



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

## **Urban Nature-Based Solutions for the promotion of Active Travel in Finglas West, north Dublin**

### **Trinity Research Doctorate Award 2026-2030**

We invite applications for a fully funded PhD studentship on adolescent-led nature-based solutions (NBS) for promoting urban, active travel in Finglas West, north Dublin. This PhD is part of a larger interdisciplinary project, *Implementing and Evaluating Nature-Based Solutions for Health in Children and Adolescents*, funded through the AIB Trinity Climate Hub Trinity Research Doctorate Award (TRDA) scheme.

#### **The Project**

Nature-based solutions (NBS) are increasingly used to address climate-related challenges while also supporting healthier and more sustainable communities. In particular, active travel-oriented NBS (e.g., greenways, safe walking and cycling infrastructure, urban greening, and connected public spaces) may simultaneously improve environmental sustainability, increase physical activity, reduce pollution exposure, and support mental and physical wellbeing. However, evidence for the health impacts of NBS remains limited, particularly for children and adolescents, and the mechanisms linking environmental change, active mobility, and health outcomes are not yet well understood.

This project will employ community, participatory-based, co-design approaches to generate policy- and practice-relevant evidence, in collaboration with the School Completion Programme (Finglas A).

The successful applicant will be fully funded (see below) and will join a team of three other PhD researchers and supervisors at Trinity College Dublin spanning multiple disciplines.

## **This PhD**

This PhD (PhD2 within the wider project) will evaluate an *urban* NBS that supports active travel while improving local environmental quality in Finglas West, north Dublin. Employing community-based, co-design approaches, the student will: 1) train 6-8 child and adolescent co-researchers to conduct evidence and gap mapping of NBS interventions relating to active travel (e.g., where green infrastructure is combined with changes that increase the safety/attractiveness of walking or cycling), mapping local barriers and priorities in terms of the NBS supporting active travel; 2) determine which NBS to co-develop; and 3) develop and implement a pilot evaluation of the NBS solution. We expect to collect indicators of feasibility, accessibility, and child and adolescent wellbeing.

## **Supervision**

**Primary supervisor:** Professor Brian Caulfield (School of Engineering). **Co-supervisors:** Dr Alina Cosma (School of Medicine) & Professor Frédérique Vallières (School of Psychology)

## **Essential criteria:**

- An undergraduate degree (2.1 or equivalent) in public health, social sciences, education, youth-work, community development, or a related discipline **OR** in civil engineering, environmental science, transport planning, human geography or a related discipline.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with schools, families, and community partners.
- Undertaking of safeguarding and child protection principles and responsibilities.
- Fluent in English (spoken and written).
- Willingness to spend minimum 2 days per week (within term time) in the School Completion Programme team, Finglas West.
- An interest in working across disciplinary boundaries and willingness to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue.

## **Desirable criteria:**

- A master's degree in a relevant subject area
- Prior experience working or conducting research in school and/or community settings
- Experience working with children and/or young people in educational, community, sport, or wellbeing settings.
- Knowledge of participatory research approaches, community engagement models of care, process evaluations
- Familiarity with theory of change development or logic models
- Experience of working in urban studies and/or the built environment

## **Details of the Award**

The student's tuition will be fully paid, and they will receive a €25k per annum tax-free stipend for 4 years. The successful applicant must be registered and ready to commence in autumn 2026.

## **Details of Application**

Please send a CV, cover letter, and a one-page research proposal to Prof Brian Caulfield ([Brian.Caulfield@tcd.ie](mailto:Brian.Caulfield@tcd.ie)) by **5 July 2026**. Your proposal should work within the framework of the project as described above; we are not looking for an entirely new study design. Rather, we want you to describe *how* you would approach this work: what questions or methods interest you most, what relevant experience you would draw on, and what ideas you might bring to the work.

Applicants will be shortlisted for interview soon thereafter, with interviews expected in late June. The successful applicant will then have to apply directly to the relevant School following the Trinity College PhD application process.