

LEARGAS ANNUAL REPORT

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HUGH MACCONVILLE

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

Writing in April 2021, as I come to the close of my time on the Léargas Board, I'm proud to pay tribute to the work of the organisation and its staff in 2021.

The most significant event for Léargas in 2021 was the launch of a new seven-year cycle of European programmes, including Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. Funding for Erasmus+ increased to an estimated €26.2 billion for all of Europe, nearly doubling the budget of the previous cycle. This will bring opportunities to even more people across Europe. In Léargas, we were particularly pleased to see this cycle open up Erasmus+ mobility opportunities to Adult learners. This is a welcome step towards an even more inclusive programme.

Of course, this very encouraging increase in budget also means an increase in workload. We as a Board are immensely proud of the response of all Léargas staff to this challenge. 2021 was another year of uncertainty, travel restrictions and remote working due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, staff continued to enthusiastically promote the spirit of European collaboration and cooperation by renewing focus on digital and national opportunities, and supporting the organisations we work with to re-imagine and adapt their project plans where necessary until international travel was able to re-start. The result has been some outstanding projects that have benefitted the Adult Education, School Education, Youth and VET sectors across Ireland.

At organisational level, the Board were delighted to have the opportunity in early 2022 to hold an event formally acknowledging the retirement of Executive Director Jim Mullin in early 2020. This event was an opportunity not only to thank Jim for his service to Léargas, but to acknowledge the unique personal and professional integrity he brought to the role. From all of us, thank you Jim.

We were lucky to have new and enthusiastic members join the Léargas Board towards the end of 2020, and 2021 was the year when the Board really coalesced as a team alongside Executive Director Lorraine Gilligan. They are an excellent group of people and I thank each one for their hard work.

HUGH MACCONVILLE
Acting Chair
Léargas Board

HUGH MACCONVILLE

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

Ag scríobh dom i mí Aibreáin 2021, agus mé ag druidim le deireadh mo chuid ama ar Bhord Léargas, is údar mór bróid dom aitheantas a thabhairt d'obair na heagraíochta agus dá foireann in 2021.

Ba é an t-imeacht is suntasaí a bhí ag Léargas in 2021 ná seoladh thimthriall nua seacht mbliana de chlár Eorpacha, lena n-áirítear Erasmus+ agus an Cór Dlúthpháirtíochta Eorpach. Tháinig méadú ar chistiú d'Erasmus+ go €26.2 billiún measta don Eoraip ar fad, beagnach dhá oiread de bhuiséad an timthrialla roimhe sin. Tabharfaidh sé seo deiseanna do níos mó daoine ar fud na hEorpa fós. I Léargas, bhí áthas ar leith orainn a thabhairt faoi deara go bhfuil an timthriall seo ag oscailt deiseanna soghluaisteacha Erasmus+ d'fhoghlaimoirí fásta. Fáiltítear roimh an gcéim seo i dtreo clár níos cuimsithí fós.

Ar ndóigh, ciallaíonn an méadú an-spreagúil seo ar an mbuiséad méadú ar an ualach oibre freisin. Táimid thar a bheith bródúil mar Bhord as an tslí ar fhreagair foireann Léargas don dúshlán seo. Ba bhliain eile í 2021 inar thugamar aghaidh ar éiginnteacht, srianta taistil agus cianobair de bharr na paindéime Covid-19. Mar sin féin, lean an fhoireann ar aghaidh ag cur spiorad an chomhoibrithe agus an chomhair Eorpaigh chun cinn go díograiseach trí fhócas a athnuachan ar dheiseanna digiteacha agus náisiúnta, agus trí thacú leis na heagraíochtaí a n-oibrímid leo a gcuid pleannanna tionscadail a athshamlú agus a oiriúnú mar ba ghá go dtí go raibh an taisteal idirnáisiúnta in ann tosú arís. Is é an toradh a bhí air ná roinnt tionscadal den scoth a chuaigh chun sochair d'earnálacha an Oideachais Aosaigh, an Oideachais Scoile, d'earnálacha na hÓige agus an GOO, ar fud na hÉireann.

Ag leibhéal na heagraíochta, bhí an Bord thar a bheith sásta go raibh an deis aige go luath in 2022 imeacht a reáchtáil chun aitheantas foirmiúil a thabhairt don Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin Jim Mullin a chuaigh ar scor go luath in 2020. Deis a bhí san imeacht seo ní hamháin chun buíochas a ghabháil le Jim as a sheirbhís do Léargas, ach aitheantas a thabhairt don ionracas ar leith, idir phearsanta agus ghairmiúil, a thug sé don ról. Gabhaimid go léir buíochas leat, Jim.

Bhí an t-ádh linn go bhfuair eamar baill nua dhíograiseacha ar Bhord Léargas nuair a bhí 2020 ag druidim chun deiridh, agus ba í 2021 an bhliain ar tháinig an Bord le chéile i ndáiríre mar fhoireann in éineacht leis an Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin, Lorraine Gilligan. Is grúpa daoine den scoth iad agus gabhaim buíochas le gach éinne as a gcuid oibre crua.

HUGH MACCONVILLE
Cathaoirleach Gníomhach
Bord Léargas

LORRAINE GILLIGAN

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2021 marked 35 years of Léargas, and our work as a National Agency for European programmes has become even more compelling and necessary to empower people and organisations to experience the transformational value of international experiences and to create opportunities for developing new skills and knowledge, personal and professional growth through a lived experience of connection with people of other cultures.

In last year's report, I spoke about how 2020 was a vastly different year from any that Léargas had experienced in its lifetime and recalled the huge disturbance to life and work that began in March 2020.

2021 was another extraordinary year for all, as we adjusted further to living and working with Covid-19, and continued restrictions across society impacted all aspects of our daily lives, significantly limiting mobility and our work in Léargas. This further tested our resilience and energy as we experienced the fatigue brought on by the continued and extended period of detachment from our colleagues and our beneficiaries.

In 2021 we launched our new Strategic Statement, building naturally from our previous Statement and bringing the themes of inclusion, diversity, digitalisation and sustainability further forward through establishing our renewed vision for:

'An inclusive Ireland where we all can participate in and enjoy the transformational value of national and international lifelong learning experiences and be supported to reach our potential.'

We took the opportunity to reflect on the challenge of the past few years and reconnect with our purpose to enable international collaboration in support of National and European policy and exchange. We promoted and communicated the value of intercultural, collaborative projects between Ireland and other countries, and encouraged good working relationships that spark awareness and appreciation of inclusion, diversity, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability across social, cultural and educational domains.

We worked hard to make international cooperation and learning accessible to a wide range of people and organisations. We contributed to the implementation of policy and practice in education, training, adult

education, volunteering and youth work. We provided opportunities for the development of new skills for active participation in society and education. We supported the strategic development of organisations and the personal and skills development of individuals.

In developing and launching this Strategic Statement as our guide for the coming years, we remain grateful for the support and engagement received from: our staff and our Board; the European Commission; the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; the Department of Education; and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; and from our external stakeholders and colleagues representing organisations across the school education, vocational education and training, adult education, lifelong learning and youth sectors. We appreciate all contributions to the development of this Strategic Statement.

Another huge achievement of the year was the launch of the new and even more ambitious cycle of EU Programmes including Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, introducing new activities and priorities as well as a financial framework representing almost double the funding available in the previous cycle. These two programmes are central to achieving both European and national policy goals. The importance of European collaboration, of working together to make our society better, is well established at this stage. But it is always exciting to launch new programmes because they offer both new opportunities for people across Europe and a chance to assess what we want to achieve together.

The launch of the new programmes renewed energy and interest in the possibility of mobility, in a safe and supported way.

The wider scope of the new Erasmus+ programme, along with the bigger budget, means that even more organisations across Ireland can work with their peers to make society more inclusive and diverse; more digitally literate and adaptable; more environmentally conscious; and encourage the active participation of young people in their communities. These might sound like lofty and detached ideals until we examine the work being done in the projects that Léargas funds and we can see that this change is already in progress. To illustrate this, Léargas worked together with our colleagues from the HEA to make a [short video](#) showing how projects are already connecting with these priorities, from schools encouraging environmental awareness through games to vocational organisations pioneering qualifications in digital media.

2021 saw the start of the first full seven-year programme for the European Solidarity Corps, with a budget of more than one billion for all of Europe. This programme supports young people to volunteer both at home and abroad, to be of service to their communities and to work together to address challenges. In fact, the European Solidarity Corps motto is 'the power of together', which has really never been more

appropriate. The pandemic and associated restrictions have had an unparalleled impact on young people in particular, right across society. Some felt 'locked out by lockdown' and the increased funding for both Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps gives young people the power to actively take part in society and its transformation.

International exchange has never stopped, even during times of lockdown. Throughout this year we have worked in diverse ways to connect with people from other communities and other cultures, whether through our online training events, or through digital initiatives like our Adult Education platform EPALE and our school-linking programme eTwinning. In November we held the first Léargas Innovative Learning Awards, celebrating the most creative and inspiring communities, organisations, and teachers at the forefront of education and learning across Ireland. And a week later at the 2021 Léargas Forum, many of you joined us online and listened to those who have participated in our programmes over the past year, people who talked about how their transformational experiences of Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps broadened their vision of their own potential and opened new doors for education and employment.

We often speak about the transformative power of taking part in European programmes, and it's great to see that the impact is long-lasting. In 2021 we published our own research into the education and career paths of vocational learners after they return from European work placements, showing that more than three-quarters of them said their placement had developed or improved their communication and team-working skills, and their ability to work in an international environment. Placements in general have a beneficial impact on the personal and professional lives of participants, by increasing self-confidence and independence. This can help participants to enter the labour market as they feel more capable of performing in pressured situations such as interviews and entering new work places. There is a [high level of overall satisfaction with European mobility programmes among participants, and a high degree of satisfaction with the mentoring and support provided by sending organisations and employers.](#)

This 2021 Annual Report presents the outcomes of our work for the year, including the ongoing projects from the 2014-2020 European programme cycle. Many projects were paused during the pandemic and will continue to be supported by our teams in the coming years. Even with this caveat for the last year of the programme, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was a huge success. We distributed almost €100 million in funding across all sectors, and saw the number of projects and participants increase yearly as Erasmus+ became mainstreamed in organisations across Ireland. This is particularly evident in the School Education sector, where we moved from 24 projects and 2,862 participants in 2014, to 129 projects and 6,500 participants contracted in 2020.

