

CBL/CBR Case Study Template for campusengage.ie

Community-based learning and research are academic approaches that seeks to engage and accredit students, within the curriculum, for working in partnership with civic and civil society organisations (CSOs) to act on local societal challenges.

Health and Wellbeing

Project Title: #SaferFromHarm

Community Partner(s): Ana Liffey Drug Project and Humans of Dublin

Faculty: Social Media, Democracy and Journalism CM536 module
MA in **Political Communications**
School of Communications
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Dublin City University

Community-based learning/research activity (Module Outline):

CM536 Social Media, Democracy and Journalism Module outline:

The module examines the development and direction of social media, its impact on political, economic and social life and the implications for journalism and civic engagement. Although a recent phenomenon, social media has opened up new opportunities for journalism while also challenging the traditional understanding of public participation and potentially empowering audiences and civil society organisations by offering new platforms for free expression and social activism. This module explores the meaning of this digital public sphere, examines its impact on media and politics and critically evaluates the transformative claims for social media platforms. The module examines the theoretical and practical contexts within which social exist and relate the skills of social media to trends in the political, communications and media sectors.

#SaferFromHarm Project outline:

There are at least 3,000 injecting drug users in Dublin with about 400 openly injecting in the city each month. This provided the context from which a social media project was developed and implemented by six Masters students from 'Social Media, Journalism and Democracy' module in 2017.

The aim of the project was to raise awareness of the importance of the introduction of Supervised Injecting Facilities (SIFs), as a means of reducing the harm associated with drug use. The focus was on putting a human face on the issue, telling the stories of people who would benefit from the introduction of SIFs - this led to a collaborative project between the Ana Liffey Drug Project (ALDP) and the Humans of Dublin, a social media account.

	<p>The project profiled seven people who have been affected by drug use who believe that the introduction of SIFs will ensure that drug users are #SaferFromHarm.</p>
<p>Student learning outcomes</p>	<p>CM536 Social Media, Democracy and Journalism Module learning outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. recognise the impact and influence of social media on political, economic and social life; 2. demonstrate how social media affects the behaviours by citizens and governments in different parts of the world; 3. critique the impact of social media on journalism practice; 4. assess the role of social media in citizen agitation and democratic transition; 5. describe the impact of new business models on the media and on journalism. <p>#SaferFromHarm Project student learning:</p> <p>The students involved with this project became invested in supporting community organisations and playing an active role in widening the debate on SIFs and how they can provide a better future for our city and the most marginalised in our society.</p> <p>Participating students had an opportunity to develop a unique set of skills and attributes during the community-engaged activity e.g. confidence, ability to engage with diverse and marginalised groups, to respond to the needs of others, project management skills, planning, organisational and presentation skills, problem solving and decision making, while at the same time applying degree specific knowledge (social media, journalism, political communications) to tackle real-life social issues.</p>
<p>Community outcomes:</p>	<p>Given that the introduction of SIFs was a topical issue during the project, the student group was mindful of the need to add value to the debate. This was achieved through engagement with stakeholders delivering a variety of content and media coverage of the campaign. The powerful stories resonated strongly with the social media audience. The project was featured in the Pat Kenny Show, TheJournal.ie, and #SaferFromHarm was used by Senator Aodhan O’Riordain.</p> <p>#SaferFromHarm project not only added value to conversation but made a meaningful impact in transforming lives and society. By engaging with the Ana Liffey Drug Project and the Humans of Dublin, it was essential that they benefited and their capacity enhanced from their involvement in the project. The involvement of the DCU students helped to strengthen relationships with communities in the Dublin region. Both Ana Liffey Drug Project and Humans of Dublin were extremely pleased with the outcome of the project and the feedback that they have received as a result was overwhelmingly positive. This project has helped raise awareness of how</p>

	SIFs will save lives, providing a safe harbour for the most marginalised in our society and in our city.
Further details:	The project was nominated in student category for the 2017 DCU President's Award for Engagement.
Academic Contact:	<p>CM536 Social Media, Democracy and Journalism Module Coordinator Dr Jane Suiter, jane.suiter@dcu.ie</p> <p>Safer From Harm Project student contact Craig Dwyer, Founder, www.forachange.org</p>
Additional materials:	
High quality photo/logo from project:	