

## Future Focus 21c - Accessibility and Implementation

**Vision Statement:** Future Focus21C strives to empower and uplift underserved rural communities in South Kerry, Ireland, by providing equitable access to 21st-century education and community development resources. We are committed to reducing barriers such as financial constraints, literacy levels, and digital access while fostering a culture of inclusivity and empowerment.

**Context:** South Kerry faces unique challenges, including the lowest rate of employment growth in the country, a significant retired population (24,700), and 6,490 individuals unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability. The largest employment sectors include Wholesale and Retail Trade (8,800 workers), Human Health and Social Work (7,600 workers), and Accommodation and Food Service Activities (6,700 workers). Future Focus21C addresses these demographic realities through tailored education and community initiatives. (Census Data, 2022)

### Data Needs for Localisation

1. **Income Distribution Data:** Specific thresholds for low-income brackets in South Kerry based on living wage information and local demographics. The 2024/25 Living Wage for the Republic of Ireland is €14.75 per hour ave Kerry rate is between 2-4 euros below this.
2. **Employment Trends:** 21c skills and competencies (Futures / Climate and Digital Literacy) are lacking in Rural Ireland as well as on a local level. The following reports inform our focus on Futures and Climate Literacy - 21c and Green skills and competencies integrated into a framework that balances social, environmental and economic values

1. Skillnet Ireland Annual Report, p17  
[https://www.skillnetireland.ie/images/uploads/annualreport/Skillnet\\_Ireland\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://www.skillnetireland.ie/images/uploads/annualreport/Skillnet_Ireland_Annual_Report_2023.pdf)
2. GreenComp Overview  
<https://teachingthefuture.eu/green-competence-framework-published/>
3. Reimagining Rural Ireland - Digital Skills Strategy overview  
<https://www.darganinstitute.ie/research/3-big-ideas-that-can-help-reimagine-rural-ireland>
4. Responding to Ireland's Skills Needs, The Fourth Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
[https://www.egfsn.ie/media/xc0knkeg/egfsn031002\\_fourth\\_report\\_egfsn.pdf](https://www.egfsn.ie/media/xc0knkeg/egfsn031002_fourth_report_egfsn.pdf)
5. Also our own research - CoDesRes and Muinín Catalyst reports

3. **Community Feedback:** Barriers and preferences gathered via local consultation and discussion since 2017, through engaged research and our affiliation with UCD through SMARTlab / SMARTlab Skelligs - Future Focus21c
4. **Technological Access:** Proportion of residents with internet access and devices.

## Goals

1. Increase access to education and skills training for low-income and marginalised rural populations through STEAM Education and Creative Sustainable Placemaking.
2. Provide links to 21c financial technological and practical support to ensure inclusivity.
3. Develop learners and Educators accreditation with key partners e.g. Oide, NCCA and Creative Futures Academy, UCD
4. Foster collaboration with local industries and organisations to create new partnerships and 21c future-ready economic models and pathways.

## Key Strategies

### 1. Financial Accessibility

- Tiered pricing to accommodate low-income individuals.
- Provide free or subsidised access to all through funded / subsidised projects
- Profit for purpose model: Re-investment of profit to provide free or subsidised access essential education programmes for retirees, differently-abled individuals and low-income workers.

### Proposed Pricing Tiers

Income	Programme Price	Eligibility Criteria
Free Tier	0	Funded programmes / Targeted Demographics
Subsidised Tier	Contribution to programme - programme specific / non - targeted individuals	Verification of participation in government assistance programmes - included differently abled individuals
<b>Edtech Platform Licenses / Subscriptions NB: Under consideration</b>		
Standard Tier (individual)	Monthly €100 Annual €1000	Full access - Individuals not eligible for other tiers.



Non-profit	Annual: €2500	Selected programmes / multiple users Multiple users in under-served or low economic / disadvantaged areas
Premium / Institutional Tier	Monthly €1000 p.m. Annual €10,000	Enhanced features including one-on-one training, curriculum planning and masters classes / new content.

### Comparative Analysis of Pricing and Services:

In the landscape of online education, affordability and value are critical factors, especially for underserved populations. This report aims to compare our pricing and service features with those of other state-of-the-art online schools. Emphasising cost savings and value, we'll explore how our offerings stand out in terms of affordability and support for underserved communities.

### Full-Time Equivalent Fees

- Average Fees: Competitors charge between €14,200 and €17,200 for full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment.
- Our Fee Structure: We offer a school's multiple licenses package at €10,000, significantly lower than the average market rate.

### Individuals: 4-Subject Package

- Average Fees: The market average for a 4-subject package is approximately €4,100.
- Our Offering: Our comprehensive package for all 10 programmes is priced at €1,000 per annum per learner, if they do not qualify for a subsidised or free tier.

