

Project Proposal

EMPOWERED EDUCATION



A dynamic environment for children and teenagers
where learning is tailored to each individual.

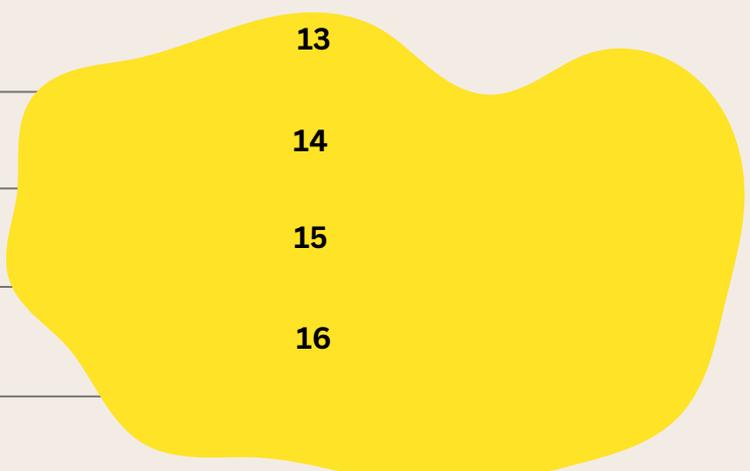


UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: EMPOWERING LEARNERS, TRANSFORMING EDUCATION!

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ABOUT US

In response to significant limitations in educational provision in Ireland, we established Sligo Sudbury in 2017. Our goal is to provide an alternative learning environment to personalise education for each individual.

We cater for families who wish to see their children raised in a system that promotes choice and autonomy. We provide a unique, self-directed educational environment for children and teenagers aged from five to 18. It is based on the fundamental principles of freedom, responsibility, inclusion and equity.

Our mission is to provide young people with rich learning opportunities in an environment of trust and reciprocal respect. We equip them to find meaning, purpose and passion in their authentic learning path.

Since its inception the school has experienced exponential growth. There is a high demand for this model of education facilitated by dedicated, professional staff. The school currently serves 85 children and by 2032, we plan to grow to a community of 240; 215 students and 25 staff.

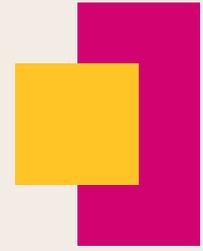
Meet our founders



MAURA DUIGNAN
FOUNDER & STAFF

GAYLE NAGLE
FOUNDER & STAFF

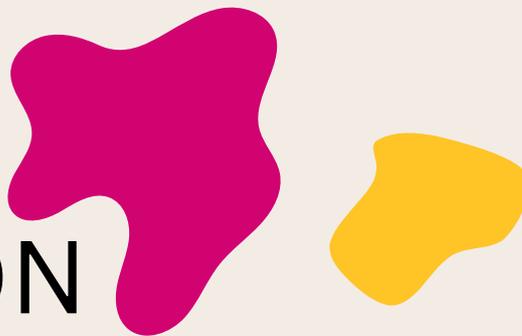
THE PROBLEM



The industrial education system fails to prepare students for the world in which we live. It negatively impacts our mental health, wellbeing, economic success, and life satisfaction. Rather than developing the whole child, it provides a standardised experience that forces conformity or failure; it does not facilitate diverse learning pathways.

Adherence to rigid curricula and developmental timelines limit children's opportunity to develop holistically. It affects children's self esteem, well-being, and future development. Many talented, gifted and intelligent students are unable to excel in this rigid system. As a result modern society is stuck with a system of education that is not serving students or society. This is evidenced by the non progression rates for first year students (12%) and the rise in the number of Irish families choosing to homeschool or seek alternative schools (from 700 in 2011 to over 1800 in 2021).

THE SOLUTION



A modern school, fit for the times we live in. It embodies freedom of choice, and fosters the self-knowledge that young people need develop their skills, abilities, responsibilities, and relationships.

An educational environment where the challenge and responsibility of education is shared equally in a dynamic relationship between learners and educators.

