

SEPTEMBER 2024

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-27

SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROJECT CLG



**SHEP**

Capacity for Personal  
& Social Transformation

## FOREWORD

SHEP is a Community Education & Development Project established in Ireland in 1974. What started as a small, innovative and responsive project has evolved in unforeseen ways. Through the years we have remained a community of people committed to a particular vision and way of working.

As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Social and Health Education Programme in Cork in 1974 we are proud of what has been achieved in collaboration with so many and look forward with gratitude and excitement to what the next chapter will bring.

To support us for the next phase of the journey together we have prepared this new Strategic Plan and we are excited to publish it now as part of our marking this milestone year for SHEP. This new plan is based on a 'rolling planning' approach. Using this approach enables us to have, each year, an up-to-date plan for the coming four years based on a current analysis of our environment, needs and opportunities. It supports us to be responsive to emerging opportunities and to be alert to uncertainty in our environment, especially in the funding context. It will also allow us to incorporate elements of 'emergent strategy' and to 'learn our way forward.'

You will see in this plan that SHEP increasingly is placing urgency on working out how to engage effectively with the climate, bio-diversity loss and social justice emergencies and to anchor these as the context for all our work.

On behalf of all the SHEP Management Committee, I wish to thank all those who have been and are part of the SHEP journey – the very many communities, organisations, agencies and people who have collaborated with us and who have partnered with us. It has been our privilege to work with you in service of the community. Finally, we want to express our appreciation to all our funding partners, particularly the HSE-South (Cork and Kerry) which has core-funded much of SHEP's work for many years.

### Carrie Shanahan

Chairperson, SHEP  
September 2024



*'We see people as the resource.'*

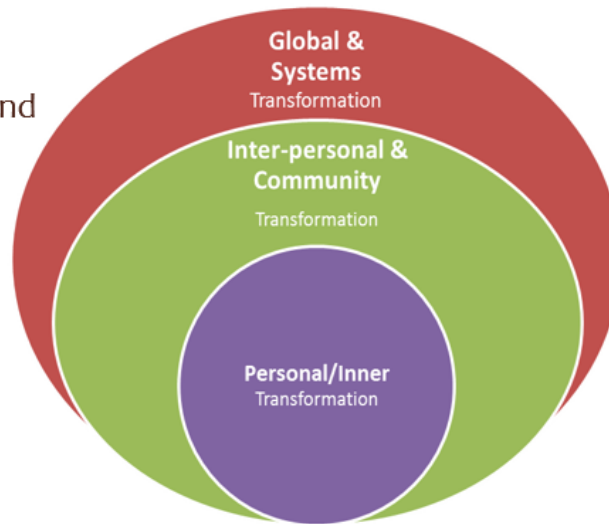


## SUMMARY

*The SHEP Mural (2020) – Community Art Project facilitated by Spark Deeley.*

# Our Mission

In solidarity and partnership with others  
we seek to foster the well-being of people, families, communities and the wider world  
and to contribute to building  
a healthy, loving, socially just and  
sustainable way of living.



## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS (2024-2027)

At the heart of our strategic plan are seven **strategic goals**:

### SUSTAIN

Put **sustainability** at the core of all our work.

### RESPOND

Respond creatively and appropriately to **emerging needs**.

### COLLABORATE

**Work in partnership** with other organisations where possible.

### LEARNING OUR WAY FORWARD

Further develop SHEP as a **community of practice**.

### CONNECT

Deepen our connection to the **wider community**.

### INFLUENCE & CHALLENGE

Take a stronger stance regarding **systemic exclusion, inequity and injustice**.

### STRENGTHEN

Continue to strengthen **organisational effectiveness**.

---

SHEP STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027



## PROCESSES THAT UNDERPIN THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

# GENERATIVE ENQUIRY PROCESS

Feedback from a consultation with internal stakeholders on the Project’s draft strategy in 2016 led SHEP to explore how we develop organisationally and manage change in a way that resonates with our core commitments to learning, relational and process work. This journey has come to be called a generative enquiry process.

