

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8 - JANUARY 2025



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WELCOME

Welcome to the 8th edition of the ISS21 newsletter. 2024 was a busy and productive year working with Dr Margaret Scanlon, the ISS21 executive management team, the board and Ashling O'Sullivan, who joined us temporarily from UCC Academy.

Collectively, this team, together with research cluster leads and members of ISS21 have contributed much to the interdisciplinary research mission of ISS21, which



is to generate imaginative, interdisciplinary, impactful and policy relevant social science research knowledge/s and methodologies to better understand and respond to societal complexities and challenges.



A Feminist Walk of Cork 2
Photo: Marcin Lewandowski

WELCOME (Contd.)

Three new interdisciplinary research clusters with local and global reach were established in 2024 in response to members' interests and pressing societal issues. **Crime and Social Harm** conducts research with academics, policy makers, practitioners, justice-involved people, people with lived experience and impacted communities. **Populism and the Rise of the Far Right** brings together researchers, civil society organisations, and activists on issues of racism, populism, and the far right in Ireland, across Europe and the globe.

Work, Organisations and Welfare provides a platform for researchers from across the university to examine topics such as the future of work and the impact of automation and AI; precarious work, inequality and discrimination; gender, work and the labour market; and social policy and welfare reform.

We welcomed a number of visiting speakers and a visiting research fellow, **Dr Wajeehah Aayeshah**. Dr Aayeshah joined us from the University of Melbourne and is working on kindness as a critical pedagogy in the university sector.

In the coming months we look forward to hosting **Mairead Dunne**, Professor of Sociology of Education and a former Director of the **Centre for International Education (CIE) at the University of Sussex**.

Collective Social Futures

ISS21 is delighted to lead Collective Social Futures (CSF), a cross-university research platform that was founded in 2023 in response to a call to identify areas of strategic importance to UCC Futures. In collaboration with schools, departments and research centres that identify and affiliate with the Social Sciences, CSF seeks to identify the key global challenges of current times, and examining how we might understand, envision and enact our collective social futures.

A central premise of CSF is that the key global challenges of our time need to be understood and addressed from inter-disciplinary social science perspectives. CSF developed two Festivals of Social Science in 2023 and 2024. We are planning the 2025 festival, which promises more community focused events highlighting community-university partnerships as well as socially engaged research.

Selected Events 2024



J.P. O'Sullivan, MECPATHS



Dr Lorraine Tansey, StudentVolunteer.ie
Programme Manager

Refugee Week 2024

ISS21 was proud to host several events as part of [UCC Refugee Week](#) 19-23 February, including presentations on racism and the rise of the far right (Dr Piaras Mac Éinrí & Dr Amin Sharifi Isaloo); EU governance of forced migration and its impacts (Dr Apostolos Veizis, INTERSOS); poetry readings by Anton Floyd and UCC students, and a presentation from JP O'Sullivan (MECPATHS) on child trafficking in Ireland.

Migration & Border Studies

In March the ISS21 Migration and Integration Cluster hosted a seminar on the migration crisis in the Mediterranean with Angela Caponnetto and Professor Nando Sigona; this was followed in October with a presentation by Dr Meiyun Meng on home-making and gender in Chinese Migration (co-hosted with the Genders, Sexualities & Families cluster). On 18 November Professor Mimi Sheller delivered a keynote as part of the launch of the EUROBOARDERWALKS project.

Children & Young People

The ISS21 Children and Young People (CYP) cluster was delighted to host three events with UCC Futures - Children, two of which addressed

children's right to play, with speakers Marguerite Hunter Blair (Chief Executive of Play Scotland), Theresa Casey (independent play consultant), and UCC's Dr Michelle Bergin.

On 10 May Dr Noel O'Connell reported on the initial findings of the ISS21-affiliated CODA project, which explores the experiences of hearing children of deaf parents. The CYP cluster also hosted a webinar with Dr Maria Lotty to report the outcomes of her study on the impact of a graduate level trauma-informed care program developed for child welfare professionals (Tara Project).

