

# CORK LIFELONG LEARNING FESTIVAL NEWSLETTER

issue two-2012

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION - AT THE HEART OF THE FESTIVAL

In Spring 2004, as the first lifelong learning festival was being planned, the idea of community based events was first discussed at meetings of networks throughout the city. What kind of event? Who would turn up? Who will pay for it? Who will end up doing all the work? What is lifelong learning anyway?

All these questions came up and more; the main one was "Will we do something?" All were teased out and the answer was "Yes."

So, in the very first attempt to investigate, celebrate and participate in lifelong learning, 27 events of the inaugural 65 were organised and hosted by Community Education Network members – that's over 40%. And in 2012, nine festivals later, even though the number of events in the festival has grown over the years the contribution of community education networks has remained very high, with between 20% and 25% of events organised by community education network members each year since.

When preparing for the visit of President McAleese in 2011, five of the groups chosen to display their work were members of Community Education networks: Traveller Education; Home School Community Liaison; Mahon CDP Men's Art group; Meitheal Mara and Ballyphehane Togher Community Education Network. All were examples of best practice in hosting festival events and all represented the best of the festival down the years. Former festival funder FETAC always chose to visit community network events.

### Education Networks

In 2012 Community Education Networks, including the Traveller Young Women's Network and men's groups from Eason's Hill, Blarney Street and Mahon hosted our Australian visitor George Osborne in Blackpool, and so did Ballyphehane Togher.

All 10 networks of community education providers host events during festival week. What is it about the festival that has groups coming back year after year with more and more ideas for community based events?

Siobhan O'Dowd of Ballyphehane Togher Community Education Network has this to say:

"All of us involved in community education believe strongly that education is a lifelong pursuit, one that goes beyond the school bell or the teacher. Clay Bedford said 'You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him/her to learn by creating curiosity, s/he will continue the learning process as long as s/he lives.' Maybe it's our curiosity that keeps us going; the challenge of staying curious and interested in the world around us. Maybe it's also that in Community Education the Muinteoir might be your next door neighbour, or the friend from the social group you meet weekly.



One of the first events we organised back in the early days of the festival was a workshop on texting, this year it was the Wii - but, though the technology has moved on, what both these events have in common is local people teaching other local people what they know. Curiosity matched by generosity is the simple formula that has made the festival work."

*by Denis Barrett,  
Community Education Service,  
City of Cork VEC*



[www.corkcity.ie/learningfestival](http://www.corkcity.ie/learningfestival)  
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Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Niall Ó Donnghaile: *"Much like Féile an Phobail, the Cork Lifelong Learning Festival has grown up from grassroots level, from volunteer action. It has grown from a passion and determination to improve the quality of life of the people all around you, in your city, and in Ireland as a whole.."*



## Cross-border projects continue

To mark the twinning of the festival with Féile an Phobail, Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Terry Shannon, Festival Patron, invited the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Niall Ó Donnghaile, to jointly launch the festival programme in March.

In April, youth leaders drawn from both communities in the North spent time with Meitheal Mara at Crosses Green in Cork learning how to train their groups to build currachs and row them.

On May Bank Holiday weekend, for the second year, a Cork team drawn together by Bernard Twomey of the HSE's Health Action Zone, participated in Belfast City Marathon. For the first time a team from Belfast took part in the Cork City Marathon on June Bank Holiday Monday – led by Kevin Morrison, Youth Development Worker with Féile an Phobail.

Young people from Lisburn brought the two currachs they had built last year as part of our project back to Cork to take part in the annual Ocean to City race, where one team won the Youth Event!

The mural project also continued. Two Belfast mural artists, Frank Quigley & Michael Doherty, travelled to Cork with four young



unemployed men, drawn from across different communities by the Tar Isteach Resource Centre in North Belfast, where they worked with four young unemployed men from Mahon, identified by Mahon CDP. Together they created the mural inspired by the Titanic, which can be seen on Horgan's Quay.

During this year's August Féile a group travelled to Belfast from Cork – knitting together the different strands of continuing North-South activities: murals, currach-building & rowing, the marathons in both cities, the Ocean to City Rowing Race. In the group were the four young unemployed men from Mahon involved in the 2012 mural project; Viv Sadd of Mahon CDP; Justin, who took part in the Belfast Marathon; Padraig O Duinnin – to give a talk on traditional boat building and complete a currach partly built by the young people from Hill Hall in Lisburn; and Jim O'Donovan, member of the Cork Committee of Co-operation Ireland & Director of Services at Cork City Council. Also at Féile were Willie McAuliffe, Chair of the festival's Organising Committee, Denis Barrett & Tina Neylon.



