

## CBL/CBR Case Study Template for [campusengage.ie](http://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.

Sustainable Communities and Cities

**Project Title:** Exploring the needs of adolescents in the Douglas Region

**Community Partner(s):** Douglas Matters

**Faculty:** Applied Social Studies

**Community-based learning/research activity (Module Outline): Please describe the product, piece of research, service learning, activity carried out.**

As part of the Masters in Social Work (MSW), in their second year, social work students must undertake a piece of research. Three students on the MSW programme carried out a large piece of research broken into three parts for a local community group, Douglas Matters.

Douglas Matters wanted to explore the needs of adolescents in the Douglas Area (a large suburb of Cork city). The three Masters of Social Work students examined this question by:

- Carrying out qualitative interviews with adult stakeholders in the area.
- Analysing surveys completed by transition year students from three post-primary schools in the area.
- Carrying out ethnographic research, using photo-voice and qualitative research, with seven teenagers in the area about the spaces and places they felt included and excluded in Douglas.

Douglas Matters identified a liaison person for the project. The team met her regularly to tie down the methodology and to discuss progress.

The team was invited to meet and present on progress to the full Douglas Matters group. The students finalised their projects for mid-April 2018. The students presented it at the MSW Research Conference on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2018, with Douglas Matters present.

**Student learning outcomes: please list and detail the various learning outcomes e.g. effective communication, high level cognitive, intercultural, leadership, entrepreneurial agility, analytical and interpersonal skills, (set out in Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025).**

The students learned a lot from this engaged research experience, including:

- Communication skills – these students are social workers and require excellent communication skills to do their jobs effectively. This project meant they developed skills in communicating with multiple audiences and being sensitive to different needs and perspectives. At varying stages, the students communicated the results with multiple audiences and learned different and democratic means by which to disseminate the work.
- High level cognitive skills – working with young people and ensuring their true voice came through in the

	<p>research findings is a further skill acquired by these student researchers. The students had to build trust with these young adolescents and be in tune with their needs. They had to navigate through complexities such as the potential for the research results to be markedly different than what the community partner expected. These factors gave students a real-life situated experience of the many complexities that can arise when working with different groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytical skills – the students developed strong qualitative research skills and learned how good design and methodology can yield strong results to inform practice. The students had to assess their research results against existing anecdotal evidence and determine whether the results supported or contradicted that evidence and discuss why. This required strong objectivity but also a contextual knowledge of the subject area gained through primary research.</li> <li>• Leadership skills – the students undertaking this engaged research were nervous at first and perceived that they were taking on extra risk in doing a collaborative project. Overall, they saw the reward in doing a project with a participatory design and took the chance. The students were rewarded in multiple ways for this: they had a challenging, worth-while project to work on the results of which would genuinely assist a community-based organisation; they could take ownership of the direction of the research and strongly direct its development; their peers were able to witness this transformation in their classmates; the researchers felt they played a strong leadership role for the young people participating in the collaboration and were able to shed light on the college experience for these young people.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community outcomes (Aims and Objectives):</b></p>	<p>Douglas Matters had anecdotal evidence that the Douglas area had insufficient resources and amenities in place. They believed this was negatively affecting the lives of young people in the area and having a direct impact on the number of young people presenting to professional support services/ agencies for help. They wanted empirical research to be undertaken to determine if this was the case.</p> <p>The results of the project will help the organisation to apply for funding, substantiate a correlation between increased demand for professional services and youth dissatisfaction with community resources/ amenities, underline the need for youth centres and safe places for young people to socialise, and inform the decisions and resource allocations of local community organisations and public services in this area.</p>

<b>Further Details &amp; Assessment:</b>	<p>All three students presented their work to Douglas Matters at various intervals. Additionally, representatives from Douglas Matters attended the end of year research presentations and participated in a wider discussion about the research. All MSW students witnessed the collaborative roles played by both the community group and the UCC student and supervisor. The collaboration between the students, their supervisor and the community group is ongoing.</p>
<b>Credit weighting:</b>	<p>20 ECTS for the Masters dissertation</p>
<b>Academic Contact:</b>	<p>Dr Fiachra O’Suilleabhain</p>
<b>Additional materials:</b>	<p><a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/msw/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/msw/</a>  <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/</a></p>
<b>High quality photo/ logo from project:</b>	<div data-bbox="651 669 1337 965" data-label="Image"> <p>The logo for CARL (Community - Academic Research Links) at University College Cork, Ireland. It features the word 'CARL' in large yellow letters, followed by a colorful circular graphic composed of several overlapping circles in red, green, blue, and purple. Below this, the text 'COMMUNITY - ACADEMIC RESEARCH LINKS' is written in black, with 'RESEARCH LINKS' highlighted in a blue box. At the bottom, it says 'University College Cork. Ireland'.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="651 996 1420 1507" data-label="Image"> <p>A photograph of three people standing in a room with a white perforated wall. On the left is a woman with blonde hair wearing a white blouse and a patterned skirt. In the center is a woman with dark hair wearing a white blouse with black polka dots. On the right is a man with a beard wearing a grey sweater. They are all smiling at the camera.</p> </div>