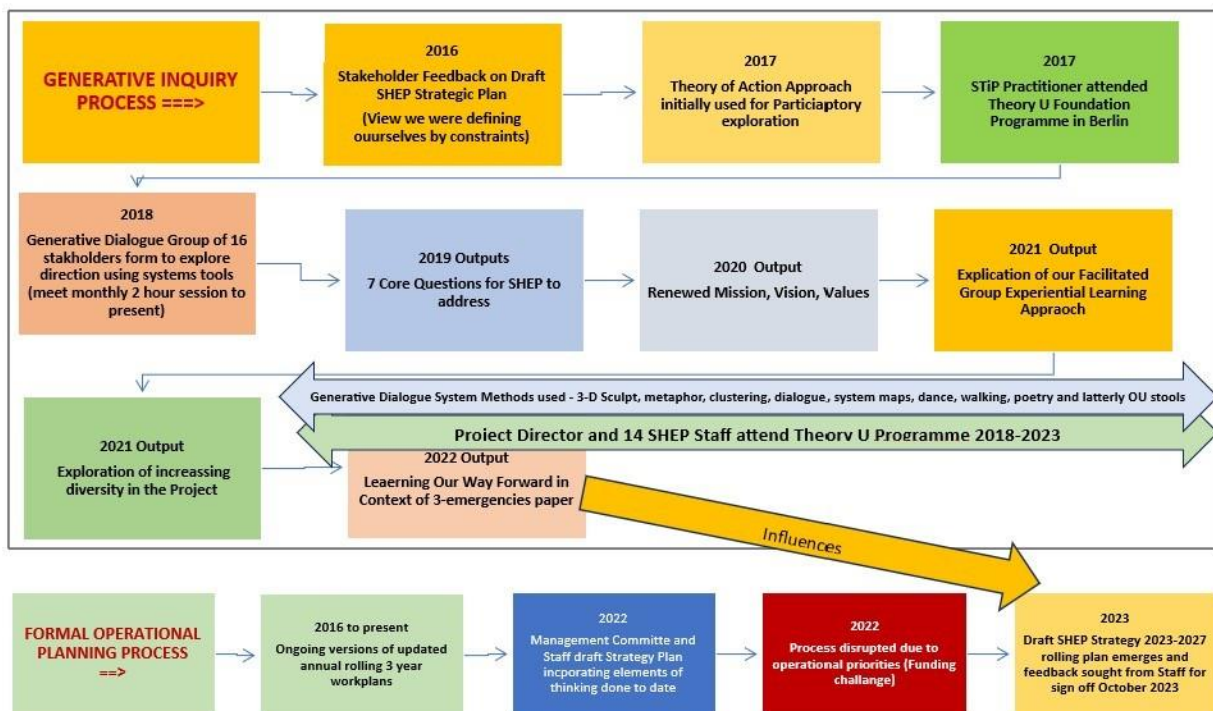
Two key outputs from this journey are reflected in the current plan:

1. A new mission statement (reformulated Purpose, What we Dream and What We See)
2. A systems perspective of SHEP as a Learning Organisation

In addition, in October 2022 SHEP’s Generative Dialogue Group, working on behalf of the Management Committee, proposed that an approach of ‘Learning Our Way Forward in Context of Climate, Bio-Diversity Loss and Social Justice Emergencies’ inform the development of SHEP’s strategic approach.

The journey of the (i) Generative Dialogue process and (ii) the formal organisational operational planning processes, that have led to the current version of the SHEP evolving Strategic Plan 2024-2027, are captured in Diagram 1 below. Both processes have been informed by standard organisation planning frameworks (e.g. strategic planning ideas of Mission, Vision, Goals; Financial Planning etc.) and have been informed by ideas from Systems Thinking (e.g. generative dialogue, system dynamics, learning and emergent strategy). The on-going evolution of SHEP’s strategy anticipates a continued inter-weaving of ideas from these and other relevant frameworks.

