

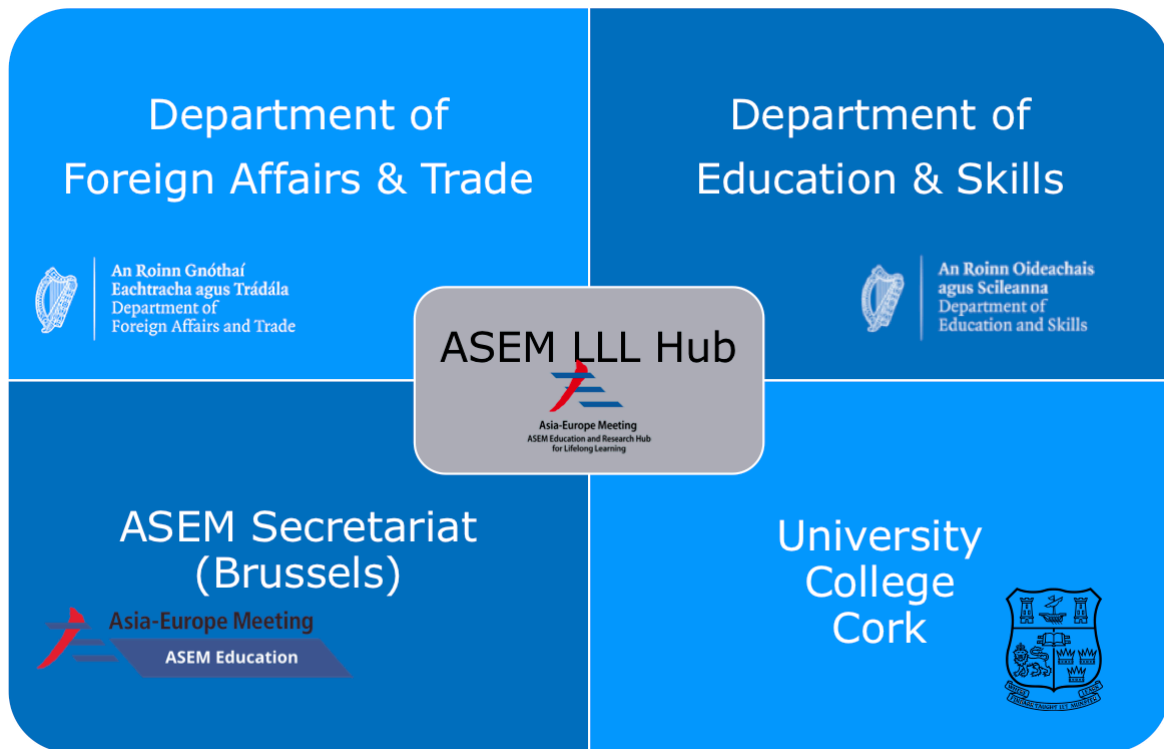
Ireland Hosting

ASEM Education and Research
Hub for Lifelong Learning

(ASEM LLL Hub)

2019-2024

Arrangements, Priorities & Context



September 2019

Executive Summary

- Collaboration and partnership building will be the key mission of the Irish Chair of the ASEM LLL Hub.
- The ASEM LLL Hub will align with Ireland's longstanding practice as an honest broker for positive change in international affairs.
- The Irish ASEM LLL Hub subscribes to the philosophy that society needs proactively engaged universities
- Active engagement extends to the entire web of education and learning
- Lifelong learning is the essential paradigm of the contemporary era of unpredictability in areas such as work, technology, climate, migration, and security
- The ASEM LLL Hub offers Europe and Asia an unparalleled mechanism for engaging in high-level, policy oriented research on our common futures
- The ASEM LLL Hub is one of the largest international networks of researchers
- ASEM LLL Hub was officially transferred from Denmark to Ireland at the ASEM Ministers Meeting in Bucharest on May 15, 2019.
- Dr Séamus Ó Tuama was announced as the Chair of ASEM LLL Hub at ASEMME7
- The Irish Secretariat of ASEM LLL Hub will be hosted at UCC
- A process of review and refocus will be carried out in autumn 2019 ahead of the ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020
- A 5-year plan will be adopted at ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020 in Ireland
- Department of Education & Skills will identify key national priorities for ASEM LLL Hub in education, skills and lifelong learning
- Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade will identify priorities vis-à-vis Ireland's global diplomatic and trade programme that align with the mission of ASEM LLL Hub.
- Irish educational providers will showcase at ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020

