



International Men's Day at MIC

Welcome to the #IMD2021 themed newsletter where we share a range of different stories including a look at the background to International Men's Day (IMD), a sample of our colleagues perspectives on IMD and a reminder of events taking place to mark IMD 2021.

#internationalmensday #celebratemen #menshealth #stopmalesuicide

International Men's Day - What's the Story?

International Men's Day (IMD) observed on November 19 focuses on men's health, improving gender relations, highlighting male role models, and promoting positive expressions of masculinity. It's also an opportunity to recognize men who don't fall into traditional manifestations of masculinity, such as gay and bisexual men, transgender, or masculine non-binary people.

Founded in 1998 in Trinidad and Tobago, IMD has gone on to garner support from individuals and social groups across the globe. International Men's Day is celebrated in over 60 countries of the world.

The 6 Pillars of International Men's Day

1. To promote positive male role models; not just movie stars and sports men but every day, working class men who are living decent, honest lives.
2. To celebrate men's positive contributions to society, community, family, marriage, child care, and to the environment.
3. To focus on men's health and wellbeing; social, emotional, physical and spiritual.
4. To highlight discrimination against men; in areas of social services, social attitudes and expectations, and law
5. To improve gender relations and promote gender equality
6. To create a safer, better world; where people can be safe and grow to reach their full potential.

Early pioneers of IMD remind everyone that the day is not intended to compete against International Woman's Day, but is for the purpose of highlighting men's experiences. Each year secondary themes are suggested, such as peace in 2002, men's health in 2003, healing and forgiveness in 2007, or positive male role models in 2009.

IMD Theme 2021

One of the six pillars of International Men's Day is to improve gender relations and promote gender equality not only for men but for women too. In this light the theme for 2021 is

"Better relations between men and women."



MIC Perspectives on Role Models & Gender Equality

Here we have a sample of perspectives from colleagues across the College on the influential role models in their lives and what gender equality means to them. Thank you all for your time. The term 'role model' often means something different to each of us. Our colleagues and students inspire those around them often without even knowing it!



Eoin Martin, Education Office

Please tell us a bit about you:

I work in the Education Office. I started in January 2021 and also attended MIC from 2007-2012.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

My parents.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

To me it means a balance and accepting people for who they are.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Exercise



Professor William Leahy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Please tell us a bit about you:

I am very new to MIC. I started on the 1st September 2021 and so am half way through my third month here. I am moved over from London where I spend most of my life - though I lived in Berlin for 7 years in the 80s and 90s.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

One of my heroes is Sinead O'Connor. I love her determination to be herself and be true to herself no matter what. Another is my friend, Benjamin Zephaniah, a UK poet. He has strong principles, all defined by clear notions of justice and he also stays true to these principles. Finally, I would have to say Greta Thunberg - for obvious reasons. What a hero!

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

For me it is simple really. It is just a question of justice. That's it - simply justice.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

I can recommend Tai Chi. It is exercise and meditation rolled into one.



Dave Cuddihy, MISU Clubs and Societies Coordinator

Please tell us a bit about you:

Having graduated from MIC in 2006 I served as Students' Union President for the Academic Year 06/07. Myself and MIC parted ways then for a grand total of 3 years before I returned to work with the Students' Union in 2010 and as they say the rest is history. In my role as Clubs and Societies Coordinator I look after the running of all of our Clubs and Socs here at MISU. No day is the same in my role, which I love and have learned to embrace the spontaneity involved in student activities. The passion the students bring to the table always amazes me as I get older and try to keep up. Alongside my role in MISU I have also recently been elected as Chairperson for the Board of Irish College Societies which is the umbrella organisation of 17 Institutes who provide guidance to the staff and student network throughout the country.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