Diagram 1: Systems Thinking Practice in SHEP since 2016

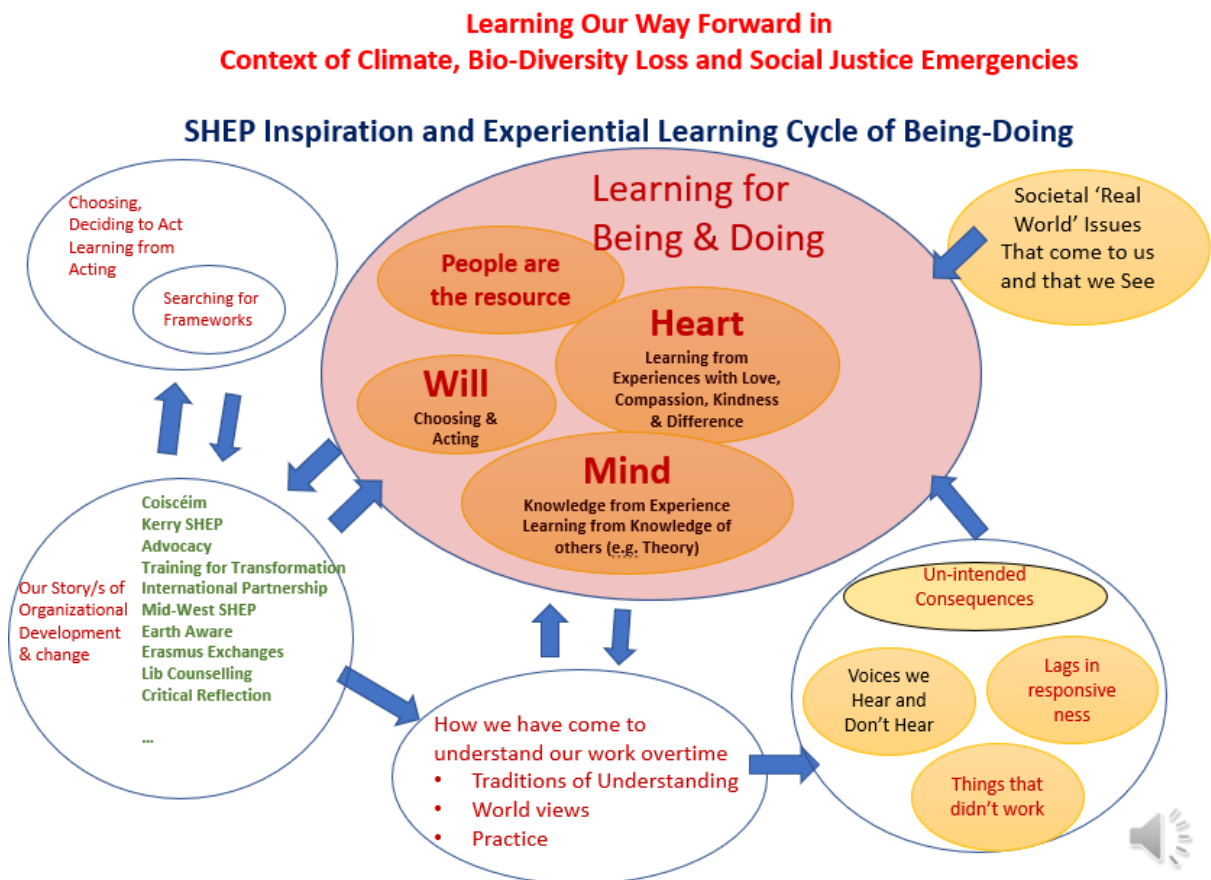


‘We have a story of change over time.’

## LEARNING FROM ‘BEING AND DOING’

Our exploration of SHEP’s tradition of organisational learning employs an on-going generative enquiry approach to managing change (see Diagram 3, below).

Diagram 2: SHEP’s Tradition of Learning from Being and Doing – over 50 years



As an approach to working out how to respond, our Strategy envisions SHEP as a learning system in which we figure out together our responses to problematic situations (engaging iteratively in conversations about sense making, teasing out perspectives and accommodating interests, acting and evaluating).

SHEP’s story and pattern of organisational learning over 50 years is captured in Diagram 2 above.

The pattern of our being and doing over time includes:

- *We see people as the resource*
- *We anchor our knowing in experiential and inspirational learning*
- *We have a story of change over time*
- *We have developed a tradition of understanding<sup>1</sup> including a tradition of searching and connecting with external lines of theory*
- *We hold worldviews and assumptions underpinning our tradition of understanding*
- *We see knowledge as co-created and learning as both individual and social*
- *Our practice aligns with systemic thinking (recognises wholeness, context, inter-connectedness and emergence)*

As we mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Project, with a wide body of 300-plus practitioners, the design of all collective spaces in the Project where practitioners assemble presents important opportunities for critical reflection and exploration of SHEP as a Learning Organisation.

The Project increasingly is placing urgency on working out how to engage effectively with **Climate, Bio-diversity loss and Social Justice emergencies**, and anchor these as the context for all our work.

In the context of our reformulated purpose, and by remaining focused on the intention to respond to these three emergencies, we anticipate that changes in our practice and understanding will follow from facilitating conversations at three levels:

- i) making sense of our situation
- ii) learning about how SHEP learns (our tradition of being and doing over time), and
- iii) critical exploration of that tradition of understanding and our held worldviews.

It is our hope that by sensitively facilitating the practitioner body to i) connect with the personal and collective stories involved in our tradition, and also to ii) connect with the changing situation in the world and SHEP's perspective on this, that our collective practice response to the emergencies we face will emerge.

This approach underpins what is meant by 'emergent strategy': we anticipate our learning and insight evolving and accumulating each year to inform the next year's version of the 'rolling' plan.

