

#### About Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

[Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board](#) (KCETB) is a leading provider of education and training in the south east of Ireland, enabling 18,000 annual learners to reach their potential by offering education pathways in schools, colleges, training centres and community settings. Their remit includes the management and operation of 13 post-primary schools, two colleges of further education and training, an extensive range of adult and community education services in 30 locations across Kilkenny and Carlow, the co-ordination of youth services, and the promotion of music education through Music Generation.

With a dedicated team of 1,377 staff and an annual budget exceeding €80 million, KCETB's mission is embedded in its tagline: Flourish through learning. Their Adult Learning Service plays a vital role in supporting families to take control of their health, wellbeing, education, and future through an inclusive and learner-centric approach.



#### Family Learning Health and Wellbeing: Intercultural Cookbook

In early 2023, KCETB launched the Intercultural Cookbook project, an innovative family learning initiative designed to support health and wellbeing through food, culture, and community. With weekly sessions in a local school setting, this programme brought together participants from diverse cultural backgrounds including South Sudan, Portugal, Ukraine, Ireland, the Traveller community and more.

The project used food as a powerful medium to promote mental, physical and social wellbeing. Families worked collaboratively to research, cook and compile recipes for a shared cookbook that celebrates global culinary traditions and encourages healthy eating at home. Through intergenerational learning, parents, grandparents and carers were supported to build their confidence and strengthen family relationships. The varied range of activities included cooking demonstrations, budgeting challenges and apron-making.

The project also served as a space for intercultural exchange and social connection, with participants sharing personal stories, treasured recipes, and health-conscious cooking practices from their home countries. As one participant reflected:

*"We had great fun learning about different cultures, food and going on some trips to experience different foods... It was a fun and interesting project to be part of."*





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Shortlisted for the Family Learning to Support Health and Wellbeing Award

### Impact and next steps

The Intercultural Cookbook has had a tangible impact on learners, families, and the wider school community. Participants reported increased self-esteem, reduced isolation, and new friendships that extended beyond the classroom. Parents were proud to share their contributions and see their names and drawings in print. One participant said:

*"It was really amazing... I met new amazing people. We learned recipes of different cultures and countries. It was a great time."*

Beyond health education, the project boosted digital literacy, budgeting, and language skills. Families visited key cultural sites such as Kilkenny Castle and the Butler Gallery - experiences previously inaccessible for many due to financial constraints. These outings strengthened parental confidence and deepened connections to their local community.

Looking ahead, KCETB is adapting and expanding the model to other schools and communities. Future iterations will incorporate feedback such as extending the programme duration and including air fryer cooking to better align with participants' home cooking practices.

The success of the initiative is reflected in learner retention: 17 of the 23 cookbook participants have continued into KCETB's follow-on Family Learning programme, with others progressing to further accredited education or part-time work. The project's reach has extended into libraries and community radio, and the cookbook itself is now a lasting resource that proudly sits on local bookshelves.