Laura Brennan, a close friend who passed away 2 years ago now but spent the final years of her life fronting the HSE HPV vaccine campaign. Laura knew her diagnosis was terminal but used the time she had left to help others and to make sure that others did not have to go through what she went through. Laura never complained and would not let her

diagnosis hold her back. She showed such courage and determination which I was in complete envy of. There was often times I would sit there and think to myself how in God's name is she holding everything together as I certainly wouldn't be able to do the same in her situation. That to me was a true inspiration.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

Gender equality would mean getting to a point where we no longer have to have the discussion around the same. It would be nice to have some kind of fairy-tale solution but until we get to a point where we no longer have to have the conversation/initiatives then we have not reached the end goal.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Talking to myself and swearing - I will often be found wandering around the house doing bits and pieces while chatting away to myself and swearing under my breath. It may not be inspirational but I do find if I let off a good string of obscenities I will feel a whole lot better and once I have externalised the problems then it no longer requires my headspace, even if no one is listening I've got the issue out of my head and I can move on and forget about it.



Dr Eamonn Mitchell, Lecturer in Education (School Placement)

Please tell us a bit about you:

I have been working in MIC since 2007/08 academic year. I began by being seconded to a Visual Art Education Lecturer post, following nearly a decade of class teaching in counties Wicklow and Limerick. I now work in the area of School Placement in the College. It is a busy and demanding role, which keeps me connected to many different areas in Education. I enjoy being part of the MIC community, especially in my teaching of students, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. I am married to Geri, and have three lovely children, Ciarán, Áine and Aoibhín. They are wonderfully adept at keeping me grounded and we enjoy trips 'home' to my homeplace of Sligo, walks on Atlantic shorelines, watching a movie together and enjoying each other's company. I am really interested in the arts generally, philosophy and photography.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

My dad Oliver has to be a huge influence on my whole self. I completed a Doctorate on the area of caring and ethics of care in QUB in the last few years. The reflective inquiry style of writing and thinking in that doctoral work led me back to my father's role as early care-giver of myself, my sister and two brothers. I have a whole section of my doctorate on my father's genuine caring. Another role model who has inspired me includes my wife Geri (a primary school teacher and fellow graduate of MIC's class of 1999) and her strong value and opinions on her primary teacher role. Further role models come from the many teachers I encountered from preschool to third level, including Mrs. McTigue for introducing me to important new things at 4th class, my mother Elaine for guiding and shaping my mind, and past MIC lecturers (now my colleagues, and some who sadly have since passed) who resonate with me still.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

It is important to try to move 'beyond gender', without letting go of realising biological difference and the lived-with constructs of gender as they currently are emplaced in society. I think if we start to move towards contemplation of 'human caring' (see Joan Tronto) and genuine caring (see Nel Noddings), we can negate some of the hard duties that have long been foisted upon women, while allowing men to embrace the care role more fully. A focus on human caring, rather than seeing women only as carers and/or men as not, may allow for new transitioning towards shared responsibilities, and from the early moments of life and outwards, young children will

grow as human carers themselves. I know I focus on caring quite a bit, but I feel the constructions of gender have been developed historically on the basis of care ethics and the morality of caring. I believe we all can and should 'care'. By starting with and experiencing role models of care in early life in this way, I believe the world can come closer to human equality by changing gender constructions in society, whilst still acknowledging biological difference of men and women.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

There is nothing better to switch off from work, then simply reconnecting with friends and family... a shared adventure, a shared story, or a shared laugh.



Martin Waters, Project Portfolio Manager, ICT

Please tell us a bit about you:

I began working in MIC in 2008 in the ICT Services department. Although I have had different roles throughout that time in support and operations, projects have always been my passion. In 2020 I completed an MSc in Project and Programme Management at the University of Limerick. It is fair to say I enjoy the challenge of bringing a project from an initial idea/concept to completion and transitioning into operations. When not working, I enjoy cycling, coaching the local underage GAA team and being a Dad/Taxi/ATM to my two sons.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

