



COISTE GAIRMOIDEACHAIS CHONTAE ÁTHA CLIATH
COUNTY DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Empowerment through education in communities

In education, we always talk about curriculum and curriculum is the story we tell from one generation to the next. So, what story do we tell in our communities and what lessons are we passing on?

Investing in education is the single most effective means of reducing poverty.

Education is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. It is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future and is critical to reducing poverty and inequality. Receiving a good education firstly helps empower you, thus making you strong enough to look after yourself in any given situation. It keeps you aware of your given surroundings as well as the rules and regulations of the society you're living in. It's only through knowledge that you can be able to question authority for its negligence or discrepancies. It is only then that you can avail your rights as a citizen and seek improvement in the structural functioning of governance and economy

- Education gives people critical skills and tools to help them better provide for themselves and their children
- Education helps people work better and can create opportunities for sustainable and viable economic growth now and into the future
- Education encourages transparency, good governance, stability and helps fight against graft and corruption.

The impact of investment in education is profound: education results in raising income, improving health, promoting gender equality, mitigating climate change, and reducing poverty. Improved education and training also yield a social dividend: they result in better social cohesion and public health, and mitigate against poverty, crime and social welfare dependency.

Some facts

Community education plays a key role in personal empowerment, the development of critical thinking, equality, citizenship and social inclusion. These principles are found in the Irish policy for community education, the White Paper "Learning for Life" (2000), the National Skills Strategy "Tomorrow's Skills" (2007) and in European policy "Action Plan on Adult Learning" (2007) and "Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training" (2010).

- An individual's potential income can increase with each additional year of schooling. Recent evidence for Ireland indicates that this increase is between 9-11% for males and 14% for females. These figures represent a high return on investment relative to any other form of investment. Training and upskilling are just as important as initial education. (Report for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, 2006).
- Annual GDP increases by 1% with each year of additional schooling.
- An increase of one standard deviation in student scores on international assessments of literacy and mathematics is associated with a 2% increase in annual GDP per capita growth.

In 2010, community education in Ireland, under local VEC provision, reached 55,953 participants and was budgeted at almost €10m.