Contextualising Ireland's Hosting of ASEM LLL Hub

- Education and Ireland Abroad: A Better World recognises the diverse challenges in delivering quality education especially to vulnerable and left behind groups
- Internationalisation of Higher Education: ASEM LLL Hub provides strategic benefits for HEIs in Ireland, the EU and ASEAN+ for advancing international education.
- ASEM LLL Hub as International Education Catalyst: ASEM LLL Hub offers exceptional reach into the ASEAN+ area as well as championing capacity building
- Longer Term Vision: Ireland & Europe: ASEM LLL Hub opens a soft diplomatic channel for Ireland in education and
- Ireland as a Good Neighbour: The Ireland led ASEM LLL Hub will reflect Ireland global reputation, through Irish aid, primarily focused on the needs of ordinary people
- ASEM LLL Hub Expressing Ireland's Values as a country committed to supporting peace and cooperation.
- ASEM LLL Hub will enhance Ireland's profile in South-East Asia, animate the goals of A Better World, and bring direct benefits to the Irish Higher Education sector.
- Leading in South East Asia: The ASEM LLL Hub places Ireland as a leader of Europe's Lifelong Learning engagement in South-East Asia for a period of five years.
- Europe in Asia: It is the goal of the Irish Chair to support a collaborative agenda, under the wing of Ireland diplomatic missions in South East Asia.

Adopting a Very Irish Model of Inclusion

The Irish Chair of the ASEM LLL Hub will adopt the collaborative *modus operandi* which typifies the UNESCO Learning City approach. This model was adopted in Cork and was formalized in an MOU signed in 2015 between Cork City Council, University College Cork, Cork Institute of Technology and Cork Education and Training Board. This learning city approach ensures that all partners in learning are embraced, including community groups, youth service, libraries, schools, Colleges of Further Education, sport organisations, cultural organisations, business, HSE, prison service,

Gardaí, with a constant open call for all citizens (denizens) and stakeholders to participate. At a national level Cork led the reach out to other Irish cities to adopt and Charter¹ and form a national network of Irish learning cities (currently including Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick and Derry) and subsequently to the convening of a network of European and North American learning cities in association with UNESCO. UCC convened the first meeting of HELLIN² (Higher Education Lifelong Learning Ireland Network) which includes virtually all Irish Higher Education Institutions (universities and institutes of technology), including Ulster University. It is proposed to bring this ethos to the fore both nationally and internationally in the Irish led phase of the ASEM LLL Hub, which aligns with Ireland's longstanding practice as an honest broker for positive change in international affairs.

**"...create that better world
which we want for ourselves
and our children, a world
where Ireland shows effective
leadership and good global
citizenship as we move into
the second century of our
independence"**

— An Tánaiste, Simon Coveney TD

Community Engaged and Outward Looking

The Irish ASEM LLL Hub subscribes to the philosophy that society needs proactively engaged universities 'to addressing the complexities of contemporary social, political, economic, environmental and wellbeing challenges'³.

**"Ireland's foreign policy is
based on the fundamental
principles of justice, human
rights, the rule of international
law, and supporting peace and
friendly cooperation between
nations"**

— *A Better World*

However, active engagement does not stop at universities, it extends to the entire web of education and learning at all levels and lifelong. Today's challenges include those encountered by ordinary people in their day-to-day lives up to global ones. Lifelong learning allows individuals, communities and wider society to acquire learning throughout the lifecycle in everything from basic education to advanced skills and knowledge, in how to live with each other in a changing world and how to live our lives better.