In 2021, we had particularly notable success in eTwinning. The year saw a 25% increase in National Quality Labels awarded, and European Quality Labels for Irish based teachers more than doubled. I would also like to acknowledge the continued support and engagement from our colleagues in the government departments we work with: the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; and the Department of Education.

In summary, 2021 has been another challenging year and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and support of our Board, who are committed to achieving the highest standards of good governance and transparency, as evidenced in the Governance and Financial sections of this Report. This outlines our efforts to continuously strengthen the Léargas Board, Committees and processes, along with ensuring we abide by all legal and regulatory requirements.

Finally, I wish to convey a sincere thank you to all staff and supporters of Léargas, and particularly to our Chair Mr Hugh MacConville, who at the time of writing is about to complete many years of service to the Board of Léargas. I know his colleagues on the Board, the Management and the staff team are very grateful for his many years of service, warm personality and humour and we hope our paths cross again. It is the people of Léargas make it possible to deliver the range of activities and programmes that have such a profound impact on individuals, organisations and communities across Ireland, and Europe. So, to all who contribute to this organisation and to giving people opportunities, thank you.

LORRAINE GILLIGAN
Executive Director

LORRAINE GILLIGAN

TEACHTAIREACHT ÓN STIÚRTHÓIR FEIDHMIÚCHÁI

Bhí Léargas 35 bliana ar an bhfód in 2021, agus tá ár gcuid oibre mar Ghníomhaireacht Náisiúnta do chlár Eorpacha tar éis éirí níos láidre agus níos riachtanaí fós maidir le cur ar chumas daoine agus eagraíochtaí araon taithí a fháil ar an luach bunathraithe atá ag eispéiris idirnáisiúnta agus deiseanna a chruthú chun scileanna agus eolas nua, fás pearsanta agus fás gairmiúil a fhorbairt trí thaithí bheo ar nasc le daoine as cultúr eile.

I dtuarascáil na bliana seo caite, labhair mé faoi mar a bhí 2020 an-difriúil le bliain ar bith eile a bhí ag Léargas le linn a shaoil agus chuimhnigh mé ar an gcur isteach mór ar an saol agus ar an obair a thosaigh i mí an Mhárta 2020.

Bliain neamhghnách eile a bhí in 2021 do chách, agus sinne ag dul i dtraithí ar mhaireachtáil agus ar oibriú le Covid-19, agus chuir na srianta a bhí ag leanúint ar aghaidh ar fud na sochaí isteach ar gach gné dár saol laethúil, rud a chuir srian mór ar shoghluasteacht agus ar ár gcuid oibre i Léargas. Is beag nár bhris ar ár n-athléimneacht agus ár bhfuinneamh mar a bhí an tuirse a tháinig chun cinn mar gheall ar an tréimhse fhada leanúnach a rabharmar scartha ónár gcomhghleacaithe agus ónár dtairbhíthe ag cur as dúinn.

In 2021 sheolamar ár Ráiteas Straitéiseach nua, agus sinne ag tógáil go nádúrtha ar an Ráiteas a thugamar roimhe seo agus ag tabhairt téamaí an chuimsithe, na héagsúlachta, an digitithe agus na hinbhuanaitheachta chun cinn níos faide trínár bhfís athnuaite a bhunú le haghaidh:

'An inclusive Ireland where we all can participate in and enjoy the transformational value of national and international lifelong learning experiences and be supported to reach our potential.'

Thapaíomar an deis machnamh a dhéanamh ar dhúshlán na mblianta atá thart agus athcheangal a dhéanamh lenár gcuspóir chun comhoibriú idirnáisiúnta a chumasú d'fhonn tacú le beartas agus malartú Náisiúnta agus Eorpach. Chuireamar luach na dtionscadal idirchultúrtha, comhoibrioch idir Éirinn agus tíortha eile chun cinn agus chuireamar in iúl é, agus spreagamar dea-chaidreamh oibre a spreagann feasacht agus léirtheiscint ar chuimsiú, éagsúlacht, claochlú digiteach, agus

inbhuanaitheacht comhshaoil ar fud réimsí sóisialta, cultúrtha agus oideachais.

D'oibríomar go dian chun rochtain ar chomhoibriú agus foghlaim idirnáisiúnta a chur ar fáil do réimse leathan daoine agus eagraíochtaí. Chuireamar le cur i bhfeidhm beartais agus cleachtais san oideachas, san oiliúint, san oideachas aosach, in obair dheonach agus in obair don aos óg. Chuireamar deiseanna ar fáil chun scileanna nua a fhorbairt ar mhaithe le rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach sa tsochaí agus san oideachas. Thacaíomar le forbairt straitéiseach eagraíochtaí agus le forbairt phearsanta agus scileanna daoine aonair.

Agus an Ráiteas Straitéise seo á fhorbairt agus á sheoladh againn mar threoir do na blianta atá le teacht, táimid buíoch i gcónaí as an tacaíocht agus an rannpháirtíocht a fuarthas ó: ár bhfoireann agus ár mBord; an Coimisiún Eorpach; an Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta; an Roinn Oideachais; agus an Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánphairtíochta agus Óige; agus ónár bpáirtithe leasmhara seachtracha agus lenár gcomhghleacaithe a dhéanann ionadaíocht ar eagraíochtaí ar fud na n-earnálacha oideachais scoile, gairmoideachais agus oiliúna, oideachais aosaigh, foghlama ar feadh an tsaoil agus earnáil na hóige. Táimid buíoch as gach cuidiú le forbairt an Ráitis Straitéisigh seo.

Éacht ollmhór eile i rith na bliana ab ea seoladh an timthrialla nua de Chlár AE atá níos uailmhianaí fós. Áirítear orthu seo Erasmus+ agus an Cór Dlúthpháirtíochta Eorpach a thugann isteach gníomhaíochtaí agus tosaíochtaí nua chomh maith le creat airgeadais a léiríonn beagnach dhá oiread an chistithe a bhí ar fáil sa timthriall roimhe seo. Tá an dá chlár seo rithábhachtach chun spriocanna beartais Eorpacha agus náisiúnta a bhaint amach. Tá an tábhacht a bhaineann le comhar Eorpach, agus le bheith ag obair le chéile chun ár sochaí a fheabhsú, seanbhunaithe ag an bpointe seo. Ach is rud spreagúil é i gcónaí cláir nua a sheoladh mar go dtugann siad deiseanna nua do dhaoine ar fud na hEorpa agus deis measúnú a dhéanamh ar a bhfuilimid ag iarraidh a bhaint amach le chéile.

Mar thoradh ar sheoladh na gclár nua, tháinig athnuachan ar fhuinneamh agus ar spéis i bhféidearthacht na soghluaisteachta, ar bhealach sábháilte a bhfuil tacaíocht leis.

Ciallaíonn scóip níos leithne an chlár nua Erasmus+, mar aon leis an mbuiséad níos mó, gur féidir le níos mó eagraíochtaí ar fud na hÉireann oibriú lena bpiaraí chun cur le cuimsitheacht agus éagsúlacht sa tsochaí; chun cur lena litearthacht dhigiteach agus lena hinoiriúnaitheacht, le tuiscint don chomhshaoil; agus chun rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach daoine óga ina bpobail a spreagadh. B'fhéidir go bhfuil cuma an-uailmhianach ar nós saoil gan locht ar na smaointe seo ach má chaithimid súil níos géire ar an obair atá á déanamh ar na tionscadail atá á maoiniú ag Léargas chífimid go bhfuil an t-athrú seo ar siúl cheana féin. Chun é sin a léiriú, d'oibrigh Léargas le chéile lenár gcomhghleacaithe ón ÚAO chun

físeán gairid a dhéanamh a thaispeánann an nasc atá idir tionscadail agus na tosaíochtaí seo cheana féin, idir scoileanna atá ag spreagadh feasachta comhshaoil trí chluichí agus eagraíochtaí gairmoideachais a bhfuil cáilíochtaí ceannródaíocha acu sna meáin dhigiteacha.

In 2021 cuireadh tús leis an gcéad chlár iomlán seacht mbliana don Chór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach, le buiséad de níos mó ná billiún euro don Eoraip ar fad. Tacaíonn an clár seo le daoine óga obair dheonach a dhéanamh sa bhaile agus thar lear, chun seirbhís a thabhairt dá bpobail agus oibriú le chéile chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar dhúshlán. Déanta na fírinne, is é mana an Chóir Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpaigh ná 'cumhacht le chéile', rud atá níos oiriúnaí ná riamh faoi láthair. Bhí tionchar gan sárú ag an bpaindéim agus ag na srianta a ghabh léi ar dhaoine óga go háirithe, ar fud na sochaí. Mhothaigh cuid acu go raibh siad 'glasáilte amach ag an dianghlásáil' ach tugann an méadú ar mhaoiniú do Erasmus+ agus don Chór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach an chumhacht do dhaoine óga páirt ghníomhach a ghlacadh sa tsochaí agus ina hathrú ó mbonn aníos.

Níor tháinig stop riamh le malartú idirnáisiúnta, fiú le linn dianghlásála. Le linn na bliana seo d'oibríomar ar bhealaí éagsúla chun nascadh le daoine ó phobail eile agus ó chultúir eile, cibé acu trínár n-imeachtaí oiliúna ar líne, nó trí thionscnaimh dhigiteacha ar nós ár n-ardán Oideachais Aosaigh, EPALE agus ár gclár nasctha scoile, eTwinning. I mí na Samhna réachtáladh na chéad Ghradaim Foghlama Nuálaíochta de chuid Léargas. Rinneadh ceiliúradh ar na pobail, na heagraíochtaí agus na múinteoirí is cruthaithí agus is spreagúla atá ar thús cadhnaíochta san oideachas agus san fhoghlaim ar fud na hÉireann. Agus seachtain ina dhiaidh sin, ag Fóram Léargas 2021, tháinig go leor agaibh isteach ar líne agus d'éist sibh leo siúd a ghlac páirt inár gcuid clár le bliain anuas. Labhair na daoine sin faoin gcaoi ar thug a dtáithí bunathraithe ar Erasmus+ nó ar an gCór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach fíis níos fairsinge dóibh i dtaobh a n-acmhainneachta féin agus mar a d'oscail sé sin doirse nua le haghaidh oideachais agus fostaíochta.