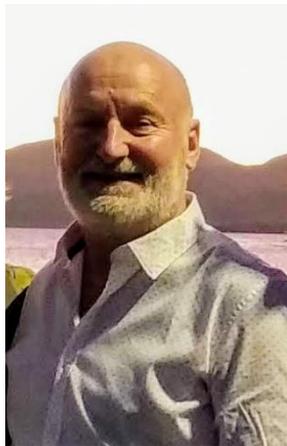
My parents. Both have inspired and motivated me to make the most of life, and are always available when I need support.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

For me, gender equality means equal opportunities for all and the freedom to pursue the career you want, the lifestyle you wish for and do so without discrimination.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Getting on my bike and cycling for 2 to 3 hours at weekends is an excellent opportunity to switch off and escape from the hustle and bustle that life throws at you. I also enjoy listening to podcasts in the evenings if I go for a run or walk. Currently, I'm listening to Vincera! The story of Italia 90 and Demystifying Mental Toughness by David Charlton. Current and former MIC colleagues highly recommended both.



Tony O'Connell, Tutor/Moderator/Facilitator

Please tell us a bit about you:

I returned to education as a mature student in Mary I in 2005 graduating with a BA in 2009. Since joining the college community initially as a student and later as a member of staff, I have been blessed with the friendships and relationships I have developed. Those have

been with people regardless of their gender. Reflecting on the prompt re my interests, it comes down to people and in particular building a support network.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

Patricia Donald MBE whom I was fortunate to count as a friend for over ten years before she passed away in 2019 came to mind immediately when asked who I consider a role model. Patricia took her responsibility as a member of the human race very seriously. Together with her very good friend Joan Wilson whom I also had the pleasure of getting to know, exemplified how to be make an impact in their families, their church (Methodist) and in the wider community. Joan had her own struggles especially when she and her husband Gordon lost their daughter Marie in the 1987 Enniskillen bombing.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

Regardless of gender, equality for me is treating each person equally. It is unfortunate that assumptions can be made in relation to one gender in any particular situation. Perhaps because of my marginalised situation, each person is the same to me; man or woman.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Sharing the ups and downs of life as I encounter them with good friends helps me to de stress. I'm not always good at reaching out for help but when I do, those good friends are always there to listen.



Fahad Khan, Accommodation Assistant, Accommodation Office

Please tell us a bit about you:

I am working for MIC since 2016 at Courtbrack Student Accommodation, I love my job & workplace and I like to work with students, it is wonderful experience.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

My role model is my Mom & Dad. My Dad is a very positive man who always gives me positive advice. My mom was a kind hearted lady, she always thought me to help others.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

Gender equality is a basic human right, all genders have equal right to choose their career, lifestyle choice, opportunities and everything whatever they like. Gender equality makes communities/relationships healthier and safer.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

PRAY. (Pray everyday only about 20minutes. Never have any stress in your life.)



Dr. Michael Finneran, Head of Drama and Theatre Studies

Please tell us a bit about you:

I'm a teacher/artist/researcher and I've worked at MIC since 1999. I hold the unique distinction (I think!) of having been Head of departments in both of our academic Faculties. I was really lucky to have the opportunity to be heavily involved in establishing the Lime Tree Theatre, and I've been privileged to be involved with MIDAS throughout my time here.

On the personal front, I'm married to Jean and we have two canine overlords (Max and Rolo). I love travel, meeting new people, Roscommon football, Munster rugby and theatre of course!

