promenade in Cobh – a popular amenity for the large number of tourists that visit here. Through my action I hope to make people more conscious and responsible about their waste. The initiative has been very well received by both residents and businesses alike and we hope that it sets an example and paves the way for similar projects across the country.



The SDG Advocate Training assisted in the developing my idea by providing opportunities for networking with different organisations and further, the peer support from the other advocates was a key support.

## Conor Haugh - SDG Advocate 2022

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*The Advocate Training gave me the confidence to speak with authority on the SDGs. I learned to use the goals as a prompt to get workshop participants to share their own experiences and knowledge of sustainable development.*

For my Action Project, I developed an SDG workshop that I ran in my workplace, Airfield Estate. I have worked with Airfield, an educational urban farm in Dublin, for many years. Over that time, I have helped run workshops and tours in ecology, history, food production, and sustainability.

The SDGs, while very relevant to my work in Airfield, had never been a central part of the programmes I ran. As I learned more about the goals, I found that they were an extremely useful framework for understanding the subjects I based the workshops on. While the SDG workshop I created would treat all the goals, SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG4 (Quality Education) would be particularly relevant, given the nature of Airfield.

The SDG Advocate Training gave me the confidence to speak with authority on the SDGs. I learned to use the goals as a prompt to get workshop participants to share their own experiences and knowledge of sustainable development. The Advocate Training featured plenty of thought-provoking activities, exercises, and energisers that I was able to adapt to my own workshop. I felt very supported in my project. The SDG Advocate Training coordinators themselves were an example of how to facilitate workshops engagingly and were very willing to take time to discuss ideas one-on-one. My assigned mentor, Sara, was indispensable in that regard. Sharing ideas with my cohort was also very valuable and the wider network was helpful too. A colleague of mine had previously attended the course and we brainstormed my idea together.

As if to highlight the value of what I was planning, two groups approached Airfield during the Advocate Training to ask for a workshop based on sustainability. One was an organisation looking to incorporate sustainability into their next stage of development and the other was a teacher group starting a new sustainability class with their

students. Both workshops went smoothly and the feedback was positive. I hope they will inform an SDG-based approach within both their organisations.

I have found the concepts and methods the Advocate Training used to be helpful in other parts of my work, too. Towards the completion of the training, I was offered a new role in sustainability activism at Airfield. I have no doubt that the Advocate Training put me in a strong position for the role. It showcased and added to my skills and interests and hugely increased my confidence in speaking on sustainable development, design thinking, and activism. I have kept in contact with the other Advocates since the training finished and I believe we will continue to support and inspire each other in whatever we take on next.

## Maca Hourihane - SDG Advocate 2022

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*Systems thinking means more community education, and eventual support and action will emerge from these networks.*

Currently I operate as a Regional Volunteer Coordinator for the Irish Red Cross Migration Programme. With a background in Physiotherapy, working abroad, and having studied human rights ... the need to utilise experience via transferrable skills in Ireland was clear to me. At the moment in Ireland, any ability to “bring it all back home” is not that simple to demonstrate. In the world of international humanitarianism, development and human rights, the mantra of “leaving no one behind” has resonated for years. Yes, resonated but often in a hollow way... reminiscent of that clanging bell and a call to ... but without...positive action.

It has been reassuring to see these values incorporated in the SDGs along with education for global citizenship. Built on a framework of human rights, the SDGs are inextricably linked. Like human rights they are indivisible and interdependent. In addition, the Covid pandemic has highlighted that the global has indeed become local, and that “no one is safe until everyone is safe”. These mantras resonated on a personal level.

I also support the CPIHD (Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists special interest group for Healthcare Professionals in International Health and Development) whose activities have been based around the SDGs. However, it has been a challenge to articulate the connection for interdisciplinary health care professionals, and at the same time make the SDGs relevant for the CPIHD group.

I choose to attend the SDG Advocate Training as providing an opportunity to knit all of these ideas together in a coherent way. Mentors supported and guided in a collegial and positive way. Given time restrictions, an action plan materialised to coordinate a poster for CPIHD’s annual conferences. High interest in CPIHD activities, suggest that education in the sphere of planetary health and the SDGs is necessary at both an undergraduate and post graduate level in a practical way for health care professionals in a myriad of disciplines.

The Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC) which is a student-driven, metric-based initiative to inspire planetary health and sustainable healthcare education engagement in health professional schools, has been successfully initiated in the discipline of medicine. But there can be no doubt that other undergraduate healthcare professionals should heed the call and take up the baton. This PHRC initiative has hit challenges in recruiting students to lead it, as many have limited time to commit and increased rents for students means that many have to work longer hours in part time work to supplement allowances. It has impacted their ability to participate in the PHRC initiative.

This cannot be achieved alone and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) affirms that by working together we can all go further, with networking being key to endeavours. The poster for the CPIHD conference articulates a potential base of activities that support a broader commitment to this field of practice for various health care professionals. Sustainability of the group will require identifying those individuals and networks who can support the handover of the baton that comprises CPIHD.

**Presented by CPIHD:**  
**ISCP**  
 Chartered Physiotherapists and Healthcare Professionals in International Health and Development

**Presented online at:**  
 Irish Global Health Network  
 Irish Global Health Network Conference 2022

## CPIHD offers Solidarity (via the SDGs\*) in the Realm of International Health and Development

**Aim**  
 To demonstrate that CPIHD offers a platform to facilitate ethical leadership in global and local responses to current issues.

**It collaborates via ISCP:**

**International Affairs Committee** | **Ukrainian Association of Physical Therapy** | **World Physiotherapy**

Find out more: [www.iscp.ie/members/Chartered-Physiotherapists-and-Healthcare-Professionals-in-International-Health-and-Development](http://www.iscp.ie/members/Chartered-Physiotherapists-and-Healthcare-Professionals-in-International-Health-and-Development)

**Methods**

Interdisciplinary allied healthcare professionals membership, merge advocacy mandates from:

To champion and action:

**Results**

**PHRC**  
Planetary Health Report Card Initiative

- CPIHD highlighted issues re Ukraine: vaccine equity, survivors of torture, education on inclusion health, and climate change.
- Proposed adaptation of the "Planetary Health Report Card" has been enhanced by connections facilitated by CPIHD.

**Conclusions**

- The global has become local. No one is safe until everyone is safe. Effects from the situation in Ukraine have rippled to Ireland.
- The mantra of the SDGs to "leave no one behind" through policies of inclusion and diversity, cements partnerships addressing same.
- The resulting leadership provided by cross fertilisation of levels, disciplines and siloes; strengthens and validates professional solidarity.
- CPIHD affirms that these issues are all connected through human rights and the SDGs.
- They also all require advocacy and action from the networks that present through connections. SDG 17 concerning partnerships has been key to activities.

Authors Sarah Burke, Fiona Craven, Anna Hogan, David Kennedy, Ailís O'Dea, Naomi O'Reilly, Claire O'Reilly, Rachel O'Reilly, Cliona O'Sullivan, Mary Owens, Corresponding Author: Maca Hourihane email: [galway.migrations@irishredcross.com](mailto:galway.migrations@irishredcross.com) Review by ethics committee not applicable.  
 Declaration of interests: All authors are currently CPIHD Committee members.

