

## Innovative Research Solutions with Industry

Disability & Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing, Education & Training, Research

**CLIENT:**  
UNESCO

**AREA:**  
Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness & Recreation



## IT Tralee receives UNESCO Chair in Inclusive P.E., Sport, Fitness and Recreation



UNESCO is the United Nations' lead agency for Physical Education and Sport, providing assistance and guidance services for governments, NGOs, and experts to debate the evolving challenges in this area. In addition, UNESCO offers its expertise in the design and implementation of development programmes in the domain of sport.

Currently 15% of the world's population have a disability but yet are not afforded equal opportunities to participate in sport and Physical Education as per the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNESCO has identified that despite numerous efforts over the past two decades, significant gaps remain between physical education and sport policy commitments and their implementation. The organisation is promoting investment in sport and physical education and through intercultural dialogue, education, scientific research and the sharing of knowledge to address these gaps.

IT Tralee has an esteemed international reputation for leadership in inclusion and adapted physical activity. This includes development of the APA (Adapted Physical Activity) Honours Degree & Masters programmes, the European Fitness Inclusion Training for Work (EFITW) Leader, the Cara Centre (the National Centre for APA), Campabilities (a residential camp for visually impaired children) and the Surf to Heal (Kerry) project. In May 2013 it signed an agreement with UNESCO establishing the Chair for 'Transforming



UNESCO, Paris

the Lives of People with Disabilities through Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation'.

Some of the major challenges of modern times are addressed by the Chair activities including healthy and active aging and tackling societal challenges such as inclusion and wellbeing. The Chair activities extend across such disciplines as education and training, adapted physical activity, social sciences, the arts (music and dance), social entrepreneurship, health, pedagogy, assistive technologies, ICT, policy and development work. →

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- The UNESCO Chair activity in the IT Tralee is facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities in PE and Sport with the view to influencing both policy and practice. A range of activities are currently being progressed including:
- Actively engaging with governments to advance their investment in, and policies around, PE and sport.
  - Working closely with UNESCO to shape future resources in PE, Sport, Fitness and Recreation to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities.
  - Promoting an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the fields of inclusive physical education, adapted physical activity, sports and fitness for social inclusion of people with disabilities.
  - Advancing the research agenda and developing a suite of postgraduate educational and training programmes

IT Tralee's UNESCO Chair has contributed to MINEPSV, UNESCO World Sport Ministers & Senior Officials Conference Berlin in May 2013 which resulted in the Berlin Declaration, a blueprint for global policy and practice for the coming 5 years. The IT Tralee is currently sourcing funding for the Chair from research grant awards and philanthropic donations. Funding for previous research at the IT Tralee in adapted and inclusive physical activity was sourced from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union; The Irish Sports Council; The Department of Justice; Hyundai Ireland; Fáilte Ireland, National Council for the Blind, National Learning Network, Hope Alaska. ■

## TESTIMONIAL

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### Catherine Carty

IT Tralee

*"The awarding of the UNESCO Chair to the IT Tralee is testament to the track record of the Institute in the areas of PE, Sport, Fitness and Recreation for people with disabilities in inclusive and segregated settings. The UNESCO Chair designation has catapulted us into advancing our work agenda through providing the Institute with the opportunity to influence global policy and practice aimed at making societies more inclusive. The opportunities proffered by the Chair are of benefit to the Institute and to society at large. Our aim was to make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities, their families and their communities, and we will endeavour to use this opportunity to realise this goal."*

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### Ms. Catherine Carty

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