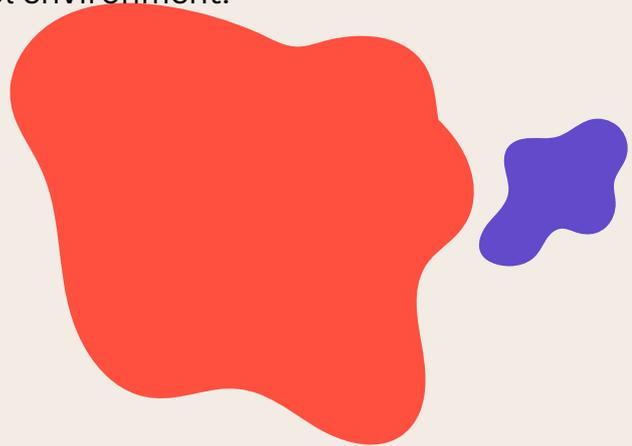
An empowered student body who are fully engaged to follow an authentic learning path and determine their life values.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS

Democratic Education has been flourishing worldwide for over 100 years. Extensive research proves that a diverse range of learners flourish in this model. Research such as *Self-Determination Theory*, and *Social and Emotional Learning* indicate that autonomy and emotional wellbeing positively impact on academic learning and motivation. The Sudbury model is based on the principles of Self-Directed Learning in a Democratic School environment.

Why Self-Directed Education?

- learning fit for the 21st century
- flexible and innovative
- builds resilience
- allows creativity to flourish
- develops initiative and drive
- empowers the learner



It is time to consider what young people really need to thrive and succeed. Children and teenagers need freedom to think for themselves. They should be able to move how and when they want and to dedicate themselves with gusto to their passions and interests. They should experience fulfillment and self knowledge that can only be discovered through trial and error, self-reflection and personal initiative.



"To improve our schools we have to humanise them and make education personal to every student and teacher in the system. Education is always about relationships."

- Ken Robinson

SLIGO SADBURY

At Sligo Sudbury School, we provide an educational environment for students to develop into the best version of themselves, without prejudice or imposed standards.

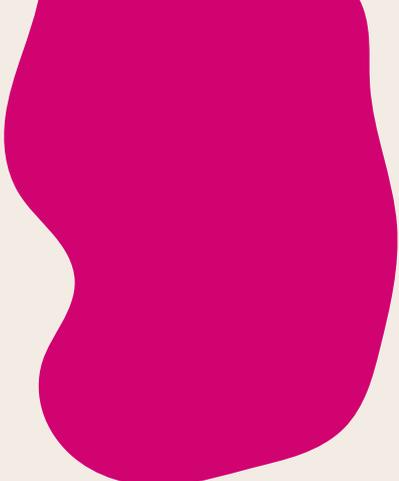
We have no preferred curriculum, and no preferred religion. Our concept of diversity and inclusion extends to the diversity of interests, learning methods, paths and timelines of development. It also embraces diversity of racial, linguistic, cultural or socio-economic background.

Our Social Mission is to provide an educational environment that is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate each learner's needs. These are non-coercive learning environments where students' choices are respected. They are free to develop organically and coherently without internal or external conflict. Students set themselves challenges based on their individual needs. They become more fully themselves while honouring others in the process.

Social and Emotional Learning is an intrinsic part of our philosophy and individuals are fully engaged in all conflict resolution, negotiation, and decision making at school. They are supported by staff members to navigate real life democratic processes. This hands on experience has greater relevance the children than artificial exercises.



BENEFICIARIES



Students

Our students are young people from a wide range of backgrounds and geographical areas who are otherwise unable to access a *“level and quality” educational provision that is “appropriate to their needs and abilities”*. - Education Act 1998

Employment

So far, we have created 12 secure, permanent and meaningful jobs. Over the next 10 years we will create 12 more. These jobs have enabled our staff to sustain themselves and their families in this rural location. Our enterprise is an important provider of long-term employment in the area, both now and into the future.

Democratic School Network

We support new and emerging democratic schools at the foundational stage of their development. We provide training, opportunities for observation and affiliation with the Democratic Education Ireland movement.

Family and Society

There is a positive impact on the whole family when a young person is fulfilled and happy at school. As the fundamental building block of society, the health and well-being of families is of paramount importance to the well-being of society and our state.

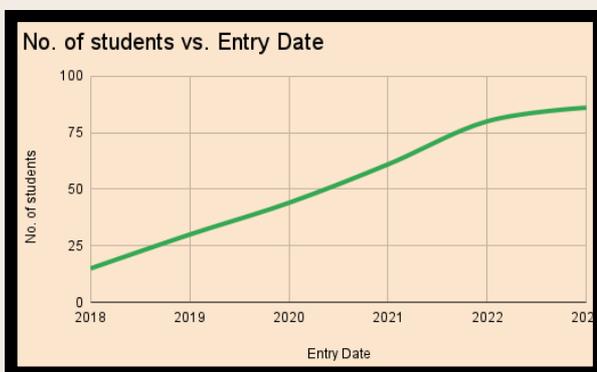
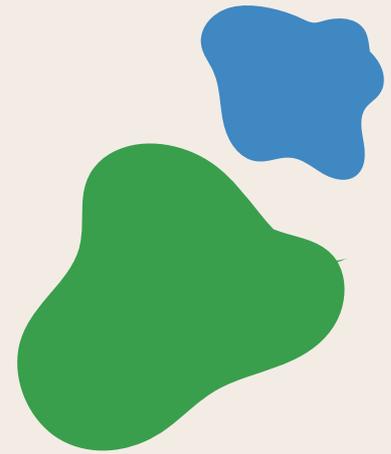
Local community and economy