\*SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals see Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1

The SDG Advocate Training identified systems thinking for me and the result is not wasted. Sometimes the 'Heroes Journey' does not run in a straight line but this is all part of the trip. My communication skills have been enhanced perhaps by adding a bit of patience to the cocktail.

By networking, reflecting and journaling on CPIHD goals, a clearer compass emerged. A series of 5 webinars are currently being coordinated for healthcare professionals to articulate the relevance of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) to inclusion health, international health and development. They will be delivered in early 2023.

Networking with participants on the SDG Advocate Training yielded two relevant speakers and a highly relevant connection for an active community inclusion project. This will involve identifying suitable candidates who are asylum seekers in Ireland to participate in further education and physical activities concerning the SDGs.

Following on from the SDG Advocate Training, the Galway City Council Network (GCCN) have invited Development Perspectives to provide training around the SDGs for the GCCN SDG Steering Group of which I am a member. This is about incorporating the SDGs into the Development plan for Galway City. Based on the SDGs it would be wonderful to eventually see Galway City implement an intercultural hub as part of this plan. Systems thinking means more community education and eventual support and action will emerge from these networks.

## Jacqueline Healy - SDG Advocate 2022

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*The Advocate Training prepared me well for various aspects of my project - articulating vision and goals, identifying allies, recognising potential barriers and being realistic about what I can achieve to ensure the sustainability of the project.*

My name is Jacqueline Healy and I work in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, (IHREC). IHREC is Ireland's National Human Rights Institution and Ireland's National Equality Body. At the moment I lead IHREC's work on Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Since 2014, there is a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of staff and service users in their daily work. I provide support and guidance to public bodies to comply with this Duty and in meeting equality and human rights standards.

Through my work in IHREC, I have received queries from public bodies on the relation between this Public Sector Duty and the State's commitments to Sustainable Development Goals. I knew very little about the SDGs and this led to my applying for the SDG Advocate Training.

My action project is about exploring the link between the SDGs and the Irish government's responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and equality. It will also explore the potential role of a National Human Rights Institution such as IHREC to support the realisation of the SDG in Ireland. I resonated with the core element of the 2030 Agenda that we aim to '*leave no-one behind*'. This is also a core concept in the promotion and protection of human rights and equality so I was very interested in exploring the synergies between the SDGs and human rights.

I am very fortunate that the Danish Institute of Human Rights, who have been doing stellar work on the link between the SDGs and human rights, have agreed to do an online information session with IHREC staff on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2022. They will share the learning from their work and speak about the toolkit that they have recently produced on SDGs and Human Rights to support advocates. The Danish Institute is also a National Human Rights Institution like IHREC and they will explain how the 2030 Agenda explicitly references human rights throughout its text so National Human Rights Institutions can play a key role in the implementation and follow up of the SDGs through their mandate to protect and promote human rights.

I consider that my action project is relevant to all SDGs and in particular the SDGs that relate to Poverty and economic security (SDG 1); Building the resilience of vulnerable groups to climate and other crises (SDG 1); Health, including access to reproductive health services (SDG 3); Inclusive and equitable education (SDG 4);

Gender equality, including the elimination of violence against women and girls and recognising the value of unpaid care and domestic work (SDG 5); Full and productive employment and decent work (SDG 8); Access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions (SDG 16) and monitoring and accountability (SDG 17). The SDGs and economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs) are seen as mutually reinforcing. ESCRs can offer a legal basis and guidance in the implementation of the SDGs, and the SDGs can increase support for the realisation of ESCRs.

The SDG Advocate Training gave a focus to my advocacy work on the SDGs. The requirement to complete an action project in 2022 was a great motivator to really explore what I could do to contribute in a small way to the meaningful implementation of the goals in Ireland.

The Training prepared me well for various aspects of my project - articulating vision and goals, identifying allies, recognising potential barriers and being realistic about what I can achieve to ensure the sustainability of the project. My fellow advocates – the people I met on the course – were very inspiring and influenced my thinking on the SDGs and on my project. We also had a lot of fun which always helps on a learning journey! Development Perspectives created an excellent learning environment for advocates that challenged our thinking and promoted creativity.

I deepened my awareness and understanding of the SDGs and where SDG implementation is at present. Our last session in West Cork was very interesting as we looked at the launch of the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs and the political commitment given to this Plan, so I feel we are undertaking our action projects at this opportune time. I am confident that current and previous advocates of the training can make a significant contribution to the vision of leaving no one person behind.

## Robbie Lawlor - SDG Advocate 2022

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*Ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages by 2030 is a pipe dream without first addressing the issue of high-priced medicines and our current innovation crisis.*

*Are we prepared for the next pandemic? Case studies from HIV, COVID-19, MPOX, and Antimicrobial resistance.*

This was the question I posed to students around Ireland.

Unfortunately, the answer is no.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) asserts that all people have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, yet prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated two billion people in lower and middle-income countries lack access to affordable medicines. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the fault lines in global inequitable access to essential health technologies, and how much needs to be done to address these systematic issues.

To achieve the SDGs and UHC by 2030, the issue of high-priced drugs must be addressed. Intellectual property rights of medical technologies delay the onset of generic competition, hindering access to lifesaving treatments and preventative medicines such as oncology drugs, antiretroviral therapy, and vaccines in the Global South.

I had the pleasure of co-organising an Access to Medicines Speaker Tour alongside Oxfam Ireland, the Irish Global Health Network student outreach team, and Learghas. Joining me on this speaker tour were Mirza Portillo from Costa Rica and Fernandos Ongolly from Kenya. We shared our personal stories and academic expertise of previous and ongoing pandemics to highlight the deficits in our global health architecture. More importantly, we provided them with a solution: The Pandemic Treaty.

In July 2022 WHO took a step toward drafting a legally binding treaty to prevent and respond to infectious disease threats. The first draft is good. Now we just need member states, including Ireland to adopt it, and not water it down.

### **Campaign goals in support of The Pandemic Treaty:**

To significantly increase public funding for the research and development of medical technologies for diseases that are endemic in the Global South;

Ensure public return on this public investment;

To promote and encourage transparency in the cost and pricing of pandemic response products, including development, production, and distribution costs;

For Access to Medicines Ireland and Oxfam Ireland to have meetings with the Minister of Health and Department of Health throughout the Pandemic Treaty negotiations.

### **Speaker Tour outcomes:**

Over 120 people around Ireland were educated on how to improve our pandemic preparedness and response; Students sent emails to TDs outlining the issues in our global health architecture and making them aware of the pandemic treaty negotiations and Ireland's role in it;

Meetings with over 15 TDs and their staff were held on the Day of Action, including a call with the office of An Tánaiste, Minister Leo Varadkar;

Plans to put the Pandemic Treaty negotiations on the Oireachtas Health Committee agenda for early 2023 in which we will be attendance.

My motivation for joining the access to medicines movement came from seeing global inequitable access to health technologies first-hand. I have been living with HIV for more than 10 years now. Due to the side effects of previous treatment, I am now on my 6<sup>th</sup> option of HIV treatment. Thankfully, we live in the golden era of HIV treatment. Taking one pill a day means that I will live as long as everyone else and it means that I cannot pass on HIV sexually. Yet the same level of access to HIV treatment is not distributed equally around the world. The first HIV treatment was authorised for market use in 1996 and people living with HIV in high-income countries stopped dying of AIDS. However, the intellectual property and exorbitant prices of these lifesaving drugs placed them out of reach for millions of people. The African Union estimated that 9 million people died needlessly of AIDS between 1996-2006 in Sub-Saharan Africa because pharmaceutical companies would not allow generic, cheaper HIV drugs to be manufactured, sold, or imported. After hearing so many stories of my friends losing their families needlessly to greed, I knew I needed to take action.