Volunteering & Civic Engagement

On 16 October a seminar presented the findings of two ISS21-affiliated research projects on volunteering in Ireland. The first explored young people's engagement with volunteering and how it can be promoted; while the second looked at the development of questions on volunteering for the Irish census, raising important issues about public understanding of volunteering and civic engagement. This well-attended event included presentations from the research teams and key stakeholders, followed by a lively Q&A.

Selected Events 2024

How might mad knowledge inform not just what we know but what we do?
What does care work and unruliness have to do with ethical practices? How might our professional bodies and mainstream services respond to a mad ethics of care?
How might Dr. Sapouna's ideas around a prefigurative politics support a mad ethics of care in our professional work?
How does an ethics of unruliness and care counter attempts at appropriation and co-optation?



Dr Lydia Sapouna, School of Applied Social Studies, Professor Bren A. LeFrançois

Mental Health & Mad Studies

ISS21 was delighted to continue its collaboration with Critical Voices Network Ireland by co-hosting a two-day conference: 'First, Do Good': Critical and Creative Responses to Iatrogenic Harm in Mental Health Practices (8-9 November). Earlier in the year, the ISS21 Disability and Mental Health cluster welcomed Professor Bren A. LeFrançois (Memorial University of Newfoundland), who presented a thought-provoking seminar on Mad Studies as a theoretical lens, a methodology and an ethical practice.

Care and Caring Relations

During 2024, ISS21 continued to shine a light on different aspects of care and caring, with a public event on Debating the Referendum: Family, Care and the Constitution; a seminar with visiting speaker Dr Iva Šmídová (Masaryk University) on ageing men, relations of power and care; and the launch of a research-based report on the potential of Care Cooperatives to enable older people to age well at home (see below).

In November the Dementia Lifeworlds transdisciplinary working group hosted a workshop and presentation by Professor Joanna Latimer (University of York) entitled '(Re)situating Dementia: Philosophy, Biomedicine, Politics, Society'.

Violence, Resilience & Justice

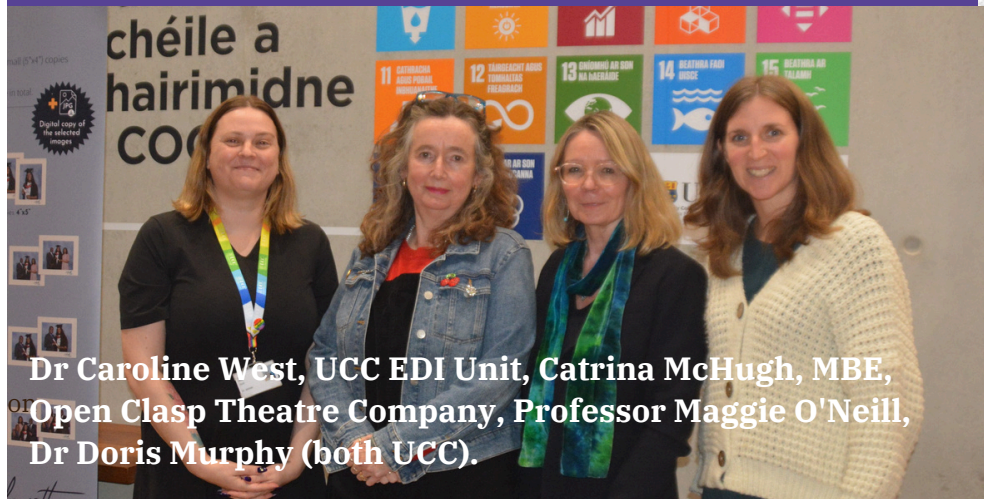
Issues of violence, marginalisation, resilience and justice were addressed through film screenings and events, hosted by ISS21 clusters, stakeholders and colleagues across UCC.

On 14 February gender-based violence was explored through a screening of Rattle Snake followed by a Q&A with Mary Crilly (founder of Sexual Violence Centre, Cork) and Professor Maggie O'Neill.