Is minic a labhraímid faoin gcumhacht bunathraithe a bhaineann le páirt a ghlacadh i gcláir Eorpacha, agus is iontach an rud é a fheiceáil gur tionchar a mhaireann go gceann i bhfad é. In 2021 d'fhoilsíomar [ár dtaighde féin ar oideachas agus ar chonairí gairme na bhfoghlaimoirí gairmoideachais tar éis dóibh filleadh ó shocrúcháin oibre Eorpacha](#). Thaispeánamar go ndúirt níos mó ná trí cheathrú díobh gur fhorbair nó gur fheabhsaigh a socrúcháin a gcuid scileanna cumarsáide agus oibre foirne agus a gcumas oibriú i dtimpeallacht idirnáisiúnta. Bíonn tionchar tairbheach ag socrúcháin go ginearálta ar shaol pearsanta agus gairmiúla na rannpháirtithe, trí fhéinmhuinín agus neamhspleáchas a mhéadú. Is féidir leis seo cabhrú le rannpháirtithe dul isteach sa mhargadh saothair mar go mbraitheann siad go bhfuil cumas níos fearr acu feidhmiú i gcásanna ina bhfuil brú ann cosúil le hagallaimh agus dul isteach in áiteanna oibre nua. Tá ardleibhéal sástachta ar an iomlán le cláir shoghluaiasteachta Eorpacha i measc rannpháirtithe, agus ardleibhéal sástachta leis an meantóireacht agus leis an tacaíocht a

chuireann eagraíochtaí sallchuir agus fostóirí ar fáil.

Sa Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2021 seo cuirtear i láthair torthaí ár gcuid oibre don bhliain, lena n-áirítear na tionscadail ó thimthriall na gclár Eorpach 2014-2020 atá ar siúl i gcónaí. Cuireadh stop le go leor tionscadal le linn na paindéime agus leanfaidh ár bhfoirne de bheith ag tacú leo sna blianta atá le teacht. Fiú i bhfianaise an caveat seo maidir leis an mbliain dheireanach den chlár, d'éirigh thar barr le Erasmus+ 2014-2020. Rinneamar maoiniú €100 milliún, nach mór, a dháileadh ar fud na n-earnálacha go léir, agus tháinig méadú bliantúil ar líon na dtionscadal agus na rannpháirtithe de réir mar a rinneadh Erasmus+ a phríomhshruthú in eagraíochtaí ar fud na hÉireann. Tá sé seo le feiceáil go háirithe san earnáil Oideachais Scoile, áit ar a dtáinig méadú ó 24 tionscadal agus 2,862 rannpháirtí in 2014 go 129 tionscadal agus 6,500 rannpháirtí ar conradh in 2020.

In 2021, d'éirigh thar barr linn maidir le eTwinning. Tháinig ardú 25% ar Lipéid Cháilíochta Náisiúnta a bronnadh, agus tháinig méadú faoi dhó ar Lipéid Cháilíochta Eorpacha do mhúinteoirí atá lonnaithe in Éirinn.

Go hachomair, ba bhliain dhúshlánach eile i 2021 agus ba mhaith liom an deis seo a thapú chun aitheantas a thabhairt do thiomantas agus do thacaíocht ár mBord, atá tiomanta do na caighdeáin is airde dea-rialachais agus trédhearcachta a bhaint amach, mar is léir sna codanna faoi Rialachas agus Airgeadas sa Tuarascáil seo. Leagann sé seo amach ár n-iarrachtaí chun Bord Léargas, Coistí agus próisis a neartú go leanúnach, mar aon lena chinntiú go gcloímid leis na ceanglais dhlíthiúla agus rialála go léir.

Ba mhaith liom freisin aitheantas a thabhairt don tacaíocht agus teagmháil leanúnach ónár gcomhghleacaithe sna ranna rialtais a n-oibrímid leo: an Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta; an Roinn Leanáí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige; agus an Roinn Oideachais.

Mar fhocal scoir, ba mhaith liom buíochas ó chroí a ghabháil leis an bhfoireann agus le lucht tacaíochta Léargas ar fad, agus go háirithe lenár gCathaoirleach, an tUasal Hugh MacConville. Agus an méid seo á scríobh tá na blianta fada seirbhíse a thug sé do Bhord Léargas ag teacht chun deiridh. Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil a chomhghleacaithe ar an mBord, sa Bhainistíocht agus ar an bhfoireann an-bhuíoch as na blianta fada seirbhíse a chuir sé isteach, as a phearsantacht chairdiúil agus a ghreann. Tá súil againn go gcasfar le chéile sinn arís. Gan tiomantas agus iarracht ár bhfoirne, ní bheadh ar chumas Léargas an réimse gníomhaíochtaí agus clár a bhfuil tionchar chomh mór sin acu ar dhaoine aonair, ar eagraíochtaí agus ar phobail ar fud na hÉireann agus na hEorpa a chur ar fáil. Mar sin, glacaim buíochas le gach duine a chuireann leis an eagraíocht seo agus le deiseanna a thabhairt do dhaoine.

LORRAINE GILLIGAN
Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin

ERASMUS+ ADULT EDUCATION 2021 KA1 & KA2

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Erasmus+ Adult Education Mobility supports staff and learners to travel to another country to train, job-shadow or learn. Adult Education organisations can collaborate with other relevant organisations to achieve a shared goal or share good practices through Cooperation Partnerships. Teachers, trainers and others involved in Adult Education can take part in short Training courses and Cooperation Activities, both in Ireland and in other countries.

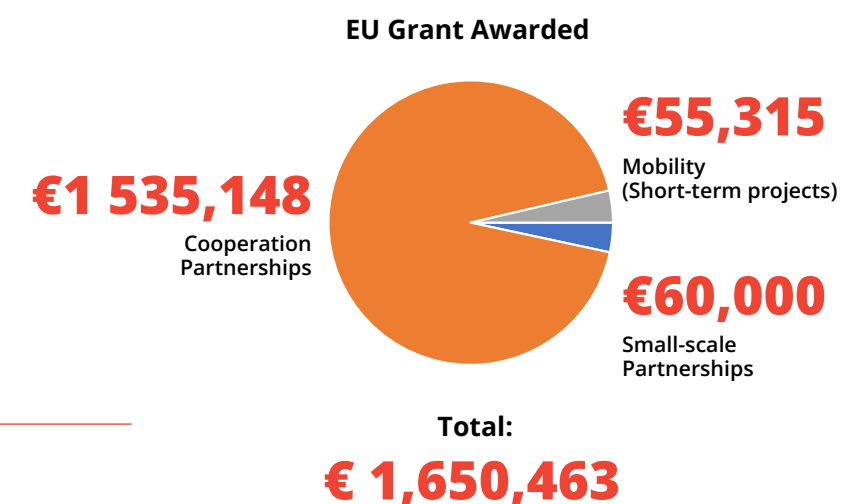
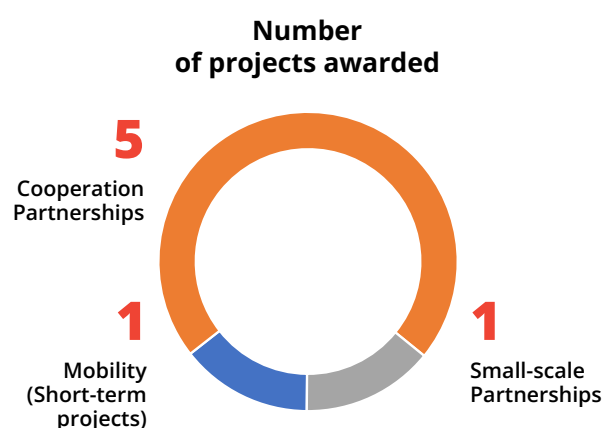
While a lot of Adult Education Mobility projects were still on hold during 2021, some amazing work was taking place among the Strategic Partnership projects. Project partners continued to come up with new and innovative ways to keep their projects on track despite travel restrictions. In some cases they ended up extending their reach far beyond what was planned, by holding virtual events open to members of the public all across Europe.

The number of newcomer schools and organisations applying for Key Action 1 Short-term mobility projects was approximately 60% of the total applications received. This was an achievement given the on-going difficulties with Covid-19. Project topics included:

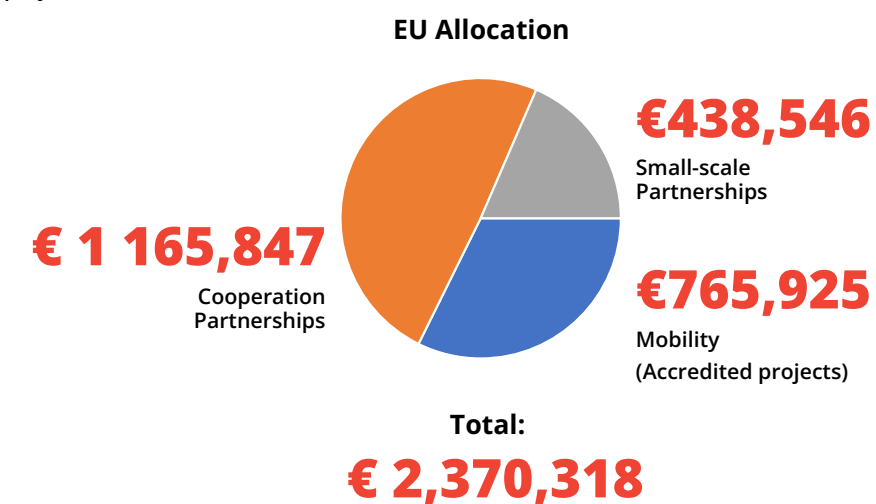
Wellbeing, ICT/Digital, Language learning and Climate Change. New projects which were awarded funding in 2021 include one Small-Scale Partnership as well as five Cooperation Partnerships. Over the coming years, these projects will address important topics such as:

- Digital transition - embedding digital skills into communities and embracing the opportunities offered by digital tools
- Sustainability and biodiversity
- Social inclusion - including issues such as mental health, substance misuse, and older people in rural communities.

In addition, five organisations were awarded Erasmus+ Accreditation in the field of Adult Education. We look forward to hearing about all the exciting mobilities that these organisations will carry out around Europe in the next few years.



Total number of forecasted participants
20 Mobility (Short-term projects)



Health@Home



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

The Health@Home project led by Meath Partnership came to an end in 2021. This project looked at the idea of health literacy - such a vital area of work for the current times!

It developed a wide range of resources for families to support communities to access and understand basic health information. With posters, comics and webquests, there is something there for all ages, covering subjects such as nutrition, physical activity, social media use and much more.