The SDG advocate programme helped me to incorporate the sustainable development goal language into my advocacy. Ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages by 2030 is a pipe dream without first addressing the issue of high-priced medicines and our current innovation crisis. I was also inspired by the other SDG advocates. During the initial planning stages of the Speaker Tour, I ran into many obstacles which I found quite disempowering. Yet, seeing the other speakers continue to work on their projects and remembering 'the heroes' journey' helped me to stick with it. I was particularly struck by Michael Doorly's sentiment about action projects. I'm paraphrasing, but he said we can often be immobilised by having the 'perfect' action project. Do it soon or it won't be done at all. Action needs to happen now. Regardless of the campaign's imperfections, it was effective. How effective still remains to be seen.

Thanks to the SDG programme, I helped (with lots of brilliant friends/colleagues) bring awareness of the Pandemic Treaty to Dail Eireann. As the campaign progresses, I will continue to incorporate my learnings of the SDGs and global citizenship education into my work.

## Robert Bolton - SDG Advocate 2022



*We know that cooperation is required to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals, but we must begin to think about how such cooperative values may be developed.*

My project, called ‘Encountering Deep Democracy’, speaks strongly to Goal 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions. My aim is to facilitate an ‘encounter group’ within the institution in which I work. An encounter group is difficult to define, but it is generally a non-goal orientated group where “*In such a group the individual comes to know himself and each of the others more completely than is possible in the usual social or working relationships*” (Rogers, 1970, p. 16).

Such groups had their heyday in the 1960’s and 70’s where other ‘let it all hang out’ groups were popular. My reasoning for the action project comes from a felt sense that individuals in some workplaces feel disempowered, where their voices are not heard and where conflicts between people are left simmer to the detriment of everyone. An encounter group is a space where voices can be heard through facilitating an atmosphere of psychological safety. More than that, evidence shows that participation in such groups builds self-acceptance, self-determination and greater willingness to engage in teamwork.

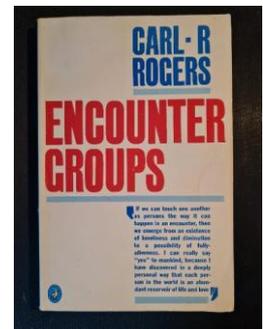
The SDG Advocate Training has supported the development of my idea in different ways.

An exercise we undertook at Bru Moytura (<https://www.brumoytura.org/about>) called ‘Defining Your Primary Persona’ provoked my thinking about who the audience of my action project might be. During the exercise I realised that some staff groups in my institution might benefit more from participating in an encounter group than others.

This is not about placing exclusionary limits on who can participate in the group, but about the people and circumstances in which they find themselves whom I did not

consider as potential participants. The practical consequence of this going forward is that I need to ensure that my advertising of my idea reaches out to these groups of staff.

Another aspect of the Training which developed my thinking relates to my fears around the project. One exercise opened my fears to the consequences of the action project and which in turn has developed my thinking about the limitations of the project. Encounter groups have been shown to enable people to develop interpersonal skills and as such they could be called self-development groups. In a broader sense however, I get the impression that many self-development groups are conducted by trained therapists or group facilitators. My fear of the consequences centered around these questions: how can I, a non-therapist, facilitate



such a group? What if somebody is negatively affected by the experience? What are my ethical responsibilities? Is it ethical to facilitate such a group when I have little experience in facilitation?

I knew before this exercise that I would need to build up facilitation skills if I am to facilitate such a group myself. Indeed, my action project is split into two parts. At this moment in time, I am engaging with the first part: I am currently participating in an online encounter group myself, as I fundamentally agree with Carl Rogers that those best placed to facilitate such groups are those who have themselves experienced them.

The question which I cannot answer now is when the second part of my project might start – when will I actually get down to facilitating an encounter group in my workplace? One thing is clear, I would not have inserted myself into an encounter group had it not been for the Advocate Training.

Another thing has become clear is my drive, commitment, and conviction that such encounter groups are needed vastly outweighs my aforementioned fears. In the 1950s, humanistic psychologists wanted to use psychology to make the world a better place. They rejected a “model of mental life that reduces communities to *demographics*, persons into *patients*, suffering into *symptoms*, and healing and recovery into *treatments*” (O’Hara, 2010, p. 101) and saw humanistic psychology as key to avoiding nuclear annihilation and war. Indeed, it has been argued that it was empathy that helped resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis. That empathy, along with self-restraint and the ability to cooperate with others are some of the key aptitudes that is needed to tackle the major crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We know what causes climate change. We also know the technical solutions to this major environmental crisis. But as Maureen O’Hara (2010, p. 113) said in her Presidential Address to the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, the other “inconvenient truth is that, in all likelihood, the most difficult challenges facing planet earth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not technological but *psychological*”.

We know that cooperation is required to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals, but we must begin to think about *how* such cooperative values may be developed. We can do so by facilitating opportunities to develop human relations skills. Encounter groups are one way to do that.

## Joyce Mahon - SDG Advocate 2022



*The SDG Advocate Training has given me insightful knowledge of development education and a thorough comprehension of the SDGs, their importance, and their effects.*

I am a PhD student in Computer Science in UCD with ML-Labs, and I teach part time in further education with LOETB (Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board). As part of my PhD programme, I completed 'Research Integrity' training, and became more aware of the field of 'open science', and consequently, the volume of freely available online resources that can support learners in their studies.

During lockdown for Covid-19 in 2020/21, I taught students online, and I became acutely aware of further education students' difficulties in accessing materials that could support their studies. Students who attend higher education are given access to educational resources e.g. through the university library. Further education students cannot typically access knowledge in the same way. Thus, for my SDG project, I created a free online resource called **Open4Ed**, for use in further and adult community education, to promote inclusive and equitable quality education.



The project is located at [www.open4ed.com](http://www.open4ed.com), and it aims to provide a valuable support for staff and students. It is a central location where links to existing online resources are collated e.g. open access libraries, open data and open educational resources. In addition, the site also provides links to SDG resources that can be used by staff and/or students both inside and outside of the classroom. The website was officially launched in October 2022 in Portarlington Further Education and Training Centre, and is available to all.



The SDG Advocate Training has given me insightful knowledge of development education and a thorough comprehension of the SDGs, their importance, and their effects. Being a part of this training has been very inspiring, and it has given me the opportunity to be part of a community of likeminded people.

## Caroline Corrigan - SDG Advocate 2022

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*As consumers we have choices and choices that mean we don't have to go without, you can still shop for clothes but do so in a sustainable and ethical way*

My action project focuses on fast fashion, this is something that has interested me in the past few years. As a reformed 'shopaholic' I initially wanted to know how impactful fast fashion is on the environment, and spoiler alert it's really bad! But once I started to look into this, I quickly realised that the impact on human life and people is worse. As horrifying as this was it gets worse when us consumers think nothing of buying clothes, wearing them once or twice (or sometimes never wearing) and thoughtlessly throwing them away, not caring where 'away' is.