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

I've been fortunate to work with some incredible colleagues in MIC and further afield. Within the college, Áine Cregan and Dorothy Morrissey have been inspirational companions as have Louise Donlon and Gill Fenton in the Lime Tree. In the world I'm deeply inspired by the philosophy of Maxine Greene and Gayatri Spivak, the political leadership of Michael D. Higgins and John Hume, but especially the fictional leadership of Josiah Bartlett (played by Martin Sheen in The West Wing)

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

I regard gender equality as a yet unfulfilled promise and a duty for us all to pursue. It is important to me because I have spent my career surrounded by women or equal and often greater ability with whom I collaborate and yet to whom, I know the system does not provide equity of opportunity to fulfill their ambitions. As a white, middle-class, straight man I recognise how many opportunities have come my way that do not come to others, but I also recognise the power of my voice in calling for and leading change.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

I'm currently reading Fintan O'Toole's new book 'We don't know ourselves' and thoroughly enjoying it, and listening to a brilliant new book by a friend of mine Melanie Challenger - 'How to be Animal'. I love to get up a hill or to the gym for exercise and my current tv viewing is 'Chestnut Man' on Netflix



Colm Linnane, Higher Executive Officer, Human Resources

Please tell us a bit about you:

I have been working in the Human Resources Department in MIC since 2019. Before joining MIC I worked in Westmeath County Council and the Civil Service. I studied at NUI Galway and completed a BA and a Masters in Human Resource Management. My interests include amateur drama, GAA, golf, music and horse racing.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

My Parents

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

Equal opportunities for women and men. This is vital to ensure quality of life for all citizens regardless of their gender.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Golf - a stressful way to relax!



Niall Quinn, Art Technician

Please tell us a bit about you:

I've been the Art Technician in MIC for over 20 years now. I was lured here with a promise I could leave after six weeks. Then someone locked the door behind me. Send help. I try to help out as best as I can in Art Education doing a bit of everything. I'm not an academic though and I don't teach. As I tell students who seek my help "I'm the HOW guy, not the WHAT guy". Prescient to my future career I earned the nickname "Jack of All..." (with the unspoken but heavily implied "Master of None") in secondary school –probably after ditching playing drums at school masses in favour of playing bass which I assumed I could play and was much handier to lug about than a drumkit. I still can't play bass but I've been known to tap the drums for sheer kicks'n'giggles.

Who do you consider role models whom have inspired you?

My dad who's 88 worked from his teens till his 80's and along the way gave over two decades as a public representative –including a term as Mayor of Limerick. Over a further two decades after stepping down from politics he STILL has people knocking at his door at dinner time looking for help or advice on something or other and he, the bigger eejit for it in my view, goes out of his way to help them. But that's still pretty inspiring all the same.

What does gender equality mean to you and why do you think it is important?

I think gender equality shouldn't HAVE to be important and shouldn't HAVE to be a thing at all. It should just BE. It should be entirely presumable. That it isn't 'there' yet and that there's such a way to go in so many areas -from classroom to boardroom and from pay gaps and maternity/paternity leave to roles in the home can be frustrating and disappointing when frustration and disappointment are inadequate. It requires action and constant re-appraisal of where we're at.

Bonus section - can you recommend something that helps you switch off from work or de stress:

Saturday nights I try to stay away from devices and screens as long as possible -including Netflix. I listen to Len Dinneens Sounds Easy radio show on 95fm where he plays all the old crooners my folks love but not necessarily the type of thing people would think an aging punk-rocker like me would be into. I just strum and howl along. It's a great de-stresser and helps keep the vocal chops in some kind of shape.

Movember

November is also Men's Health Awareness month. Many of us will have seen or know males in our lives that are taking part in 'Movember' by growing moustaches to raise money for charity while also raising awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide.

Movember was established in 2003 by a few friends over a beer in a pub just outside Melbourne, Australia. The organisation now numbers 5.5million, and has raised well over €500m for 1,200 men's health projects.

Read more on the Irish campaigns [here](#).



Limerick Suicide Watch on Campus

[Limerick Suicide Watch](#) will deliver a talk today (Friday 19 November) to mark International Men's Day. Unfortunately, suicide rates tend to be much higher for males and it may have touched our lives in many different ways.

Limerick Suicide Watch are a Limerick based suicide prevention group who patrol between the four bridges in Limerick City. The group's main focus is to keep eyes on the river, and identify and provide support to those in distress and who may be contemplating suicide. As part of their Suicide awareness programme and Community outreach programme they visit schools, colleges, places of work and local Communities to provide support, promote positive mental health and encourage conversation around mental health and suicide.