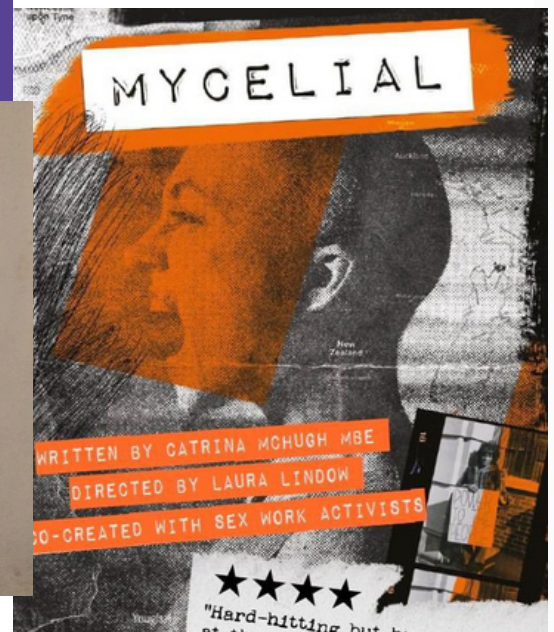
In November the new ISS21 Crime and Social Harm cluster, in association with the Department of Sociology and Criminology, held an event to explore the challenges and harms experienced by LGBT+ communities, focusing on violence, victimisation, and the presence (or absence) of systemic protection.



Selected Events 2024



Dr Caroline West, UCC EDI Unit, Catrina McHugh, MBE, Open Clasp Theatre Company, Professor Maggie O'Neill, Dr Doris Murphy (both UCC).



Criminalisation & Exclusion

Mycelial, an Open Clasp Theatre Company film focussing on the lives of sex workers, was screened by artistic director and writer Catrina McHugh in The Shtepps on 24 October, followed by a panel discussion.

The film challenges exclusionary discourses and makes a powerful case that inequalities and injustice must be rectified, not by criminalising sex workers but by addressing the structural, relational, and social factors involved.

The themes of criminalisation and exclusion were also addressed through a creative workshop on 17 May, in which practitioners, researchers, students and people with lived experience of prison explored the potential of a prison abolitionist network across the Island of Ireland. This was followed in October by a presentation by Romarilyn Ralston (Senior Director of the Justice Education Center at Claremont Colleges) on the relationship and impact of education on incarcerated people.

Gender, Equality & Diversity

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in ISS21's work, and this is reflected in the events we

host and support. As part of the [Feminist Walk of Cork](#) series, the 'Women, Confinement and Social Justice' walk was held in July during the Mother Jones Festival.

On 19 November, Pat O'Connor, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Limerick, joined us for a seminar on women in academia, at which she read extracts from her memoir, 'A "proper" woman? One woman's story of success & failure in academia'.

In a seminar on 19 June, visiting speaker Dr Iva Šmídová (Masaryk University) discussed critical approaches to studying men and masculinities as a way to grasp intersectional inequalities. [Visit the ISS21 Research Events and the ISS21 Research Cluster pages for more event details.](#)

Health Impacts

During 2024, we were delighted to co-host two events on the development of health impact assessment in Wales and Australia, with speakers Dr Liz Green (Public Health Wales) and Dr Ben Harris-Roxas (University of New South Wales). Both events were hosted with the HIA-IM project and the School of Public Health.

Report & Book Launches 2024



Dr Carol Power, Dr Caroline Crowley

During 2024 a series of events were held to launch research reports from ISS21-affiliated projects.

On 22 March the Centre for Co-operative Studies and ISS21 hosted a launch for the report: [Supporting Older People to Age Well at Home: Assessing the Potential of Care Co-operatives in Ireland](#) by Dr Carol Power and Dr Caroline Crowley. Funded by the IRC, this timely research project explored the potential of co-operatives to provide home care services and to support independent living and healthy ageing in the community.

The report [Pathways towards Stable Housing for Parents & Children Exiting Residential Services](#) was launched on 18 June, with presentations of the findings from Dr Margaret Buckley and Edith Busteed and opening remarks from Professor Cathal O'Connell, Interim Head of CACSSS.

On 16 October a webinar was held to launch [Teaching and Learning in Ecosocial Work: Concepts, Methods and Practice](#) (Forde et al., eds. 2024). This groundbreaking book redefines how we approach education, the environment and sustainability in social work and the social professions.