Our impact on the economic development of this rural area has been considerable. Between 2017 and 2023, 20 families have moved to Sligo and its environs to become members at our school. There are 75 people living and working in this rural location that would not be here if it wasn't for our enterprise.

Stakeholders in Education

Stakeholders in education can observe and learn about this model at our Centre of Excellence for Self-Directed Democratic Education.

IMPACT STORIES



◆ "Our daughter (14 y.o.) is the happiest she has ever been (and we were going to very good traditional schools before). The community is vibrant and we're looking forward to the next months and years in Sligo Sudbury."

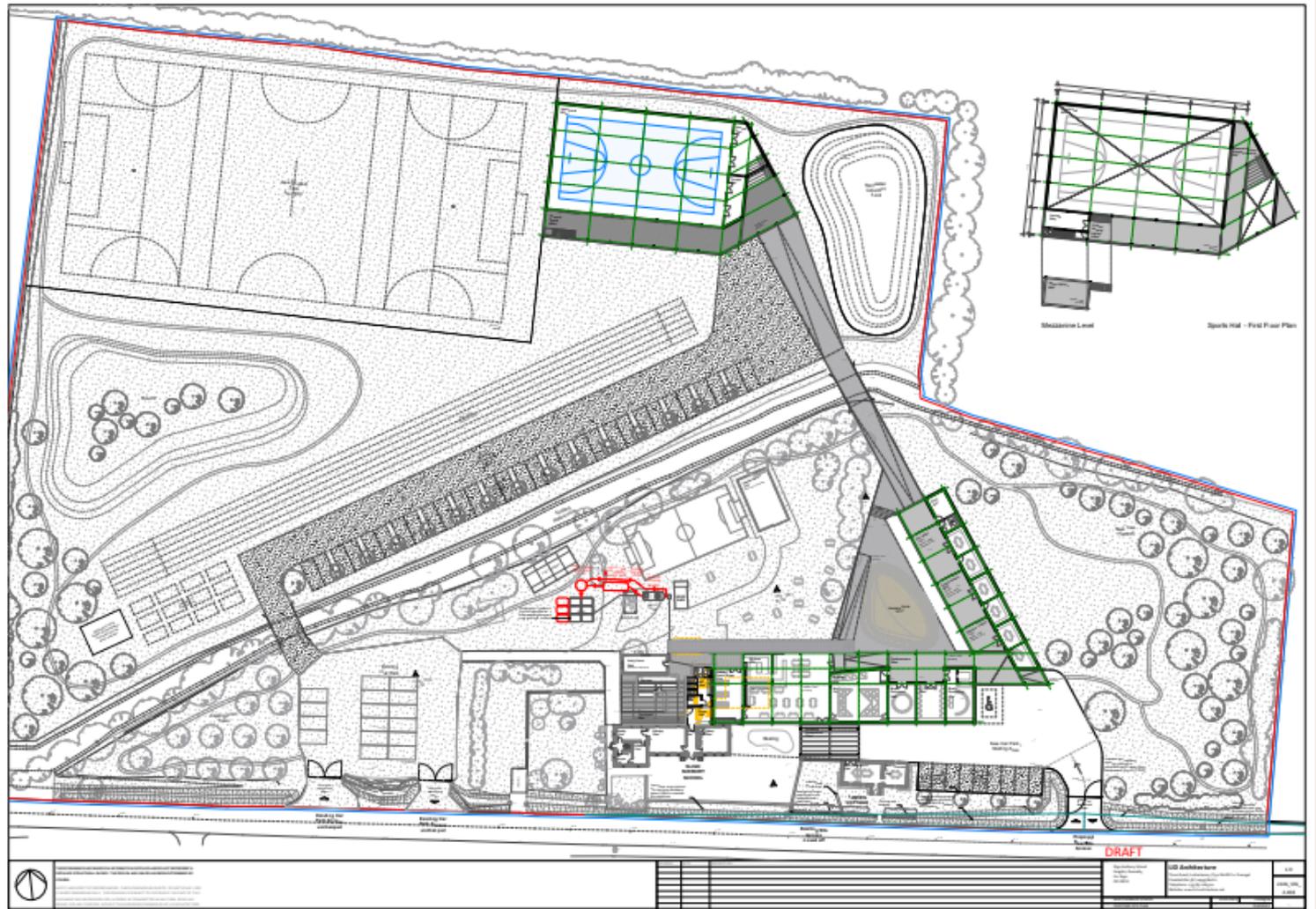
◆ "Without a shadow of doubt our family life is incredibly better since our children started at Sligo Sudbury School. It has been the best decision we ever made for our boys and our family as a whole."



