

Report of the  
*Pilot BEACONS Event*  
*Baltinglass*

7/8 November 2019



**Participating Partners**

Scoil Chonglais, Scoil Naomh Íosaf, Bigstone NS, Stratford Lodge NS, Stratford-on-Slaney NS, The Lalor Centre, Adult Basic Education Service West Wicklow, Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre.

with

The Teaching Council & Burren College of Art

## *Pilot BEACONS Event - Baltinglass*

**Purpose:** This, the second BEACONS event, still in pilot phase, was an unfolding of a long-held vision of the Director of the Teaching Council (TC) to catalyse a conversation process among parents, teachers and students in their local areas to allow them say what's important – what's in their hearts – about the future of education in a safe, inclusive, inspirational way. The hoped-for fruits included tapping the insights, hopes and aspiration of diverse participants that might help shape education at a local level, while developing the BEACONS template and feeding insights into a national conversation.

**Participants:** The event was coordinated by Thomas Ahern, a seconded teacher of Scoil Chonglais, in conjunction with the principals of the local schools and centres, most of which were national schools, plus an adult, special needs and outdoor education schools. It started with an ice-breaker session in Horans (a restaurant on the main street of Baltinglass) on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, followed by a full school-day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 3pm. The participants inscribed from the various partners included 10 from Stratford Lodge National School, 3 from the Lalor Centre for people with intellectual disabilities (opening evening), 5 from Bigstone NS, 10 from Scoil Chonglais, 11 from Scoil Naomh Iosaf NS, 5 from Stratford-on-Slaney NS, 1 each from the Adult Basic Education Service West Wicklow, Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre and CSL and together with participants from the Teaching Council and Burren College of Art. The participants included 15 primary students, 5 second-level students, 3 adultslearners, 8 principals and centre leaders, 8 teachers, 10 parents, and 7 observers. Chris Chapman was the facilitator as part of the Burren College of Art team.

**This Report:** What follows is (i) a summary of the main themes emerging from this second BEACONS event; (ii) a report on what participants had to say; (iii) reflections from the Director of the Teaching Council and (iv) the harvest of documents from which the report derives.



*Ice-breaker event in Horans*

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## Summary of the Main Themes

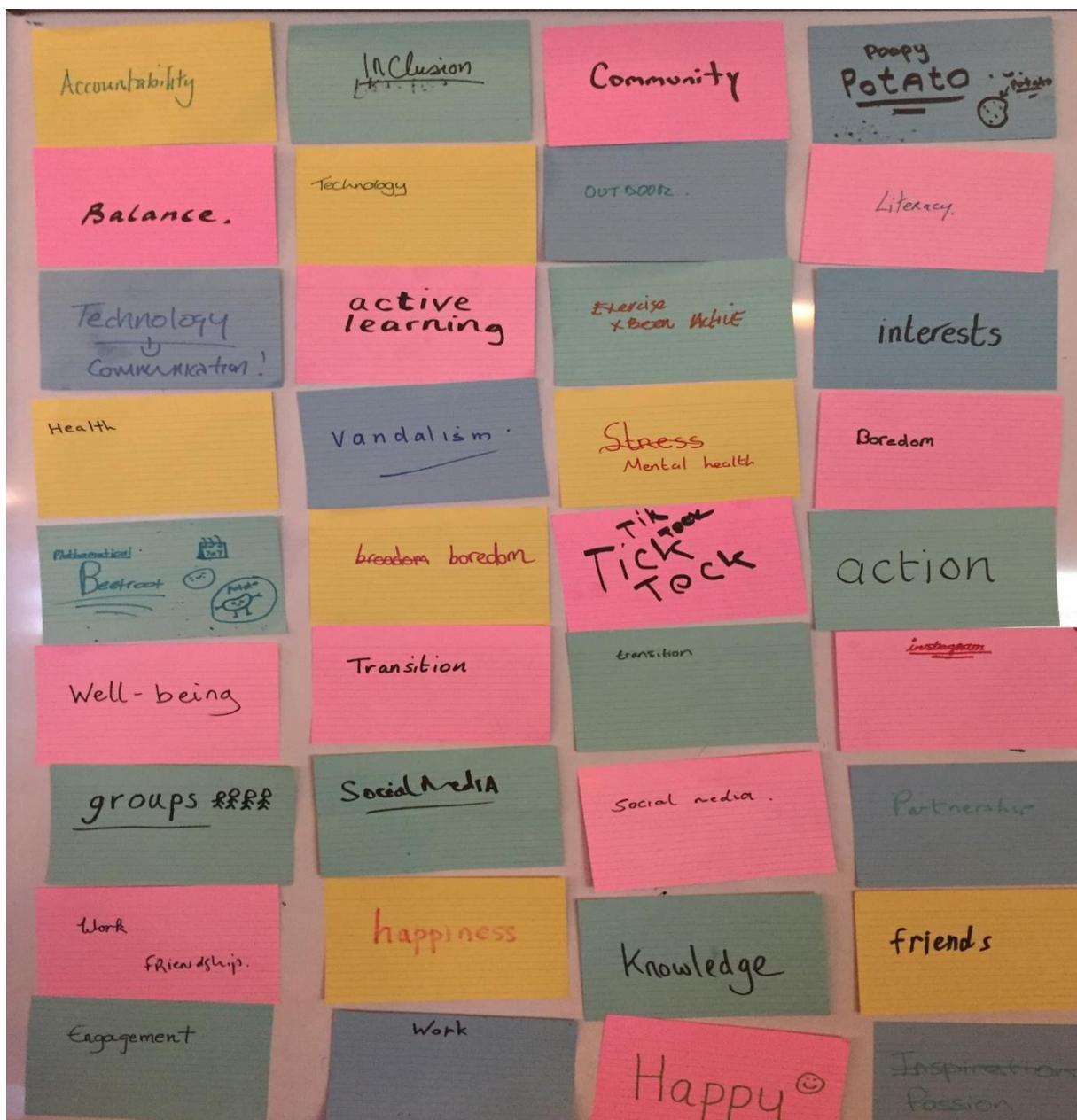
Participants, predominantly from the national school sector, relished the opportunity to share perspectives with the diversity of groups: learners from national, secondary and further education, teachers and parents. There was a sense that the proposals for action that emerged were entirely doable and many looked forward to the opportunity to reprise the process at a future date. Among the themes that emerged strongly were:

- The power of student voice, to name what's real and important to them - they needed to be listened to;
- An appreciation of the great outdoors and the resources of the community such as the outdoor education centre as potential sources of wellbeing and learning;
- A desire for alternative forms of learning such as conversation-based and activity-based learning, as a means of engaging the interests of students and allowing modes of expression other than writing;
- A focus on creativity in how homework is approached with free writing, encouragement for the imagination, group work and fun ways to approach subjects;
- A recognition of the importance of inclusion for everyone starting with a welcome in the morning and an appreciation of the different aptitudes and learning styles of each pupil;
- The importance of educating parents, teachers and students on how to exploit the huge potential of technology and IT while avoiding being exploited by it - the word 'gaducation' was coined for the positive use of technological devices in education;
- A concern with the environment and a particular commitment to action against plastic - winning 'green flag' status was no longer enough, taking concrete action was now called for;
- A recognition that there was a gradual transition from a child-centred to a more rigid curriculum-centred approach as students moved towards second level from 3rd class onwards in primary school with some wanting more home-work to reflect this shift and others wanting a less pressured approach;
- The importance of assisting with transitions from pre-school to national school, from national to secondary and from secondary to tertiary with suggestions of exchanges to facilitate the process;
- Enhancing connections between the schools in Baltinglass was viewed as important with ideas such as ambassadors from the second level to the primary, familiarisation visits from national schools to secondary and using wellbeing hours in secondary to assist with buddy reading in pre-school;
- The perception of adult education, outdoor education and non-academic further education as the 'poor relations' of the mainstream academic-focused system needed a major correction with a 'de-snobbing' of the mainstream and a revaluing of vocational and alternative education;
- For those with mental disability the call was for recognition that they wanted to learn like everyone else, and the learning needed to be measured, repetitive, adapted to need, engaged with the outdoors and life-long;
- Finally there was a concern with how to bring about change at a national level, how to engage more disaffected students in the conversation and how to reengage with similar process in the future.

