

ISS21 NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

ISSUE 9

Welcome

Welcome to the 9th edition of the ISS21 newsletter. 2025 was an extremely busy and productive year in terms of research events, new research projects and grant capture. It also saw the embedding of three new research clusters, all supported by ISS21 cluster leaders and the ISS21 and Collective Social Futures executive management teams and board. We extend our special thanks to Professor John McCarthy (former Chair of the Board) and Dr Caitriona Ni Laoire (former Deputy Director of ISS21) for their years of fantastic service, as both stepped down from their respective roles in 2025. John is replaced by Professor Carol Linehan, who we warmly welcome to the team.

ISS21 aims to generate imaginative, interdisciplinary, impactful and policy relevant research that better responds to societal issues and complexities. This is achieved through the 12 research clusters and our leadership of Collective Social Futures (CSF).



**Professor Maggie O'Neill, Director of
ISS21 and Collective Social Futures**

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Welcome (continued)



Founded in 2023, CSF is an interdisciplinary research platform, which is being built from the ground up with social scientists across the university's research centres, departments, schools and colleges. CSF emphasises the importance of the social sciences in addressing the key global challenges of our time and the necessity of addressing these collectively.

In 2025 CSF supported **research** that makes a difference, seed funding various community-university research partnerships, and developing resources based on these partnerships, while also highlighting the importance of both blue skies and socially engaged research in understanding, envisioning and enacting our collective social futures.

This newsletter gives a flavour of some of the work which ISS21 undertakes. I would like to thank all our members and affiliated researchers who have contributed so much to the Institute during the past year.

Thanks, as always, to Dr Margaret Scanlon and Ashling O'Sullivan in supporting the vision, mission and membership of ISS21.



Dr Caitriona Ni Laoire, Professor John McCarthy

A selection of ISS21 events in 2025



Rose Anne Kenny presents on the TILDA Study

Every year, ISS21 and its research clusters organise a wide range of events, often in collaboration with projects, schools and departments across the university as well as UCC Futures and community partners. 2025 was no exception. Our programme was broad and varied, spanning seminars and symposiums, conferences, roundtable discussions and film screenings. The following provides a glimpse of the more than 30 events held throughout the year.

Growing Up in Ireland and TILDA, 26 February and 12 September

ISS21 was delighted to welcome speakers from two major longitudinal studies that contribute to the understanding of ageing and childhood in Ireland. On 26 February, Dr Eoin McNamara, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, presented a workshop on the Growing Up in Ireland study methodology and data set. This event was hosted by the Children and Young People Research Cluster and UCC Futures - Children. In September, Regius Professor Rose Anne Kenny, Trinity College Dublin, shared findings from the Irish Longitudinal Study of Aging (TILDA) at a half day symposium hosted by the ISS21 Ageing Research Cluster and UCC Futures - Ageing and Brain Science. This symposium included presentations from early career researchers and a round table discussion on the shift towards greater public engagement in research.

The Palestine Exception - public screening and panel discussion, 21 March

Directed by Professor Jan Haaken and Jennifer Ruth, The Palestine Exception is a documentary film that features professors and students as they join calls for a ceasefire and take part in anti war protests.

Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Vice President Global Engagement, opened the event and Professor Jan Haaken introduced the documentary. The screening was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Professor Maggie O'Neill, Department of Sociology and Criminology and Director of Collective Social Futures. [Find out more](#)



Panel discussion after The Palestine Exception

A selection of ISS21 events in 2025



Carol Power, Julien Mercille, Carol Kelliher, Monica O'Mullane, Claire Edwards

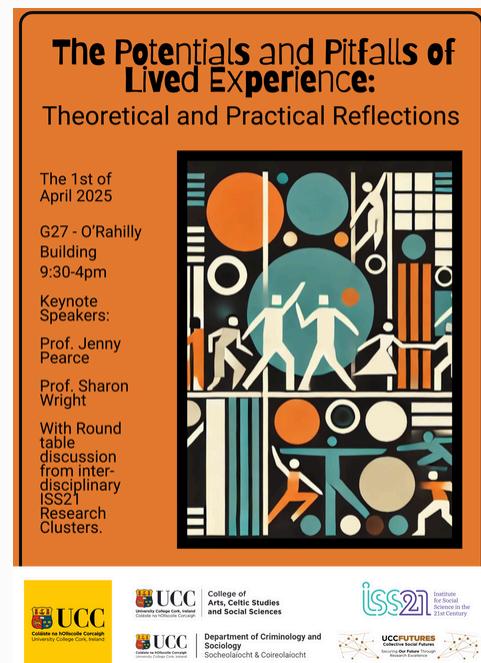
Marketisation of Care: current and emerging approaches, 4 April