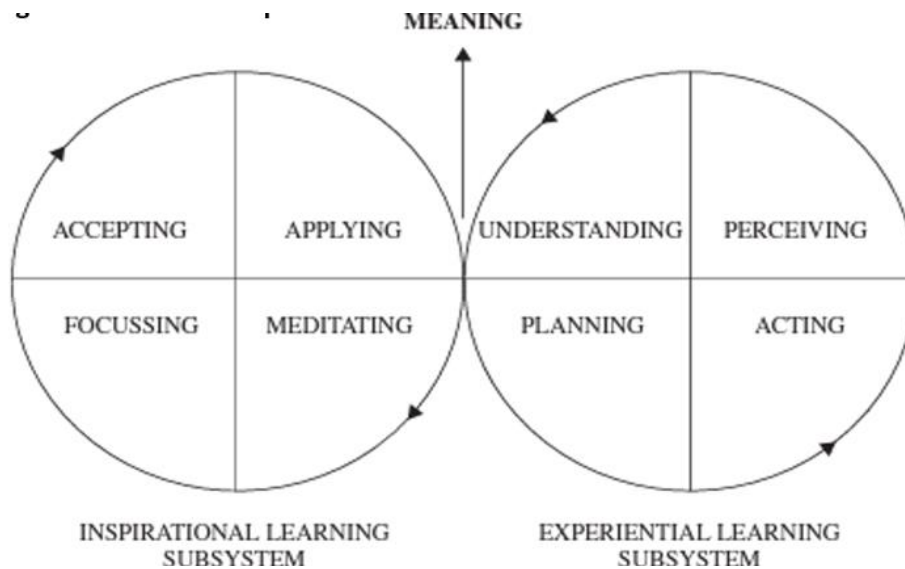
*'We anchor our knowing in experiential and inspirational learning.'*



## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING & INSPIRATIONAL LEARNING

Richard Bawden’s (2010) account of organisational development as a Critical Social Learning Systems in a particular Australian agricultural education and training institute (what became called ‘the Hawksbury Tradition’) is a useful model that expands SHEP’s appreciation of ‘Experiential Learning’ to include an ‘Inspirational Learning’ cycle. In SHEP’s organisational development the two learning cycles together offer a fuller account of the emergence of SHEP’s tradition of learning and development over its fifty years (see Diagram 3, below).

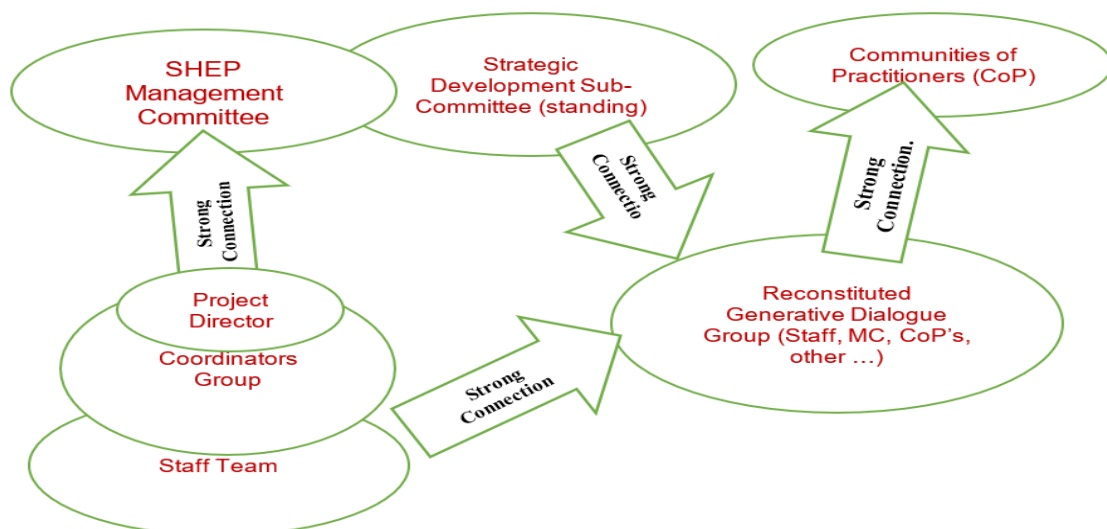
Diagram 3: Experiential and Inspirational Learning in SHEP’s Journey of Organisational Development



## SHEP COMMUNITIES OF PRACTITIONERS & PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

In our organisational development and governance processes we model a participatory approach to evolving the strategic direction of the Project. Diagram 4, below, visually represents a revision of the connections between spaces in SHEP that will strengthen the dialogue and discernment around strategic questions facing the Project and support governance processes.

Diagram 4: Spaces in SHEP (and connections between them) that support Participatory Governance





## HOW WE WORK & WHAT WE DO

## Our Dream

We dream a world where everyone can live in dignity; a world where all can lead fulfilling lives, with open hearts and minds and widening awareness, as we learn to value, cherish, love, and celebrate each other and ourselves and all the web of life on earth that links all living things; a world of welcome and inclusion where diversity and difference are the threads that make the vibrant pattern of the weave; a world that's just and fair for everyone, and social systems have been shaped to serve the common good of all; a world in which we human beings have learned at last to live more lightly on the earth and leave a space for all the other species great and small who dance with us the one great dance of life.

This is the world we dream, the world we long for, to make the dream be real is what we work for.