Erasmus+ Project Reference
2019-1-IE01-KA204-051443
www.healthathome.net/about/



ERASMUS+ SCHOOL EDUCATION 2021 KA1 & KA2

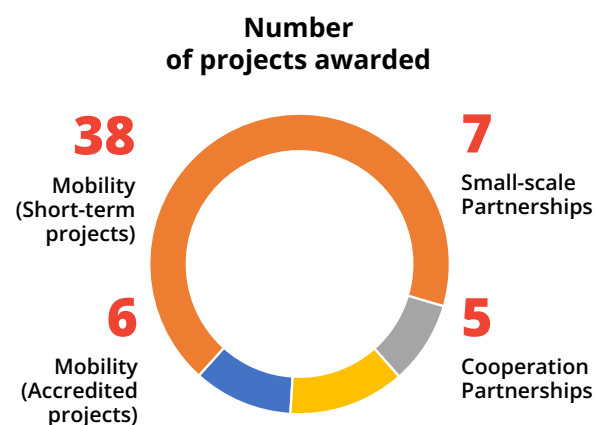
Deirdre O'Brien
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Erasmus+ School Education Mobility supports teachers, learners and School Education staff to travel to another country to train, job-shadow or learn. School Education organisations can collaborate with other relevant organisations to achieve a shared goal or share good practices through Cooperation Partnerships. Teachers, trainers and others involved in School Education can take part in short Training courses and Cooperation Activities, both in Ireland and in other countries.

This year proved to be another difficult and challenging time for Erasmus+ School Education. Despite the challenges that Covid-19 has posed, there are a number of positives to report.

2021 saw an increase in schools and organisations applying for Erasmus+ Accreditation. Accreditation gives organisations simplified access to mobility funding and supports their strategic delivery of professional and personal development opportunities for learners, teachers, trainers and other education staff. Organisations only need to be accredited once during the seven years of the programme. Twenty-one new accreditations were awarded in 2022.



Newcomer schools and organisations made up approximately 60% of the applicants for short-term mobility projects. This was a considerable achievement given the ongoing difficulties with Covid-19. Popular project topics included Wellbeing, ICT/Digital, Language learning and Climate Change.

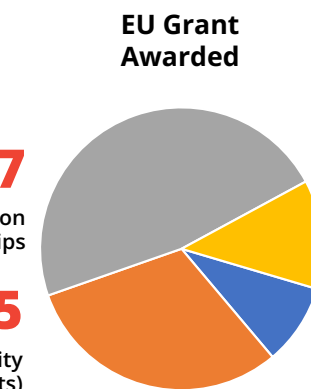
We had strong attendance at our online events, in particular our Erasmus+ 2021 & Beyond sessions which gave an overview of the new programme cycle. We also held a Project Ideas Lab for Small-Scale Partnerships, to raise awareness of the benefits of participating in a European Partnership Project and the new lump sum funding model. Our session on Developing New Local & European Horizons with Erasmus+ Accreditation introduced the new Accreditation model and in particular Accreditation as a Consortium Coordinator.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

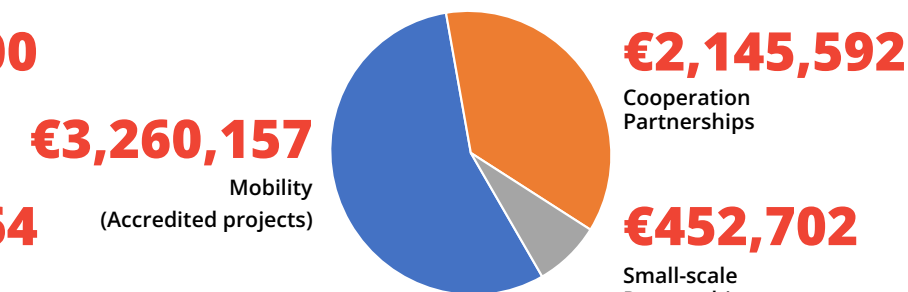
BFireSafeatSchool

Leitrim County Council's Strategic Partnership project BFireSafeatSchool won the prestigious European Fire Safety Award for 2021 at the Sixth International Safety Education seminar in Croke Park, Dublin. The award was sponsored by the European Fire Safety Alliance and the Federation of European Fire Officers. It was one of twelve projects submitted from countries all over Europe. The award was presented by Maria Walsh MEP, a member of the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education.



Total: €2,884,786

EU Allocation



Total: €5,858,451

Total number of forecasted participants

- 528 Mobility (Short-term projects)
- 119 Mobility (Accredited projects)

Total number of participants with fewer opportunities

- 27 Mobility (Accredited projects)
- 24 Mobility (Short-term projects)



Finian Joyce, Leitrim County Council being presented with the Award from Maria Walsh MEP a member of the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education



European Innovative Teaching Award

We were delighted to recognise Irish schools' achievements with the new European Innovative Teaching Award. The award was established by the European Commission to showcase outstanding teaching practices and recognise the work of teachers and their schools who make an exceptional contribution to the profession, in the context of Erasmus+. You can watch profiles of the winning schools on our EITA playlist on YouTube.

The project developed a new fire safety education programme for teachers and pupils in second level schools in Europe. The partners were a well-balanced group of fire and rescue services, local, regional and national government organisations, third-level research institutions, learning developers and national and EU teacher organisations. The project produced training course material on Fire Safety and an e-Learning tool.

Erasmus+ Project Reference
2018-1-IE01-KA201-038807
www.bfiresafeatschool.eu

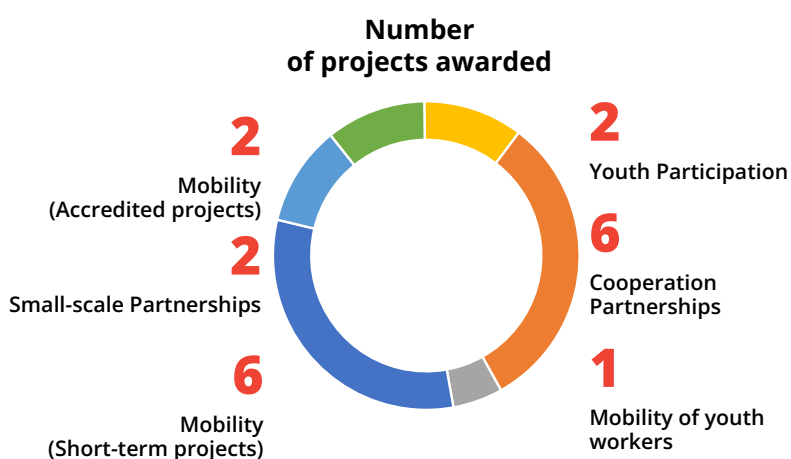
ERASMUS+ YOUTH 2021 KA1 & KA2

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Erasmus+ Youth offers opportunities to youth workers and young people, who can travel to another country for training or exchange in Mobility projects. Youth organisations can collaborate with other relevant organisations to achieve a shared goal or share good practices through Cooperation Partnerships. Youth workers, Youth managers and others involved in youth work can take part in short Training courses and Cooperation Activities, both in Ireland and in other countries.

As part of the Léargas Strategic Statement we have identified the importance of cultivating and facilitating meaningful partnerships among our beneficiaries, but also with other key organisations. In 2021 we established long-term cooperation projects in the areas of Education of Youth Workers, Digital Youth Work, and International Youth Work. These projects enhance the quality of youth work both on a local, national and European level through training, research, policy, and strategic collaborations. We are working with main youth work actors in Ireland such as Maynooth University, National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and Youth Work Ireland to ensure our objectives are being met and ensuring impact at grassroots levels. We were particularly proud to deliver



our 'Youth Work and You' Module on International Youth Work, developed alongside NYCI and Maynooth University.

The impact of COVID-19 on the youth sector and international mobility had a strong influence on the number of applications we received throughout 2021. We received 10 youth exchange, 5 youth worker mobilities and 4 youth participation activity applications. The main topics ranged from youth empowerment and leadership, youth participation, inclusion of marginalised young people, physical and mental health, well-being, creativity, arts, and culture. To support beneficiaries dealing with the ongoing challenges to their projects we increased monitoring and support calls to guide them in their options for their projects. The level of adaptability and commitment demonstrated by beneficiaries to realise their projects has been motivating. Youth accreditation is a new feature of Erasmus+ that allows experienced youth organisations to apply for an accreditation for the entire duration of the programme. Once accredited,

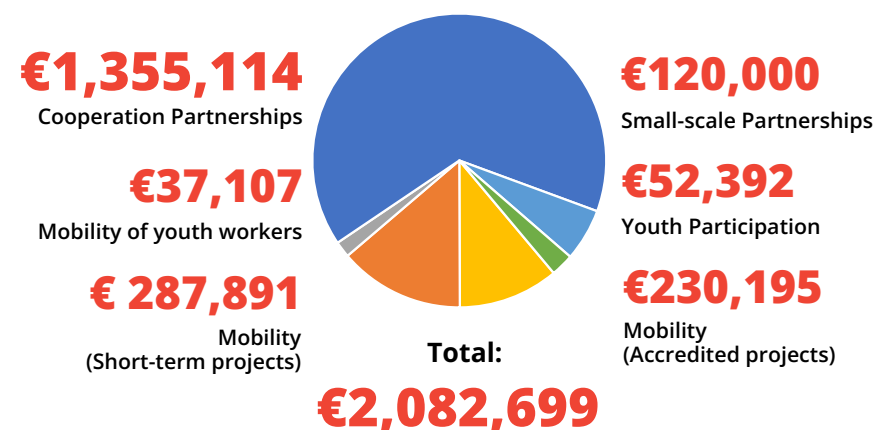


PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

BFireSafeatSchool

Many projects were put on hold throughout 2021 but some managed to realise their activities by adapting them online. For example, the Irish Environmental Conservation Organisation for Youth UNESCO Club successfully adapted their youth dialogue project "The Heat is On - Environmental Youth Summit" into seven online activities. They managed to achieve their objectives and supported and empowered young people to tackle issues related to environment and climate that were important to them. Appropriate online methods and safety

EU Grant Awarded



Total number of forecasted participants

- 393** Mobility (Short-term projects)
- 340** Youth Participation
- 225** Mobility (Accredited projects)
- 27** Mobility of youth workers

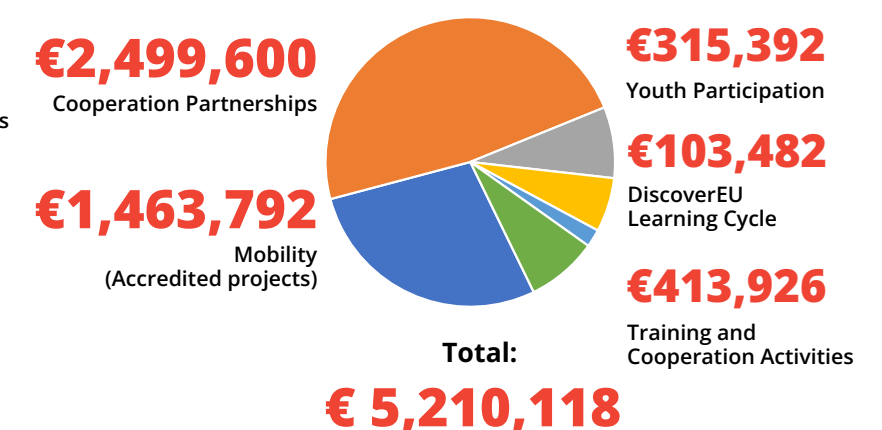
Total number of participants with fewer opportunities

- 217** Mobility (Accredited projects)
- 81** Mobility (Short-term projects)
- 12** Mobility of youth workers

practices supported the successful implementation of the project.

