

## Press release

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# Role of education systems in connecting communities in focus at latest Shared Island Dialogue

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Over 150 political, civic society and education sector representatives from North and South convene on Friday 16 June for the latest Shared Island Dialogue on Education systems and connecting communities. The dialogue is taking place at the Dublin City University St. Patrick's campus in Drumcondra, Dublin.

Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean at the DCU Institute of Education will moderate a series of sessions, with contributions from leading figures in the education sector, North and South.

The first panel session will look at the achievements and shortcomings of education systems in bringing communities together over the last 25 years, and asks what does a no change scenario in education systems mean for a shared island in 20 years time?

Speakers are:

- Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Chair General Synod Board of Education committee
- Emer O'Neill, Teacher and RTÉ presenter
- Lisa Dietrich, CEO, Community Relations in Schools NI
- Tracey Reilly, Education Development Worker, Pavee Point
- Professor Tony Gallagher of Queens University Belfast

The dialogue will hear younger generation views on education systems North and South, with contributions by Caitlin Faye-Maniti, President of the Irish Second-level Students Union, and Dermot Hamill, Editor of YouthVoice NI.

The second panel session will discuss actions in education for a shared future, asking what does a more ambitious approach to connecting communities through education look like, and what does achieving it require in politics, communities and schools?

Speakers are:

- Alan Hynes, Chief Executive, Catholic Education Partnership
- Andrew Brown, Chair of the Transferor Representatives Council and Lecturer, Stranmillis University College
- Dr Martin Brown, Head of School of Policy and Practice at DCU Institute of Education
- Sandra Irwin-Gowran, Head of Education and Development, Educate Together
- Peter Osborne, Chair of the Integrated Education Fund (NI)

Concluding the dialogue will be a session with political reflections on the day's discussions from:

- Fergus O'Dowd, Chair, Oireachtas Committee on the Good Friday Agreement
- Rose Conway Walsh, Member, Oireachtas Committee on Good Friday Agreement
- Senator Erin McGreehan, Spokesperson on Children, Disability, Equality and Integration
- Kate Nicholl, Alliance Party
- Claire Hanna MP, Spokesperson for Europe & International Affairs

This is the 16th event of the Shared Island Dialogue series, which informs development of the government's Shared Island initiative, to deepen cooperation on the island of Ireland and engage with all communities and traditions on a shared future, underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement.

Content from the event will be posted on social media throughout the day by @merrionstreet and you can follow the discussion online using #SharedIsland.

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## Notes

The Shared Island Dialogue series focuses on issues of common concern for all communities on the island of Ireland. Over 2,700 citizens and civic representatives have participated in the series over the last two years, with earlier events on topics including tourism; sport; rural and community development; arts and culture; tackling gender-based violence; and, Media representation.

Through the Dialogue series the government is listening to people's views on how to work across communities and borders for a shared future, in practical ways.

The Dialogues are informing the government's approach to the Shared Island initiative, complementing commissioned research being published, and implementation of commitments and objectives on a Shared Island that are set out in the Programme for Government and revised National Development Plan.

Shared Island Dialogues are organised by the Shared Island unit in the Department of the Taoiseach in consultation with other government departments and agencies and with civil society stakeholders across the island.

Further information on the government's Shared Island initiative and Dialogue series, is available at [www.gov.ie/sharedisland.](https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c3417-shared-island/) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c3417-shared-island/>).

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