Lifelong learning is the essential paradigm of the contemporary era . In this era skills, careers,

¹ <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/council-services/news-room/latest-news/symbolic-signing-of-all-island-learning-city-charter.html>

² <https://hellin.ie>

³ Ó Tuama, S. (2019). Community-Engaged Universities: Approaches and Context. *Adult Learning*, p1. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159519853804>

where one might live, work and learn are predictable only to the extent that they are unpredictable, where technology, climate, migration, security for instance are presenting ever new challenges. The concept of education being linear, divided into phases, having exit points and conclusions is no longer valid. The ASEM LLL Hub offers Europe and Asia an unparalleled mechanism for engaging in high-level, policy oriented research on futures in lifelong learning, drawing on rich European traditions and exciting new trends in Asia. Currently over 100 researchers are engaged in five networks, under the Irish Chair it is proposed to extend a new round of invitations to leading researchers to join existing networks and/or develop new networks.

Five Year Plan

The ASEM LLL Hub, considered one of the largest international networks of researchers, was officially transferred from Denmark to Ireland at the ASEM Ministers Meeting in Bucharest on May 15, 2019. Dr Séamus Ó Tuama was announced as the Chair of ASEM LLL Hub at that ministerial meeting. The intention is to host the Irish Secretariat of ASEM LLL Hub at UCC and to maximise the direct benefits for Ireland and the international community over the term of Ireland's stewardship. A process of review and refocus will be carried out in autumn 2019 ahead of the ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020 — a full meeting of the networks and councils to devise and adopt a five-year plan during the period of Ireland's hosting of the ASEM LLL Hub. It is proposed to hold this ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020 in Ireland in March 2020.

MILESTONES 2019

Séamus Ó Tuama Elected Chair of ASEM LLL Hub at ASEMME7, Bucharest

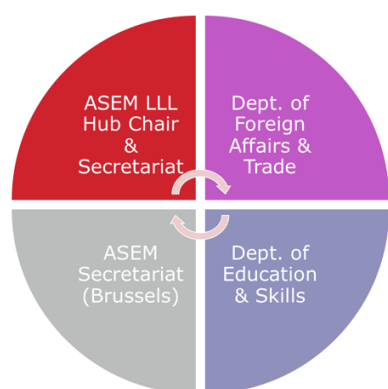
Establish Irish Chair of ASEM LLL Hub

Establish ASEM LLL Hub Secretariat hosted for Ireland at UCC

PLAN: ASEM-LLL-Hub Forum Spring 2020

**IRISH
EDUCATION
SHOWCASES**

Research Review & Presentation
Adopt 5-Year Research & Policy Plan
Confirm Joint-Conveners:
Intergovernmental Senior Officials Forum
Confirm Joint-Conveners: Asia-Europe
Council of University Senior Managers



In planning for ASEM LLL Hub Forum 2020 it is hoped that the Department of Education & Skills will identify key national priorities vis-à-vis Ireland's global reach in the field of education, skills and lifelong learning that it would like to place high on the agenda of the research and policy workplan. It is hoped that the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade will identify priorities vis-à-vis Ireland's global diplomatic and trade programme that align with the mission of ASEM LLL Hub. Irish educational providers will be invited to showcase their work with

a focus on building international relationships across Europe through programmes like Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and in Asia through their international education, skills, research and training activities. This may include new generation activities under Erasmus+. It is planned that the forum would be attended by high level ministry officials and university rectors as well as ASEM LLL Hub researchers from Asia and Europe.