Conditions for the majority of garment workers are dreadful, often working long hours, not paid a living wage, working in dangerous conditions, subject to abuse and through all this become trapped in a poverty cycle. Sadly, this is a greater problem for women and young girls as this gender represent 80% of garment workers. Hearing the stories of these women really saddened me. One case in particular stayed with me, that of a female garment worker who was forced to take her children out of school to mind her elderly parents because she was working such long hours in a clothing factory. Consequences are that without education her children will once again become trapped in the poverty cycle. We are aware of the disturbing story of the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh but sadly this is still happening, people are dying for us to continue our toxic relationship with the clothes we often don't wear.

Fast fashion hits many of the SDGs but the big ticket ones are SDG5 Gender Equality, SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG13 Climate Action.

As consumers we have choices and choices that mean we don't have to go without, you can still shop for clothes but do so in a sustainable and ethical way. To choose shopping for preloved clothes and buying from companies that support workers, requires a change in mindset and seeing the value in garments, if something is valued it will be better cared for.

Unfortunately, we are challenged by the fashion industry, who rely on us wanting to be 'bang on trend' and who ceaselessly feed our need to be up to date. Green washing is prolific in this industry, from caring about the planet slogans on clothes to vague claims that the garment is sustainably made. Truly the only sustainable clothes are the ones that already exist and as we have enough garments to clothe the next 6 generations we

really do have enough.

My project aims to connect people to their clothes (not just wear them!), to understand the impact our consumerism has on planet and people, to imagine walking in someone else's shoes (pun intended!). In doing so I undertook *#SecondHandSeptember* where I wore preloved clothes for the month and created awareness through social media. The next phase involves a clothes swap in my local village. I hope to work with the local scouting group who will help collect the clothes and set up 'shop' and the event space will have posters detailing the impacts of fast fashion and how individuals can lessen these. I endeavour to live as sustainably as possible and was delighted to see a zero waste shop (My Little Jar) appear in Drogheda. During a visit I was talking to the shop owner, the fabulous Carole, about second hand September and we now hope to work together and do a clothes swap in the shop.

The SDG Advocate Training not only introduced me to inspirational change makers but introduced me to new ways of thinking, framing the problem and creating greater awareness on the root cause of the problem. It was also good to see that there are many people doing really good work across the SDGs and that we all face similar challenges.

The Advocate Training took us all on a journey, both figuratively and literally (we all remember the Hero's Journey hike in the lashing rain!), to explore our action projects and grow in confidence as we progress them. Often we feel helpless in the face of climate change and injustice, that our actions cannot change things, however, I feel as a group we can actually make a difference and support each other on this journey.

## Una Murray - SDG Advocate 2022

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*This scheme will be implemented in each of the centres I work in and hopefully over time we will educate our learners on how to manage waste at home.*

In my role as Literacy Tutor with CETD (Cork Education and Training Board), I work in several centres around North Cork. I noticed in these centres that there was a need to improve waste management. I consulted with each of the centre managers and asked them if I could put in place a waste management system to improve the centres' sustainability so that it would be a positive action for climate change.

With this in mind the Sustainable Development Goals that influenced my project were, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and SDG 13 Climate Action.

I began with the Charleville FET centre. With the help of Neil, the centre manager we put bins in each room with simple signage indicating what should go in each bin. We have recycling, rubbish and compost bins. With the help of Paul, the horticulture tutor, a compost heap was started in the garden for use in the vegetable and herb plot.

This scheme will be implemented in each of the centres I work in and hopefully over time we will educate our learners on how to manage waste at home. I also intend to put together a module which can be delivered to students who wish to learn more about waste management in an effort to live a more sustainable life style.

Also, in each of the groups, I tutor I put a big emphasis on not wasting materials and reusing all the left-over stuff as well as repurposing as much as possible and so the battle for climate change goes on...

## Shirley Foley - SDG Advocate 2022

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*People often value sport as a benefit to their health and lifestyle but do not consider other physical activity in the same way.*

Every two seconds someone under 70 dies of a non-communicable disease (NCD), e.g. cardiovascular, respiratory, diabetes. The majority of people are in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), according to a report by the World Health Organization. (September 2022)

I am a Clinical Chartered Physiotherapist and have clients of all ages and abilities. People often value sport as a benefit to their health and lifestyle but do not consider other physical activity in the same way. Many of my clients when I ask “tell me what sport or activity you are involved in? say “none” but on questioning they are very active in a variety of ways e.g., walking, house-work, gardening, and cycling etc. They don’t consider these physical activities as a benefit for their health and well-being until questioned and I explain the importance of these activities in their lifestyle.

Over the summer of 2022 I explored many ideas related to the benefits of physical activity for my project, changed “tack” many times and eventually, after the 1 to 1 mentoring in August with Sara from DP, I put pen to paper.

In September I attended a 2-day course on research methods run by the Physical Activity for Health (PAfH) research hub in the University of Limerick to explore the research methods suitable for my project. During the 2 days we explored many methods and I was advised by experts in the field. My plan is to measure and value gardening as an activity for health and well-being using METs (metabolic equivalent of task) as a means of measurement. Over 800 activities are already documented by this method including all types of gardening work (SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing).



*Produce for sharing*



*Juicing day September '22*



*Apple Pulp for composting*

I have a keen interest in sport and I also recognise the value of physical activities as a part of overall fitness and wellbeing. I am currently involved in a community garden and orchard and in setting up The Flourish Garden which is a new Mental Health initiative in Sligo. I am also a member of Sligo Yacht Club, Sligo Women in Business, Sligo Environmental Network and Sligo Cycling Campaign.

Early in Covid-19, I identified the need for community-based exercise programmes and developed “Home Fit” - a circuit-based exercise programme for adults which can be carried out standing or sitting. Along with the residents we ran “Home Fit Adult” on the green where I live, March- October 2020 twice a week during Covid-19 restrictions. I have continued to use these programmes in my clinic with a variety of clients.

For this project I plan to put together a database of the community gardens in Sligo and Leitrim. I propose to visit the gardens and ask those involved working in the gardens to fill out an activity questionnaire for an hour of the work they carry out in the gardens. I will then use METs to measure the value of their effort/energy output. I plan to put the data- base together and start the project in Spring 2023. This project will also improve networking between the community gardeners in Sligo and Leitrim and highlight the physical and social benefits of community gardening.



*Harvesting in St Marys Community Garden Sligo*



*Flourish Garden*

The advice, support and mentoring I received from the staff on the SDG Advocate Training has assisted me to put my project plan together and the Physical Activity for Health research hub in the University of Limerick gave me confidence in the chosen research method.

On completion of my project I will share the results with the Community Gardens in Sligo and Leitrim which I hope will highlight the WHO's director of NCDs Benet Mikkelsen's statement “World leaders have recognised the critical importance of NCDs in SDGs, aiming to reduce premature death from NCDs by one third by 2030”. Currently only 14 of 194 countries are on track to achieve this goal.



*Flourish Garden art work by Ukrainian gardeners who joined Flourish Garden when they were living in Sligo*

## Derek Walsh - SDG Advocate 2022

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*In this fashion I hope to inspire people to eat healthier which is by and large a more ethical way to eat. Also, I want to promote awareness of our reliance on the soil in light of widespread soil nutrients depletion.*

My action project is related to SDG 3- Good Health and Wellbeing; SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 15 Life on land. I could relate to my plan of action within the context of my own health and wellbeing.