Erasmus+ Project Reference
2019-3-IE01-KA347-065607
<https://ecounesco.ie/10-18-youth-programmes/youth-summit/>

EU Allocation



organisations can apply for one annual grant request for multiple youth mobilities. There were 8 applications in 2021, and there is huge potential within the accredited organisations to meaningfully contribute to the inclusion and diversity priority of the programme. For example, Waterford and South Tipperary Youth Service highlighted the benefit of accreditation in giving them flexibility to plan and integrate European work into their programmes for their target groups.

2021 has also seen the restructuring of Cooperation Partnerships within Key Action 2, with the introduction of small-scale partnerships to the Action. Small-scale Partnerships are designed to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach within the youth field. In 2021, we supported two projects under this action, as well as 6 projects under Cooperation Partnerships.

Throughout 2021 we continued to carry out online events to support applications through discovery days, project labs and application clinics.



European Youth Week

A highlight of the year was European Youth Week. During the week, we co-hosted three national events and supported local activities across the country (Clare, Tipperary, Dublin, Limerick, Galway, and Kerry) to celebrate young people and to promote international youth work and cooperation. The events engaged over 250 participants and promoted the priorities of the new programme. The "Minority Voices Shaping and Creating our Equal and Inclusive Future" event addressed inclusion and diversity but also intersecting topics such as mental health and wellbeing, environmental justice, and youth activism. The Making Links group from the National Youth Council of Ireland's quality and intercultural programme developed and facilitated the session which empowered them to run their workshops as peers who come from minority identities and so speak about inclusion and equality from lived experience.

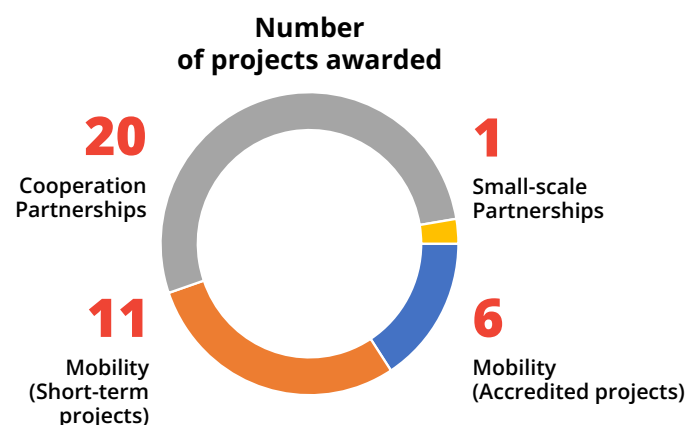
ERASMUS+ VET MOBILITY 2021

Erasmus+ VET Mobility supports teachers, trainers and VET staff to travel to other countries for job shadowing, teaching and training. VET learners can travel for work placements and take part in skills competitions.

VET Mobility for staff and learners focuses on physical travel so that participants can experience real-world skills development, and “the whole package” of cultural immersion and understanding. Although virtual mobilities are possible, the impact and ramifications of Covid-19 were particularly challenging in this sector. We facilitated extensions to several projects that were unable to carry out physical mobilities or wished to change host partners during 2021.

We also continued to support both new and experienced applicants with peer-to-peer focused events such as application workshops and Project Management Days. We held a ‘round table’ event on Inclusion, and joined with colleagues in the European Solidarity Corps to deliver a self-care workshop for mentors and accompanying persons. We also teamed up with colleagues in Cooperation Partnerships and in Adult Education to create a space for Further Education and Training staff from Education and Training Boards to have peer-to-peer exchange of experiences in the context of European projects.

For applicants in 2021, there was a 100% success rate with continued high scoring. This was also the third year in a row with a full geographic spread of applicants. Applications reflected all



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potential activities, with good emphasis on longer term mobilities (called ‘ErasmusPro’) and embraced new programme activities such as skills competitions. We had applications for learner mobility projects from diverse vocational areas including Administration/ Business; Nursing/Healthcare; Beauty Therapy; Childcare; Traditional Irish Music; Tourism with Business; Health Nutrition-Food Science; Art; Theatre Performance/Drama; Professional Cookery; Horticulture; Multimedia; TV & Film; and Outdoor Education.

Applications for staff projects broadly focused on the management, design, delivery and enhancement of VET provision. Topics include the need to upskill and facilitate blended and ICT course delivery and learning; supporting the mental health of learners; and enhancing leadership.

It was particularly positive to see an increase in organisations applying for an accreditation, with a 75% success rate among applicants. An accreditation facilitates longer term strategic development of organisations through simplified applications for funding for the duration of the Erasmus+ Programme. There are now 23 accredited VET organisations who have long-term plans to improve the VET provision within their organisation.

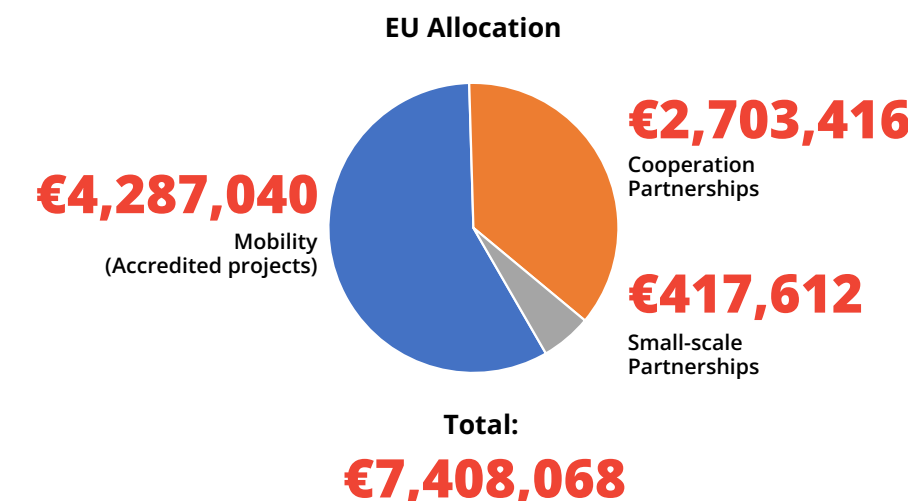
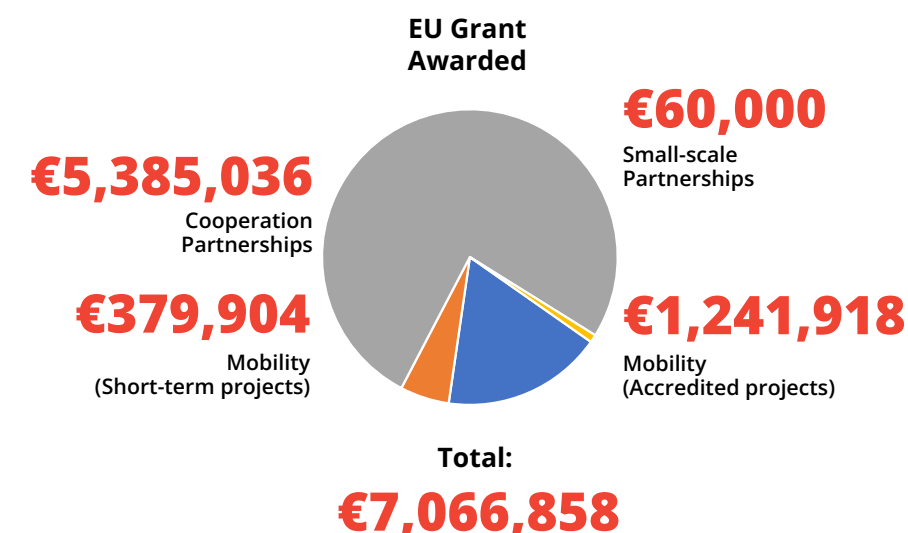
Total number of forecasted participants
311 Mobility (Accredited projects)
166 Mobility (Short-term projects)

Total number of participants with fewer opportunities
126 Mobility (Accredited projects)
54 Mobility (Short-term projects)

We also surveyed 2020 and 2021 project co-ordinators, who similarly responded that the main benefits of learner mobilities were soft skills like confidence, independence, problem solving, team-work, adaptability, resilience (88%); greater motivation for their course/career (88%); and being more likely to progress to Higher Education (47%). The main benefits of staff mobilities were reported as professional development (94%); exposure to new ways of doing things (88%); increased motivation (65%); and development of networks. Almost half reported that participation had enhanced VET provision within the organisation through, for example, introduction of new courses and modules.

at Galway Community College for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Erasmus+ Project Reference
2018-1-IE01-KA102-38636
www.fe.galwaycc.ie



International exchange



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Galway Community College sent learners to Cyprus and Portugal to undertake work placements in a variety of organisations. The project provided a holistic, valuable personal and professional learning experience for learners. The college also sent staff at senior management and tutor level to Cyprus for exchange of expertise and best practice.

This project had long-lasting and positive impact as the staff mobility directly resulted in a new Pharmacy assistant course being successfully developed, set up, filled and run



National research study of Vocational Learners from Ireland

In 2021 we published the national research study “It Made Me Hungry For More: Tracing the Impact of European Work Placements on the Skills, Attitudes, Education and Career Paths of Vocational Learners from Ireland”. The study found that mobility placements are effective at developing self-confidence and independence, along with soft skills such as communication, team-working and time management - particularly among younger participants, those who have not lived away from home before and those who have not worked in their vocational area before. It further found that Erasmus+ mobilities have a lasting impact on personal and professional contacts, with many participants developing close ties with co-workers and peers. Placements helped participants to access the labour market as they felt more capable of performing in pressured situations such as interviews and entering new work places.

ERASMUS+ VET COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS

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VET organisations can collaborate with other relevant organisations to achieve a shared goal or share good practices through Cooperation Partnerships. These projects are wide-ranging from initial vocational training to upskilling of those already in the workplace.