In April, ISS21 research clusters, CARE21 and SHAPE (Society, Health Equity and Political Economy), hosted a timely seminar on the marketisation of care and emerging approaches to care. The seminar included presentations by Professor Julien Mercille (UCD) on unpacking the marketisation of long-term care in Ireland; Dr Claire Edwards (UCC) on the lived experience of care markets; and Dr Carol Power (UCC) on care co-operative approaches to care provision. The seminar was chaired by cluster leaders Dr Monica O'Mullane (SHAPE) and Dr Carol Kelliher (CARE21).

The Potential and Pitfalls of Lived Experience, 1 April

This full-day symposium critically examined the concept of 'lived experience' from feminist, sociological, criminological, and political perspectives. Highlights included keynote presentations from Professor Jenny Pearce, University of Bedfordshire and Professor Sharon Wright, University of Glasgow.

In round table discussions, colleagues from UCC shared insights on lived experience, based on their own research and practice. The symposium was hosted by several ISS21 research clusters, details available [here](#).



Migration, Place/making and Belonging Conference, 5-6 June

This two-day interdisciplinary conference brought together scholars and practitioners to discuss the intersections of migration, place/making and belonging in Ireland and beyond. We were delighted to welcome national and international speakers

A selection of ISS21 events in 2025



The Migration, Place/making and Belonging Conference at UCC in June 2025

including plenary speakers Professor Parvati Nair (Queen Mary University of London), Professor Susanne Wessendorf (Coventry University) and Professor Maggie O'Neill (UCC). This event was hosted by the ISS21 Migration and Integration Research Cluster. [Find out more.](#)

Global & Comparative Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence, 15 October

This one-day symposium examined different perspectives on gender-based violence, as well as exploring routes to resistance and action, and crafting alternative futures. The keynote address, All Mexican Violence is Gender Violence, was delivered by Professor Pablo Piccato, Columbia University, with opening remarks from Dr Gema Kloppe-Santamaría (Department of Sociology and Criminology, UCC) and a response from Professor Nuala Finnegan (Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies). The symposium was a collaboration between the ISS21 Genders, Sexualities

and Families Research Cluster and colleagues from the College of Arts, Celtic Studies, and Social Sciences. [Find out more.](#)

Pedagogical Praxis as a Site of Struggle against Neoliberal Fascisms, 28 November

This cross-disciplinary 'unconference' event invited participants to reimagine education as a site of resistance and transformation. Key contributors included Professor Jennie Stephens, Maynooth University and Dr Diretnan Dikwal-Bot, UCD, with creative inputs from Wise WaterAcademy and Lydia Cumiskey, BluePrint – MaREI. Hosted by the ISS21 Research for Civil Society, Environment & Social Action (REACT) Research Cluster and the UCC Students' Union and supported by SATLE funding



A selection of ISS21 events in 2025



New ISS21 Research Cluster Events

We would especially like to acknowledge the events hosted by ISS21's three new research clusters, which were set up during the 2024/25 academic year. The Populism and Rise of the Far-Right Research Cluster hosted two timely panel discussions in 2025, the first of which was held as part of UCC's Refugee Week. The Crime and Social Harm Research Cluster hosted or co-hosted events that addressed the issues of intimate partner violence and substance abuse, juvenile offending, the use of community sentences or custody, and violence and protection in LGBT+ communities.

Finally, the Work, Organisations and Welfare Research Cluster, in collaboration with several other ISS21 research clusters, took the lead in organising the one-day symposium, The Potential and Pitfalls of Lived Experience - Theoretical & Practical Reflections, (see details on previous pages).

Other ISS21 Research Cluster events

In addition to events with invited speakers, the ISS21 Research Clusters organise more informal gatherings where members can share their research and research interests. On 19 September, the Disability and Mental Health Research Cluster hosted a [meet and greet event](#) at which colleagues from across UCC shared their research in this field.

