

Editorial

This publication *Mapping Civic Engagement within Higher Education in Ireland* highlights a range of activities that underpin civic engagement within higher education in Ireland from diverse perspectives. It is a contemporary record and example of current thinking, experiences and rationale in this area. Contributions have been drawn from those working within policy bodies, universities, and community together with third level students. Themes relating to community based/service learning, community university partnerships and broadly, the role of institutions of higher education within society are explored from academic, professional and personal lenses. In addition, the contributions and experiences offered are independent, and representative of the authors and not of the editors.

The publication is a product of the 'Service Learning Academy', a project funded by the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) Strategic Initiatives 2005 to 2007. The project was led by the Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI) at NUI Galway in partnership with Dublin City University (DCU), NUI Maynooth and Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The 'Service Learning Academy' allowed for an all island debate among students, community and academics. The conversations focused on the role of higher education within society, community based/service learning as pedagogy for civic engagement and the purpose of civic engagement within Ireland, through a series of seminars and discussion fora. This publication was called for at these events to help those new to the field to gain an insight into the ongoing activities within Ireland. It is our intention that this resource will contribute toward thinking and help propel innovative practice. The work that commenced through the 'Service Learning Academy' has culminated in the formation of a network called 'Campus Engage', a partnership of universities in Ireland that has brought together original Academy partners with the University of Limerick and University College Dublin. 'Campus Engage' has been funded by HEA SIF 1 with matched funds provided by each of the five partners.

This book seeks to provide insights into the range of theories, practices, processes and the varying manifestations of civic engagement activities between communities and institutions of higher education in Ireland at present. This unique publication is one of 'voices' – the voices of all the relevant stakeholders with regards to civic engagement within higher education.

The publication has been divided into three distinct but interrelated sections. Section One *Foundations for Civic Engagement within Higher Education in Ireland* takes account of contextual and conceptual issues. Section Two *Case Studies*, which has been subdivided into five case studies, offers multiple perspectives on a range of models, activities and experiences that underpin civic engagement and partnerships between the community and university. Finally, Section Three *Conclusions* offers reflections on the main messages emanating from this publication with some thoughts on future implications for the role of the university broadly within society and specifically within community.