## Opening – Ice-breaker

Chris (facilitator) said the BEACONS was an opportunity for an easy, friendly, safe conversation about whatever participants had on their minds about education. There would be an opportunity to speak to the truth of things respectfully and there would hopefully be concrete actions arising from the event, at school level, between schools and even nationally. Thomas (host) said he was thrilled at the turn-out and that this type of conversation was quite revolutionary in bringing all the schools together with parents, students, teachers and principals. It was a unique opportunity to join the dots. The experience of the first BEACONS in Ennistymon was that students were concerned that nothing would happen but change did, in fact, happen quickly.

## Invitation to name a word you want in the conversation



## **What you'd like others to understand of your experience/what are you curious about?** (Discussion in Constituency groups)

### **National School students want:**

- More team-work, less home-work;
- More creativity, more art and science, more community-based learning;
- More conversation-based learning and homework (particularly for those with dyslexia);
- School is important but mostly boring; its fair but needs to be more fun;
- We like school – it's fun; Irish is fun; I'm terrible at Irish; maths is cool;
- More time for lunch and PE;
- More attention to 6<sup>th</sup> class and the challenge of transition – we're scared of secondary school.

### **Secondary Students want**

- Smaller class size; more use of technology and more feedback;
- More focus on CBA's – work/stress not reflected in final grade;
- Need more representation e.g. on Board of Management;
- There's lack of passion in some areas due to how taught – should focus on strengths and have fewer dropping out;

### **Teachers**

- We work hard and have lots of preparation;
- The curriculum is packed and getting more so each year – hard to fit it all in;
- Expectation that school will sort all society's problems out e.g. obesity;
- Exams and assessments are only one way to learn;
- We're on the child's side, want to see them happy, would love to teach more art etc.;
- Schools need more resources; teachers use their own money, don't like asking parents;
- We love our job and need to work more with colleagues to share ideas;
- We really appreciate when acknowledged.

### **Principals**

- We love our job and the joyful nature of children;
- We like to make all feel welcome;

- We wear so many hats – teaching and learning, maintaining student and teacher morale, often counsellors, psychologists, un-blockers of loos, administrators; mind readers; health and safety responsibilities.
- All things to all people – mammy, teacher, patron; long hours;
- Sometimes we feel we don't have all the skills;
- Accountability to students, teachers, SNA's, DES, Patrons – the buck stops with us.

### **Adults with Intellectual Disability (Lalor Centre)**

- We like learning new things like everyone else, being creative, choir, life-long learning.
- We want education at a slower pace, simple language, repetition to allow sink in, small steps;
- Work outside in the community
- We need an event such as this dedicated to people like us.

### **Parents – what we're noticing?**

- The potentially positive side as well as the negative side of social media;
- Intrinsic motivation of children vs imposition;
- 'Meitheal learning' is a positive experience;
- Children happy when doing sport, art, Zumba and music generation;
- Making inclusion a reality; Réalta (name for SNA unit) very positive experience;
- We like feedback from schools about our children;
- Leaving Cert hinders a rounded education;
- Education needs to be more hands-on;
- On positive side, schools provide positive and responsible environments with love of learning, teachers are fantastic and we have the Réalta unit.

### **Others (Outdoor, Adult Literacy etc.)**

- Frustration at lack of resources and understanding for non-academic sector;
- There is lack of understanding of transition stresses and lack of links between pre-school and NS and NS and Secondary;
- There is need for greater awareness and empathy, student to student, student to school and school to society;
- There is need for support to retain those in danger of dropping-out – help with homework – have a youth-worker in school; the teacher knows who needs support;
- Early intervention is crucial – bad behaviour is learned by the age of three;
- Must be responsive to different learning styles;

- Pupils in NS are responsive up to 3<sup>rd</sup> class when rigidities of texts and exam system begin to encroach – the vicious-circle, self-reinforcing nature of the current system needs to be broken; who will do this given vested interests and parental expectations?
- Steiner, Montessori and other progressive philosophies gaining traction – meanwhile we need regional support teams of psychologists, counsellors etc supporting schools.

### **What are we Curious about now that we could discuss tomorrow? (Collective comments)**

- The positivity of everyone, particularly of parents;
- Need to give teachers feedback which is greatly appreciated;
- Much more stress now than in the past – not sure a job will result from education;
- Inclusion, stress and transitions came up;
- Conversation-based learning popped up a few times;
- If we could better understand what it's like to have adult literacy and writing difficulties?
- If roll-out of wellbeing hours could be extended to senior cycle?
- What students like/dislike and what parents expect?
- How technology might be used positively in school;
- Bullying – if child doesn't feel safe, no learning will happen and some will stay at home; students should behave to learn vs learning to behave;
- Students should feel secure enough to speak;
- Importance of culture of space and time to make things possible.

### **Concluding Comment from Director of Teaching Council**

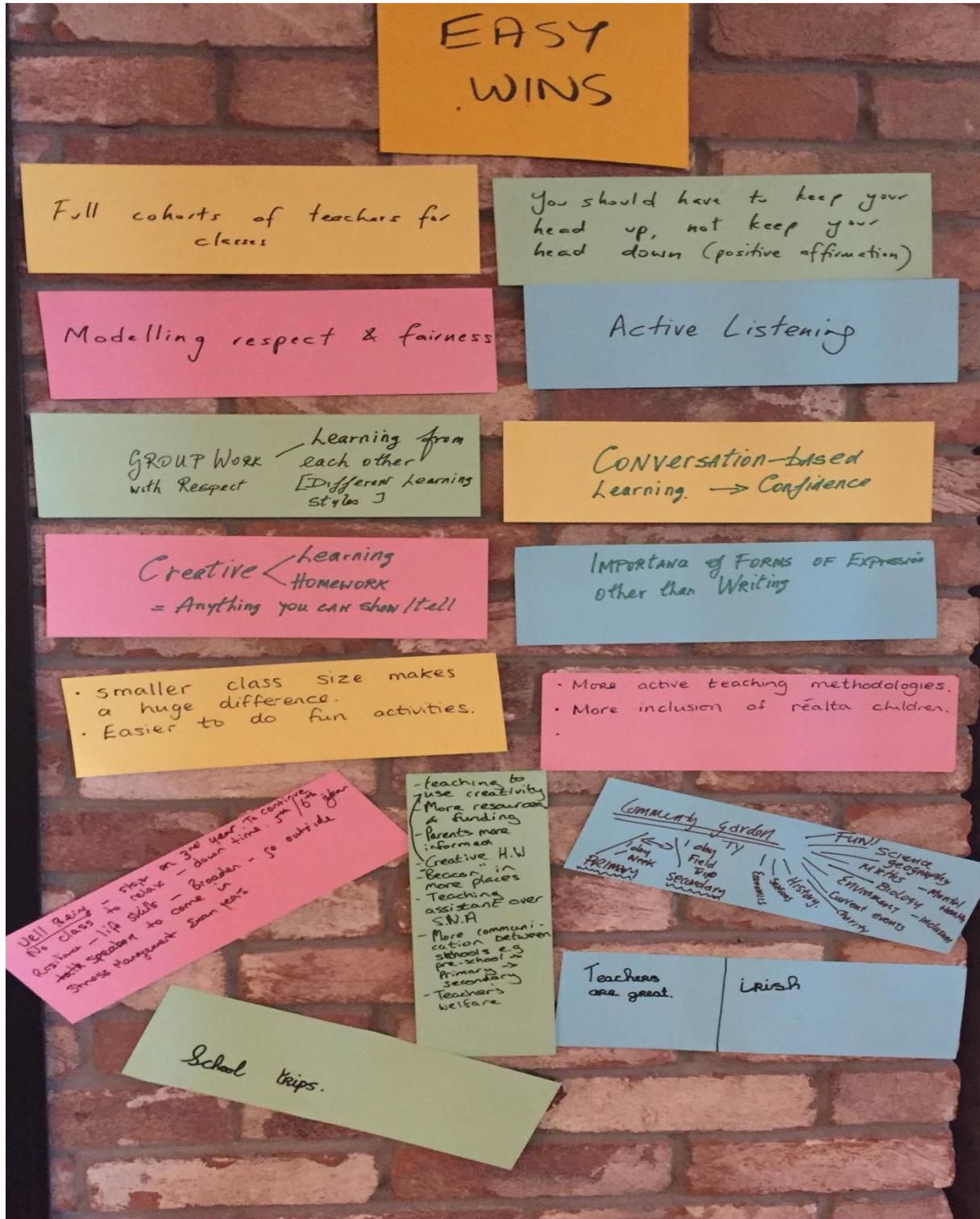
This is a unique experiment, not done elsewhere. We are seeking to learn and to break the dynamic of inspirational conferences which ultimately change little in the practice of education. This process brings students into the conversation to join parents and teachers. When people feel heard change happens. I'm hearing from Lalor participants of learning in the community, learning at a slower pace and a desire of people to be closer.