2021 saw a continuation of online cooperation and virtual activities between funded projects, although some projects managed to hold physical activities and meetings in the latter half of the year - in some cases meeting each other in person for the first time! Several projects were successfully completed and covered a range of sectors and topics including: training for agri-food cooperatives; validation of informal learning in childcare; and the use of digital technology in Vocational Training.

All projects succeeded in achieving their original objectives and produced outputs as planned. Projects also succeeded in

contributing to a range of European priorities including mapping and development of competences in Vocational Training, inclusion and diversity, and innovative digital practices. Projects worked together creatively to carry out their activities virtually resulting in new skills and experiences for those participating.

Meaningful Virtual Engagement in Strategic Partnerships

To capture some of these approaches we hosted a cross-sectoral virtual seminar on Meaningful Virtual Engagement in Strategic Partnerships in November 2021. The event brought together 33 participants from seven European countries (Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands and Serbia) and focused specifically on identifying, exchanging, harvesting and sharing examples of Meaningful Virtual Engagement in Strategic Partnerships.

Restart+



PROJECT
SPOTLIGHT

Restart+, led by Letterkenny Institute of Technology developed a suite of innovative learning tools and resources to equip leaders of community groups, public authorities and educational institutions with the knowledge and skills needed to adopt a transformative approach to community reactivation. As a result of the project 61 organizations participated in Restart+ Alliances across Ireland, UK, Portugal and Romania, and

engaged in training to improve their skills and to transform approaches to community regeneration in their regions.

Erasmus+ Project Reference
2018-1-IE01-KA202-038796
www.restart.how

ERASMUS+ 2014-2020

Many projects for the 2014-2020 cycle of Erasmus+ were paused during the pandemic and will continue to be supported by our teams in the coming years. Even with this caveat, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was a huge success. We distributed almost €100 million in funding across all sectors, and saw the number of projects and participants increase yearly as Erasmus+ became mainstreamed in organisations across Ireland. This is particularly evident in the School Education sector, where we moved from 24 projects and 2,862 participants in 2014, to 129 projects and 6,500 participants contracted in 2020.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Programme Total
Adult Education								
Funding	€1,280,576	€896,710	€890,222	€870,000	€1,700,000	€1,005,064	€2,058,106	€8,700,678
Projects	14	6	10	11	15	15	15	86
Participants	223	189	636	1126	1770	1004	1803	6751
School Education								
Funding	€1,278,596	€2,903,915	€2,485,061	€3,430,000	€3,500,000	€5,637,991	€7,621,731	€26,857,294
Projects	24	46	55	80	98	162	129	594
Participants	2862	3097	2300	3357	4216	6819	6500	29151
VET								
Funding	€4,258,436	€3,869,990	€3,937,689	€4,900,000	€7,000,000	€7,662,791	€7,877,411	€39,506,318
Projects	23	24	27	37	49	62	59	281
Participants	965	754	3014	2755	4214	4389	3945	20036
Youth								
Funding	€2,234,027	€2,751,048	€2,834,063	€3,700,000	€4,000,000	€2,789,404	€3,626,175	€21,934,717
Projects	79	86	89	98	78	64	34	528
Participants	2013	2491	3566	4518	4133	4862	3924	25507

ERASMUS+ TCA/NET 2021 KA3

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Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) and Networking Activities (NET) are events arranged by National Agencies to encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice within Erasmus+. They can be training and support events aimed at National Agency staff and project coordinators; contact seminars to find project partners; or thematic seminars addressing specific topics in education, training and youth work.

In 2021 we supported 26 Transnational Cooperation Activities in the fields of Education and Training, Networking Activities, and Youth. Most of these were held online rather than in person, in line with government guidelines at the time. These TCAs addressed topics including: inclusion; digital transformation; access for schools in rurally isolated areas and communities; and the quality of project implementation. National activities allowed us to engage newcomers and current beneficiaries within their national context, an support them in making a connection with the European context.

Our transnational TCAs for Youth, Education and Training, and Networking focused on several different priorities such as inclusion, sustainability, rural schools, and youth work. The TCA team is also part of ongoing research project, 'DIGI Snac'. This project focuses on digital youth work and brings together National Agencies, research experts, and the National Youth Council of Ireland to support the digital competencies of youth workers.

Highlights of the year

- A national event on 'Meaningful Virtual Engagement', bringing together beneficiaries of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership projects to explore and explicate models of virtual engagement and blended learning – an area of paramount importance during the pandemic.
- The national activity 'National University of Ireland Certificate in European Youth Mobility Projects Management' which saw 15 students take part in a 16 week course on European Youth Mobility Project Management.
- Other events including 'SDGs and ME' which offered those working with young people an international learning experience, enabling them to develop their competencies in connecting local issues to global issues using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework.
- An increase in engagement with Higher Education institutes to carry out the long-term 'Among Others' project.
- Our series of 'Webinar Wednesdays' which aimed to provide learning and training opportunities for people involved in Education and Training, Youth, and Civic Society in Ireland. These events explored the key priorities and values that underpin

The budget of
Youth
TCA

€413,926

The budget of
Education
and Training TCA

€244,082

European Programmes, including 'Introducing EPALE to the VET sector' and 'Sharing your Story - Communication in EU Programmes'.

- The 'ACCESS ALL AREAS' event, where we worked alongside the National Centre for Guidance in Education to develop a training for post-primary guidance counsellors to discover the opportunities within Erasmus+.
- The TCA 'Resources for Rural Schools' also looked at collaborating with our colleagues in eTwinning to support access for schools in rurally isolated communities to engage in European projects through eTwinning and Erasmus+.

We hope that the number of participants attending our hosting and sending activities will increase in 2022, with the reintroduction of face-to-face activities.

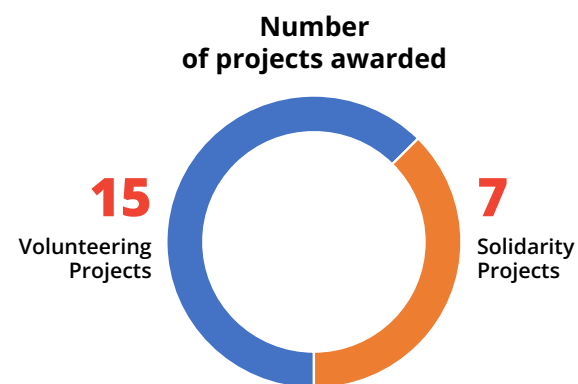


EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS 2021

The European Solidarity Corps helps young people to help others. It funds and supports young people aged between 18 and 30 from EU member states, to volunteer or self-organise projects that benefit communities. Young people can volunteer at home or abroad, through the Volunteering Projects and Solidarity Projects strands.

The new European Solidarity Corps Programme 2021-2027 brought a significant change to previous iterations with a focus on Strategic Impact. This brought a new dimension to the programme for our beneficiaries. The priorities of the programme were clearly set out to include Inclusion, Digitalisation, Sustainability and Active Citizenship. The programme brought new vigour with more funding opportunities to support organisations, and motivated young people to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic. Organisations wanting to participate in the programme were asked to consider these priorities and to connect their organisation's strategic plan to further the aim of the programme to create a more inclusive, digitally aware, civically engaged and sustainable Europe.

Taking a high-support approach, we walked the experienced and newcomer organisations through the steps to engage with the new programme. We held several online events including Quality Label hubs and Learning Networks to promote the programme



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and demystify the process of applying. Through our networks, for example The Wheel and Sustainable Ireland, we held events focusing on the priorities. The organisations rose to the challenge and as a result, we awarded 26 Quality Labels to organisations throughout Ireland. These organisations represent various sectors including Youth, Sustainability, Homelessness services, Arts and Youth theatre, Social Justice, Organisations working with people with disabilities and After School projects. These organisations have all set out three-to-seven-year strategic objectives demonstrating a commitment to the programme.

Despite a challenging start to the programme, approximately 100 young people were supported to volunteer in many of these organisations as well as to travel and volunteer abroad. Most of these activities were long term and approximately 50% of the participants were young people with fewer opportunities. Despite the challenges of lockdowns, young people were given the opportunity to integrate into the communities. Moreover, beneficiaries worked hard and creatively to support volunteers to connect with the needs of the communities they worked with.

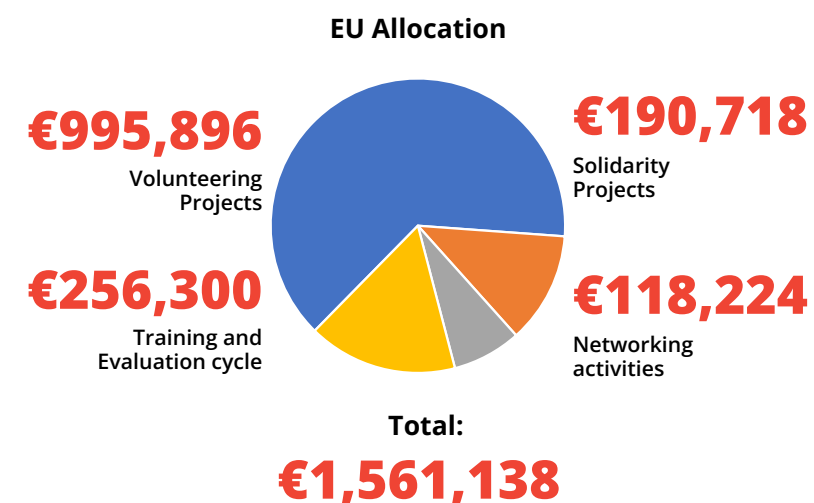
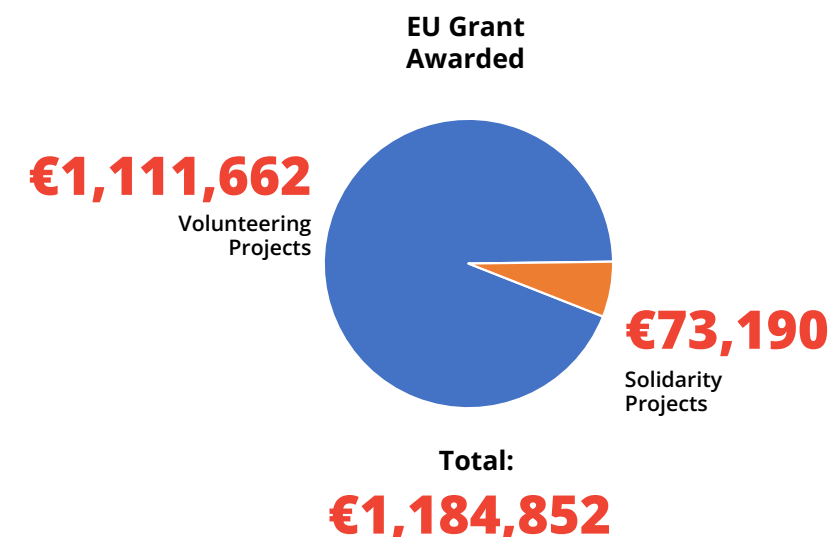
Total number of forecasted participants

82 Volunteering Projects

48 Solidarity Projects

Total number of participants with fewer opportunities

70 Volunteering Projects



Solidarity Projects



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Solidarity Projects are projects designed, developed, and led by groups of young people who are inspired to address a challenge in their community. Due to delays to the start of the programme we had two calls for Solidarity projects in 2021.