Dr Margaret Crowley, Edith Busteed

Book Launch

On 13 September we were delighted to welcome Professor Diane Reay, University of Cambridge, to the launch of the book; *The making of a left-behind class: educational stratification, meritocracy and widening participation* (Powell et al., 2014).

Professor Reay delivered the keynote address on educational inequality and its social impact in the UK, followed by a presentation by Professor Fred Powell on the key themes of the book and a Q&A with the authors. The launch was hosted by the ISS21 REACT cluster.



Professor Diane Reay

Projects & Research



ISS21 Projects

There are currently fifteen ISS21-affiliated projects, most of which are co-hosted with schools and departments across the university. Several major new projects got underway during 2024, funded through *Horizon Europe*, the *DOROTHY COFUND*, *Wellcome, Research Ireland* and the *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*. Other projects are in the pipeline, with start dates in 2025.

More Information

Details of on-going and completed projects are available on the ISS21 website at iss21/researchprojects.

Research outputs & impact

In 2024 we were delighted to see two Impact Case Study Narrative awards going to ISS21-affiliated projects: *Socio-Cycle: Exploring the socio-cultural significance of cycling*, and *IMMERSE: integration of refugee and migrant children in education*. In addition, our colleague Dr Katharina Swirak received an engaged research award at the UCC Research & Innovation Awards.

During 2024, ISS21 researchers continued to disseminate their research through national and international conferences, peer-reviewed journal articles, project reports, and other forms of print and broadcast media.

Research outputs from individual projects are available on the project webpages (on the ISS21 website), while a compilation of outputs from all ISS21-affiliated projects is available at [ISS21 Outputs](#)

Current ISS21-Affiliated Projects

- ***CODA: A Hidden Minority Amongst the Majority*** (2023-2028). PI: Dr Noel O'Connell. Funder: SFI-IRC Pathway Programme. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies.
- ***EUROBORDERWALKS: Walking Borders, Risk and Belonging: Advances in ethno-mimetic research in the making and re-making of three European borders*** (2023-2026). PI: Prof. Maggie O'Neill. Funder: IRC Advanced Laureate Awards. Co-hosted with the Department of Sociology and Criminology.
- ***SocialPaths: Sex-specific socioeconomic pathways to cardiovascular disease risk across the life course*** (2022-2026). PI: Dr Linda O'Keeffe. Funder: Health Research Board. Co-hosted with the School of Public Health.
- ***HIA-IM - Developing a Health Impact Assessment Implementation Model: Enhancing intersectoral approaches in tackling health inequalities*** (HIA-IM) (2023-2026). PI: Dr Monica O'Mullane. Funder: Health Research Board. Co-hosted with the School of Public Health.
- ***Imaging/ Imagining Reproductive Crisis: Time-lapse microscopy, animation and fertility discourse*** (2024-2027). PI: Dr Rebecca Close. Funder: DOROTHY COFUND. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies.
- ***TOGETHER: Collaborating across Prison Walls & Borders: Researching the impacts of prison-university partnerships, North and South*** (2022-2025). PI: Dr Katharina Swirak. Funder: HEA North-South Research Programme. Co-hosted with the Department of Sociology and Criminology.
- ***TARA: Trauma, Attachment, Resilience into Action*** (2022-2025). PI: Dr Maria Lotty. Funder: Dublin South Central, TUSLA. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies.
- ***Deep Societal Innovation for Sustainability and Human Flourishing*** (2024-2028). PI: Prof. Edmond Byrne, co-PIs: Prof. Maggie O'Neill and Dr Ian Hughes. Funder: EPA. Co-hosted with Process and Chemical Engineering & ERI.



PROJECTS

At ISS21, research projects are the cornerstone of our work and drives our clusters, discussions and events.

