

Irish
College
Leuven
est. 1607

Dúiche 2026 Workshop

CAPITALISING ON PLACE | COMPETING ON DIFFERENCE

Why and how place matters?



IRISH COLLEGE LEUVEN, BELGIUM

Sunday, 11th October 2026 - Friday, 16th October 2026

Cost: €1,950

For further information, contact reception@irishcollegeleuven.eu

Dúiche Workshop

This Workshop is named Dúiche from the Irish word for native place, derived from the root 'du', meaning earth or land. Dúiche emphasises a sense of belonging, identity and responsibility, and stresses the interconnectedness of place, people, culture, language and the ecological balance between human and non-humans.

Dúiche Learning Approach

The Dúiche 2026 Workshop follows on from our very successful Dúiche 2025 Workshop. It is designed to inspire, and stimulate the development of internationally-competitive European enterprises rooted in unique places through the creation of 'real value'. It is not a business or entrepreneurship 'bootcamp'. Rather, it is an integrated mix of reflective lectures, discussions, guest speakers and hands on case studies, all designed to foster sustainable and innovative enterprises, especially in marginal regions throughout Europe.

Dúiche Major Themes

- Authenticity and tradition
- Place, sense of place and rootedness
- Real value, meaning and purpose
- Place-based enterprises and transformative experiences
- Community development and cooperative enterprises
- Competitive advantage of distinctive local resources
- Scaling deeper

BACKGROUND

At a time when national economies and societies are increasingly questioning the impact of the homogenising forces of globalisation and the relative risks and rewards of complex global supply chains, the 'local' matters more than ever. If anything, the consequences of recent political upheavals and the pandemic have heightened interest in place-based enterprises.

Throughout Europe, indigenous enterprises, especially those characterised by a commitment to authenticity and possessed of an ecologically and socially sustainable mind-set, offer a critical counter-balance to rootless multinationals. Sense of place, distinctiveness, identity, the arts, character, culture and commerce are inextricably linked in ways that extend well beyond the 'cultural industries':

In today's experience economy, meaning, tradition, authenticity, culture, language, and sense of place are often key elements in attaining a competitive advantage by 'scaling deeper' - that is, root-ing sustained competitive advantage in distinctive and authentic (including intangible) local resources.

Distinctive cultural and natural resources stimulate imagination, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship while promoting shared value creation, global citizenship, ecological integrity and community regeneration.



WHY LEUVEN?

The city of Leuven is a major cultural and high-tech innovation centre located about 20 minutes by train from Brussels Airport. It is home to numerous local breweries. The Dúiche Workshop takes place at the Irish College Leuven in an ideal setting offering a unique cultural and educational experience. Originally set up because of religious persecution at home, there were by the 18th century 34 Irish Colleges throughout Europe. They were important scholarly centres, focused on the preservation of Ireland's distinctive identity as manifested in its rich and distinctive culture, language, history and literature. In 1984, the Irish College Leuven became established as a non-profit-organisation, continuing the 400 year-old tradition as a centre of learning.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Executives in development agencies and community development practitioners, public officials and policy makers engaged in supporting economic, social, and cultural development, and supporting SMEs, especially those located in marginal regions throughout the EU.
- Entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, potential entrepreneurs and business owners, especially those who might benefit from understanding more about place-based and sustainable ventures in sectors such as food, tourism, crafts, renewables, the creative economy, the green economy, marine resources and the digital economy.

OFF SITE VISITS

A Day trip to Ieper, (ideally taking place on Thursday, leaving Leuven later in the morning and returning late at night) is to visit places in the Ieper area associated with World War 1, especially those places with connections to Ireland such as the Island of Ireland Peace Park. Apart from learning about the events that took place in the area, seeing first hand these places is very impactful for participants. Attending the brief ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial later that evening is an especially lovely way to end the day.

The purpose of our visit to a local enterprise, especially one that is place-based or rooted in that area such as a craft beer or food enterprise, is to expose participants to an innovative entrepreneurial venture in a different context than their normal experience. Hearing in a place like Leuven or Flanders from a person describe his/her product/service, competitors, markets, challenges, etc. is very illuminating for participants who are either working for development agencies supporting ventures or are themselves trying to grow entrepreneurial ventures at home.