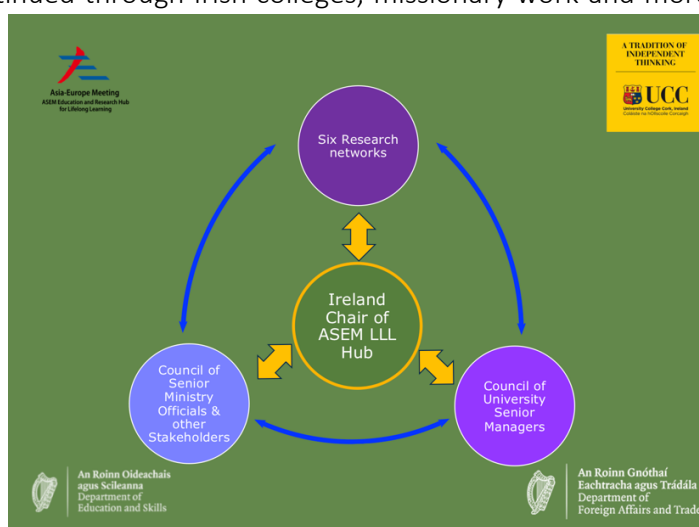
ASEM-LLL-Hub Forum 2020



Contextualising Ireland's Hosting of ASEM LLL Hub

1. Education and Ireland Abroad:

Education has been a central pillar of Ireland's engagement with the wider world dating all the way back to the middle ages, it continued through Irish colleges, missionary work and more recently through proactive engagement in formal and non-formal education by Irish NGOs, educational institutions and Ireland's aid programmes since the 1970s. *A Better World* recognises the diverse challenges in delivering quality education especially to vulnerable and left behind groups, it places special emphasis on the needs of girls and women and those caught in conflict zones. Making education a lifelong project is essential for all people on the planet in the 21st century, but the needs of these groups are even more acute, both now and in the future. Underpinning Ireland's educational goals in *A Better World* will be greatly enhanced through the policy research agenda of ASEM LLL Hub drawing on over 100 research teams, organised around five existing themes Development of ICT skills, e-learning and the culture of e-learning in Lifelong Learning (e-ASEM); Workplace Learning; Professionalisation of



Adult Teachers and Educators in ASEM countries; National Strategies for Lifelong Learning; Lifelong Learning Core Competences and the proposed new network on Learning Cities.

2. Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation is a key mission for ambitious HEIs globally. In strategic terms the Irish Department of Education and skills frames it as being about developing and maintaining ‘a comprehensive approach to education that prepares students, academics and staff to be active and engaged participants in an interconnected global world’⁴. The HEA report *The Internationalisation of Irish Higher Education*⁵ offers an excellent overview of context, policy and direction in the Irish HEI sector. The level of engagement and ambition in Ireland is in line with trends globally. Three key benefits are identified in the EU study *Internationalisation of Higher Education* ‘Improved quality of teaching and Learning... increased international awareness of / deeper engagement with global issues by students’⁶. It also reports on the priorities for HEIs as outward mobility; incoming students; international research collaboration and innovation; strategic partnership; and strengthening in international/intercultural curriculum⁷. ASEM LLL Hub provides clear strategic benefits for HEIs in Ireland, the rest of the EU and in ASEAN+ in terms of advancing both agendas.

3. ASEM LLL Hub as International Education Catalyst

OECD data shows the scale and potential for international student enrolment for Europe. The EU hosts 35% of all international students, with the UK the largest host at 10%. In capacity terms, Ireland operates at about one third of the UK level, with international students accounting for 6.4% of the total university enrolment against 17.5% in the UK. Post-Brexit there will be opportunities and challenges for Ireland and the remaining 27 EU members. Between 2005 and 2012 numbers of international students increased by 50% and that pattern continues. Additionally: ‘Students from Asia form the largest group of international students enrolled in countries reporting data: 53% of the total’⁸. The extent of the Asian appetite for international education and the pull offered by ‘the attractiveness of specific education systems’⁹ open significant opportunities for Ireland to accentuate its potential for international research and study through the ASEM LLL Hub. It is important to note that internationalisation policies need to be balanced, to ensure that developing economies, in particular, gain long term benefits. A key factor in mitigating negative outcomes is ‘to increase the quality of their domestic HEIs through encouragement of collaborations with

⁴ Irish Educated Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020 p16. <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

⁵ See: *The Internationalisation of Irish Higher Education*. <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

⁶ Internationalisation of Higher Education p64

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU\(2015\)540370_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

⁷ Ibid p75

⁸ OECD Factbook: Economic, Environmental & Social Statistics 2015-2016, p168. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/factbook-2015-en.pdf?expires=1563875112&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=6D5C4CDBCC2A3379DC8F7CB6F6549979>

⁹ Ibid p168

quality providers in developed economies'.¹⁰ This is precisely the *modus operandi* of ASEM LLL Hub, which includes researchers from both regions in all research networks and makes capacity building in weaker regions a priority.