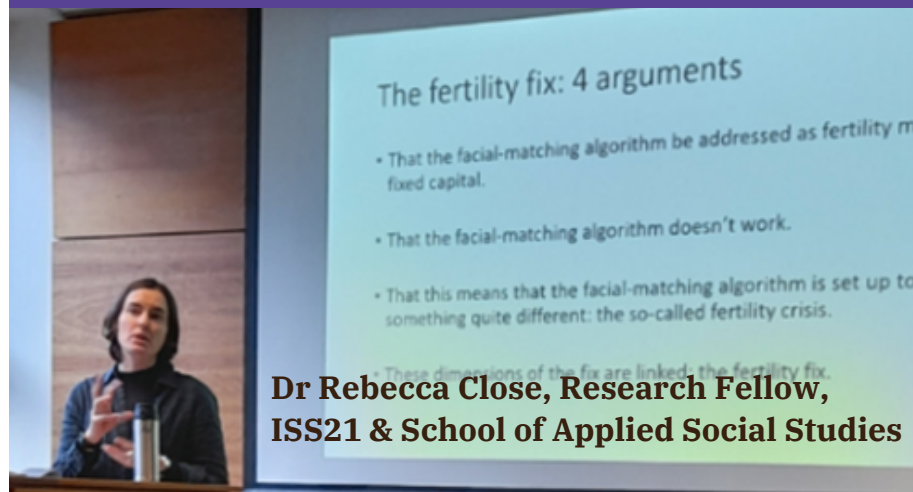
Current ISS21-Affiliated Projects

- ***Education First? Lone parents' lived experience of the challenges and benefits of participating in higher education*** (2023-2025). PI: Dr Fiona Dukelow. Funder: IRC New Foundations. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies.
- ***CoPPer: Cooperation to Promote a European Volunteering Programme in Probation Services*** (2022-2025). PI: Dr Katharina Swirak. Funder: Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Union. Co-hosted with the Department of Sociology and Criminology.
- ***The External Voice in Defining an Engaged and Inclusive Institutional Research Culture*** (2023-25) PI: Prof John O'Halloran; co-PIs: Prof. John Cryan, Dr Martin Galvin, Prof. Maggie O'Neill. Funder: Wellcome. Cross-university collaboration.
- ***GreenInCities*** (2024-2027) PI: Dr Martin Galvin, Co-PI: Dr Siobhan O'Sullivan. Funder: Horizon Europe. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies and the OVPRI.
- ***DICES - Driving Inclusive Care: Economic Democracy and Social Economy*** (2025-2029). PI: Dr Carol Power. Funder: Horizon Europe. Co-hosted with the Centre for Co-operative Studies.
- ***INSPIRE - Intersectional Spaces of Participation: Inclusive, Resilient, Embedded*** (2024-2027). PI: Dr Catherine Forde. Funder: Horizon Europe. Co-hosted with the School of Applied Social Studies.
- ***CLIMATUDE: Understanding Irish people's attitudes, beliefs and values related to climate change*** (2025-2028). Funder: EPA. PI: Dr Niall Dunphy, co-PI: Dr Breffni Lennon. Co-hosted with the ERI and the School of Engineering.

Find out more at
[ISS21 Research Projects](#)

PROJECTS

ISS21 Welcomes New Researchers



During 2024, we welcomed **Dr Rebecca Close**, who joins ISS21 and the School of Applied Social Studies as a Research Fellow under the DOROTHY COFUND Programme. Dr Close conducts ground-breaking research at the intersection of Science and Technology Studies and Art.

Rebecca's current project, *Imaging/ Imagining Reproductive Crisis* (2024-2027), explores the use of time-lapse microscopy in imaging the reproductive cell in laboratory settings and shaping social imaginaries around fertility and reproduction more broadly. This project is being undertaken in Ireland and Spain, where Rebecca is currently based at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The initial findings of the research were presented at a workshop in UCC in December 2024.

We are also delighted to host several new researchers who joined ISS21-affiliated projects during 2024. In December **Dr Aoife Price** joined the Tara Project, which focuses on trauma-informed care and building resilience within the Irish child welfare system. Aoife's research interests and experience are in the fields of disability law and policy, child and youth participation, gender, and intersectionality. Before joining UCC, she worked as a Research Associate at the Centre

for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP), University of Galway. In December we were also joined by **Titaś Biswas**, a researcher on the Horizon-Europe funded project INSPIRE (Intersectional Spaces of Participation: Inclusive, Resilient, Embedded). Titaś is a sociologist and media/film scholar. She has worked as a lecturer in several third level institutions and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University College Dublin's School of Sociology.