My action plan is linking good health and wellbeing with good work- life balance and how it relates to soil health. This was a work of learning I undertook and with the twin results of a composition in poetic form and a separate piece for a 15-minute speaker date sometime now in the pipeline.

In this fashion I hope to inspire people to eat healthier which is by and large a more ethical way to eat. Also, I want to promote awareness of our reliance on the soil in light of widespread soil nutrients depletion.

The Story of Action plan fell into place in the summer between the SDG Advocate Training weekend away in Sligo and the one-on-one virtual mentorship with my DP mentor. The importance of greens in a person's diet was well known to me at this stage, but I wanted to go deeper into this on my own personal and professional journey as regards diet and consumer impact.

I had been an active enough writer of poetry by that stage, so I said why not combine the two and undertake a mindful endeavour - a tying-together exercise of learning between soil health, thriving plant biodiversity, the benefits of healthy nutrition and microbiome all being released to us in terms of work-life balance and our own human experience.



At the time of writing this piece, the deadline for my action plan hasn't come to pass yet. The work of learning is to be followed up by an oration of the same topic, and my projects' workload has been pushed back to the latter half of the year. The oration performance is at the time of writing still left outstanding.

My work of learning wasn't informed by an undergraduate education, and I hadn't, up to the point of starting the SDG Advocate Training, done any great strides into the chosen field of learning I embarked upon. All the activism requires of us all is to become educated as to the benefits of the proper healthy diet.

I realised during my research that there were many variables as regards to the healthiness as well as the ethics of our food purchases and high on the priorities of these is minimising food wastage, i.e. to eat and perhaps cook all the food we buy.

I had attended all the SDG Advocate Training 2022 sessions, both virtual and face to face, and this provided me with an extensive access to networking to keep me on track for my SDG related activism. I abandoned my original notions of the direction of the activism, which were Mental Health Recovery promotion and awareness, and then settled into an SDG related field but more in common with the other 2022 SDG advocates

Another by-product of my action will be better educated personal choices when it comes to food, better energy efficient choices in cooking and food preparation. My intention for my future direction is to further promote the household's priorities for ethical purchases, encourage the incorporation of healthy greens into the diet of the householder and inspiring people to see that these approaches are good for soil health.

I will also want to feedback into my local authority's biodiversity plan and local authority 5-year plan (due in 2 years' time) as regards the protection of soils from nutrient depletion in the local area.

## Lill Coyne - SDG Advocate 2022



*The SDG Advocacy Training may just prove to be “The Gifts and Treasure” (Joseph Campbell), the necessary catalyst to spur me on by providing a ‘platform’ from which to offer Courses in ‘Sustainable Gardening’ while promoting the SDGs.*

This action project addresses SDG2 Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture; SDG3 Good Health and Wellbeing; SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG13 Climate Action; SDG14 Life below water; SDG15 Life on Land; SDG17 Partnerships for the Goals. I planned to start with SDG15 Life on Land concentrating on target 3, the integrity of the Soil, Seed Saving and Biodiversity to meet the Targets 15.3 Soil, 15.6 Genetic Resources, and 15.9 Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

Stiuido Cuig is a collective of five groups who are concerned with healing, both people and the planet, and with a concern for the environment. The most active arm of Stiuido Cuig is Gardeners Dynamic - an endeavour to establish a ‘Space for Healing for People and Planet’. It’s Mission Statement is ‘Enabling people to be connected with the soil that feeds us and aiming to preserve its integrity for generations to come’.

An on-site home Kitchen Garden, based at An Googaune Scire, The Old School House, Kilskyre, Kells, Co Meath, was set up as a ‘Community Class Room’ (C. Classroom) in collaboration with the local ‘Pride of Place’ group and the local Primary School, and funded by GIY (Grow it Yourself Ireland). C. Classroom will consist of raised beds, a pond to attract wildlife, a poly tunnel already in situ, for protected cropping and use of the old school building for shelter and classes. Pollinator friendly trees, shrubs and flower borders are already fairly well established and I am in the process of putting raised beds together. The next job is to set up a pond in the pollinator friendly garden.

Much work has been completed already in the Kitchen Garden. There was a good garlic harvest this year which was planted by a few of the local school children and tomatoes grown from saved seed are still looking good and turning red despite the late season. The bird feeders have been washed and filled and Bug Hotels are in action. A Scare Crow has been set up but still awaiting its head! Various methods of composting continue and liquid feeds are already in tanks. The work was badly interrupted by the COVID 19 outbreak but now looking forward to the Spring.

This initiative is dedicated to providing courses for adults and children in growing food ‘without costing the earth’. Once the Old School House is renovated as a venue for workshops, I would like to provide an introduction /training by attracting other tutors from the Stiuido Cuig network. Training courses could be funded by LMETB (Louth and Meath Education and Training Board) under ‘Community Education’, or they could be run privately.

I have reached out through word of mouth to parents of local Primary School children via the School Principal and Chairperson of the Parents Committee, regarding availability of gardening courses for parents/grandparents. I need to promote courses also through other schools, Church groups, Resource Centres, Active Retirement Groups, ICA, IOA, the Irish Seeds Savers Association. I will also explore ways of networking with other SDG Advocates in Co Meath and local counties.

I want to develop 'Community Education' courses and I am looking forward to using modules already established or a Module Descriptor as a framework on which to establish lessons for a module specific to promoting the SDGs. Certification for those who take part in the courses would also be welcome. I need to resume contact with LMETB to confirm my interest in teaching once the module descriptors become available. Meanwhile in order to advertise courses I need to launch a website and print a brochure for use in social media such as Facebook & Instagram, develop a QR code and access appropriate materials for use at market- stalls. With this in mind I took part in the recent brainstorming session and development of a Business Model Canvas at the Kells Enterprise and Technology 'Champion Changemakers Hackathon' and pitched for funding at Final of the National 'Pitchfest' hosted at 'Innovate Communities' in Ballymun last week.

However, no funding is forthcoming as yet. So back to basics, which means focusing on my immediate Action Plan to target 3 Farmers Markets for use of stall space (in the short term) to promote the SDGs in conjunction with sustainable food growing practices at the C. Classroom. I would also like to ascertain the level of interest amongst the market customers in pursuing courses in growing food sustainably and exploring how and where can this work be aligned with the SDGs.

In November, I spent 3 hours at the nearest local Market in Clonmellon Co West Meath on a Pop Up stall dedicated to introducing the SDGs to the Local Community. I used soil samples, portable wormery, photos of various composting methods, a poster of the SDGs (Irish Aid) and leaflets ('Make Ireland Sustainable for all'), to support raising awareness. The Market stall materials generated a definite stirring of interest resulting in 5 people signing up to be notified regarding our prospective Spring Courses. More market sessions are in the pipeline.



Taking part in the SDG Advocacy Training was a wonderful opportunity to interact with likeminded individuals. An introduction to Joseph Campbell's 'The Heroes' Journey' deeply resonated with me (not that I'm in any way a hero) as I've been focused on setting up a 'Space for Healing' over the last 20 years and I identified with the various stages of progress /achievements together with obstacles to moving forward. The SDG Advocacy Training may just prove to be

"The Gifts and Treasure" (Joseph Campbell), the necessary catalyst to spur me on by providing a 'platform' from which to offer Courses in 'Sustainable Gardening' while promoting the SDGs.

