

Leave No One Behind exhibition Launch **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/115301>)**



We held a public event on Wednesday 23rd April to showcase our Leave No One Behind Series 4 (<https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/leave-no-behind-series-4/>) exhibition and promote the launch of our Series 5 conversations. The event took place in Unit18 Trinity in the Community (https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/estates-and-facilities/pdfs/Unit18_TCD_Trinity_East_Community_Engagement.pdf), next to Pearse St. Also on the day we held a series of interactive workshops with students as part of series 5 and as an extension of our poverty aware practice module. (<https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/poverty-aware-practice/>)

Mary Colcough Coordinator Unit18 welcomed everyone to the event spoke also on the importance of collaborative project and value and potential of spaces such as Unit18.

"Unit18 is the first dedicated physical space provided by Trinity College Dublin for civic and community engagement. Located on the Trinity East campus, it opened in September 2021 and is designed as a place for local residents of all ages and backgrounds to meet, learn, socialise and have fun".

Erna O Connor, Assistant Professor in Social Work in Trinity College spoke meaningfully about the partnership between Trinity College Dublin and ATD Ireland. Below read more about the insightful morning workshops with students.

Catherine Conlon Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy in Trinity College spoke on the importance of the themes discussed and their relevance for social work practice.

We were very pleased to welcome **David Donoghue, Co Facilitator of the UN negotiations on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda** (<https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/david-donoghue-comments-on-leave-no-one-behind-series-4/>), who spoke on the Leave No One Behind promise and the need to not lose sight of this even as we enter a more divisive and unequal time politically and socially around the globe.

"Even if the rate of implementation of the 2030 Agenda is seriously off-track, the global solidarity and determination which gave rise to it ten years ago remain largely intact. The world may today be a more insecure place but our promise to "leave no one behind" has lost none of its power or relevance".

We also heard from Georgina from Concern Worldwide who have funded each of our Leave No One Behind Conversation Series. She spoke on the importance of projects which truly reach out to and hear the voices of those left behind.

Brian O' Toole Director Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk paid reference to the core ideas that arose throughout Series 4. He also described how the SDGs are a global ambition which must be fuelled by local knowledge, especially the wisdom and contributions of those most left behind.

"To be honest the SDGs can sometimes feel like a huge mountain to climb—ending poverty, tackling climate change, achieving equality, but in our honest, local conversations we've learned that "Support means being seen" and people talked

about choice, and voice, and dignity—about how real inclusion means having agency over your own life, across the entire lifespan—from early childhood right through to old age. People spoke about systemic barriers—poverty, disability, rural isolation, homelessness, discrimination—and about the heavy silence that can fall when your voice isn't in the room. What we also learned that real change doesn't start with millions. It starts with one”.

Isabelle, ATD Fourth World volunteer corps member and founder of ATD Ireland, reflected on some of the people she has known who live in hardship, and the how they look out for others.

“When we talk about leaving no-one behind, we have to remember that those who are behind these words are the people who yesterday and today battle day by day against poverty. Theirs is an endless struggle, yet in the midst of this struggle they are the ones who keep standing alongside those even worse off than themselves, like Theresa we met in Dublin”.

She spoke about how Father Joseph Wresinski founder of ATD Fourth World viewed poverty, and people being left behind, as a violation of human rights.

On the 17 October 1987 (<https://17october.ie/>) Joseph Wresinski engraved this word on the Human rights stone in Paris

Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty,

Human rights are violated

It is our solemn duty to come together

To ensure there rights are respected.

In light of the 25th anniversary of the 17th October in Ireland and the results of the Leave No One Behind Series 4, our Series 5 conversations will focus on;

“When people are left behind in our communities due to poverty, exclusion, displacement and socio- economic discrimination, this is a violation of their human rights. Series 5 focuses on our shared rights and values and the collective actions needed for a more inclusive society”.

Prior to the public exhibition and launch and in preparation for their upcoming placements, second-year Social Work students participated in a series of interactive workshops designed to deepen their understanding of what it means to be left behind and the SDGs in relation to their Community practice. These workshops were held at Unit 18, Trinity in the Community, and offered students the opportunity to engage creatively and reflectively.

The cohort was divided into three groups of 10 to 15 students. Each group rotated through three themed tables, each focused on a specific question:

1. How does it feel to be left behind?
2. What are the collective actions needed from us to help make society more inclusive?
3. Which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are most important for community practice?

Art supplies, including paint, markers, stickers, and newspapers, were provided at each table to encourage expressive, visual responses and facilitate a creative exploration of these topics.

Dr Erna O Connor and Dr Sinead Whiting supported the facilitation of the workshops, alongside the team at ATD Ireland.

Table 1: How does it feel to be left behind?

The first table encouraged students to reflect on the personal and emotional aspects of exclusion. Through creative expression, students explored the question: “What does it feel like to be left behind?”

Common themes that emerged included fear, shame, and feeling forgotten. Students discussed how these emotions can deeply affect an individual's sense of belonging and self-worth. The conversation shifted toward the role of social workers as advocates, and how resilience should be viewed not as a default expectation, but as a process that requires time, support, and understanding.

One student noted the tendency to generalise responses rather than connect to personal experience. This sparked a response from Erna about how vulnerability and self-awareness can help build stronger, more empathetic relationships with service users. As Erna also pointed out, many social workers are drawn to the profession by personal experiences that shape their commitment to change.

Table 2: What are the collective actions needed from us to help make society more inclusive?

At the second table, the focus shifted to collective responsibility: “What are the collective actions needed from us to make society more inclusive?”.

Here, students emphasised the power of working together while Erna also highlighted the value of working with community and self-advocacy groups. They discussed the importance of listening and learning from people they are working with, especially at this stage of their placement. Students reflected on the need to be kind, caring, empathetic, inclusive and smile. Sinead and Erna added the need to approach every interaction with intentionality, recognising that even brief encounters can have lasting positive or negative effects: “Every encounter you have with someone can do good or bad”.

This conversation brought forward reflections on morality and ethics. Students expressed concern over the rise of far-right ideologies and the challenges of maintaining hope in divisive political climates. Nonetheless, they highlighted, through prompts from Erna and Sinead, the importance of staying hopeful, listening to those with lived experience, and choosing actions that offer support and solidarity.

Table 3: Which SDGs are most important for community practice?

The final table asked students to consider: “Which SDGs are most important for community practice?” Students were tasked with identifying and ranking the SDGs they felt were most relevant to their future roles. Tara and Community Activist Annmarie supported students at this table.

This activity aimed to bridge the gap between frontline practice and global policy by encouraging students to think critically about how advocacy, inclusion, research, and participation can be aligned with broader social and environmental goals. It also served as a reminder of the importance of contextualising their work within the larger framework of sustainable and just development.

Collective Values

At the conclusion of the workshops, each group was asked to come up with some collective class values and actions that they will all keep in mind and take forward into placements. Themes of collaboration, empathy, and critical reflection were consistent across all tables. Students spoke about the importance of recognising potential and encouraging self-advocacy.

Thank you very much to all who attended the launch event, especially those who spoke on the day, UNIT18 and Trinity College Dublin social work staff and students. Thank you very much to all who took part in our Leave No One Behind Series 4 project.

Our Leave No One Behind Series 4 exhibition will be on display in Unit18 Trinity in the Community for the couple of weeks- please have a look around in you are in the area!

Region
Dublin 2

[More Information \(https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/leave-no-behind-series-4/\)](https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/leave-no-behind-series-4/)

Date Entered/Updated
28th Apr, 2025

Expiry Date
12th May, 2025

Source URL: <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/115301-leave-no-one-behind-exhibition-launch>