### Value-Added Service Features

- **Subsidised and Free Tiers:** Our pricing model includes subsidised and free tiers for eligible learners, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder access to quality education. This approach not only makes education more accessible but also aligns with our mission to support underserved communities.
- **Self-Directed Learning:** Our content is developed through rigorous research and delivery, allowing for self-directed learning. This empowers students to take charge of their education and learn at their own pace.
- **Localised Support:** We enhance the learning experience through partnerships with teachers and local organisations. This localised support ensures that students receive personalised guidance and resources tailored to their specific needs.



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**Conclusion:** Our programmes offers a compelling combination of affordability and value, particularly for underserved populations. By providing lower fees, comprehensive programmes, and supportive learning environments, we differentiate ourselves from competitors and uphold our commitment to accessible education. Through strategic pricing and innovative service delivery, we continue to empower learners and bridge educational gaps.

## 2. Technological and Digital Inclusion

- All educational tools and resources meet digital accessibility standards / incorporate differentiated strategies and utilise Inclusive Design in their development.
- Utilise blended learning to support differentiated strategies through multiple learning modalities
- Provide our hardware (tablets, 3D printers, VR headsets, 3D pens, Media Equipment) for programme participants.

## 3. Community-Centric Approach

- Develop courses tailored to key capacity building in 21c Futures, Climate and Digital Literacy
- Partner with local organisations to identify and reach underserved demographics.

## 4. Cultural and Linguistic Adaptability

- Create resources available using Plain English, with options for audio and visual aids for users with low literacy levels - see also blended learning / differentiated strategies approach.
- Develop Muinin Catalyst resources in Irish - implementation in 2025

## 5. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- Conduct regular surveys and focus groups within the community to ensure programs remain relevant and effective.
- Continue engaged research approach and align to research integrity
- Continue to develop and support learners and educators through updated content development and training

**Addressing Barriers in Training Programs:** Our training programs are designed to address various barriers such as Futures, Climate and Digital literacy, as well as language, and access to resources. By recognising these barriers, our training initiatives are tailored to meet the diverse needs of learners / educators, especially those from underserved communities, typically as:

- **Digital Literacy:** Programs often include foundational modules that enhance digital skills, ensuring that all participants are comfortable with using technology. This can involve basic computer skills, navigating online platforms, and understanding digital tools.
- **Language:** To overcome language barriers, materials use blended learning and differentiated strategies including visual aids and simplified language. We are just beginning to explore translating our resources which will work with local bilingual translators
- **Access to Resources:** Efforts are made to provide free or subsidised access to online materials and where we delivery the necessary resources, such as tablets and other hardware, software, or internet connectivity. We also offer analogue options for activities and going forward our partnerships with local organisations will help support learners also.

**Follow-Up Support for Educators:** Follow-up support is a crucial component of successful training programs. It ensures that learners continue to benefit from the training and can apply their new skills effectively. Here are some common forms of follow-up support:

- **Regular Online Support:** Trainees can access ongoing support through online platforms, which may include forums, chat support, or scheduled virtual sessions with instructors. This helps address any questions or challenges that arise post-training.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Pairing trainees with mentors can provide personalised guidance and encouragement. Mentors can help trainees navigate real-world applications of their skills and offer career advice.
- **Additional Learning Opportunities:** Offering advanced or supplementary courses allows trainees to continue their education and deepen their knowledge.
- **Feedback and Assessment:** Continuous feedback mechanisms, such as surveys or assessments, help track trainee progress and identify areas for improvement.

**Accreditation and Partnership Development:** Accreditation plays a significant role in validating the effectiveness and credibility of training programs. By aligning with national frameworks and collaborating with recognised partners like Oide, NCCA, and Creative Futures Academy, training programs can ensure their content meets high standards. This not only enhances the value of the training for participants but also increases recognition from potential employers and other educational institutions.

Overall, these comprehensive approaches to training and support help create an inclusive and effective learning environment that empowers individuals to overcome barriers and achieve their goals.