The group do not receive any national funding; each member volunteers their time and depend on donations from the public and fundraising events to help fund training, safety equipment and the day to day operation of the group.

Join us on Friday 19 November to hear about the service they provide and the importance of raising awareness of their work. Please see an awareness video developed by LSW last year: [Men's Mental Health Ad Campaign](#).

Date: Friday 19th November

Venue: Online via MS Teams ([link here](#))

Time: 10.30am



Athena SWAN
Bridges Award

**MIC Athena SWAN
International Men's Day**



INTERNATIONAL
MENSDAY
November 19

This year Limerick Suicide Watch will join us on campus to mark *International Men's Day* with a discussion on the service they provide and the importance of raising awareness of their work.

Date: Friday 19th November
Venue: Online via MS Teams
(email edel.foster@mic.ul.ie)
Time: 10.30am



LIMERICK SUICIDE
WATCH

*Open to all staff and students.
All welcome!*

Further Events of Interest

- Men's Aid Ireland invites you to an online event titled: '***Human stories of pain, suffering, shame and mockery. Men's experience of intimate partner violence***'. This free event will take place on 19th November 2021, 12.30pm - 1.30pm. Register [here](#)
- The HSE National Cancer Control Programme and HEADS UP Kildare invite you to a discussion about ***male cancer risk reduction and spotting potential early signs of cancer***. This free webinar will take place on 23rd November 2021, 1.00pm - 2.00pm. Register [here](#)
- '***The WHEN of Men's Health***' - will take place on Friday 19th November 2021 from Noon to 1.15pm. At this event, you will hear from local projects about how they have used special dates / occasions to highlight men's health needs; harnessed unforeseen opportunities which present themselves; or took action in response to emerging issues. There will also be an emphasis on the importance of inter-agency partnership, cooperation and collaboration in order to achieve something which is greater than the constituent parts. Register [here](#)
- '***The Man I Am: My Mind, My Body, My World***' - where guest speakers shared their own experiences and challenges of minding their mental health. A discussion on men's mental health in a modern world: exploring identity, experiences, challenges and perceptions. Recording of webinar [here](#)

Throwback Friday

2020

We celebrated the occasion in 2020 by hosting a panel discussion with student, graduate and staff role models of MIC Thurles and Limerick. An underlying theme of the talk was in relation to male underrepresentation in both education and professional services.

MIC Athena SWAN International Men's Day

Join us to mark *International Men's Day* with a panel discussion to celebrate the many student, staff and graduate role models in MIC Limerick and Thurles.

- Stephen Dunne, graduate BA in Geography and Maths: *Overcoming barriers*
- Dr Patrick Cosgrove, Student Recruitment Officer, Strategic Communications & Marketing: *Male Underrepresentation*
- Dr Tayo Paul Adenusi, Assistant Lecturer in Education: *Education in West Africa*
- Aaron Sheil, John White & Alex O'Keeffe: *Experiences and perspectives of mature students at MIC*

Date: Thursday 19th November

Venue: Online

Time: 11am

*Open to all staff and students.
All welcome!*



2019

In 2019, our guest speaker, David Gough, gave the audience an insight into his journey to becoming one of Ireland top GAA referee's and also the first openly gay GAA referee at that level.



Dr Elaine Murtagh (former Director of Athena SWAN), David Gough, Prof Gary O'Brien (VP Governance and Strategy), Edel Foster (Athena SWAN Project Manager).

Talk to Us



We would love to hear from you, if you would like to know more about Athena SWAN or would like something included in the Ezine.

Contact Edel on edel.foster@mic.ul.ie or 061 204338.

Follow us on Twitter for updates [@MICAthenaSWAN](https://twitter.com/MICAthenaSWAN)

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