# OUR APPROACH

We work creatively and inclusively with people, community and systems:



## OUR PROGRAMMES

Reflecting the growth and development of Project over the decades, SHEP now has twelve programmes:

1. **SHEP Foundation Programme**  
Supporting individuals to develop capacities for positive personal and social change and to enhance health and well-being.
2. **SHEP Earth Aware & Action**  
Collaborating with others to help people face, and respond to, the crisis facing the world because of our current unsustainable way of life.
3. **Short Courses in the Community**  
Responding to the needs of individuals and groups, in their own communities, to explore and consider ways of making positive changes and enhancing health and well-being.
4. **Training Facilitators to work in the Community**  
Enabling people in local communities or work settings, to better support reflection, learning and transformation.
5. **Practitioner Continuing Professional Development Programme**  
Providing training supports to frontline practitioners with a focus on facilitating empowering relationships, self-care, critical reflection and a range of supports

- 6. UCC Diploma in Social & Psychological Health Studies**  
Collaborating with UCC to provide a fully accredited training course as a complement to SHEP's experiential training programme.
- 7. On-going Personal Development**  
Supporting individuals to develop the awareness, life-skills and confidence they need to move forward constructively with their lives.
- 8. Advocacy with Marginalised People and Communities**  
Providing independent advocacy to people who through difficulties of health, disability or ageing are struggling to get their voices heard.
- 9. Coisceim Low-Cost Counselling**  
Making appropriate counselling or psychotherapy affordable for those who really need this type of support.
- 10. Multicultural Counselling & Outreach**  
Providing appropriate counselling and outreach to vulnerable people and groups seeking asylum.
- 11. International Learning Partnership**  
Deepening ties of mutual learning and support with our partner in Nepal, Sahakarmi Samaj.
- 12. Supporting Communities, Groups and Organisations**  
Offering customised facilitation or specialist technical support to communities, organisations and groups.

*‘We have developed a tradition of understanding including a tradition of searching and connecting with external lines of theory.’*

# HOW WE WORK



## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong reputation</li> <li>• Clear focus &amp; proven track record in experiential learning</li> <li>• Very committed staff and personnel</li> <li>• Significant (almost guaranteed) core funding from the State (through the HSE)</li> <li>• Strong capacity for adaptability (as evidenced throughout the pandemic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of core-funding for new areas – and resulting stretch on team and systems.</li> <li>• Increasing age profile of our facilitation team</li> <li>• Lack of diversity among our facilitation team</li> <li>• All our premises are rented.</li> <li>• No asset base and just a small reserve (€40,000)</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and younger staff members bringing in new energy to the programme.</li> <li>• New initiatives in new counties present opportunities to recruit new facilitators.</li> <li>• Opportunities to reach new people through on-line &amp; blended learning</li> <li>• Considerable experience built up in during the pandemic with regard to working on-line or with blended learning.</li> <li>• Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year is a key opportunity to build our profile and leverage additional state funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic uncertainty</li> <li>• A danger that we will not be able to secure now much-needed increases in core state grants.</li> <li>• Reduced revenue/income from participant fees</li> <li>• Fewer new facilitators emerging from our programme</li> </ul>

## *The World We See*

*The world we see is not the world we dream of.*

*The world we see has life and love and laughter,  
but also hate and hurt and harm. Here light  
contends with darkness, and our lives are lived  
within the shadowed space between extremes:  
connection or contraction, open hearts  
or hearts shut down and closed in on themselves.*

*We see a world where lucky children grow  
and flourish in the force-field of affection,  
while others shrivel from a lack of love.*

*We see support and solidarity,  
the mutual care that binds communities,  
the selfless love that serves those most in need.  
We see as well a world of deep division,  
a world of separation and self-interest  
where life is lived in endless competition,  
where those who do not win are labelled “losers”,  
where dice are loaded and the game is rigged,  
so some are born to poverty and pain  
and some to wealth and privilege and power,  
a world in which the many must go hungry  
to feed the endless greed of just a few.*

*We see concern about the common good  
and caring for the earth, our common home.*

*We also see compulsions to consume  
regardless of the price that other people,  
and the plundered, suffering planet, have to pay.*

*We see the fruits of creativity,  
the search for deeper meaning and for truth,  
and openness to beauty and to mystery.  
We also see lives lived without reflection -  
at one extreme the struggle for survival  
takes all attention; at the other pole  
the restless search for ever-new distractions  
hides the underlying loss of meaning.*

*The gap between our dream and what we see  
is where we find our challenge and our calling.*

---

SHEP STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027



## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS



## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS (2024-2027)

At the heart of our strategic plan are seven **strategic goals**:

### SUSTAIN

Put **sustainability** at the core of all our work.

### RESPOND

Respond creatively and appropriately to **emerging needs**.

### COLLABORATE

**Work in partnership** with other organisations where possible.

### LEARN OUR WAY FORWARD

Further develop SHEP as a **community of practice**.