In time school communities should be able to meet anytime – helping to shape the future of education.

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Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019

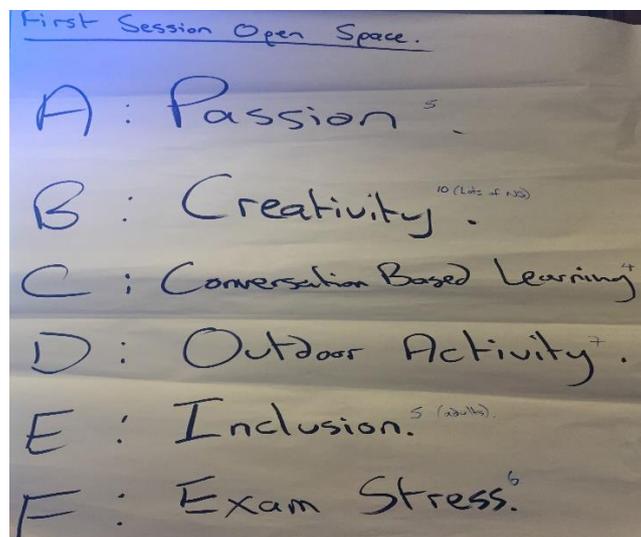
Appreciative Enquiry into Good Education Experiences – Easy Wins (Groups of 3/4)





*Time for a Break*

**Open Space** (Participants host Conversations on Subjects they care about)



### **1 Follow you Passion**

- Passion is what moves the world; the young have it and then often lose it;
- "If you love what you do you'll never work a day in your life";
- If you have passion for a subject and express it you grow in confidence;
- Should students focus more on what they're passionate about with fewer leaving cert subjects or is it important to have lots of taster subjects such that students can test things find their passion? To narrow a focus may lead to loss of interest;

- Role of teacher very important – need supportive teachers and family vs ‘you can’t do that because you won’t have the points’; find another route!
- Have outsiders in to school, to share what they’re passionate about and how they succeeded;
- Self-awareness (strengths/weaknesses) important in finding your passion as is the role of guidance counsellors and various tests; but some tests cost money that you can’t afford though you may find useful tests free online;

## **2. Creativity**

- Allows more talking and use of physical objects – creative homework, project work, free writing, art, drama, group work etc.
- Creative homework – results presented in class generating increased confidence;
- Project work – presented in front of class;
- Encourage imagination through free writing and art – present to class;
- Drama work builds esteem and confidence;
- Group work – able to ask for work and everyone gets a say;
- Using Irish in everyday conversation;
- Finding different fun ways to do things especially if you have a disability – sparks interest;

## **3. Conversation-based Learning**

- Emphasis on oral work, talking about topics and including videos, drama and active learning - with less writing but content still covered;
- Talking isn’t a waste of time – it’s learning and it’s what children want; SPHE is enjoyable because it involves a lot of talking;
- It allows learning from each other, sharing ideas, information and stories;
- It allows change of topic following your interests and new areas;
- If you contribute you’re more interested and engaged and remember more;
- Talking, singing and drama are more accessible and inclusive.

## **4. Outdoor Education**

- More outdoor trips allow interacting with community – tidy-towns, sport, gardening;
- Outdoor survival skills, sports, athletics;
- Help save the planet - add a bee-friendly garden, less waste/plastic in school;
- Relaxation, wellbeing, calming, interactive, fun; peaceful;
- Active learning, walking and hiking.

## 5. Inclusion

- Inclusion applies to everyone – everyone has different needs;
- Meet and greet by name in the morning;
- Need access throughout the system from preschool to adult and need classroom assistants;
- What's important – contentment, communication, life skills;
- Not everyone is academic – provide a life-skills achievement cert;
- School is a microcosm of society; inclusion in school gives confidence that transfers to an adult in society – 'I can do it';
- School needs resources to be truly inclusive – smaller classes, wellbeing of teachers and students; as teacher have I enough time to cater to every child's needs?
- Réalta unit is centre for those with autism – providing sensory space and life-skills such as cooking; does inclusion of SEN pupils meet the needs of the pupil or 'just for the sake of it';
- Use technology better – comic font, audio books, Microsoft can read the homework.

## 6. Exam Stress

- Use more friendly, inviting, mindful language – quiz/check-up instead of exam – connect to wellbeing;
- Focus more on passion and less on curriculum which provokes stress;
- Need more empathy towards teachers and principals, and more empathy for students in relation to stress.

## 7. Positive Use of Technology

- 'Gaducation' = use of technology in education – new term invented here!
- Technology allows learning outside curriculum and outside school – following your passion and for junior students apps can be useful for learning words/spellings etc;
- Need to educate: (i) teachers how best to teach the use of technology (ii) students on the basics of efficient typing, email, Word, Power Point etc and (iii) parents on how to set safe/appropriate tech boundaries re access etc.

## 8. Health & Wellbeing

- Teachers as role models of healthy eating policy (students have spotted the choccie biscuits);
- Have more healthy vegan options in the tuck shop;
- More PE/Mindfulness for body and mind - breathing/meditation exercises;
- Have a double PE at Senior Cycle;
- Strategic SloMo learning;
- Less linear failure – more learning opportunities.

## 9. Active Learning and Fun

- Outdoor education centre, using community resources;
- Co-operative groups where every child has a role;
- Learn outside – pick a subject; playing games to learn;
- Balance of writing, conversation and active learning;
- Educate parents about active learning and the transfer of learning from games to work;
- Survey children about how they like to learn, what subjects they would like to be more active and what games they like;
- Teach-meet should share ideas of good practice;
- Do quizzes for subjects in teams of ¼ e.g. Irish/SESE.