## Dr. Akeem Badmus - SDG Advocate 2023

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*The African Irish Community (AIC), as a minority Irish community that I am representing in general, at every community level.*

I am a post Doctoral Researcher in Economics and public policy and am very active in academic research at the university and community levels with special focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Moreover, through all my research efforts on SDGs with specific references to SDG 8, I observed and realised huge inequalities based on multiple conversations with government officials and academics,

Critically, the conversations confirmed that the adopted SDG8 policies plus Ireland's National SDG policy frameworks do not translate to the pragmatic board rooms' agenda for positive outcomes in the Republic of Ireland.

Importantly, in the Republic of Ireland, there are acknowledged huge SDG8 gaps observed by many research stakeholders relative to the implementation of the SDG8 policy regimes for all within the African Irish Community at the lowest ebb of the decent work pyramids in Ireland. These gaps exist in both the public and private sectors of the Irish economy with huge negative effects on the African Irish community (AIC).

The African Irish Community (AIC), as a minority Irish community that I am representing in general, at every community level. My SDG 8 Advocacy aims to activate SDG 8 projects premised on the existing reports and to further carry out surveys to generate data for creating data visualisation to promote gainful and decent work for my community in particular and for all communities in general.

Above all, the creative SDG 8 data visualisation arts aim to encourage diversity at the workplace targeting the Company HRs to embrace proactive SDG8 policies that reduce employment inequalities and enhance decent work conditions.

## Helena Kelly - SDG Advocate 2023

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*I became interested in social justice as a child when I saw discrimination and inequality rising in my hometown.*

I became interested in social justice as a child when I saw discrimination and inequality rising in my hometown. Over the years I developed this interest to include ideas of energy poverty and just transition. For me “Leaving no one behind” was a no-brainer.

I noticed early on how hard it can be for many of us to understand policies let alone advocate for policies in our own interest. I started working to make the policy and funding application process accessible to people in my community by hosting awareness workshops. Since I started we have rolled out energy awareness programs for my community and seen some progress.

To help make government policy accessible to more people and increase awareness of grants for transition I am applying for funding to erect a plaque in a central location in my town to keep the conversation front and centre of the community.

## Shirley Moore - SDG Advocate 2023

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*We tend to work with groups which may not be suited to the more formal ETB classes. We grow our own vegetables and as we grow we learn together.*

I work with Dunhill Multi Education Centre in Dunhill Eco Park, Co Waterford.. It is a training, meeting, and conference centre guided by the principles of access and opportunity for all types of groups.

My SDG project involves working with a group of Ukrainian refugees in a community garden. We tend to work with groups which may not be suited to the more formal ETB classes. We grow our own vegetables and as we grow we learn together. It's a space where people are busy planting, nurturing, or harvesting and in that

context, it is much easier for them to learn. I have noticed that when the primary activity is horticulture, the attendees pick up the language faster. I love that we can offer this space and time to facilitate healing and integration. We also want to expand the variety of vegetables we grow to make it a viable business and to include other nationalities.

Members of the local community join us every Thursday from 10am - 1pm and we do everything from teaching to gardening, horticulture, harvesting, and other activities that contribute towards integration: teaching, physical activity, mental well being, social interaction, and preparing food.

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### Ashleigh Downey - SDG Advocate 2023

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**It led me to become an artist and in recent years my participation in climate action projects motivated me to create a similar program for biodiversity.**

I was an only child and my mum used to keep a close eye on me. There was a field across from our home that turned into a beautiful meadow in summer. I used to lie on my back there looking up at the clouds. Seeing the underside of the flowers evoked something in me. I saw there was a world beneath ours and that it was beautiful and magical. I have spent my adult life trying to share this feeling of connection to the greater chain of being with others.

It led me to become an artist and in recent years my participation in climate action projects motivated me to create a similar program for biodiversity. I established a “Biodiversity Ambassadors” program where 30 participants came together to network and share knowledge to increase biodiversity across the island of Ireland. We studied deep ecology and shared how biodiversity connects us to life as well as the practical services it provides.

We did workshops on

1. Advocating for the Rights of Nature
2. Deep ecological thinking
3. Developing strong interconnected relationships between humans and nature
4. Developing support systems and networks
5. Biodiversity/nature connection resources

My plan now is to reignite this program and help participants apply for funding for their individual projects and become multipliers in their own communities.

## Kieron Anthony Smith - SDG Advocate 2023

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*I want to celebrate the power of the image & the written text, by sharing a narrative of empathy.*

I had the privilege to read Sally's Hayden's award-winning book at the start of my journey on the SDG Advocate programme for 2023. It had a profound impact on me & on an issue that was important to me; Migration.

So I wanted to help change the narrative, support people seeking refugee & provide a platform for anyone who may be interested in creating change in our local community. This was an opportunity to connect the local with the global, as I set out to share the values of Global Citizenship as an SDG Advocate. Through my advocate training I became aware of the power of storytelling, and how it can be an instrument for change.

I want to celebrate the power of the image & the written text, by sharing a narrative of empathy. As an active Global Citizen I want to reach out with a hand of hope and work towards a more equal & just humanity for all.

*We knew, like us, every staff member could do the same reflective practice, looking at the modules they teach and identifying how the SDGs could be incorporated into their work with the students.*

#### **The Action Project - BAFTAS (Building Awareness for Teachers and Students)**

In September 2021, as part of continuous professional development, the staff of Whitehall College of Further Education participated in a workshop on Global Citizenship Education. What became evident to us both was our limited knowledge and awareness and that of our colleagues to global citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals. As teachers in Further Education, we wanted to bring knowledge of the SDGs to staff and students and the DP Advocacy programme was an ideal opportunity to learn and develop in this area.

We identified the 'curriculum' as the central medium through which this would be possible. Mapping SDGs with work that is already in existence would provide a familiar way of making the initial small transitions towards change in perspectives and practices. We looked at the modules we were currently teaching and identified how we could link the SDGs and the Specific Learning Outcomes (SLOs). For example, Social Studies Research Project, directing the research subject choice within the boundaries of the SDGs, SDG 1 – no poverty or SDG 4 - quality education, or in Business Law when looking at employment equality, SDG 5 - gender equality or even something as simple as using SDG information as part of a WP exercise so the students would be reading about the goals.

We knew, like us, every staff member could do the same reflective practice, looking at the modules they teach and identifying how the SDGs could be incorporated into their work with the students.

**Workshop #1:** We decided to facilitate a workshop with staff focussed on achieving this task in September 2023. We aimed to introduce the SDGs, explain our journey and 'gently shock' and guide them to the possibility we all had for change using the SDGs as our goals. We took on our role as advocates to get the message of urgency out there. Using stark statistics and stories of inequality and indifference, we facilitated the staff to identify concrete ways they could incorporate SDGs in their content and assessment.

To support active participation and engagement the staff were encouraged to move around the room, viewing flipcharts, reading, and discussing the SDGs. Genuine shock and disbelief were evident. However, this was

matched by a passion to look at possibilities. As a result, staff members moved from SDG to SDG and noted down how they could alter their existing work to focus on one or more goals.