### CONNECT

Deepen our connection to the **wider community**.

### INFLUENCE & CHALLENGE

Take a stronger stance regarding **systemic exclusion, inequity and injustice**.

### STRENGTHEN

Continue to strengthen **organisational effectiveness**.

*‘We hold worldviews and assumptions underpinning our tradition of understanding.’*

# SUSTAIN

Put sustainability at the core of all our work.

	Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>1.1 Green Spaces for Health</b>	Be an active member of this city-wide environmental project.
<b>1.2 SHEP Earth Aware</b>	Liaise closely with our volunteers to support 'SHEP Earth Aware' to transition to a new chapter in its journey.
<b>1.3 Horticulture LTI</b>	Take on the management of the Horticulture LTI at Ardfoyle and use this experience to deepen our connection with the environment.
<b>1.4 Centre of Excellence</b>	Develop SHEP (& Ardfoyle) as a centre of excellence in education and capacity building for sustainability and biodiversity, including a commitment to model ways of decarbonising.
<b>1.5 Integration</b>	Put additional emphasis on integrating environmental awareness and action across the whole organisation, including in our training programmes.

# RESPOND

Respond creatively and appropriately to emerging needs

	Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>2.1 Inclusion &amp; Diversity</b>	<p>Prioritise a small number of target groups – and adopt a phased approach to implementation.</p> <p>Conduct research into barriers to participating in the SHEP training programme.</p>
<b>2.2 Diversity of Facilitators</b>	Continue the selection and induction of new SHEP Facilitators while proactively supporting the increased diversity of our facilitator team.
<b>2.3 Sustainable Funding</b>	<p>Liaise closely with Project funders, particularly the HSE, to address funding shortfalls.</p> <p>Work with our partners in the Mid-West to secure long-term funding to sustain the SHEP Training Programme in the region into the future.</p> <p>Continue to be discerning and proactive in securing once-off funding – e.g. Reach fund, Mercy Solidarity Fund, What Works etc.</p> <p>Explore new and appropriate philanthropic opportunities to support our work.</p>
<b>2.4 Training Programme</b>	<p>Promote greater awareness &amp; take-up of the Foundation Programme.</p> <p>Strengthen participation in the intermediate and advanced levels of the Core Training Programme</p>

---

	Put new emphasis on developing the Core Training Programme in Kerry
	Put increased focus on partnering with local collaborators to offer our SHEP Community Education Programme.
<b>2.6 On-line Training Work</b>	Continue on-line training work in an appropriate way (and secure adequate resources for this) - to reach people we would not normally reach and to bring the SHEP approach to a wider audience.
<b>2.7 Counselling &amp; Supports</b>	Expand and develop our Youth Counselling work with TUSLA support (and secure mainstream funding).  Continue to support and work collaboratively with local organisations in the community.  Pilot a group therapy service.
<b>2.8 LIB Counselling</b>	Support the development of LIB Counselling and Outreach to include more direct provision centres (& secure mainstream funding).
<b>2.9 Advocacy</b>	Focus primarily on supporting group advocacy and self-advocacy.  Withdraw appropriately from the provision of one-to-one advocacy supports.  Continue and refine our new co-ordination model of project leadership.
<b>2.10 Families</b>	Put emphasis on supporting families through existing offerings and scoping meeting gaps.

---

*‘We see knowledge as co-created and learning as both individual and social.’*

# COLLABORATE

Work in partnership with other organisations where possible

		Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>3.1</b>	<b>International Partnership</b>	<p>Complete the current three-year programme (2022-2025) of partnership with Sahakarmi in association with Irish Aid.</p> <p>Explore options for a continuation programme of support to commence in 2025.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>UCC</b>	<p>Continue our twenty+ years partnership with UCC to deliver the Diploma in Social and Psychological Health Studies and seek to continue to have a mix of SHEP participants and others from diverse backgrounds.</p>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Practitioners</b>	<p>Continue to partner with MHFAI to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid courses to practitioners.</p>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Mid-West Region</b>	<p>Deepen the collaboration with local partners, particularly the Mid-West Regional Drug and Alcohol Forum, Limerick and Clare ETB and Healthy Ireland.</p> <p>Identify new facilitators to join the local team.</p>
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Southeast &amp; Dublin</b>	<p>Explore opportunities for small scale collaborations in the region.</p> <p>Continue to support the South-East SPHE Community of Practice.</p>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Learner Exchange</b>	<p>Use our accredited status in the Erasmus KA1 programme and our deepening collaboration with LUR, Slovenia, to pilot and deliver new learner exchange programmes with a focus on learning more about environmental sustainability.</p>

*‘Our practice aligns with systemic thinking (recognises wholeness, context, inter-connectedness and emergence).’*