We were delighted to host **Dr Wajeehah Aayeshah**, University of Melbourne, as a visiting Research Fellow during May-June 2024. Dr Aayeshah's research on HE pedagogy explores kind academic practices, including engaging students as partners, 'joyful teaching', and creating an equity-driven academic culture. On 29 May Dr Aayeshah led a workshop in which participants explored understandings of the shape of kindness in educational settings, using a framework based on real-life examples and grounded in a 'pedagogy of kindness' (Denial, 2019).

February 2025 - Welcome

We look forward to welcoming **Professor Mairead Dunne** (University of Sussex) in 2025. She will join ISS21 from February to September and will share her research, deliver research seminars and meet with colleagues across the university.

CSF Festival of Social Science



ISS21 is the lead partner in UCC Futures-Collective Social Futures (CSF). The second annual CSF Festival of Social Science was held from 25-26 November. The festival included an evening of music and spoken word, followed by a full-day symposium showcasing social science research. Highlights included a keynote presentation from **Professor Linda Connolly** (Maynooth University) and wonderful performances at The Shtepps.

The CSF team also took the opportunity to launch the new **UCC Futures-Collective Social Futures website**.

Find out more about the festival at **CSF Festival of Social Science**.



Photography by Joeleen Cronin- From the top of the page:

- Citadel: A group of musicians formed in the Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre in 2018.
- Rosie McCarthy: Traveller, Singer, Actor, Student.
- Professor Maggie O'Neill, Director of ISS21 and Collective Social Futures opens the full day symposium.
- Professor Linda Connolly, Maynooth University, delivers her keynote address.
- Professor Cathal O'Connell, Interim Head of CACSSS, Professor Maggie O'Neill, Director of Collective Social Futures, Dr James Kapalo, Vice Head of College, Research.



About ISS21



ISS21 seeks to develop, sustain and enhance excellent, impactful research on the social, economic and cultural issues shaping Ireland in the 21st century. Researchers at ISS21 interrogate key societal challenges, dynamics and interrelationships by promoting collaborative, interdisciplinary research unified around the following thematic areas:

- Ageing
- CARE21
- Children and Young People
- Crime and Social Harm
- Disability and Mental Health
- Genders, Sexualities and Families
- Migration and Integration
- Populism and the Rise of the Far-right
- Poverties, Social Justice and Inequalities
- Research for Civil Society & Social Action (REACT)
- Society, Health and Political Economy (SHAPE)
- Work, Organisations and Welfare

Engaged research is a cornerstone of the Institute's work, with significant relationships forged with community and voluntary sector organisations, local and central government policymakers and other public sector bodies. As a member of the Irish Social Sciences Platform (ISSP), the Institute contributes to national debates on the direction and impact of the social sciences in Ireland.

Learn More



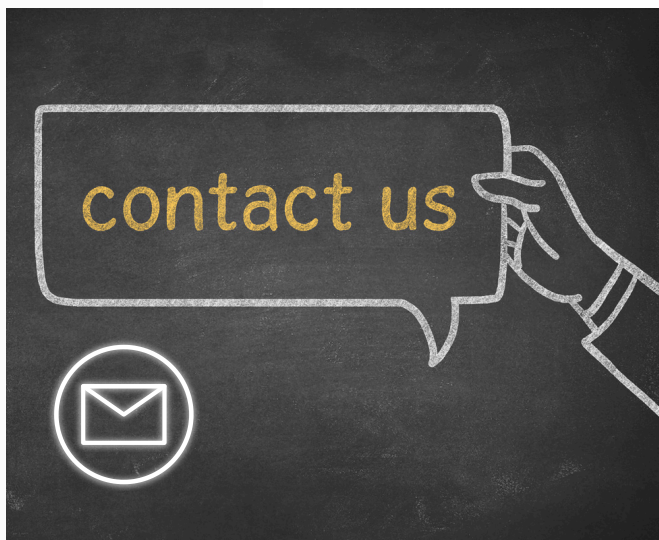
www.ucc.ie/en/iss21/



[@ISS21UCC](https://twitter.com/ISS21UCC)

Joining ISS21

New members are always welcome. Contact us for further details and a membership form using the contact details below.



- **Professor Maggie O'Neill (Director)**
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