4. Longer Term Vision: Ireland & Europe:

ASEM LLL Hub opens a soft diplomatic channel for Ireland as education and research are key elements in contemporary public diplomacy. As a soft power vehicle education and research help others appreciate a country's 'culture, values and ideas'¹¹ as well as raise its 'reputation and influence in regional and global arenas'¹². This potential is enhanced through ASEM LLL Hub as it is at a remove from short-term commercial interests and is built on the mutuality of common interests. It is an opportunity for Ireland to articulate the values and goals of *A Better World*, while also being a key voice for a common European approach. Education and research oriented public diplomacy, facilitates sharing of ideas and values, but also 'the development of common solutions and frameworks responding to transboundary challenges in the region, such as climate change, resource depletion, disease management and cybersecurity'¹³, which echoes the core values of ASEM LLL Hub and is perfectly aligned to Ireland's current and historical role in the world.

5. Ireland as a Good Neighbour

The assessment of both the *Overseas Development Institute* and the *Brookings Institute* on the effectiveness of Irish aid speaks to a policy that is primarily focused on the needs of people on the ground. It is about offering support to the most in need and enabling all to progress to a better future. It rhymes with the essential goals of the ASEM LLL Hub, which is about enabling people of all ages, through education, to achieve their potential for themselves, their families, their communities, their countries and ultimately the entire global community.

6. ASEM LLL Hub Expressing Ireland's Values

The ASEM LLL Hub is an ideal vehicle for Ireland to express its values as a country committed to 'supporting peace and friendly cooperation between nations'¹⁴. It can leverage the five core themes underpinning *A Better World*: People, Values, Prosperity, Our Place in Europe and especially how we can Influence the development of 'a more peaceful, equal and sustainable world'¹⁵.

7. International Ireland and ASEM LLL Hub

¹⁰ Adnett, N. 2010, "The growth of international students and economic development: friends or foes?", *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 625-637, p634.

¹¹ Byrne, C., & Hall, R. (2014). *International Education as Public Diplomacy* (Research Digest 3). International Education Association of Australia. p. 2. <https://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/258>

¹² Ibid p.7

¹³ Byrne, C., & Hall, R. (2013). Realising Australia's international education as public diplomacy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 67(4), 419-438, p. 431. doi:10.1080/10357718.2013.806019

¹⁴ *A Better World* p1

¹⁵ *A Better World*, Foreword by An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD

Ireland has a distinguished history as a diplomatic soft influencer even prior to independence for instance through missionary work, O’Connell’s abolitionist stance, as a fledgling state through the League of Nations, then the United Nations (as recently as the negotiations around the SDGs), at EU level and in parallel Irish peoples roles throughout the world in a wide range of areas in culture, commerce, sport and especially in education. The success of Ireland’s footprint can be gauged in so many dimensions like the diplomatic success of St Patrick’s Day, our capacity to attract inward investment and the acceptance of Ireland as an honest broker in the world. Hosting the Chair of the ASEM LLL Hub contributes to that overall mission, with potential to enhance Ireland’s profile in South-East Asia, animate the goals of *A Better World*, and bring direct benefits to the Irish Higher Education sector.

8. Leading in South East Asia

The ASEM LLL Hub being a collaboration between Europe and ASEAN+ places Ireland as a leader of Europe’s Lifelong Learning engagement in South-East Asia for a period of five years. This will allow it play a significant role in terms of European Consensus on Development and in shaping Europe’s Lifelong Learning agenda in Asia. This has added significance now in the light of the Global Commission on the Future of Work¹⁶ calling for ‘A universal entitlement to lifelong learning’; the publication of OECD report *Envisioning the Future of Education & Jobs*¹⁷; the United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹⁸ and the World Economic Forum’s assessment of future skills needs¹⁹.