## Seminar

The organising committee introduced a seminar this year – as an opportunity for the public to debate issues about education.

Speakers at the inaugural seminar were Minister of State Sean Sherlock TD, George Osborne from Hume Global Learning Village in Melbourne, Australia, and Martin Power of the Department of Sociology at the University of Limerick. The Cork festival is developing links with Hume & through that connection with other learning cities globally.

The seminar was chaired by Ted Owens, CEO City of Cork VEC & Chair of the Learning Forum, and its title was *Lifelong Learning: from austerity to prosperity at home & away*. The Q & A session was chaired by Mary Liz Trant of the National Access Office of the HEA.

The event was well attended & enjoyed very much by all present. Minister Sherlock described it as providing him with 'brainfood' when consulting with his government colleagues.

Special guest was the Australian Ambassador Mr Bruce Davis, with his wife Meg Johnson, to mark the developing relationship between the Cork festival & Hume. The three Australian visitors were afterwards received by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Tony Fitzgerald.

Subsequently the Festival Co-ordinator was invited to the annual Garden Party organised by the Ambassador at his residence to celebrate links between our two countries.





To the Editor,

I attended the 2012 Cork Lifelong Learning Festival as a guest of the City of Cork, seeking closer relations with Hume City in Melbourne, Australia through the Hume Global Learning Village while sharing learnings between both Australia and Ireland. What I witnessed with the 2012 Cork Lifelong Learning Festival was an extraordinary expression of positive social inclusion through learning. With more than 400 events, and well promoted by a professional 60 page program the festival was substantial, well embedded in the community and fully embraced by the City. Day 1 kicked off with a seminar which was attended by Minister Sean Sherlock, TD Minister of State, who impressed and commented that he had been motivated by the brain food at the seminar for government discussions. Festival organisers, Tina Neylon, Willie McAuliffe and Dennis Barret & colleagues are already planning for the 10th anniversary festival in 2013, and I strongly commend this to your readers as an opportunity to observe at first hand a world class learning event! I am sure all levels of government would be looking to support this event to ensure its success!

I feel there is enormous potential for Cork as a Learning City, and planning for a significant 10th Anniversary of their most wonderful festival is underway. I leave you with some questions to be considered –  
-In a period of economic downturn and associated challenges with social inclusion, could this indeed be a "Learning Led Recovery" of community spirit for the City of Cork?  
-What lessons can be learned for Ireland and Australia?  
-Does this lend strength to the proposal that the key to success in the 21st Century is the ability to learn, unlearn and relearn in a continuous cycle?  
-Will you be there in 2013?

Regards,  
George

**George Osborne, Manager Economic Development, Hume City Council, Victoria, Australia**

## Year of Intergenerational Work

The Mature Student Office at UCC & the Access Office at CIT organised separate intergenerational events inspired by the Schools Folklore Scheme of 1937 – when some 100,000 children in 5,000 primary schools collected material, including local history, games & recipes. At UCC schoolchildren demonstrated their skills at playing games & making griddle bread, while at CIT they cooked & tasted food from the 1930s.

Viv Sadd & Lynda Wakefield from Mahon CDP gave a talk about their intergenerational projects to men's groups from the northside at an event in Blackpool Community Centre.



## Focus on the Unemployed

The festival encourages people who are unemployed to find out about their opportunities in education & training.

For the second year, the City Centre Community Education Network had a stand in the Hanover Street Social Protection (Dole) office, where network members took turns looking after it.

The Rubicon Centre, CIT, which offers various programmes for entrepreneurs, took part for the first time.

Also, the Bishopstown Glasheen Community Education Network organised an Information Day for Adults: Back to Education, Careers, Entitlements at Bishopstown Community School.

## Plans for Limerick's Third Lifelong Learning Festival

- by Yvonne Lane, Festival Co-ordinator

The Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival will take place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 March 2013, the same week as our friends in Cork.

This will be the third year Limerick is holding a festival, organised by the Limerick City of Learning Steering Group in collaboration with Limerick Communications Office, Limerick County Council and County Limerick VEC. The festival last March featured over 150 free events and activities across Limerick City and County Limerick. They ranged from laughter yoga and drumming workshops to boat-building events, radio broadcasting training and healthy cooking on a budget.

