

STEAM Education & Learning Neighbourhoods: A Partnership approach to sustainable education in disadvantaged Cork communities.

In 2015 Cork, one of only three cities in Europe, achieved a UNESCO award as a Learning City. The UNESCO Learning City approach emphasises lifelong learning and social inclusion. This award highlighted and enhanced the synergy in effect between the educational and social services within Cork City.

The 'Learning Neighbourhoods' concept was developed by the Centre for Adult Continuing Education in University College Cork in partnership with the Cork Education and Training Board and Cork City Council. A steering group for Growing Lifelong Learning in Cork (GLLiC) selected two neighbourhoods – Ballyphehane and Knocknaheeny – to pilot the Learning Neighbourhoods Programme in 2015–2016.



In the pilot year, STEAM Education partnered with Cork City Council to deliver STEAM programmes in primary schools in the Learning Neighbourhoods, supported by the Council and other partner organisations, and co-delivered by STEM postgraduates from University College Cork.



STEAM Education Ltd engage with industry, academia, and local communities in such partnerships to inspire kids to love Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths subjects and to encourage them to consider STEAM careers in the future. The STEAM programmes are also found to be an empowering process for the kids in relation to their attitudes to further education.

Yearly since 2016, Cork City Council has supported the work of STEAM Education, backing the delivery of Science-in-a-Box, Engineering-in-a-Box and Maths-in-a-Box programmes to primary schools in the Learning Neighbourhoods and designated RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) areas: Knocknaheeny/Hollyhill/Churchfield, Fairhill/Gurrabraher/Farranree, Blackpool /The Glen/Mayfield, and Togher/Mahon/ Ballyphehane.

To date STEAM programmes have been delivered to over 400 children by UCC STEM postgraduates and volunteers from partner organisations in the following schools: Sunday's Well GNS & BNS, St. Mary's on the Hill NS, Padre Pio NS Churchfield, Blarney Street NS; Togher GNS & BNS, Holy Cross N.S Mahon, Scoil Ursula N.S. Mahon, Gaelscoil Mhachan, St. Brendan's GNS & St. Marks BNS in the Glen, with plans to extend to Ballyphehane as soon as the schools reopen in 2020.

STEAM Education's partnership with Cork City Council, and involving additional support from Cork City Partnership CLG, Gurrabraher Credit Union, Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics, PJ Hegarty & Sons Engineering company, the Cork Prison Service, and individual schools, has hugely impacted the schools and wider community.

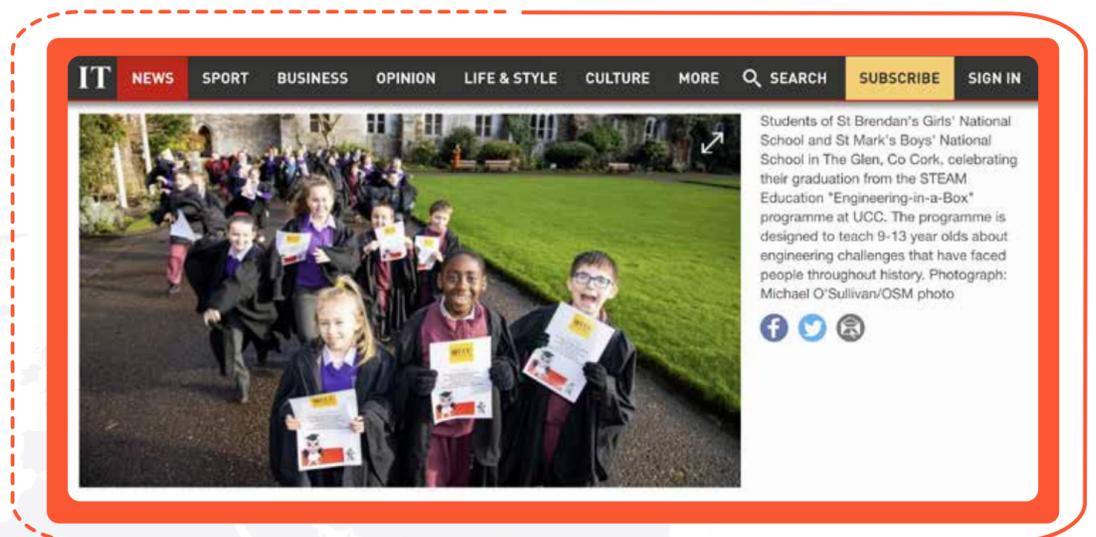


As Nuala Stewart of Cork City Council explains:

“STEAM Education worked with Cork City Council as part of our RAPID programme, targeting designated areas of disadvantage and DEIS Schools. The kids really loved the hands-on programmes, and their interaction with scientists and engineers opens up a whole new world of opportunities for them. It greatly encourages the children and young people to consider STEM careers and to progress to second and third-level education. In our experience, it goes beyond the classroom, with parents, teachers as well as students being enthused. The programme is an investment in the future as it gives each child, regardless of their ability, an equal opportunity to participate, question and offer opinions”.

In communities where attending university may not be commonplace, this project is a genuine synergetic effort to fulfil a responsibility to capture the imagination of parents, primary school children and intervene early to enhance future opportunities of youth living in these areas. In partnership with UCC visitor centre the students within these Cork City Council -sponsored programmes had the opportunity to partake in a STEAM Education ‘graduation’ ceremony in UCC, the participation in which alone, could have the experience of inspiring the next generation of STEAM industry professionals”

STEAM Education would like to sincerely thank Cork City Council and all other participating organisations and schools for their support for these programmes and for the wonderful partnership and development opportunities it has provided. Long may it continue!



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