# LEARN OUR WAY FORWARD

Further develop SHEP as a community of practice

	Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>4.1 Theory U</b>	Continue our commitment to Theory U (with its focus on deep listening and awareness based collective activity) as our core methodology for system change.
<b>4.2 Whole of Organisation Approach</b>	<p>Continue to create opportunities and spaces for organisational learning.</p> <p>Explore new approaches for organisational learning including new strategic planning processes.</p> <p>Continue our 'Generative Dialogue Group' as a key process in supporting organisational reflection and learning.</p> <p>Continue to create new spaces in and across the Project to promote understanding of the disciplines, knowledge bases and frameworks used in our various programmes.</p>
<b>4.3 Inter-generational Learning</b>	Continue the process of bringing in new facilitators to ensure a strong team in SHEP and involving senior facilitators in this process.
<b>4.4 Self-Care</b>	Continuing to 'tend to the roots of our own tree' as we work in service of others.
<b>4.5 In-house Training</b>	<p>Further develop our emerging 'Community of Practice' Training programme</p> <p>Provide continued support to SHEP Personnel (&amp; Facilitators) to deliver SHEP Training on-line and in blended formats.</p> <p>Strengthen and prepare for organisational capacity and resilience for navigating change. This will include a framework for communicating and dialoguing about realignment to new priorities.</p>
<b>4.6 Erasmus+</b>	<p>Continue to use the EU Erasmus Plus programme to support training and development, particularly in the areas of Theory U and sustainability approaches.</p> <p>Develop our links with like-minded European partners to support our interests in sustainability education, education for health and well-being, and developing digital competence.</p>
<b>4.7 Evidence and Research</b>	<p>Support a small number of priority research projects which will enhance our ability to testify to the effectiveness of models of practice and the impact of our work.</p> <p>Engage with technology's impact (e.g. AI) and discern how we can harness its potential organisationally and be present to changing demands on society.</p> <p>Review our programmes to assess need for adaptation to meet the preference and needs of younger generations (e.g. Gen Z, Millennials) and to promote diversity.</p>

# CONNECT

Deepen our connection to the wider community

		Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Connections &amp; Relationships</b>	<p>Proactively restore connections that were eroded during the Pandemic.</p> <p>Be open to identify and seeking new partners in local communities and at regional level with whom we can collaborate.</p> <p>Be intentional in speaking with stakeholders (near and over the horizon) to seek their views, to hear new and diverse perspectives, and to 'listen in/out'.</p>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Premises</b>	<p>In association with the OLA Sisters develop the premises at Ardfoyle to enhance the experience of participants and staff.</p> <p>Secure new premises in Kerry (where we no longer have an office) and in Limerick city.</p>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Communications</b>	Continue to improve our website and our social media presence.
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Fundraising</b>	Create new teams and strategies around our fundraising – in particular for our international learning partnership and the SHEP Bursary Solidarity Fund.
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Celebrations</b>	<p>During 2024, celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of SHEP</p> <p>During 2027, celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the International Partnership programme.</p>

# INFLUENCE & CHALLENGE

Take a more stance regarding systemic exclusion, inequity and injustice

		Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Contributing to the renewal of the broader social, cultural &amp; economic systems that shape our world</b>	Continue our membership of alliances such as The Wheel, EAPN and Local PPNs.
<b>6.2</b>	<b>CESCA</b>	Continue our active membership of CESCA, including employment and hosting of the CESCA Coordinator.

# STRENGTHEN

## Strengthen Organisational Effectiveness

	Specific Actions: Over the next four years we will
<b>7.1 Governance</b>	<p>Further refine our governance structures.</p> <p>Review and renew our mechanisms for nomination of people to Management Committee.</p>
<b>7.2 Leadership</b>	<p>Explore new options for Team leadership across the whole organisation while retaining our commitment to having as flat an organisational structure as possible.</p> <p>Restructure the SHEP training and Development Team to be better able to respond to programme needs, while retaining our commitment to a co-ordination model of leadership.</p>
<b>7.3 Internal Systems</b>	Continue to strengthen and modernise internal systems in the Project.
<b>7.4 Digital Competence</b>	Continue to improve our capacity to work on-line and digitally.
<b>7.5 Quality Assurance</b>	Further develop processes of continuous improvement and quality assurance.
<b>7.6 Volunteering</b>	Seek and support the greater involvement of volunteers.

‘What started as a small, innovative and responsive project has evolved in unforeseen ways. Through the years we have remained a community of people committed to a particular vision and way of working.’

# Glossary of Terms

## **Generative Dialogue System Method**

The Generative Dialogue Approach is a framework for facilitating deep and meaningful conversations that can lead to new insights, shared understanding, and collective action. It was developed by Otto Scharmer, a renowned organizational theorist, and is based on the idea that we can transcend our current perspectives and beliefs to tap into deeper sources of wisdom and creativity. Key Principles of Generative Dialogue are presence, Listening, Suspending Judgment, Authenticity, Co-creation.