To continue the learning and engagement and because we knew there were a lot of resources readily available to support teachers, we set up a college Moodle page with links to resources, some easy to access YouTube clips, presentations etc. for each of the goals. Many thanks to Anne Hannon (2020 Advocate) for the resources she shared with us.

**Next Steps:** Since the workshop, we have incorporated the SDG ethos and action-orientated practice in our work in class, and in tasks allocated to students. Members of staff discuss ideas for coursework changes and collaborate on how to achieve in practice. We are planning a follow-up 'reflective' workshop with the teachers at the end of this term. The focus will be to review progress, share experiences and insights, and renew our passion for further action.

**Student Council:** It is the student body which will add real momentum. More than 30 nationalities attend the college, and they reflect the Global Irish society of 2023. Sharing their life stories - where inequality, injustice and indifference abound - will be the catalyst and driving force for change. With the support of the student council, it is hoped to build awareness through action within the college by organised events and activities.

**Personal Development:** In addition, we are now the 'go to' persons for management regarding all things 'lean, green, and sustainable'! Advocacy provides a freedom and assertiveness gene which enables competence to seek and achieve change.

We are part of networks, both internal and external, which zone in on setting goals, developing strategies, and achieving greater sustainability. We are attending workshops on new initiatives - SOLAS/ETB Sustainability Initiatives for QQI courses. And we are the base of a team in college tasked with examining and addressing our own practices as a college institution.

The wealth of knowledge and resources provided by our advocates of 2023, and previous advocates shared through these action stories will be of huge benefit. Certainly, the added possibility of "standing on the shoulders of giants who went before" is 100% the case.

We could never have imagined how enjoyable and fulfilling this training program would be. Mog, Bobby, Sara, Niamh, and Fiachra, and guest speakers, created a stimulating, warm, safe and healthy environment in which to learn, challenge and seek change. Spending time with like-minded co-advocates was wonderful. The shared ingredients of passions, perspectives, and practices, led to our belief in taking steps towards achieving change. Combine the SDG's advocate team ingredients of 'emotion', 'enlightenment' and 'enablement' and real action is the result. ...

## Jaime Macleod Elliott - SDG Advocate 2023

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*As we look to heal our planet and ourselves, we recognise that earth-friendly produce is essential for continued harmony.*

The SDG Advocate Training programme was mentioned to me by a close friend and colleague, who had been a former participant and had found the programme to be life-changing. Over the past couple of years, I have been rediscovering many things that are important to me, that I had lost for a long time and part of this new journey is learning (and unlearning!) a great deal, and so I was eager to apply. I was also drawn to the programme due to the style of education offered, the support that was included, and the social/collaborative aspect offered by the residential components.

My action project was planned to be the actualisation of a food hub in our local area. As we look to heal our planet and ourselves, we recognise that earth-friendly produce is essential for continued harmony. While this is a multifaceted and complex task, we are able to break down the enormity of this and focus on what makes sense for us, and biodynamic, wholesome food is a wonderful place to start! The aim is to bring together local producers, and consumers, making possible an alternative connection between us and our food. This concept requires a deep shift within consumer (and producer) mindsets and seeks to support an enormous amount of learning, self-development and cultural change, ultimately resulting in symbiosis with us and the planet. Ultimately, I feel that the SDG's are intrinsically intertwined, and each individual goal cannot be considered or achieved in isolation - but I suppose the primary targets of this concept are to further the cause of the following SDG's:

- Zero Hunger
- Gender Equality
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Sustainable Communities
- Responsible Production and Consumption

- Climate Action
- Life Below Water
- Life on Land

I am involved in a number of projects and organisations within which the knowledge and skills I have gained can be shared. Most notably, I am a founding member of an independent Waldorf school in Monaghan, involved with a co-operative called Síolta Chroí which is doing critical work in ecosystem restoration, resilient food systems, and regenerative culture. I am embarking on a project involving community-led work to support and protect water systems in our local and greater catchment area.

## Saurabh Saxena - SDG Advocate 2023

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*My primary motivation was to create impact in the wider community by developing a word-of-mouth and online presence for education and awareness.*

I was lucky to get the opportunity to attend the SDG advocate training. My primary motivation was to create impact in the wider community by developing a word-of-mouth and online presence for education and awareness. I came to the advocacy program with the idea of gaining knowledge and becoming a multiplier. The training gave me a broad and deep understanding of the complexity of the issues we face, helped me gain confidence in the field and helped me build a network with like-minded individuals.

During the last few months in training, I increased my outreach to disseminate the information and create awareness among people. I acquired multiple skills through my PhD education and professional career, but I consider data analytics, problem solving, and data insights creation as my core strengths which I plan to use to bring focus on areas that need attention.

In the coming months, I plan to create online content and visualisations around sustainability with some interesting/actionable insights. Online platforms would enable information about the SDGs to reach a vast and diverse global audience. This inclusivity would be essential for creating awareness and fostering a sense of shared responsibility. I have started to look into the existing open-source databases that I can use to dive deeper into SDGs and relevant processes. I expect my content to be an eye opener and food for thought for individuals in the community. Online education resources make it easy for people to access information about the SDGs at their own pace. Moreover, online platforms are particularly effective in engaging younger generations who are often more connected to digital spaces. This is crucial for ensuring a sustainable future as these individuals will play a key role in the long-term success of the SDGs.

In summary, my action project is around leveraging online platforms for sharing data insights and awareness on SDGs to enhance accessibility, engagement, and collaboration, contributing to a more informed and active global citizenry in the pursuit of sustainable development.

## Declan Owens - SDG Advocate 2023

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*To fully understand the scale of what is happening we need to understand shifting baseline syndrome. To facilitate this and retain wisdom in our community we host a series of workshops and discussions consolidate the community response to the unfolding crises.*

My name is Declan Owens and I run a charity called Ecojustice Ireland which is a Community Interest Company, the purpose of which is to help combine the collective strengths of the trade union movement in Ireland with the environmental movement in Ireland, especially for the benefit of local communities. We work with other progressive environmental NGO partners and others to catalyse the potential for strategic and meaningful collective action.

Ecojustice Ireland is an Associate Member of Queen's University Belfast's Centre For Sustainability, Equality and Climate Action, a member of the Climate Justice Coalition, a member of the Climate Justice Group of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, a member of the Equality Coalition in Northern Ireland, and a member of the Environmental Justice Network Ireland.

My project is to host a series of Intergenerational Ecojustice Dialogues with YMCA and U3A, RIOT, Church Elders, Lions Club (Dundrum and Newcastle). To fully understand the scale of what is happening we need to understand shifting baseline syndrome. To facilitate this and retain wisdom in our community we host a series of workshops and discussions consolidate the community response to the unfolding crises.

## Russell Down - SDG Advocate 2023

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*I plan to act as a multiplier of GCE by practising and promoting active citizenship within our colleague Community of Practice; and by applying a lens of critical thinking and problem-solving when planning and organising events.*

I had started a sustainability community of practice in my workplace about a year ago. We have an online education event roughly every month though I (and the working group) are not experts in either sustainability or education. So, when I heard about the SDG advocate training I thought this would be a great way to boost my own knowledge on how to communicate on the SDGs and sustainability issues generally, and to bring a bit more structure to our approach.

My action project is to move the community of practice from an education space to an action space. We have started this by organising two volunteer days to help local community gardens. The big event that we are planning to coordinate for next year is a Green Week to increase colleague engagement on sustainability issues.