In the first round six successful projects planned to address issues including sustainability, inclusion of people living in direct provision and addressing mental health needs of young people. The second round addressed a diverse range of needs

including women's participation in democratic processes as well as sustainability and inclusion.

45 young people are leading these projects even with the restrictions affecting some of their plans. They have shown resilience and adapted to complete their projects and achieve their objectives.



EPALE 2021

EPALE stands for the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. It is a multilingual, open membership community and a hub for news, reports, events and discussion on Adult Learning across Europe. EPALE is free to join and funded by the European Union through Erasmus+. It is operated by the European Commission and supported by the governments of member states. Léargas is the National Support Service for EPALE in Ireland.

In 2021, the events we ran and collaborated on with our partners set the tone for a year full of hearty discussion and visual resources. Moved by the resiliency of humanity in the face of the pandemic, our focus in 2021 was on Life and Work Skills; Digital Transition for Blended Learning; and Inclusive Social Change. These core topics underpinned how we designed and implemented our workshops, panel discussions, and training events.

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We explored Digital Transition and Life and Work Skills at our 2021 Education and Technology conference. In collaboration with the Rehab Group, “Enabling Our Students Through Blended Learning” saw nearly 200 members join use for panel discussions and workshops.

To finish the year, EPALE Ireland’s annual National Day, “The Most Important Life and Work Skills in 2021 and Beyond” brought together professionals within Ireland as well as across Europe to reflect and look to the future.

Throughout 2021 one of EPALE Ireland’s longest-standing ambassador members conducted interviews in a blog series entitled “Adult Education, a Journey with Those who Make the Roads”, telling the story of adult education in Ireland. The activities and events tie in with the larger goals of EPALE and Léargas and create a tapestry of resources accessible without borders.





PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

The EPALE events

We held nine events in the year and were humbled by the numbers in attendance and level of engagement among members. It was great to see that each event led to the welcoming of new members.

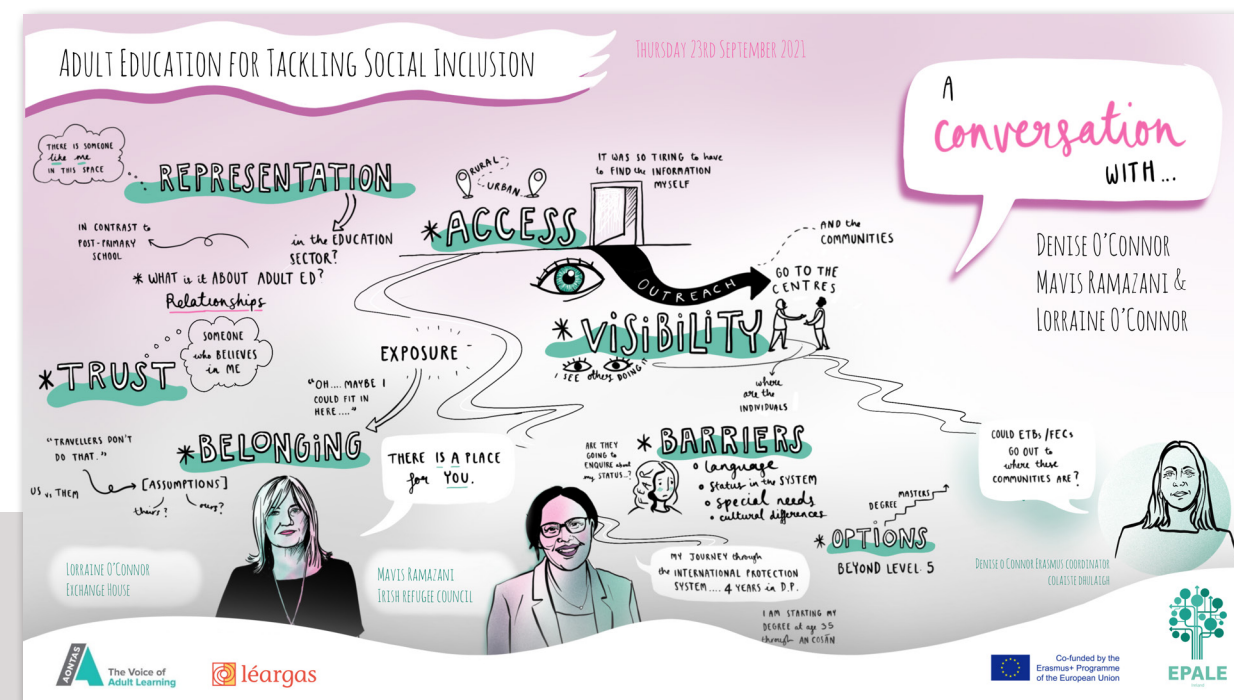
At a wider EU level, colleagues from the 37 European countries in the EPALE network saw similar growth and evidence of the positive impact that the digital platform has on the lives of educators and practitioners in the Adult Learning and Education sector. This solidifies EPALE’s place in an ever-changing world.

30%  the growth of the EPALE Ireland members from December 2020 to December 2021

100,000  number of the EPALE network members across Europe in 2021



-  **32** blogs, exceeding targets by 8
-  **27** resources, exceeding target by 3
-  **60** events, exceeding targets by 36
-  **30** news pieces, exceeding target by 6
-  **21** original blogs produced by The National Support Service within EPALE Ireland



Though all nine events were notable in their own right, our Community Education Webinar series was a particular highlight. The series exhibited the need for re-assessing what education is and means. The series had three parts:

1. Reasserting the Politics of Community Education
2. Becoming an Anti-racist Adult Education Practitioner
3. Community Education and Climate Justice.

Each event was housed under the theme of Inclusive Social Change. Another event with this theme, ‘Representation Matters: Let’s Talk About It’ in late March, was memorable as it sparked discussions that continued long after two-hour event finished.

ETWINNING 2021

www.etwinning.net

eTwinning is a free online platform connecting more than 900,000 teachers across Europe. It supports primary and post-primary schools to find partners and work on joint projects in any curricular area, using Information and Communication Technology. eTwinning is funded by the European Union and administered in participating countries by a National Support Organisation, or NSO. Léargas is the NSO for eTwinning in Ireland.

2021 was another challenging year for schools due to continuing lockdowns and uncertainty, but despite this we have many highlights to share! Our amazing and resilient eTwinning teachers created 116 new eTwinning projects throughout these difficult circumstances, and we continued to support participating schools through online visits.

In May, we held the first eTwinning National Conference on the theme of 'Media Literacy and Disinformation.' The keynote speaker was Dr Eileen Culloty, a PHD researcher in the area of media literacy and young people. Martina Chapman of Media Literacy Ireland moderated a panel discussion with two young people, an eTwinning teacher, and an Irish Times journalist. Workshops were facilitated by Cybersafe Kids, Webwise and Newsbrands Ireland.

The first comprehensive eTwinning evaluation report was launched at the eTwinning National Conference. This piece of research conducted by Ivanna D'Arcy aimed to:

- explore the levels of engagement in the eTwinning programme and the relevance of eTwinning
- identify the levels of support provided by the NSO
- recognise barriers to engagement for participants
- establish primary motivations of users for joining eTwinning

We selected five new eTwinning ambassadors for 2020-2021, bringing the total to 18. There is now improved geographical

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spread and representation from early childhood education and IVET.

In July, we delivered a Department of Education-approved blended summer course. This training aimed to help teachers in using the eTwinning platform, and creating and managing projects. The course consisted of two online 'face to face' days and three days of moderated online content. The course was very well received by participants and the blended approach was successful.

In collaboration with the Léargas Programme Support and Development team, we organised a Training and Cooperation Activity on Resources for Rural Schools. This contact-making seminar focused on the needs of schools located in rural areas and which face rural isolation. The seminar looked at resources that support and engage teachers working in these areas and how to expand their school from their local area to a European dimension. The event was well attended by 18 transnational participants.



254 2021 Teacher Registrations

116 2021 Project Registrations

National Quality Labels



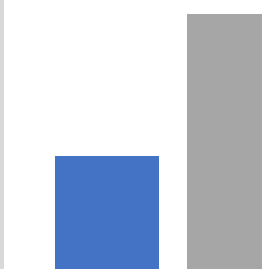
In 2021, 16 teachers received National Quality Labels for their projects with 11 also receiving European Quality Labels. There was a 25% increase in National Quality Labels awarded in 2021. European Quality Labels for Irish based eTwinners more than doubled in 2021.

The winners of the National Quality Label were acknowledged at a special online ceremony in November, the Léargas Innovative Learning Awards.

These online awards event celebrated the winning projects of three interlinked initiatives: eTwinning National Quality Label, the European Language Label and the European Innovative Teaching Award. Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, opened the awards and congratulated the winners.

16 2021 National Quality Labels
 11 2021 European Quality Labels

25% increase in National Quality Labels awarded in 2021



European Quality Labels for Irish based teachers
more than doubled
in 2021

EURODESK 2021

www.eurodesk.ie

Malgorzata Fiedot-Davies
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Eurodesk is a service designed to help young people make the most of opportunities in Europe. It is an information network, operating in 36 European countries, aimed at young people and youth organisations. National and regional coordinators share information to help young people learn about opportunities in Europe including studying, working and volunteering abroad, and having their say in European youth policies and matters.