9. Europe in Asia

The EU and ASEAN have been advancing deeper relationships since initial dialogue commenced in 1977. Today that relationship includes ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ across a range of areas including education and other fields pertinent to the agenda of ASEM LLL Hub. The ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018 – 2022)²⁰ includes a range of joint-actions. Its priority 3. *Socio-Cultural Cooperation* is particularly relevant to the work of ASEM LLL Hub, however given the sweep encapsulated by lifelong learning it resonates throughout the plan. In the 2018 *Connecting Europe and Asia - Building blocks for an EU Strategy* the EU set its ambition to ‘increase cooperation in education, research, innovation, culture, sport and tourism, helping to promote diversity and the free flow of ideas’ between Asia and Europe. ASEM LLL Hub’s work is closely related to this aspiration. It is the goal of the Irish Chair to support this collaborative agenda, under the wing of Ireland diplomatic missions in South East Asia. It is envisaged that Asia Pacific Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade will strongly advise policy formation within ASEM LLL Hub to ensure coherence between *A Better World*, EU actions and policies and the work of the hub.

¹⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/document/publication/wcms_662410.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/education/Envisioning-the-future-of-education-and-jobs.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

¹⁹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>

²⁰ <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ASEAN-EU-POA-2018-2022-Final.pdf>

Partnership Model for Next Phase of ASEM LLL Hub

Collaboration and partnership building will be the key mission of the Irish Chair of the ASEM LLL Hub. At national level this will include invitations to all sectors of the education, skills,



training and learning community to engage with ASEM LLL Hub. The project is primarily a high-level research network, with a very strong focus on producing key findings to inform policy making on lifelong learning. This means that not all stakeholders may have the capacity to lead research teams, but all have the capacity to identify research and policy topics and also to engage in research using citizen science models. UCC has already been involved in community based citizen science research in both

Cork Learning Neighbourhoods in Cork city and in the Skellig CRI project in rural South Kerry. The Irish Chair will bring the philosophy of community engaged universities²¹ into the project, this will ensure inclusivity and responsiveness, while maintaining international high level research standards

At international level it is intended to leverage existing networks and avoid duplication. Already some initial work has been done with a number of international lifelong learning NGOs and research networks. The Chair is already active within a number of relevant networks such as Eucen, ESREA, EDEN, UIL and has links to many more.



Funding Requirements

Staffing required for the Hub will comprise of one Senior Academic post (the Chair of the Hub), one fulltime Project Manager and one Senior Executive Assistant post.

It is envisaged both the Senior Academic and the Project Manager will travel at least once per month within Europe or internationally. Also included in the travel budget are subsidies for travel support for representatives of less developed South East Asian countries. The intended recipients of these travel supports are key to maintaining equal opportunity of participation and maximum impact in their home countries. The recipients would be those whose home institutions would not have the means of covering the air/rail fares from their institutions or from ASEA UNINET.

Other non-pay costs relate to hosting of events and general consumables.

²¹ Ó Tuama, S. (2019) op. cit.

Estimate of costs over five years

Profile of Chair

Séamus Ó Tuama is Director of ACE (Adult Continuing Education), University College Cork, Ireland, which has over 100 programmes and approximately 3,000 students. He was appointed as Chair of the ASEM-Lifelong Learning Hub in May 2019.

He is a member of the board/steering committee of several organisations including eucen (European University Continuing Education Network); Cork UNESCO learning city, which hosted the 3rd UNESCO Conference on Learning Cities; Cork Learning Neighbourhoods; Cork Lifelong Learning Festival; Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation; HELLIN (Higher Education Lifelong Learning Ireland Network); HERC (Higher Education Research Centre) hosted by Dublin City University. He is eucen Ambassador to the AAACE (American Association for Adult & Continuing Education). He is also active in ESREA; AAACE and PASCAL international. He is part of the Cork based team that has led two global online learning projects for UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. He has been an expert evaluator for the European Commission since the 1990s. He has also served as an external evaluator for Polish, Norwegian, Cypriot and Romanian governmental education agencies. Themes within his research include adult education, identity, social and human capital, respect, dignity, and intergenerational learning. He has published, delivered papers and workshops on these and related topics internationally, including a UNESCO mission to Egypt and high level invitations to UNAM in México, Asia, Australasia, North America and Europe. His doctoral research was on human rights under the Irish constitution, on which he has published and delivered workshops internationally. He trained as a journalist and has had a weekly column in the Irish Examiner for more than 30 years. He previously held the role of Manager of the Centre for European Social Research (CESR) and was a senior lecturer in the Department of Government & Politics at UCC. His current appointment is at professor level, with an academic link to the Department of Government & Politics.