In December, the SHAPE research cluster launched a series of Bus Stop Chats, to be held online from December 2025 to May 2026. Inspired by the UCC Bus Stop Chats, these informal lunchtime sessions feature a SHAPE cluster member sharing and discussing their research with an interested, largely nonexpert audience.



A selection of ISS21 events in 2025



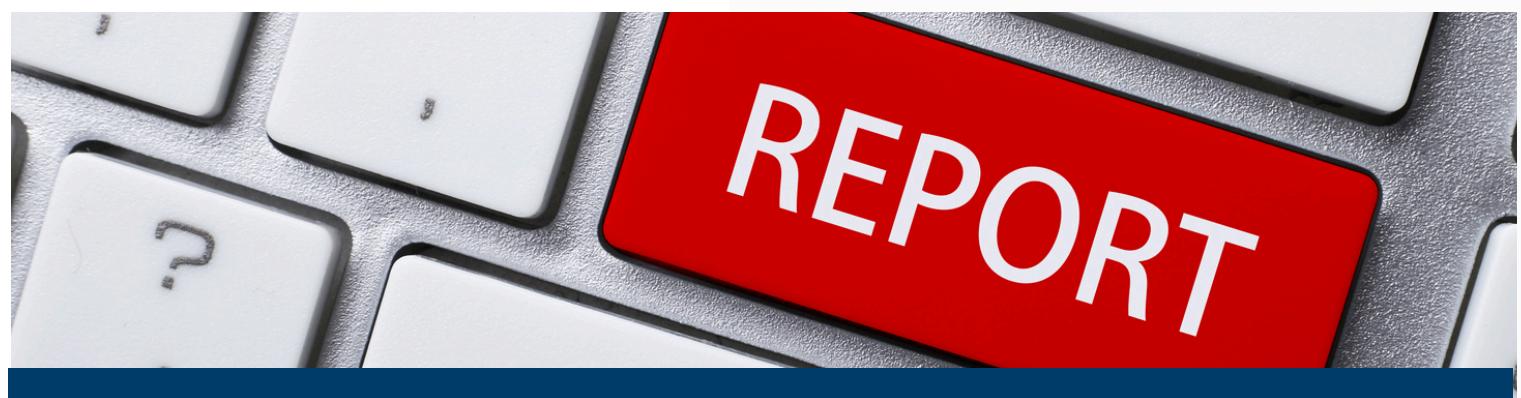
Report Launches

Enabling Diverse Student Voice in the University

An event was held on 10 January to launch the [Enabling Diverse Student Voice in the University](#) report, which was based on a joint Access UCC and ISS21 project. The launch showcased UCC's Access Student Ambassador Programme as an example of good practice in enabling diverse student voices to be heard in university structures. The event opened with contributions from members of the Access UCC team and Student Ambassadors, followed by a presentation on the project findings and an interactive workshop to explore key questions raised by the research.

Education First: Lone parents' lived experience of the challenges and benefits of participating in higher education

The report [Education First: Lone parents' lived experience of the challenges and benefits of participating in higher education](#) was launched at an event on 20 October, with contributions from Senator Lynn Ruane and Karen Kiernan, CEO of One Family. Dr Fiona Dukelow, Project PI, presented the key findings. Funded by Research Ireland, the project was carried out by a research team in Applied Social Studies and ISS21 in partnership with One Family.



ISS21 Projects



There are currently 18 ISS21-affiliated projects, co-hosted with schools and departments across the university. Details of ongoing and completed projects are available on the ISS21 website at [ISS21 Research Projects](#). Several major new projects were initiated in 2025, including:

NIGHTWORK_FOOTPRINT - A Synthesis of Contemporary Capitalisms Across Nightshift Cities (2025 – 2029)

NIGHTWORK_FOOTPRINT is an ambitious new project which explores nightwork and night-time economies in five cities, spanning Ireland, Great Britain, mainland Europe and Canada. With its focus on nightworkers, the project will make an important contribution to an underrepresented area of labour history and urban studies.

PI: Dr Julius-Cezar Macarie, Department of Sociology & Criminology. Funder: Research Ireland Pathway Programme.

RED Framework - Cocreating Rights Enabled by Design (RED) for IoT in Intellectual Disability (2025-2026)

This project explores how The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities can be integrated into design practices and embedded into

the Internet of Things (IoT), focusing specifically on applications in intellectual disability (ID). The project is an interdisciplinary collaboration between UCC, Queen's University Belfast and community partner, Praxis Care.