## **Systems Thinking**

Systems thinking is a holistic approach to understanding complex problems and developing effective solutions. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of parts within a system and the dynamic nature of systems over time. Key principles of systems thinking are: Wholeness, Interconnectedness, Feedback loops, Equilibrium and disequilibrium, Boundaries, Levels of systems.

## **Theory of Action Approach**

A theory of action (ToA) is a framework that helps individuals, teams, and organizations plan and implement change initiatives. It outlines the why, what, how, and when of a change effort, including the specific goals, activities, resources, and timelines involved. Key Elements of a ToA are Problem Definition, Goals, Strategies, Activities, Resources, Timelines, Evaluation Plan, Communication Plan.

## **Theory U Foundation Course**

Theory U is a framework for personal and collective transformation developed by Otto Scharmer, a professor at MIT. It is based on the idea that deep change can occur when individuals and groups tap into their natural capacity for presencing, a state of deep listening and openness that allows them to connect with the emerging future. The Theory U process is a cyclical journey that takes people through four stages of development: 1-Preparation: 2-Sensing: 3-Presencing: 4-Generating.

## **Group Experiential Learning Approach**

Group experiential learning is a teaching and learning approach that involves individuals learning through experiences in a group setting. It is based on the idea that people learn best by doing and reflecting on their experiences. Key characteristics of group experiential learning are: Active participation, Real-world experiences, Reflection and feedback, Collaboration, Social-emotional development.

## **Learning System:**

A learning system is a set of interconnected components that are designed to facilitate learning. It can be as simple as a teacher and a student or as complex as a computer-based training program. Learning systems can be used to teach a wide variety of subjects, from basic skills to complex concepts. Key components of a learning system are: Content, Instruction, Assessment, Feedback, Support. In the System Thinking, Community of Practice and Social Learning Traditions distinction is made between individual and social learning. Emphasis is also placed on how practitioners engage with situations, their personal and collective multiple perspectives and traditions of understanding, the frameworks and methodologies being used to understand situations and the context that shapes engagement and learning.

## **Inspirational Learning Approach**

Inspirational learning is a type of learning that is driven by motivation and passion. It is about learning that is meaningful and engaging, and that sparks curiosity and a desire to learn more. Key characteristics of inspirational learning are: Purposeful, Engaging, Personal, Transformative.

## **Training for Transformation Method**

Training for Transformation (TFT) is a non-formal education approach that focuses on helping people develop their critical thinking skills, self-awareness, and capacity for action. It is based on the idea that people can become agents of change by learning to analyse the root causes of problems and develop effective strategies for addressing them. Key principles of TFT are: Collective learning, Action learning, Reflection, Systems thinking, Empowerment and spiritual dimension.



### **Critical Reflection Approach**

Critical reflection is a process of examining and evaluating one's own experiences, beliefs, and practices to identify underlying assumptions, biases, and limitations. It is a tool for personal and professional growth, as well as for social change. Key principles of critical reflection are: Self-awareness, Openness to new perspectives, Critique of power structures, Action orientation. The emphasis is placed on reflection, reflexivity (how we influence situations), post-modernism and deconstruction (power and language) and Critical Social Theory (power, structure and oppression).

### **Hawkesbury Tradition**

The Hawkesbury Tradition is a unique and enduring way of life that has been shaped by the region's geography, history, and culture. It is a tradition of resilience, community, and respect for the land. Key characteristics of the Hawkesbury Tradition are: Resilience, Community, Respect for the land.

### **The Wheel**

The Wheel is Ireland's national association of community development organisations (CDOs). It is a membership-based organisation that represents over 400 community development groups across Ireland. The Wheel's mission is to support and empower community development groups to work towards a more just and equitable society.

### **EAPN**

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is a pan-European alliance of organisations working with people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. It was founded in 1990 and currently has over 900 members in 33 countries. EAPN's mission is to:

- Consolidate and strengthen a European network of anti-poverty organisations
- Promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and good practices
- Influence European and national policies to promote social inclusion
- Empower people experiencing poverty and social exclusion to organise and advocate for their rights

### **PPNs**

PPN Ireland is the Irish chapter of the People's Policy Network (PPN). It is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that aims to empower people to influence public policy. PPN Ireland was founded in 2012 and currently has over 200 members. PPN Ireland's mission is to:

- Enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to participate in the policy process
- Foster collaboration among policy advocates
- Promote the use of evidence-based policy making
- Advance policies that promote social justice and equality
- Empower people to participate in the policy process

### **CESCA**

CESCA stands for Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance. It is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2014 to promote and progress the equality and social inclusion agendas in Cork city. CESCA is an alliance of eighteen diverse community and voluntary organisations working in Cork city.

---

SHEP STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027

Approved by the SHEP Management Committee  
September 2024