We are looking forward to building on

the success of the last two years, and the week-long festival next March will promote and celebrate learning in all its forms.

Hosting an event as part of the LLL Festival 2013 is a fantastic avenue for groups to showcase what they have to offer, and is a tremendous way to be involved in the promotion of Limerick as a Region of Learning.

Participants from this year's festival have expressed the value of networking, with one of the learners stating: "That's what the Lifelong Learning Festival should be - bringing the groups together and a celebration of the groups."

The link with Cork Lifelong Learning Festival has been invaluable in Limerick building on its pilot festival from 2011, and we wish Cork the very best for your 10 year celebrations in 2013!

## How it all started

The festival started as a pilot project in 2004, organised by a working group from the Cork City Learning Forum, which had been set up by the Cork City Development Board (CDB). It's part of the CDB's strategy to make Cork a City of Learning. Ted Owens, CEO City of Cork VEC, chairs the Cork City Learning Forum.

The first festival ran for four days with 65 events and was such a success it has continued since, getting bigger each year. It embraces learning of all kinds, for all ages, abilities and interests.

During the 2012 festival there were more than 430 events of all kinds during the week – among them taster sessions, walks, workshops, performances, exhibitions, tours, talks – and all free.

**The festival's motto is**

**Investigate – Participate – Celebrate!**

**Its aims are:**

- to celebrate those already participating in learning of all kinds;
- to raise awareness of the huge range of options there are all over the city for others to get involved.

It costs nothing except enthusiasm & time to get involved and all festival events are free.

Festival Patron is the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Cork.



## Thanks

**Thanks to all our sponsors, without whose support the 9th festival could not have taken place.**

Cork City Council, City of Cork VEC, O'Callaghan Properties, Cork Institute of Technology, Ballypheane Credit Union, National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals (NAPD), Higher Education Authority (HEA) – Access Office, Blacknight Solutions, Ernst & Young, The River Lee Hotel.

City Councillors Brian Bermingham, John Buttimer, Catherine Clancy, Tony Fitzgerald, John Kelleher, Lorraine Kingston, Mary Shields for contributing from their Ward Funds.

Co-operation Ireland and its Cork branch and Cork City Council for supporting our partnership with Féile an Phobail & for cross-border projects.

**Media sponsors:** The Evening Echo & 96fm

Thanks also to Frameworks Films Ltd who document each festival.



Coiste Gairmoideachais Chathair Chorcaí  
City of Cork Vocational Education Committee



## Latest news

2013 marks the 10th year of our festival – and among special events organised to celebrate this milestone & to consolidate the festival's growing reputation worldwide is a Seminar with keynote speakers.

International visitors will be invited to contribute to and to experience events during the festival including a day-long seminar **Cities of the Future: the EcCoWell approach**. George Osborne, our guest from Australia introduced the **EcCoWell** concept or the **Sustainable Opportunity City**, at a presentation. The idea has been developed by PASCAL International Exchanges (PIE) the Observatory for Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions, which emerged from the work of OECD on lifelong learning – the festival represents Ireland on PIE. EcCoWell is about: - integrating strategies directed at a better life in cities across the areas of ecology, economy (**Ec**), community, culture (**Co**), well-being, lifelong learning (**Well**). In other words: - taking a holistic approach to policies which aim at building humane cities that foster quality of life and well-being for their residents.



Another special event is one **exploring The Amalgamation of Education & Training Services & Access to them**, and how that has worked in other countries ... More details to follow ...

## Organising Committee 2012

Chair: William McAuliffe, National Association of Principals and Deputies (NAPD)  
Denis Barrett, Community Education Facilitator, City of Cork VEC  
Mary Barrett, Cork City Development Board  
Peggy Barrett, Executive Librarian, Cork City Council  
Sandra Brett, Traveller Literacy Scheme  
Deirdre Creedon, CIT Access Officer  
Brendan Goggin, Former Registrar, CIT  
Patricia O'Hare, Irish Primary Principals' Network  
Mary O'Sullivan, Mature Student Officer, UCC  
Marcela Whelan, Development Worker, Cork City Learning Forum  
Tina Neylon, Festival Co-Ordinator

## Next Festival

The 10th festival takes place from Monday March 18 (a Public Holiday) to Sunday March 24 and the closing date for event details is Tuesday January 14: – email [learningfestival@corkcity.ie](mailto:learningfestival@corkcity.ie) for your form, or call Tina at 021 492 4527