◆ "Words cannot express how happy we are after her first week at Sudbury. Today was the first Monday in forever that she's looked forward to the day ahead! She gets up happy and excited, she comes home happy and excited. The knot in our tummy that we've had for years now is finally dispersing. Her anxiety has dramatically improved. I can come home after dropping her off and not spend the time worrying for the first time in years. It's been utterly life changing."

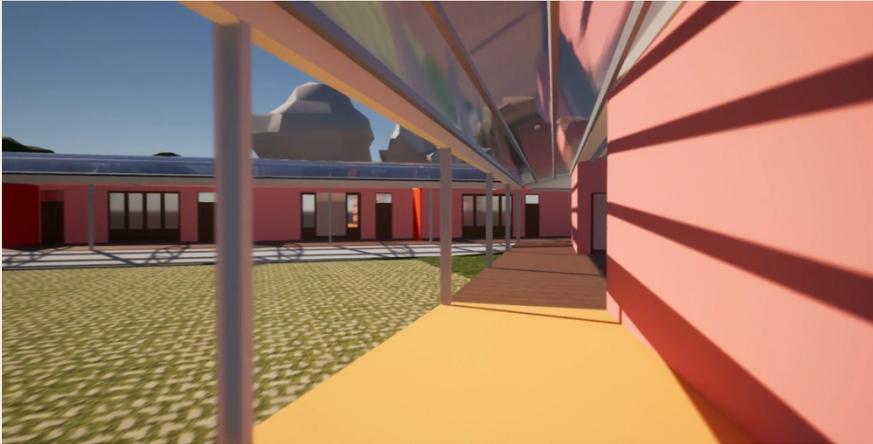
SCHOOL EXTENSION

A Centre of Excellence for Democratic Self-Directed Education for the North West of Ireland



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

What is your passion? Can you share it with us by helping us to fund and create ideal versions of the spaces listed below?



- Woodland, Green Space, Wilderness, Food Farm, Orchards and Ponds
- Sports Hall, Fitness Hub, Sports Pitches and Running Tracks
- Entrance Lobby, Locker Room, Sanitation Block, Parent Hub
- Student Hub including Teaching Kitchen and Dining Zone
- Theatre, Auditorium and Black Box Performance Space
- Gaming and Technology Room
- Construction Workshop
- Music Room, Band Space and Recording Studio
- Rooms for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths and Language
- Research Library and Study Rooms
- Sanctuary and Relaxation Zones



*Are you a musician?
Can you fund and or help us to design our new music spaces?*

Are you a chef? Can you build the dream teaching and catering kitchen?

Through this project you can share your passions and experience with the next generation...

WIDER IMPACT

Local and National Benefits

- Puts Ireland on the map as a leader in innovative and sustainable education
- Addresses the crisis in school related mental health issues
- Creates a Centre of Excellence to showcase, model, educate and inform about democratic education
- Builds awareness among the public of the availability of “other” learning models which may be more suitable for individuals’ needs and more reflective of family values
- Supports our democratic State through raising and educating our young people in institutions that reflect how our country is governed. It enables them to be informed and involved citizens
- Prepares our young people for 21st Century challenges through allowing the processes of creativity, innovation, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, collaboration, leadership and empathy to flourish
- Provides much needed indoor and outdoor workshop spaces, facilities, sports infrastructure and community hub to the people of Sligo town and county



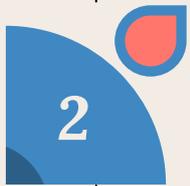
FUNDING CHALLENGE

€4 MILLION



€1,200,000

Secure 4 "Major benefactor" donations of €300,000



€2,000,000

Secure 20 "Support-a-Space" donations or pledges of €100,000



€300,000

Secure up to 30 donations through gifts, fundraising events or pledges of €10,000



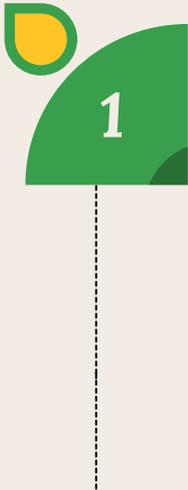
€500,000 loan secured

Secure 60 pledges of monthly payments of €100 per month over 7 years

We urgently need to start this development in order to accommodate more students, improve facilities and become a centre of excellence for Self-Directed Democratic Education. Here, policy makers, educators, and learners can experience the vast potential of this sustainable and future-fit model of education.

