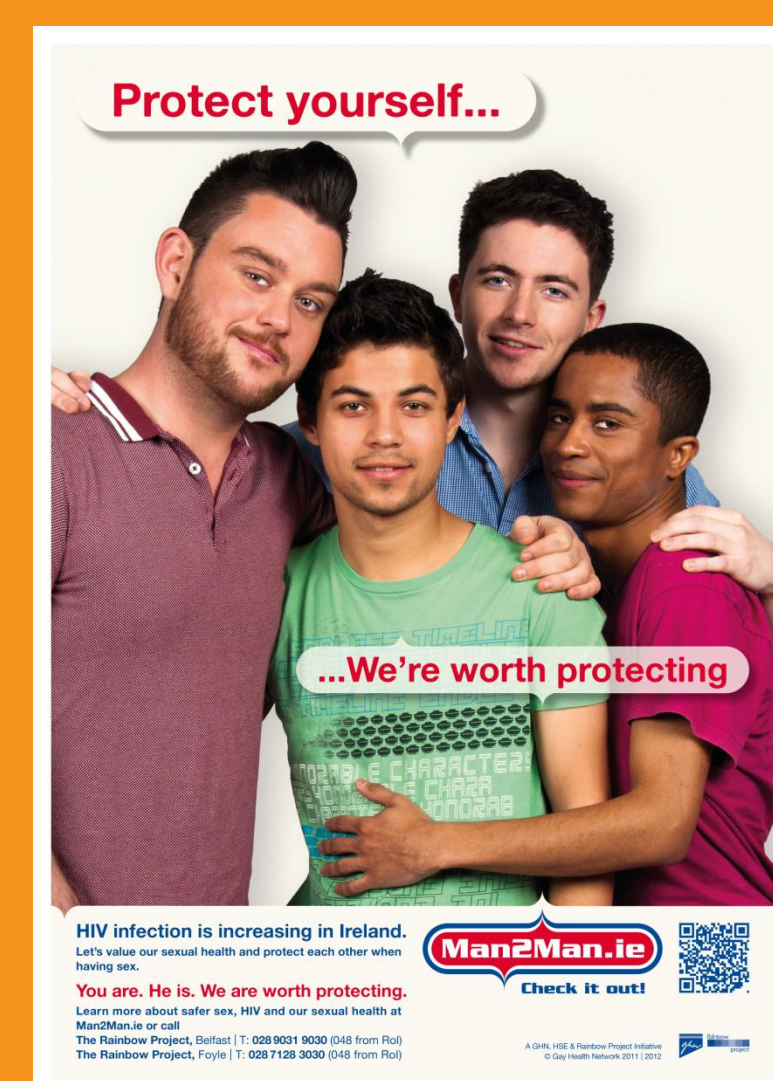
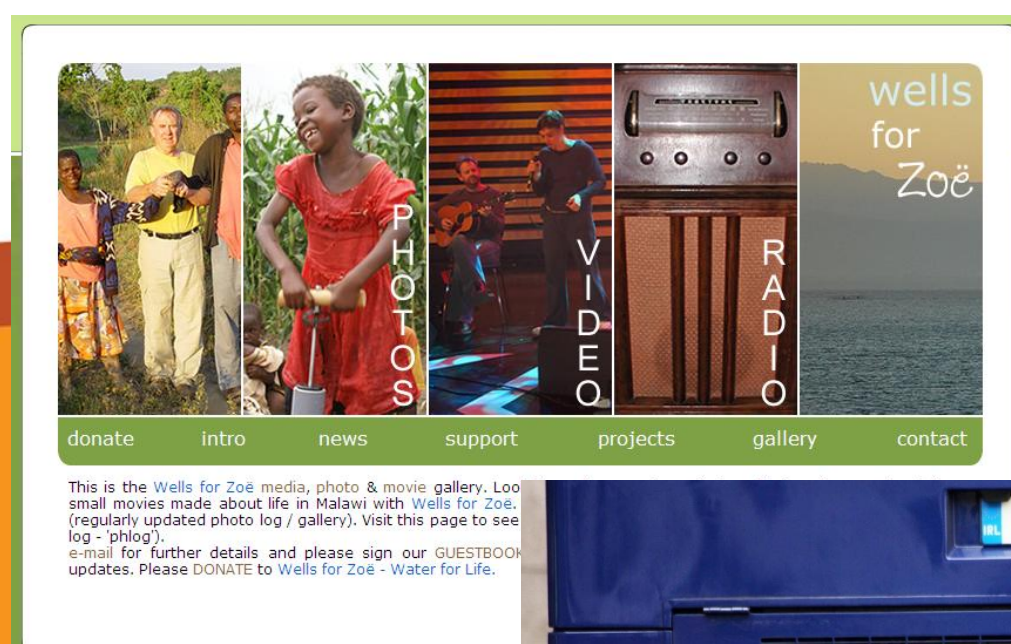


students learning with communities



# MA in Public Relations: foundation in community- based research

Students Learning with Communities



## Project description:

On the MA in Public Relations, students can choose to take a module called 'Foundations in Community-Based Research'. Students work in small groups, each with one community partner, to design, plan, carry out and report on a piece of research which the community partners require, focusing on the reception/use of some aspect of their Public Relations activity (e.g. they might want to know how a particular target group responds to their website/poster campaigns). The module is assessed by student presentations during the semester, as well as final group research reports, combined with individual reflections on module learning.

Community partners with a specific interest in the area of PR/marketing are invited to present to the students on their PR research interests. Students select their community partners based on their own learning goals, and meet to discuss specific goals for the research project, supported by lecturers (a research agreement is signed at this point). Students are expected to spend time planning and conducting the research, liaising with community partners, and writing the report. Students present their final research reports to community partners following academic assessment.

*Lecturers:* Edward Brennan, Catherine Bates.  
*Communities:* GLEN, Wells for Zoe, Enable Ireland (2011); OCD Ireland, AMEN (2011+ 2012); Ballymun Rediscovery Centre (2012).

## Benefits to students:

Students have an opportunity to work with community partners on real-life PR research projects, enhancing their research skills, their understanding of the community sector, and of how PR can be most effectively managed within budget and time limitations. They develop a sense of their future profession and its role in society. They develop a range of transferable skills such as problem-solving, time management, presentation, negotiation, communications, project management, and critical thinking, as well as gaining unique experiences which they can use in their CVs and discuss at interviews. The module also gives them a grounding in community-based research, should they want to work with communities on their dissertation later in the year.

## Benefits to Community Partners:

Students research aspects of the community partners' current and future PR strategies, and generate relevant research findings about particular target groups, and how they respond to PR in a range of media. These research reports can provide valuable evidence for funding applications and for PR strategising. Community partners can contribute to the education of these future PR professionals, by exploring their community's needs and strengths, and showing students the potential they have to make a difference in the community sector through their professional skills.