## 10. Links between Schools

- While there are already positive links these can be enhanced;
- If NS visit Secondary school and experience sample lessons there is less transition shock – ditto for transition from pre-school to NS;
- For transition 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level have guest speakers from the locality, open days and career fairs with local workers and employers;
- Have more exposure to trades - college is not for everyone - and have links to adult education centres;
- Transition programme for special-education;
- Well-being hours in 2<sup>nd</sup> level could be used creatively e.g. buddy reading, maths etc with pre-school children.

## 11. Reduce Plastic

- Education from a young age about environment – at pre-school and school;
- By teaching the child they teach the adults and the community creating more awareness of the Earth;
- We want ACTION NOW to reduce emissions rather than winning the 'Green Flag': (i) Re-usable bottles; (ii) hard-plastic lunch boxes; (iii) no wrapping.

## 12. Phones & Social Media

- Phones should be banned in junior cycle – promotes socialising;
  - Hand in phones at start of school day – in the office, if there's real need;
  - Educate parents and students – on the positives as well as the negatives of using phones.
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## What is relevant and can be done in my School Context?

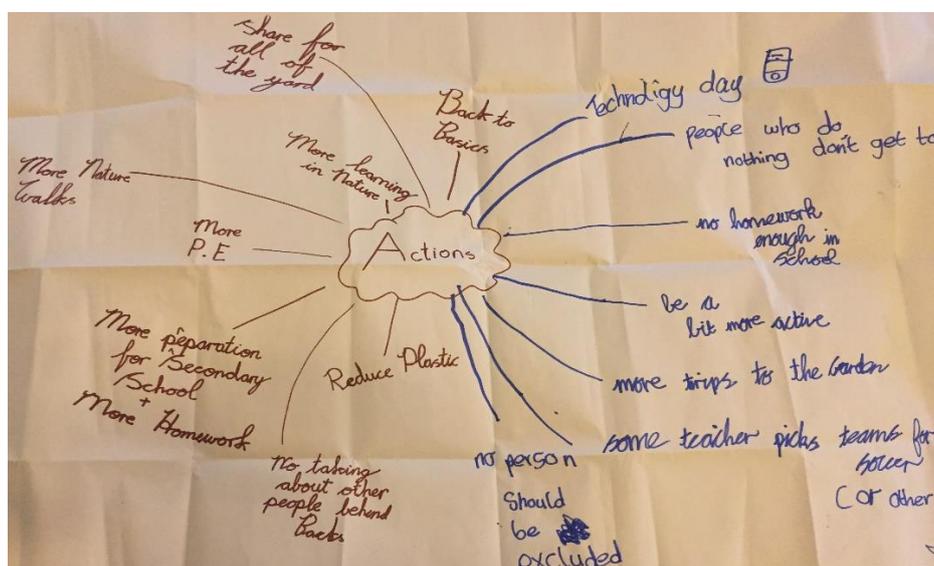


*Adults and Young People engage*

### Outdoor Education

- Adult education needs to be invited into primary and post-primary schools to give short presentations to school staffs – about the availability of adult education and the merits of and opportunities for outdoor education and Further Education, other than the academic route; school staff could, in turn, help to advise the parents of students about what's available;
- There is need for a new language in education that 'de-snobs' the system from its current bias in favour of the academic and properly valorises the vocational path;
- A Citizens Assembly for Education might help create a more balanced discourse.

### Stratford-on- Slaney NS



### **Bigstone NS**

- Ban plastics as part of 'green flag' projects;
- Integrate maths with PE – measure around school for 1 lap (87 metres);
- Visit the community garden;
- Institute active and creative homework.
- Principal: most of this is doable.

### **Scoil Naomh Iósaf NS**

- Organise a meeting between pre-school and primary school;
- Organise for all 6<sup>th</sup> class to visit Scoil Chonglais (secondary school);
- Talk to teachers about using conversation-based learning and creative homework;
- More investment in laptops and interactive whiteboards. We would like a class set of laptops to teach typing and making 'power-points';
- Organise a 'buy-a-brick' fundraiser;
- Communicate with parents: 'aistear'; 'active learning' and welcome to visit;
- Invite someone - Simon Harris and his brother Adam? - to open the 'Réalta' centre.
- Principal: great ideas we'll run with.

### **Stratford Lodge NS**

- More maths, Irish and music (jam sessions) and dance;
- Less homework – getting the balance right – do some homework in school;
- Technology day; really cool science projects – physical science;
- More conversation-based learning – less writing;
- Quiet area where children can relax; buddy reading;
- Principal: some conflicting 'asks'.

### **Scoil Chonglais (Secondary School)**

- Have 'partnership fair' for careers/further education;
- Better primary links, wellbeing opportunities, subject choice;
- Ambassadors from secondary to primary helping with subject choices; sports links and language/reading aids;
- More impactful language use in communications;
- First year taster subjects;
- Review of 'Bring your own device policy';
- More peer teaching/tutoring;
- PE as leaving cert subject; Computer life skills;
- Principal: some already being looked at and others will be looked at.

## **Discussion**

Looking at what needs to be said to the larger system, the active and conversational learning approaches call for smaller class sizes and classroom assistants and more resourcing. Meanwhile there's a serious teacher recruitment issue, particularly in certain subjects that needs to be highlighted. Perhaps management bodies might be more proactive at hiring fairs in this country. The 3<sup>rd</sup> level has never sought to match supply and demand. There is now a focus on getting more modern language graduates – but it will take time.

## **Evaluation of BEACONS Event**

### **What worked well?**

- I like the way we all had our say in multiple conversations; everybody's voice heard – including the pupils; I liked having opportunity to talk to parents, children and teachers – I really liked the student voice; I liked listening to different perspectives; the variety of voices/perspectives in the room;
- I liked going to different groups and having conversations; the movement into groups; I really enjoyed the choice given about which conversation you wished to participate in; the group size of day 2 worked very well;
- I liked seeing how others think and seeing what the secondary school want to change; working with other schools and seeing others' perspectives on things; more of every school pupils together; I liked conversations with people I didn't know.
- Amazed at the wisdom of young (national school) students; the interplay of students, teachers and parents;
- Taking the time to discuss education – inspirational ideas shared; positivity; thinking of issues we mightn't have thought about without this event;
- I liked that every person was allowed to give their own opinion whether positive or negative; it was an open dialogue that valued everyone equally; ...opportunity to chat in a safe informal way about positive and negative aspects of education;
- The first night the food and the group work;
- I like that you can get interviewed; people said very positive things; the way we had different themes;
- Excellent breezy facilitation;
- I liked everything and it was really fun and I am really tired.

### **What didn't work well/What I didn't like**

- I didn't like all the moving around; the moving I didn't like;
- The registration in the morning;
- A more private and warmer area.

### **What I would change about this Event**

- Include all perspective in education – including pre-school;
- Questions or phrases in advance to children (primary esp.) could think about them before hand; making questions better for pupils.
- Give an idea of the structure/key questions before so we have time to think about them; to pose questions before we arrive;
- More online surveys – too many bits of paper;
- Consider various ways in which people can express themselves/give feedback;
- Day may be a bit long for kids;
- More engaging activities on day one for children and young people;
- I think they could explain some of the activities in a more child-friendly way;
- Variety of food;
- I would have smaller groups and change the food;
- We didn't agree norms at the start of the event;
- I would make all the students from all the schools have a conversation.