We do not receive funding from any government department or agency.

PROPOSED TIMELINE



LAND ACQUISITION - 2021 / 2022 - Completed

- Raised 165k in gifts and donations
- Secured 175k in low interest short-term loan
- Purchased 3 acre field to the rear of school
- Purchased 2 acre site and cottage adjacent to school
- Secured change of use planning permission for newly acquired lands and building
- Formed strategic partnerships with: Verus Metrology, DMac Media and the Nagle Family Foundation.



THE BUILD TIMELINE - 2024/ 2025 - On Target

- March 2024 - Planning Decision
- July 2024 - Construction Start
- August 2025 - Building Handover

In 2022 we secured donations of €165,000 to help us to complete the first phase of project. Our benefactors feel strongly that education needs to change in order to protect and enhance children's creativity, enterprise, and wellbeing, and that self-directed education is the most powerful means to achieve this. These were significant donations for which we are most grateful.

These donations enabled us to purchase a site and develop the design for our new school. We are now seeking additional supporters to help us to complete phase two of our project and would like to invite you to become a benefactor of Sligo Sudbury School.

Current Project Sponsors

Sligo Sudbury School is supported by and has strategic partnerships with:



BUDGET PROPOSAL

Expense Category	Amount (€)
School Extension and Sports Hall	€3,611,532
Sports Field	€180,000
Architect Fees	€100,000
Professional Services	€100,000
Fixtures and Fittings	€10,000
Total Budget	€4,001,532

Support our project

Help us scale our impact on the lives of children and their families, and develop a Centre of Excellence for Self-Directed Education. Commit your support today to turn our vision into reality.

Note:

Total Budget: The overall estimated budget for the build, includes all the expense categories mentioned above. This figure represents the total funding required to develop our school building and grounds to completion.

FINAL WORDS



- "Educational inequality is a problem in Ireland. Except for Youthreach, a state-provided programme of 'second chance' education, the area of alternative education is not explicitly defined and mentioned in the Irish education system." (1)
- "Long term consequences of negative school experience and early school leaving contribute to life-long problems with mental health, general wellbeing, economic stability and life satisfaction." (2)
- "Children growing up today will not just inherit the world's problems. They will be expected to have the skills and the will to help solve them. How will they be prepared to cope successfully with their daily lives and lead us into a complex and uncertain future when a narrow, inadequate vision of education still prevails for so many of the world's children?" (3)
- A recent Irish study found that as few as 13% of Irish employers believe that graduates are very well equipped to meet the future needs of the workforce. This study found that challenges started in secondary school education with a disconnect between the skills students needed and what they are taught. Employers say "soft" skills such as communication, work ethic, teamwork and problem-solving will be most needed for the workforce of the future over the coming years. O'Brien, Carl (2020) Graduates 'not well-equipped' for future workplace. (4)
- "If we are to educate students to engage in public life as democratic citizens, it is essential that they learn how to participate democratically in the public domain. The first public forum where that opportunity arises for all members of society is in schools, where students can learn about democracy by practising it." (5)

1. Kovačič, T., Forkan, C., Dolan, P. & Rodriguez, L. (2021). Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway, section 1.2
2. (Smyth, E., Banks, J., O'Sullivan, J., McCoy, S., Redmond, P. & McGuinness, S. (2019) Evaluation of the national Youthreach programme. Research series, Number 82, Dublin: ESRI.
3. Linda Lantieri. Cultivating Emotional Intelligence through Social and Emotional Learning: Why It Matters
4. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/graduates-not-well-equipped-for-future-workplace-1.4183717>
5. Baker, J; Lynch, K; Cantillon, S; Walsh, J. (2004) Equality: From Theory to Action. Palgrave MacMillan.

FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Help us share a brighter future, where every learner is the author of their own success story.

Support our mission with your donation today.

Contact us directly to discuss your donation. Details below.



CONTACT US

Sligo Sudbury School



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