I plan to act as a multiplier of GCE by practising and promoting active citizenship within our colleague Community of Practice; and by applying a lens of critical thinking and problem-solving when planning and organising events.

## Jill Pitcher Farrell - SDG Advocate 2023

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*My work revolves predominantly around SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 17 partnerships for the goal but increasingly you see it connects to all 17 goals*

I work in a local development company who are one of the government's SDG champions this year so we do a variety of different projects with community groups in Limerick and Cork. My SDG advocacy project was around education on the SDGs. I was surprised to find out how little people know about the 2030 Agenda so I have been developing, implementing and reviewing interactive workshops with community groups across the Ballyhoura region with the aims of

- Increasing awareness and knowledge of the SDGs
- Empowering individuals and groups to view their work through the SDG lens/framework
- Connecting local work and actions to a global context
- Allowing people time for reflection to value their work which will also hopefully motivate them.

My work revolves predominantly around SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 17 partnerships for the goal but increasingly you see it connects to all 17 goals. I plan to continue my work and scale up to reach a greater audience. It is lovely to know you are not alone on this journey.

## Eileen McLoughlin - SDG Advocate 2023

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*This education for people with disabilities will help empower people with disabilities and hopefully contribute to less poverty and more equality.*

I have been doing research to gather information in the St John of God services to help them become more sustainable and energy efficient. This goal helps to achieve partly all the sustainable development goals in particular goal 7 - affordable and clean energy, and to reduce inequalities and promote good health and wellbeing. I developed an adult education programme for people with disabilities and staff in the St. John of God services to inform them about grants available and a separate presentation for people with disability in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The reason that I became involved in SDG advocacy training was due to my interest in advocacy. The attached presentation was my action project. I also did other presentations on “What is Advocacy”, “The Law and Advocacy.” These presentations help clients with learning disabilities understand their rights and also help them understand how to achieve their rights.

This education for people with disabilities will help empower people with disabilities and hopefully contribute to less poverty and more equality. As a result of this education people with disabilities will help other people achieve their rights and lead a meaningful life with planetary boundaries. In this manner I plan to become a multiplier of GCE.

## Niamh Cowdell - SDG Advocate 2023

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*As a child I spent time in nature and developed a connection to the living world that motivated me to protect it.*

As a child I spent time in nature and developed a connection to the living world that motivated me to protect it. It is an experience I wanted to share with my daughter but as she was growing I noticed changes in the natural environment and read about the trajectory our current business model is taking the planet. I struggled to find a balance between protecting her from the truth and teaching her how to advocate for her future.

Out of this was born No Planet B; an environmental group on Climate Change/Biodiversity loss that works to raise awareness and encourage climate action. The group was made up of my daughter and other kids her age. They learned about the drivers of climate and biodiversity loss and gave presentations in the new library to the community.

The group became proficient at presenting and have received over 20 speaking engagements across the Adult and Community sector as well as the Dail and our local Chamber of Commerce. We worked with communities 4 climate action (C4CA Kildare Group, National Peatlands Park Group, Birdwatch Ireland, IPCC, Maynooth University, Green Party Kildare, Kildare PPN, Nationwide, Afri Peace and Justice Conference.

We are now launching a second environmental documentary which we plan to take around the country and help other groups form.

## Joan Swift - SDG Advocate 2023

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*I felt I needed to learn more myself and see if I could find a way to integrate some of the SDGs into my own involvement with the Council as a cycling advocate and a PPN Rep on the Council Special Policy Committee for Infrastructure and Environment.*

I was aware of the SDGs from my earlier working life as a teacher. Later, when I was making submissions to Sligo County Council consultations on behalf of Sligo Cycling Campaign I would notice references to the SDGs but I didn't feel they were integrated into policies and actions. I felt I needed to learn more myself and see if I could find a way to integrate some of the SDGs into my own involvement with the Council as a cycling advocate and a PPN Rep on the Council Special Policy Committee for Infrastructure and Environment.

My Action Project is to coordinate a PPN consultation on the 30th November in Sligo on the theme of Sustainable and Active Transport. The idea is to consult the community so as to be in a position to respond to the Transport section of the Draft Sligo County Development Plan, the Draft Sligo Local Transport Plan and the Draft Local Climate Action Plan all of which are out for consultation at the moment. The Report produced as a result of this consultation will update the current PPN Vision for Community Wellbeing and the feedback to the community will support them in making their own submissions if they wish. I am also publishing a booklet explaining official transport jargon to further assist communities. The SDGs I am focussing on are 3, Good Health and Wellbeing, 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13, Climate Action.

Sligo Cycling Campaign is in the process of forming alliances with Community Gardens and Biodiversity groups. We have also linked in with the Strandhill Sustainable Energy Community to advocate for a Coastal

Mobility Route between Strandhill and Rosses Point, In both of these activities we will have the opportunity to highlight the 3 SDGs above as well as Goal 17 Partnership for the Goals, as an important part of our advocacy.

## Jennifer Duffy - SDG Advocate 2023

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*I am passionate about the environment. I strive to live a simple life, in harmony with nature and her changing seasons.*

I am passionate about the environment. I strive to live a simple life, in harmony with nature and her changing seasons. I am a mother of two and actively role model an ecologically sensitive lifestyle of minimal ethical consumption and responsible stewardship of the Earth.

I work for LOETB (Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board) as a teacher in Portlaoise Prison. Part of my job is to co-ordinate the Gaisce Award Programme (The President's Award for young people). This is an active citizen programme, advocating personal development, community involvement and altruism. In my opinion becoming an active citizen locally involves developing an awareness of global developmental issues. The Sustainable Development goals offer a valuable framework to understand and analyse how the world's resources are distributed.

My action project is to establish and maintain a polytunnel on the grounds of Portlaoise Prison. This involved working in collaboration with the Governor, Assistant Chief Officer in charge of groundskeeping and the Education Unit.

This project contributes to goal 3 Good Health and Wellbeing. Inmates of Portlaoise Prison currently have no access to a green space. Recreational yards are enclosed outdoor spaces, with tarmacadamed ground marked

for football protected by high concrete walls. Working in the polytunnel will expose participants to the natural environment which enhances feelings of wellbeing and contentment.

Goal 4 Quality Education. Establishing a poly tunnel presents the opportunity to teach biology, horticulture, permaculture and nutrition in an inclusive and experiential way.

Goal 12 Responsible consumption and production. Growing vegetables from seed will prompt an awareness of the cycle of production and consumption and help to reduce waste and decrease carbon emissions.

Goal 13. Climate action. Learning to grow your own vegetables is sustainable practice that promotes self-sufficiency.

Goal 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Providing a constructive work opportunity will promote the peaceful running of Portlaoise Prison by enhancing the quality of life and respecting the human rights of inmates.

Learning horticultural skills will have a profound effect on individuals in Portlaoise Prison. It will provide a daily focus and sense of purpose to the working team responsible for maintaining the plants. The Home Economics department and Prison Kitchen will benefit from fresh seasonal produce. The attractiveness of the Grounds will be enhanced by hanging baskets and flower beds germinated in the polytunnel. This will attract more pollinating insects. Awareness of sustainability and self-sufficiency will increase among inmates' families and extended communities. Upon release an ex-offender will have a valued skill set to share with his community.