



European Democratic Citizenship Awards

Category : Personality of the Year

Name of Personality : Lorraine McIlrath

Description of the Personality:

"Lorraine McIlrath has worked at NUI Galway for a decade and within that time she has successfully enabled the development of a civic engagement ethos and practice across NUI Galway giving thousands of students annually an opportunity to be involved in community and civic activities locally, nationally and internationally. Under her leadership, she established the CKI, gathered a strong dynamic team and has developed innovative resources and web based support tools for students and staff.

To date, over 10,000 students have received the ALIVE Certificate for volunteering and over 40 service learning modules have been developed giving 1600 students an opportunity to connect their learning to community and society. Lorraine has supported over 400 academic staff in the re-design of the curriculum that has given rise to service learning as a NUI Galway hallmark. As a result, NUI Galway is recognised nationally and internationally as a pioneer and beacon of best practice and received the revered MacJannet Prize from the Talloires Network.

In addition, she has secured funding nationally and at a European level to support the ongoing development of civic engagement in Ireland, the Middle East and Europe. Having secured HEA SIF 1 funding, she founded Campus Engage, national Irish network to support civic engagement within higher education in Ireland www.campusengage.ie Since 2010, she has been a member partner in a nine-university EU Tempus funded project to support the introduction of service learning to five universities in Jordan and Lebanon entitled the Tawasol Project through EU Tempus www.tawasol.org More recently, in October 2014, she was awarded 345,000Euro from EU Erasmus+ to establish Europe Engage, a European network for service learning with 12 European universities."

Impact achieved by your involvement:

"Since inception the CKI has given more than a 10million euro contribution to the local community in terms of student and staff engagement through research projects, volunteering and service learning. Lorraine has developed strong relationships with over 500 local, national and international community and voluntary sector organizations. Annually the university responds to community need and the community sees the CKI as a gateway into the university in terms of accessing knowledge resources and support.

The ethos of the CKI under her leadership has to been to respond positively to community need and we have had direct experience of working with Lorraine in responding to community need through the establishment of the Youth Academy as co-founders. Over two years also we founded the Youth Academy that offered bespoke academic programmess to 4th and 5th children in the local community

on Saturday mornings. The Youth Academy has worked with more than a 1000 children since inception and was supported by Lorraine beyond the pilot within the CKI. http://cki.nuigalway.ie/youth_academy/"

What makes the initiative innovative?

Without doubt Lorraine has brought to the programme has transformed the student experience in Ireland and has given students a more ethical perspective into their future professions and careers. Academic colleagues have forged new and lasting relationships with the community and voluntary sector and some of these have had a direct impact on research. Colleagues committed to social change have found a pathway to connect professional practice with personal commitment. Lorraine has forged new innovative pathways for the university system and the community to come together to achieve social change and maintain a sustainable ethos of civic engagement.

Contribution to European values:

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights, democracy, equality, community engagement and solidarity.

Website or promotional materials:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/cki>

http://cki.nuigalway.ie/service_learning/