## 6. Future Focus21c - Logic Model



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Components	Description
<b>Inputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local suppliers prioritised through pCr mapping.</li> <li>● Community engagement efforts.</li> <li>● Funding for local initiatives.</li> <li>● Employee expertise in community development.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sourcing 50%+ of non-labour expenses from local / independent suppliers.</li> <li>● Hosting training/workshops for community members.</li> <li>● Providing space for local organisations.</li> <li>● Partnering with underserved communities for tailored initiatives.</li> </ul>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contracts with local suppliers.</li> <li>● Number of workshops or training sessions held.</li> <li>● Community spaces utilised for events.</li> <li>● Surveys capturing stakeholder satisfaction.</li> </ul>
Short-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved skills and confidence in beneficiaries</li> <li>● Learners and educators with increased capacity in integrated Futures / Climate and Digital Literacy</li> <li>● Pilot Values-led accessible Edtech Platform</li> <li>● Increased engagement with community organisations</li> <li>● Increased delivery partnerships</li> <li>● Enhanced economic activity for local suppliers</li> </ul>
Long-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Values-led Edtech Platform</li> <li>● More integrated educational Landscape including knowledge transfer from Industry / Academic pathways</li> <li>● Contribution to environmentally sustainable innovation and enterprise policy and implementation</li> <li>● Strengthened community networks and resilience.</li> <li>● Evidence of reduced dependency on external aid in underserved areas.</li> <li>● Reduction in socio-economic inequality.</li> <li>● Sustainable growth of local values-led businesses.</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Systemic approach to values-led education / Life-long learning</li> <li>● Educational Reform</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Greater social cohesion and empowerment in disadvantaged areas.</li> <li>● A thriving local economy with equitable opportunities.</li> <li>● Contribution to environmentally sustainable innovation / enterprise including supply chains.</li> </ul>
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## 6. Future Focus21c - Simplified Theory of Change

### 1. Challenges Identified:

- Education not designed to meet the challenges of the 21c
- State level curriculum is not agile enough
- Limited 21c role models / opportunities and access to learning these skills
- Limited opportunities contribute to an economic diaspora - learners leave and rarely return
- Socio-economic inequality in rural Kerry, including low household incomes and dependency on social welfare.
- Limited access to skilled local suppliers and community organisations working with 21c Futures / Climate and Digital Literacy other than university or industry.

### 2. Core Mission:

- Increase opportunities for
- Develop a life-long learning landscape (early years - university level)
- Develop a centre of excellence for Futures / Climate Literacy for place-based STEAM Education and Placemaking
- To drive sustainable social environmental and economic regeneration through local sourcing, community capacity building, and equitable partnerships.

### 3. Pathway to Change:

**Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact**

- **Inputs:** Resources, partnerships, expertise, and funding.
- **Activities:** Local sourcing, training, stakeholder engagement, and impact measurement.
- **Outputs:** Tangible metrics like project-based evaluation including awards / recognition, agentic activities, satisfaction rates, contracts, events and economic benefits.
- **Short-Term Outcomes:** Immediate capacity-building results.
- **Long-Term Outcomes:** Reduced inequalities, regeneration beyond simply sustaining development and empowered communities / agentic localised resilient actions.

### 4. Impact Goals:

- Build a resilient and self-sufficient local ecosystem.
- Promote environmental and social regeneration.



- Foster equitable social and economic opportunities.
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## Implementation Plan 2025

### Phase 1: Assessment (Months 1-3)

- Review detailed demographic and income data from local government reports and community organisations to ensure ongoing relevance.
- Complete evaluation and reports for existing programmes showing skills gaps / barriers faced by rural residents / programme participants.
- Build out Simplified Theory of Change
- Submit proposals / tenders and expand revenue generation activities
- Develop Accreditation partnerships

### Phase 2: Program Development (Months 3-7)

- Develop tailored educational content focusing on employability in dominant local sectors.
- Develop Local / regional partnerships for new programmes - Sept 2025
- Collect participant feedback for refinement / programme and evaluation design
- Review and Update as necessary pricing tiers / income verification systems.

### Phase 3: Pilot and Rollout (Months 8-12)

- Launch new pilot programmes / Edtech platform in collaboration with local / regional partners.

### Phase 4: Evaluation and Expansion (Year 2)

- Measure program success using bespoke metrics developed through prior research and user design e.g. gamification, bespoke learner criteria satisfaction, and participant numbers.
- Expand programs based on community needs and user co-design.

### Metrics for Success

- Enrollment of at least 250 underserved participants in the first year.
  - 80% user satisfaction rate across programs.
  - Documented through routes and pathways and upskilling outcomes for 200 participants annually.
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## Future Focus21C Digital Learning Platform - Initial Design Brief

**Design Focus:** Integration of simple and universally recognisable icons, such as headphones for audio mode and a globe for language selection.

- Designed and built using Inclusive Design principles
- Gamification for educational motivation
- Project-based learning accreditation
- Low carbon / embodied resource impact
- Free and Subsidised price tiers
- Educator support packages

### Key Features:

- 1. Navigation Interface:**
  - High-contrast design and large buttons for users with visual impairments.
  - Intuitive menu system to aid those with low digital literacy.
- 2. Content Delivery:**
  - Audio lessons and narrated tutorials for individuals with low literacy levels.
  - Bilingual content in Irish and English, with easy-to-understand visuals.
- 3. Accessibility Settings:**
  - Adjustable text size and screen reader compatibility.
  - Offline mode for users with limited internet access.
- 4. Community-Specific Modules:**
  - Training tailored to meet 21c Futures, Climate and Digital Literacy needs
  - Evidence-based local needs