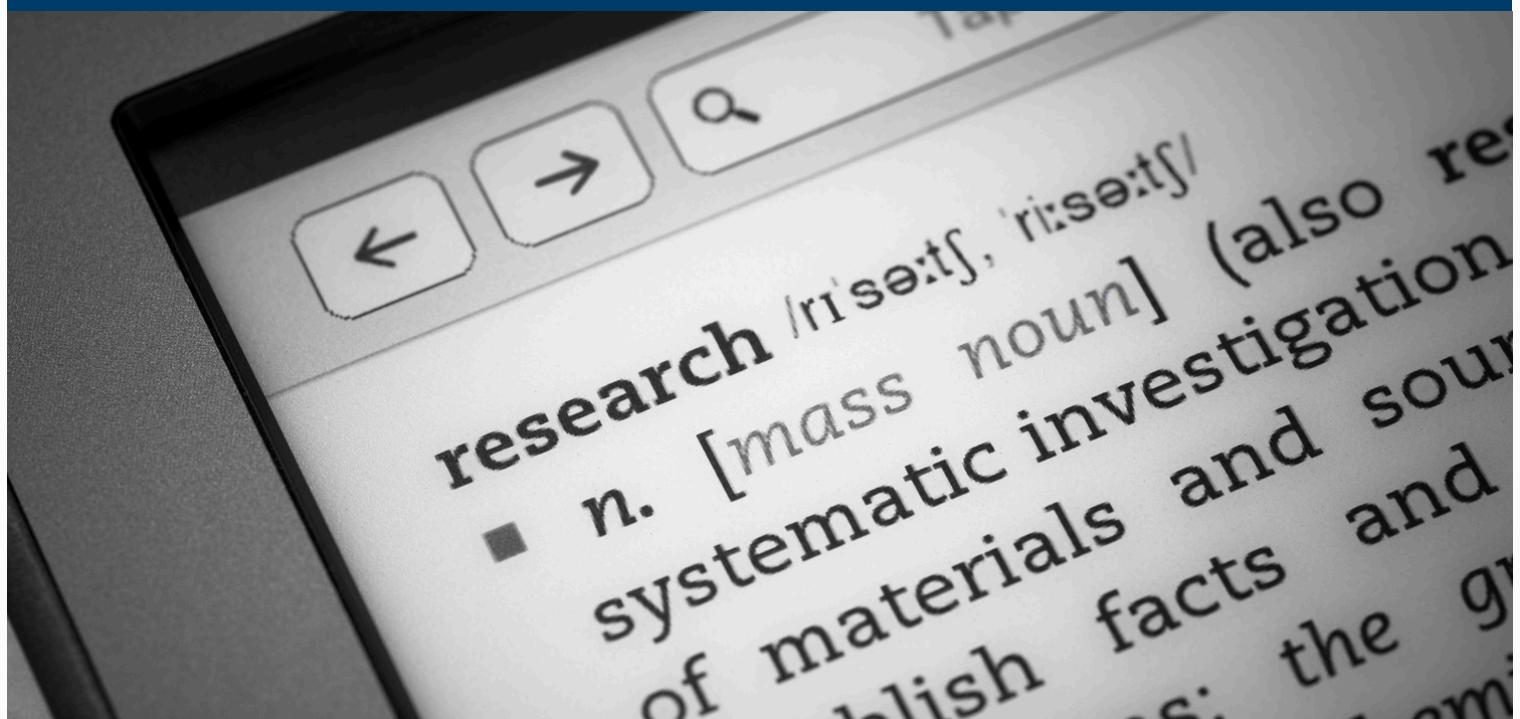
PI: Professor Eleanor Bantry White, School of Applied Social Studies. Funder: Research Ireland CONNECT Centre Platform Funding.

MIGDIS - Migrants' Digital Spaces: technology-assisted analysis of home, border and belonging (2025-2027)

MIGDIS offers an interdisciplinary analysis of how technological advances shape migrants' experiences of home and belonging. The project explores the ways in which migrants negotiate home and place through digital tools and infrastructures.

PI: Dr Mastoureh Fathi (Sociology & Criminology), Co-PI: Dr Paolo Palmieri (School of Computer Science). Funder: Research Ireland COALESCE Programme.