### **What I would like more of**

- Listening to students – they have great ideas;
  - More time to plan new ideas;
  - How exactly we can take action at national level;
  - Change at national level;
  - Ensure we have follow-up events – BEACONS – in a process, not a project;
  - A follow-up session at the end of term where people get back together;
  - More of everything – and how about questions of drugs and pornography?
  - I would have liked more time for conversation in smaller groups;
  - I would have liked to hear from pre-school representatives to be all-inclusive;
  - More school-averse students and learners; even more representation from various groups would have enhanced the effectiveness of the dialogue.
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### **Closing Comments (open forum)**

- Thanks to the teachers – keep up the good work;
- Thanks to Thomas for coordinating and to Chris for facilitating;
- Great to have head-space to think and listen;

- **Students:** It was great to be able to come and speak our minds – it will make a difference; I have hope and am more happy; Thanks for the opportunity and getting us all together; It's we who are in the classes – great that we have voice;
- **Thomas:** Thanks to Chris for easy, breezy style, guide-on-the side, making us all comfortable with awkward conversations. The energy in Baltinglass was very positive. It was a step into the unknown and great numbers showed up – if doing again I'd like to get students who are school-averse.
- **Tomás:** We are saying what we want more of which is great. Now we need to reach to those who are disaffected with the system. The process allows every voice to be heard and for participants to find their voice. I noted the calls for conversational education and creativity which is doing what you love and love is a creative force. The ambition is to host another event and two review events before Christmas. We need to train more trainers and scale the ambition. Thanks to Chris, BCA, DWEC, Slack and all who participated.

MH

10.11.19

## **Reflections from the Director of the Teaching Council**

I wish to thank and congratulate every member of the Baltinglass school community who gave of their time and energy to their own BEACONS event on 7 and 8 November.

The care and nuance of thought which was articulated by students, parents and teachers was uplifting and inspirational.

Some of the most challenging questions in the national discourse – such as the use of social media and its relationship to supporting teaching and learning – were discussed in an open and honest spirit. Everyone was clear about the questions which they needed to discuss – but were equally clear that no one person or group has all the answers. It may be said that we only have each other – but both BEACONS events to date demonstrate powerfully how much we have to share with and teach each other.

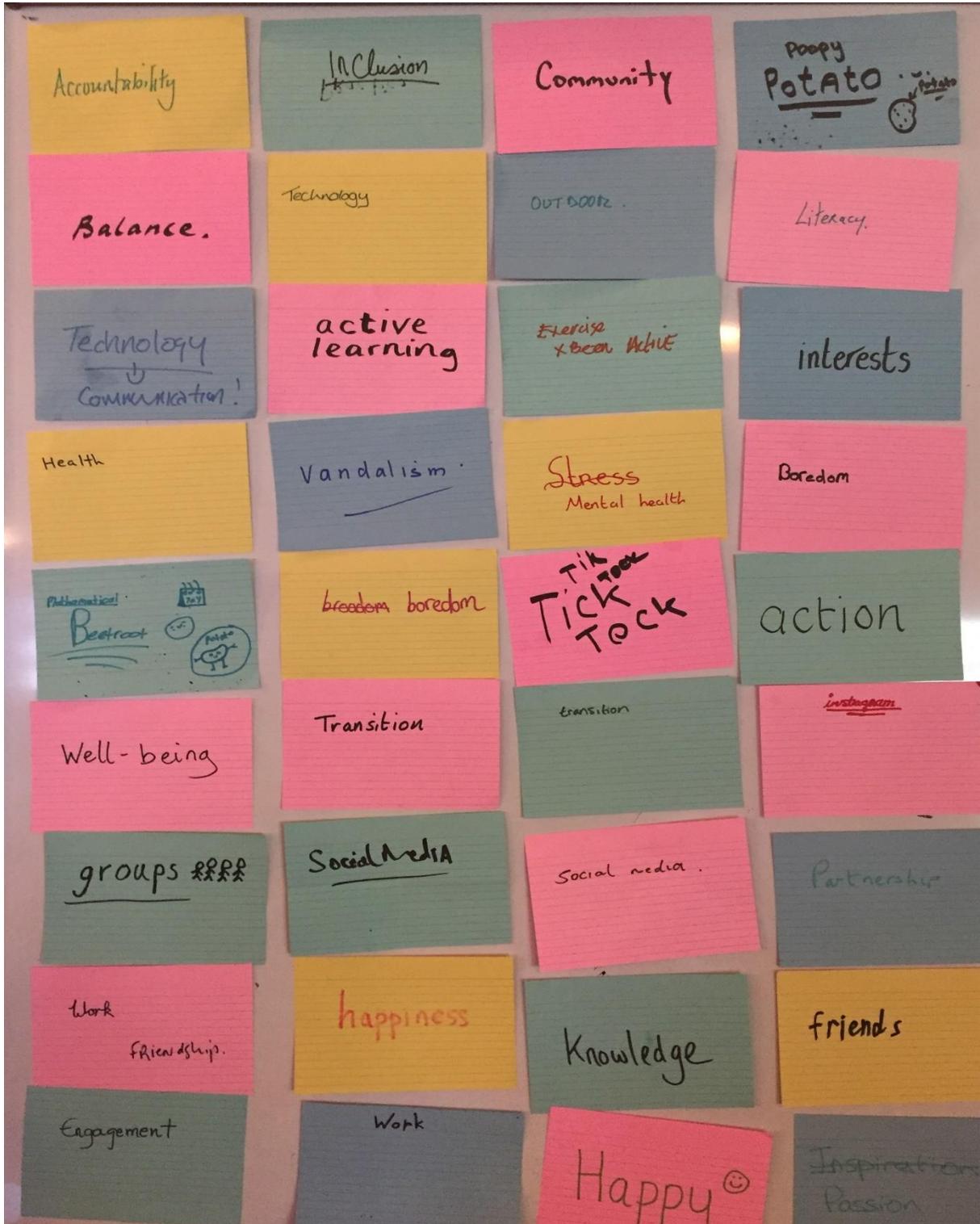
I was particularly taken with the emphasis on conversational based learning, particularly by the primary school students. It was heart-warming to hear of how this is seen to be a more inclusive approach for all learners. This was how I liked to learn, particularly in post-primary, and it was great to see it put forward by learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I wish all attendees of BEACONS Baltinglass every good wish with the next stages in their journey as a community, and I hope that it won't be long before we return for the next stages in your process.