SPEAKERS



Finbarr Bradley has taught in recent years at University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin. He was a professor of finance at Dublin City University where he was also founding director of the Irish-medium degree, Fiontar. He has been a professor at Maynooth University, and a visiting professor at, among others, the University of Michigan, Fordham University, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Copenhagen Business School and Aalto University, Finland.

He has authored or co-authored books such as *Digging Deeper: How Purpose-Driven Enterprises Create Real Value* [2016] and *Capitalising on Culture, Competing on Difference* [2008]. He holds an engineering degree from University College Cork and a PhD in International Finance from the Stern School of Business, New York University (NYU).



James J. Kennelly is Professor of International Business at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York. He has also taught at NYU's Stern School of Business, Aalto University (Finland) and the University of Applied Sciences in Krems, Austria. He has published dozens of academic articles and case studies in international management journals, as well as *The Kerry Way: A History of the Kerry Group* (2001), and four other co-authored books (see above). He holds a BS in Accounting from Montclair State

University and an MBA, M.Phil. and Ph.D. from the Stern School of Business at NYU in International Management. His current research interests centre on indigenous, place-based enterprises as necessary components of a sustainable economy and society.



Micheal O hEanaigh (Michael Heaney) is a Development Consultant working in Regional Development, Strategic Planning, Enterprise Development, Social Enterprise, Community Development, Local Resource Development (e.g. Tourism, Creative Economy, Green and Blue Economies) and Capacity Building. He has served as CEO of Udaras na Gaeltachta, as Director of Services with Donegal County Council, and in leadership and development roles in Rural, Local and Community Development settings. At

present he serves on the boards of the Western Development Commission, Irish College Leuven, Cooperative Housing Ireland, Asia Matters, Donegal Tourism, Cuidiu Housing Association, Fanad Lighthouse Project, and is Chairperson of Donegal 2040. He is Vice President / Executive Board Member of the AER (Assembly of European Regions). He has a Master's Degree in Rural Development (University of Galway) and a Master's Degree in Education (University of Sheffield).

Reflections from the participants in the **Dúiche 2025 Workshop**



The programme was well timetabled with a good mix of class and site visits

The 'enabler' had a really open approach, so that everybody will learn from everybody

Bhi sé chomh suimiúil éisteacht le na daoine a bhí ann agus scealta s'acu a chloisteail faoi caidé mar ar éirigh leo a 'n-áiteanna' a dhéanamh níos láidre agus níos ábhartha.

[It was so interesting to listen to the people who were there and hear their stories about how they succeeded in making their 'places' stronger and more relevant]

The workshop was fantastic - both the intellectual side and the craic - and the iconic venue added greatly to the experience

The course had such a positive impact on me



I really had a wonderful time in Leuven. It was excellent programme and I feel so grateful to have participated

It was a pleasure to participate in the workshop. It found it extremely valuable; its reflections will inspire my daily work

It was a pleasure to be part of such an inspiring week and to meet so many new colleagues and friends. Thank you for the inspiration, the laughs and organising such great speakers!

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to reflect on what really matters and make connections and friendships to inspire our work into the future

Thank you all for delivering this really inspiring workshop. It was a tremendous success, lots of inspiring talks and lots of fun too. Would highly recommend

Dúiche 2026 Workshop

Cost of Workshop: €1,950pp

This fee covers room and board for the duration of the workshop.

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IRISH COLLEGE LEUVEN

Irish College Leuven is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to provide tailored residential education programmes in every subject area. We have a proven track record, with forty years' experience in delivering exceptional educational experiences.

All our programmes are bespoke. Our dedicated and experienced education team engage with each client to create a unique experience for their group, timeline, and learning objectives.



Through our network, we invite leading academic and industry professionals to deliver high-quality and relevant education content for your students.

We take care of all practical matters from start to finish including ground transport, lectures, study visits, entry to political institutions, and cultural activities.

Our campus is a heritage residential education venue offering state-of-the-art meeting rooms, ensuite accommodation, catering facilities, and modern amenities all under one roof. This makes Irish College Leuven an ideal setting for faculty-led study abroad programmes, immersive training events, and conferences.



www.irishcollegeleuven.eu

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