ISS21 Projects



Starting in 2026

Projects due to begin in 2026 include, **MITIME** - Entanglements of Migration and Time in Post-industrial Urban Europe (2026-2030). Funded by the Horizon Europe MSCA Doctoral Networks programme, MITIME is an interdisciplinary doctoral programme that will train early-career scholars in critical issues of migration, integration and societal change.

Project Outputs

During 2025, ISS21 researchers continued to disseminate their research through national and international conferences, journal articles, project reports, and other forms of print and broadcast media.

A compilation of outputs from ISS21-affiliated projects is available [here](#).



ISS21 Welcomes new researcher



Adjunct Professor Máiréad Dunne

Máiréad Dunne is Emeritus Professor of the Sociology of Education at the University of Sussex, a member of the Sussex Consortium for Development Studies (ranked as global No.1 in the field) and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. She was a visiting scholar at UCC (ISS21) during 2025 and has recently taken up the position of Adjunct Professor at ISS21 and Collective Social Futures. Máiréad was recently interviewed by Ashling O'Sullivan.

Ashling: Máiréad, you spent several months in Cork this year, from February to October, as a Visiting Scholar. Now, in your capacity as Adjunct Professor with ISS21 and CSF, could you share what originally motivated you to engage with UCC?

Máiréad: I had a look at the UCC website and came across ISS21 which I thought was very innovative and attractive in terms of the range of research clusters focussed for example on [Genders, Sexualities and Families, Ageing](#) and [Children and Young People](#) among others.

ISS21 appealed to me with its intersectional perspectives that had lots of connections within my own work on sociology, education and international development. I enjoyed my time as a visiting scholar so much that I applied for and have been appointed as an Adjunct Professor and I will be in that post for the next three years.

[Zana Vathi](#) joined us as an Adjunct Professor at the end of 2025 and will be actively involved in a number of ISS21 events in 2026.

Ashling: During your time as Visiting Scholar, what did you enjoy about being at ISS21 and CSF?

Máiréad: I received such a great welcome from the people in UCC. I attended several seminars and workshops. One of my first events was the [Feminist Walk of Cork](#), led by Professor Maggie O'Neill on International Women's Day. That helped me to get to know some of the gender history and geography of Cork. Not only did I have the opportunity to listen to UCC and visiting speakers, but I also enjoyed giving an ISS21 seminar on my own current research work and another to the doctoral students on research processes. I even met one of my previous MA students from the University of Sussex, now a doctoral researcher at UCC!

This is an extract from an interview with Professor Máiréad Dunne which was published online in 2025. For the full article, click [here](#).

CSF Festival of Social Science 2025



As lead partner in UCC Futures – Collective Social Futures, ISS21 is central to the CSF Festival of Social Science. This year, the third annual festival encompassed several events between 24 and 28 November, with associated events taking place the following week.

The festival kicked off with a book launch and showcasing event on 24 November. Featured books included: [Walking as Critical Pedagogy](#) (O'Neill et al 2025), [Being a Researcher](#) (Frost, 2025), [Climate Change Resilience Across Societal Contexts, Potentials and Visions for the Future](#) (Skillington and Setti, eds., 2025) and a poetry collection edited by Bahriye Kemal and Giovanna Terzi. The event opened with words of welcome and introduction from Professor John Cryan, Vice President for Research and Innovation and Professor Stephen Graham, Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies, and Social Sciences.

That evening at The Shteps, audiences enjoyed a programme of socially engaged music and spoken word with artists Rosie McCarthy, Oein DeBhairduin, African Queens and Citadel.

This lively event was followed by a full day symposium showcasing social science research across UCC, with a keynote address by Professor Kathleen Lynch, University College Dublin.

Other affiliated events included the Dementia Lifeworlds project symposium and the Women's Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence and Substance Use seminar. Pedagogical Praxis as a Site of Struggle Against Neoliberal Fascisms - a creative (un)conference event - rounded off a very full festival. Find out more about the festival [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who took part in our festival this year or who joined us for one or more of the events.

Follow Collective Social Futures now on [LinkedIn](#)



About us

ABOUT US

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
- Poverty, Social Justice and Inequalities
- Research for Civil Society, Environment & 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.

Learn more at our [website](#)

Joining ISS21

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

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