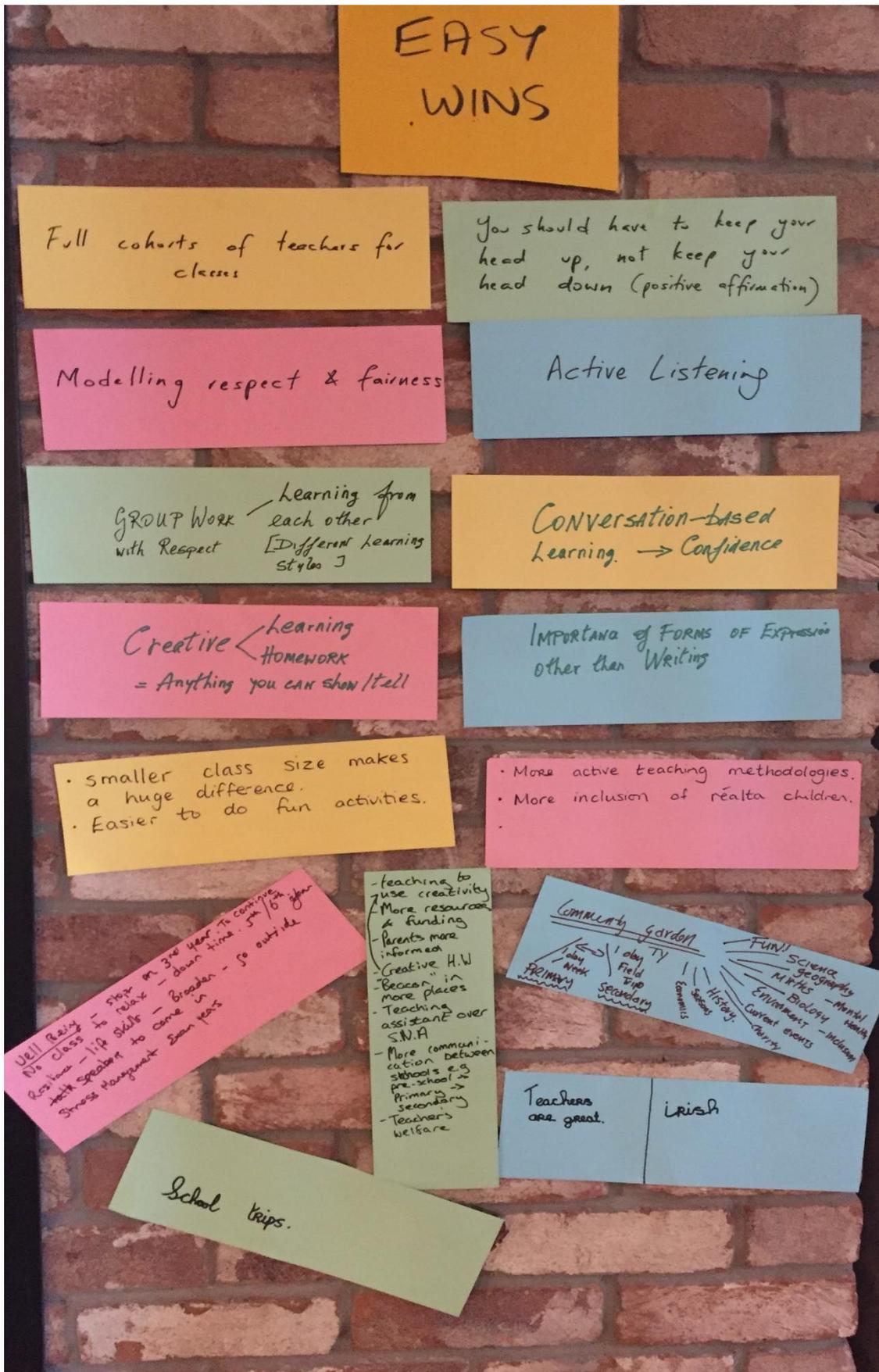
Tomás Ó Ruairc  
Director / CEO  
11 November 2019

# HARVEST OF BEACONS DOCUMENTS

## Opening: The Words we want in the Conversation



Possibilities & Issues after the Ice-breaker Session (Thursday)



# Appreciative Enquiry: Good Educational Experiences and how to Scale them

## Follow your Passion

Passion: It's what moves the world  
 Spread Your Passion for subjects to other Students  
 Inspire: (A) How?

- Share Passions: Easier to Express if Passions → Greater Confidence
- Outsiders coming to speak - sharing what is inspiring.
- Focus on fewer subjects at L.C.? Pros, Cons
- To discover Passion, must try things out → Wide range of choice
- If you love what you do you'll never work a day in your life.
- Need to know yourself - self-knowledge - helps discover Passion
- = Guidance Counsellor helps - Options Test + Online Test
- Documentaries help you discover what you might like. TV in your

(A) Follow Your Passion

- Inspirational Speakers  
e.g. Nurses: Real Life Experiences
- Broad Range of Subjects  
- if you don't experience you can't find out. T.Y.
- Guidance Counsellor  
- Tests (Cost Band 1)
- TV
- Self-Knowledge
- Importance of Support of Family / Friends

## Creativity

Creativity

- more talking.
- mixing subjects
- physical objects
- creative homework
- free writing - increased confidence - present to class
- imagination - free writing / act
- Drama - self-esteem / confidence
- group work - Able to ask for help - fair group everyone gets a say.
- white board
- figure things out on your own - circuits
- Projects - presenting in front of class.
- challenging yourself!
- visual. - colourful.
- Irish - using Irish in everyday conversation.
- finding fun ways to do things esp. if you have a disability - different ways to do things. (spark interest)

Creativity

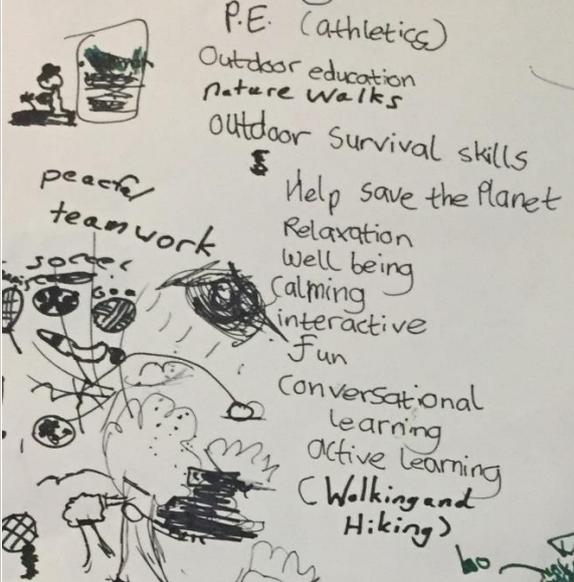
Confidence to talk in front of class - presentation things you are interested in (Creative Homework)

## Conversation-based Learning

- Conversational based learning
- Opportunities to learn from each other and share ideas, information, stories.
  - More time to talk.
  - Balance between talking, writing, etc.
  - Talking leads to change of topics, talking about new things and talking about your interests.
  - If you get to contribute, you're more interested and engaged.
  - If you join in and talk you will remember more.
  - More accessible and inclusive
    - ↳ talking, singing, drama
  - SPHE is enjoyable because it's a lot of talking
  - Better understanding

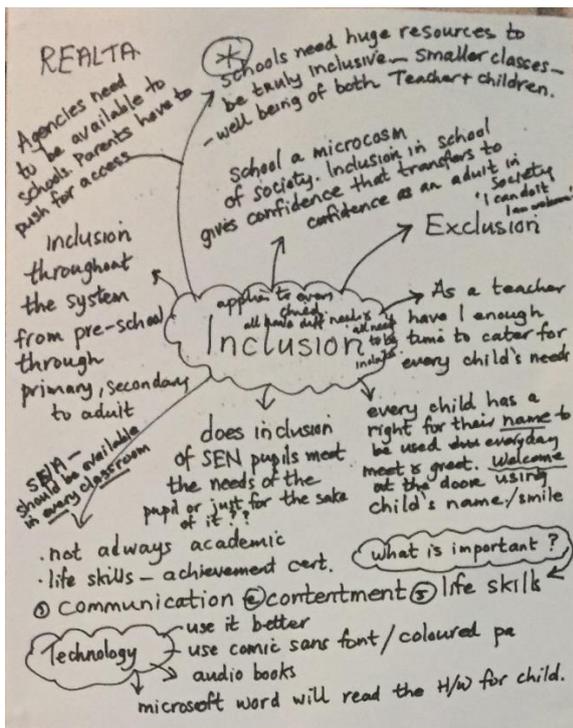
- ↳ More time to talk about topics and include videos, drama, active learning.
- Children more interested in conversational based learning, that's what they're asking for - spread the word!
- Talking isn't a waste of time!  
It's still learning.
- Conversational based homework.
- Less copy pages filled, less book orientated but content still covered - more emphasis on oral work. Note to parents.
- Oral reports on items (intro, structured plan) instead of

## Outdoor Education

- Outdoor Education
- interacting Community (tidy towns) Sport
  - (Pure mile) Gardening
  - P.E. (athletics)
  - Outdoor education
  - Nature Walks
  - Outdoor survival skills
  - Help save the Planet
  - Relaxation
  - Well being
  - Calming
  - interactive
  - Fun
  - Conversational learning
  - active learning (Walking and Hiking)
- 

- More Outdoor trips to Baltinglass Outdoor Education
- Walking and Hiking
- ADD a bee friendly garden
- Less waste use in schools (Lunch)
- Less plastic usage

## Inclusion



every classroom has pupils with needs.  
behavioural / social / SEN / gifted  
different learning styles /

Inclusion applies to every child/adult

### Action

Meet & greet / welcome everyone in the morning with a smile & use their name where possible.  
(Good morning Mary)  
How are you today?  
Inclusion in school/centre to meet the needs of the pupil.  
Access throughout the system - from preschool to adult.  
classroom assistant for every or - as  
Be aware of importance of communication / contentment / life skills. (not a total academic focus)

Club access for anyone who

## Exam Stress

### Exam Stress:

- Top-down problem
- "Stress, Stress & More Stress"
- More mindful language e.g. Quiz, check-up etc.
- Less on curriculum, inspires passion
- No foreign language in Primary Schools
- More study skills
- A/D/Ls
- "Marketing"
- More feedback from parents & teachers
- Teachers more valued
- Empathy towards teachers & principles

- More Empathy towards teachers & principles
- More Empathy towards students about stress inviting
- More Friendly & language
- Link with wellbeing
- Less Stress, more passion

## Positive Use of Technology

## Health & Wellbeing

### A) Positive Use of Tech.

#### Graduation

- Time management on technology

#### • Educating Teachers how best to teach use of technology

- Moodle: Platform for communicating with students
- Teaching Basics: email + WORD + PowerPoint <sup>+ TYPING (Properly)</sup> Vs App
- Apps - useful for young children - words/spelling
- Boundaries: Parents must set. Parental Access Control
- Safety: Education for parents on Boundaries
- Promoting School:
- Learning outside school/curriculum - follow passion

### Solutions

1. Teachers should role model the healthy eating policy
2. More healthy/vegan options in the tuck shop.
3. A double P.E. in Senior Cycle

### A) Positive Use of Technology

Education for everyone  
Technology as a good thing  
how to type (send emails)  
making powerpoints and how to lock your child's phone (or device)  
how to know something is fake  
Graduation

### Actions

1. Teachers role modelling healthy eating (students have spotted the chocie biscuits)
2. More P.E. / Mindfulness for body & mind
3. More healthy/vegan options for sale
4. Less linear failures, more learning opportunities. Recognising stress can be useful.
5. Strategic slow learning
6. Breathing / Meditation Exercises

## Active Learning & Fun

- projects in groups
- outdoor education centre - using community resources.
- Co-operative groups - where every child has a role.
- Learn outside - Pick a subject
- playing games to learn.
- balance of writing, conversation and active learning.

### Active Learning

- Use community resources especially the outdoor education centre.
- inform parents about active learning and transfer of learning from games to work.
- survey children on how they like to learn + what subjects they would like to be more active + what games they like.
- do quizzes for different subjects. In teams of 3-4 people. Irish/SESE.
- Teach Meet. Meetup between schools to share ideas between teachers.

## Links between Schools

- Links programme
- Consultation from SEN coordinator
- Visit, & less shock
- Pre-School → Primary
- Transition programme Special Ed
- Sample lessons
- History & Geography
- More collaboration between schools
- Google Drive lesson plans, notes etc.
- Wellbeing hours used creative e.g. buddy reading, maths etc.

### - Link between Post-Primary & College

- ↳ Guest Speakers
- ↳ Open days
- ↳ Meeting Students
- ↳ Teaching practice, Work experience etc.

### - Careers Fairs

- ↳ Local Workers, employers

### - More exposure to trades

- ↳ College not for everyone

### Links with adult education Centres

#### ① Careers Fair

#### ② Visit & pre-exposure to post-primary education

- ↳ Sample lessons

#### ③ Pre-School → Primary Link with pre-school staff

#### ④ Wellbeing hours

- ↳ Link buddy reading, maths etc.

- Professional Speakers from the locality

## Reduce Plastic

- Actions**
- Reusable bottles
  - hard plastic lunch boxes
  - No wrapping
- information \*
- (2) Green school
    - ↳ Actions over the flag
  - (1) Tell the child teach the adult
    - Community \*
    - More awareness of the Earth
    - Consequences
  - (1) \*Education from a young age
    - ↳ Parents
    - ↳ Schools
    - ↳ Schools
  - More talks from environments

## Phones/Social Media

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd year should be banned from phones.
- No need for phone in Classroom.
  - Parental responsibility.
  - Leave phone in office if big need.
  - Hand in phone at start of day.
  - Educate parents
  - Positive and Negatives
  - Can be Educational
  - More talks
  - Bullying on social media needs to be sorted.
  - Children need to learn more.
  - Mainly learn to use phone.

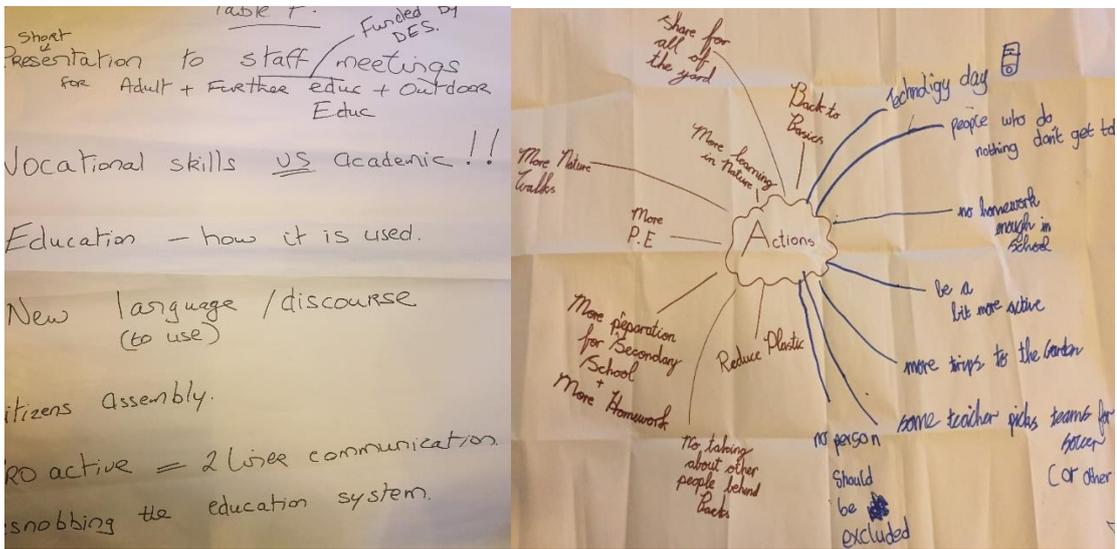
**ACTION NOW!!**

- BAN PHONES IN JUNIOR CYCLE (WILL PROMOTE POSITIVE SOCIALISING).
- EDUCATION FOR PARENTS + KIDS.
- NOT TO SCARE PEOPLE - TO BE USED FOR POSITIVE OUTCOME.

# What is relevant and can be done in my School Context?

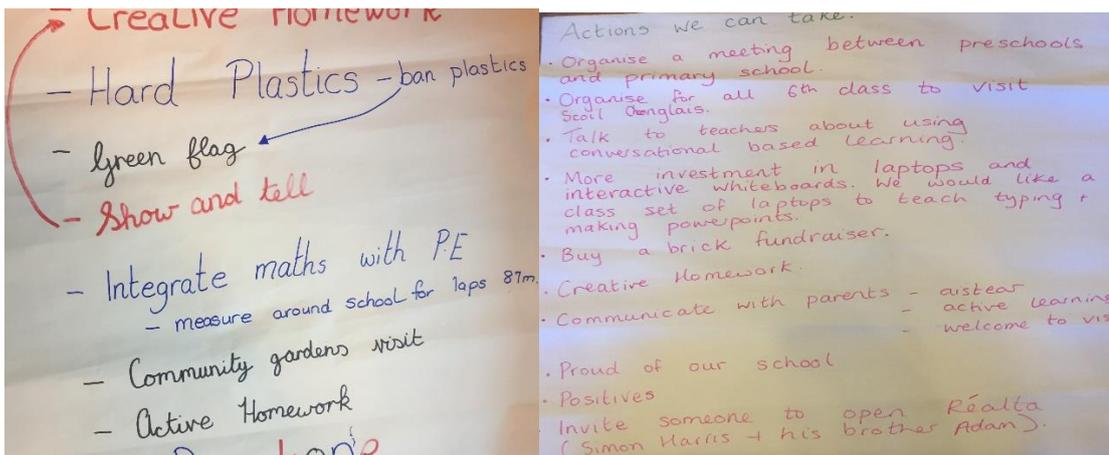
## Outdoor Education

## Stratford-on-Slaney NS



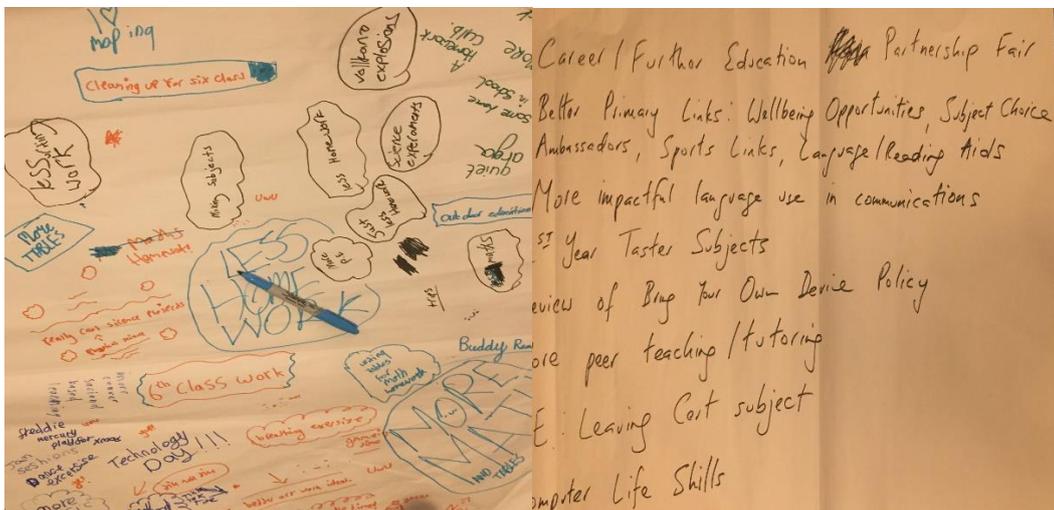
## Bigstone NS

## Scoil Naomh Iósaf



## Stratford Lodge NS

## Scoil Chonglais

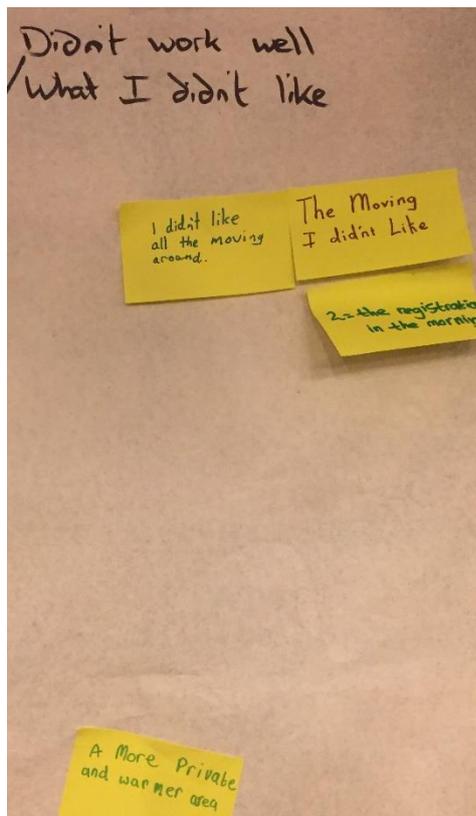


# Evaluation\* of BEACONS Event

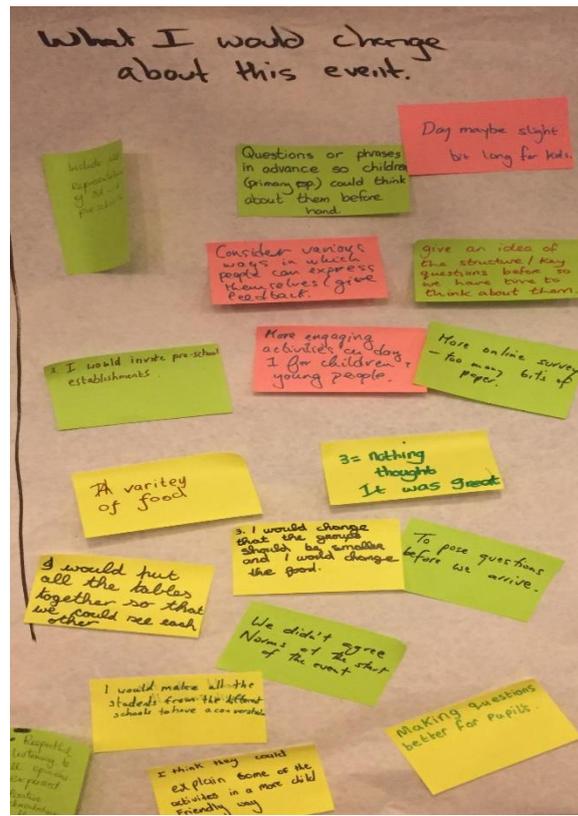
## What worked well/I liked



## What didn't Work Well



## What I would Change



\*Colour Code: Yellow = Student; Green = School staff; Orange = Parent; Pink = Other

What I'd like more of

What I would have liked more of?

Day maybe slight bit long for kids.

Listening to students, they have great ideas

More time to plan new ideas.

give an idea of the structure / key questions before so we have time to think about them.

how exactly we can take action with national level

Ensure we have follow up events  
- ~~it~~ BEACONS is a process, not a product.

More online surveys - too many bits of paper.

Pre-school reps

Taking in Groups

A follow up session at the end of term where people get back together

Great

4 A follow up session and more funding to implement some of the good suggestions x Dept. of Ed.

More of  
- Sampling  
- How about the business of Drugs + Technology

4. Conversations

To pose questions before we arrive.

4 = more of the group thing

I would've liked more time for conversation in smaller groups

1. everyone had the right to voice their opinion & everyone was open to listen.
2. I would've liked to hear from pre-school representative to be all inclusive.

Change at National level

3. Even more representation from various groups would've enhanced the effectiveness of the dialogue.

making questions better for pupils.

I enjoyed having different perspectives of different people - e.g. students, parents and teachers. This helps answer our own questions.

More school give students & learners