2021 was a very busy and creative year for Eurodesk Ireland! Following the Eurodesk motto, "Don't stop dreaming, start planning!", we continued to provide high quality youth information on EU opportunities and programmes for young people such as Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. We enhanced cooperation with our multipliers and cooperation partners: youth information services, Europe Direct Centres, Voluntary Service International, Spunout, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, EURES, Euroguidance, Europass, Higher Education Authority and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

Highlights of the year

- An interactive online workshop "Europe is open to you" run by Eurodesk Ambassadors during the Eye on the Edge festival in April, including interviews with ex-ESC volunteers, a Kahoot quiz and the human library, was attended by young people from all over Europe!
- Interviews with exceptional young people prepared by Europe Direct Ballinasloe as part of the Eye on the Edge festival and supported by Eurodesk Ambassadors.
- A webinar "Creative Ways to Embrace and Celebrate European

Identity with Young People" during which Eurodesk multipliers and an ambassador shared examples of creative Eurodesk activities for young people around European identity, citizenship and values.

- European Youth Week events in May organised by Eurodesk multipliers included a YouthInfo Chat campaign on EU mobility opportunities, a Citizens' Jury on sustainable fashion, European Nights, and a Photography Competition "Healthy Connections in a Disconnected World".
- Time to Move events in October included a YouthInfoChat on EU programmes, mental health and green-themed activities combined with information sessions on studying, working or volunteering abroad and relevant EU programmes such as European Solidarity Corps.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

#DiscoverEU

We held a successful promotional campaign for #DiscoverEU, including live radio interviews and articles in local newspapers. These contributed to Ireland reaching the highest number of applications per country - we exceeded by

21 times the quota of travel passes available for young people from Ireland!

To summarise, 2021 has been a very successful year for Eurodesk Ireland! We continued our regular activities and further developed and supported many projects and initiatives: our panel of highly skilled and inspiring young Eurodesk Ambassadors, Eurodesk network's own online interactive publications and live chats with young people, innovative activities around mental health and green policies, and successful PR campaigns. We look forward to new challenges and projects in 2022!



- Interactive information resources on EU opportunities, prepared by Eurodesk network members and Ambassadors – take a look at the Padlets: "Discover Europe from your fingertips" and "A Greener Europe".
- We held an upskilling and networking session in October on opportunities for young people to study and work in Europe and recognition of young people skills and qualifications, run in cooperation with EURES, Europass, NYCI and HEA.

- The Eurodesk Coordinator joined the European Youth Portal European Advisory Board
- 6** new members joined the Eurodesk Ambassadors Panel in December
- 1** of the Eurodesk Ambassadors joined the Eurodesk Advisory Panel in September
- Eurodesk Ambassadors were selected for the European Year of Youth poll of young journalists and for the 25 Percent Conference.



PEACE IV - CASE 2021

www.sharededucation.ie

@CASEshared

CASE is a programme that recognises the importance of collaboration and cooperation in a society damaged by a cycle of sectarianism and intolerance. It seeks to create and cultivate positive relations among primary and post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. CASE has a specific focus on schools that have limited or no previous experience of providing shared education opportunities to their children and young people. The Education Authority in Northern Ireland and Léargas work in partnership to implement the programme.

CASE Mid-Term Evaluation

In 2021 the Special European Union Programmes Body commissioned SJC consultancy, in partnership with the National Children's Bureau, to assess the impact of the interventions in the Shared Education strand of the EU PEACE IV Programme. The evaluators found strong evidence of improved shared/reconciliation outcomes being achieved through the development of cross-community relationships and friendships between children, as well as between practitioners/teachers in partner schools. This, coupled with wider cross-community and cross-border connections being established, will create a legacy from the funding.

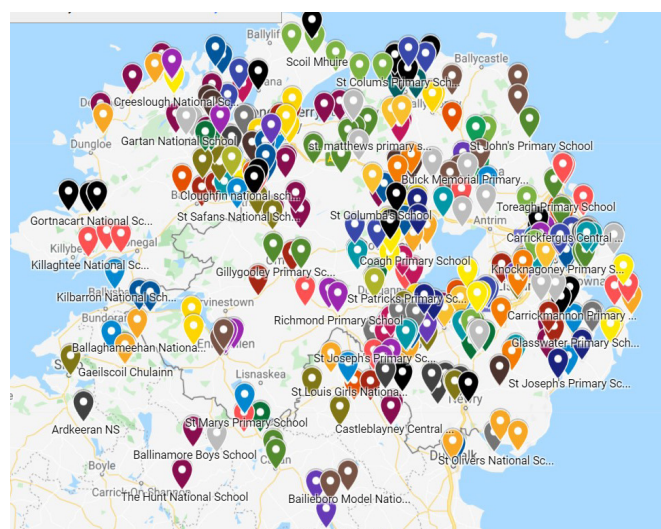


The feedback from teachers is overwhelmingly positive and a testament to their hard work and dedication to cross community and cross-border collaboration. The findings highlight both educational and reconciliation benefits of sharing between children, teachers, parents and the wider community.

Sarah McCarthy, Managing Director, SJC Consultancy and CASE External Evaluator

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Google Map of CASE schools

over **20,000** pupils North and South participated in CASE in 2021

3,270 total number of pupils involved in the BRI in 2020/21 school year

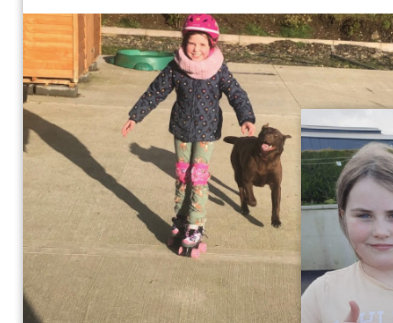
98 total number of Southern Schools involved in CASE in 2021

36 total number of South/South Partnerships

14 total number of North/South Partnerships

Skating with Coco achieving 3750 steps

Distance	Pace	Time
3.00 km	10:40 /km	32m 0s



Share the Walk photos

All together we have done 36k



3KM TODAY!!



Winning poster for SHARE THE WALK designed by Lucy Carey of Scoil na gCailíní, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan



Poster "Walking with my new friend"

We had a competition for all schools to design a 'Share the Walk' poster and the winning entry came from Lucy Carey of Scoil na gCailíní, Castleblayney.

Share the Walk



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Our highlight of 2021 was how schools engaged in Share the Walk, our initiative to keep all our shared schools connected during the difficult times of Covid-19 related closures and restrictions.

We designed a set of challenges for all our schools to get active and get outside. Share the Walk saw pupils, teachers and the wider community walking each day, tying in with well-being goals and the PE curriculum. Mathematical prowess was also involved, in keeping track of the nearly 50,000kms

covered by participating schools – this is greater than the circumference of the earth! Next year schools will plant trees in a shared space to commemorate their walk, bringing environmental awareness into the initiative too.



Our 'Share the Walk' is going brilliantly. The kids are so invested in it. Teachers certainly don't get a chance to forget to walk everyday as the children remind them hourly! The pupils have Zoom meetings with Welchtown NS to debrief and share what the focus of our walks were every week. Welchtown shared some beautiful artwork with us last week - much to my own pupils' disappointment, as they didn't have art to show them. We have sorted that since and the Lifford pupils got their moment to shine this week. We are putting all our skills learned from previous Peace action plans into place for this year's work.

Lifford National School, County Donegal

LANGUAGES 2021

We manage three language programmes on behalf of the European Commission and Council of Europe: the European Day of Languages, European Language Label, and the European Centre for Modern Languages. All support the plurality of languages spoken in Europe, and promote the value of plurilingualism.

In 2021 the Languages Programme brought you a diverse suite of events that celebrated and supported plurilingualism. Below are some of the year's highlights.

To raise awareness about the Primary Intercultural Guidelines that were published by our colleagues at Post-Primary Languages Ireland at the beginning of 2021, we invited Dr. Déirdre Kirwan, the co-author of the Guidelines and a former winner of the European Language Label Award, to speak and share her experience with primary teachers and principals. Déirdre was the main speaker at the event *Giving Voice to Primary Pupils' Plurilingual Repertoire* hosted online on 24 March.

As in previous years, in 2021 we welcomed applications for the European Language Label (ELL) Award from both Erasmus+ projects and national initiatives in the field of language teaching and learning. We were delighted to welcome entries from a wide range of nationwide projects in all fields of education and training, both formal, informal and non-formal.

Award-winning ELL projects were celebrated online on 11 November as part of the *Léargas Innovative Learning Awards* ceremony. The Award ceremony recognised the winning projects of three different but interlinked European exchange and learning initiatives: the European Language Label, the new European Innovative Teaching Award, and the eTwinning National Quality Label.

In autumn 2021, with the help and expertise of the European Centre for Modern Languages, we organised *CLIL and Beyond*:

Eli Babei
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 @Leargas_Eli



Pluriliteracies for Deeper Learning, an online two-day training session. This was a hands-on experience that took participants from the basics of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) to an understanding of deeper learning episodes which support the transfer of learning across language and subjects, based on the Pluriliteracies model.

From 2 to 4 November, we hosted the virtual Transnational Cooperation Activity "Supporting Home Languages and the Languages of Schooling with Erasmus+", a theme that resonates with many teachers across Europe. This TCA welcomed 25 participants from five countries: Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland and Sweden.

The winners of the 2021 European Day of Languages Competition

- Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Kilkenny with the eTwinning project UNESCO: Building Bridges through European Cultural Heritage
- The King's Hospital School, Dublin with the eTwinning project Komm zu Besuch!
- Maynooth Post-Primary School, Kildare with the eTwinning project International Mother Language Day 2021 - Let's celebrate diversity!
- Beech Hill College, Monaghan with the eTwinning project Tackling Educational Disadvantage

The winners of of the 2021 European Language Label Award

- Beech Hill College with the project *Tackling Educational Disadvantage*
- St. Mary's Primary School with the project *Languages Connect Us*
- Access Office and School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, University of Limerick and Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School with the project *FLEURIR – Language Programme for the Academy for Children*
- School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, University of Limerick with the project *Erasmus Speaks*

VET TEAMS 2021

Laura Austen-Gray
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2021 marked the start of a new, exciting European Commission initiative: **VET Teams**, which we coordinate in Ireland. **VET Teams brings together the learning from several past European Commission programmes, including ECVET, which Léargas coordinated nationally until 2020.**

Under the VET Teams programme, we nominated a small team with prominent expertise in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET). This team began working in 2021 to promote the use of various EU VET instruments, such as *ECVET* and *EQUAVET*.

We held a key VET Teams event in December to discuss the current state of VET and Further Education and Training, and heard from VET experts who presented research and valuable input.



YOUTHWIKI 2021

In 2021 we updated Ireland's 10 Chapters on the Youth Wiki site, which were originally created between 2019 and 2020. These updates included information related to new policies, frameworks and initiatives. Invaluable input was added to the chapters through feedback from a panel of Subject Matter Experts, each selected for their detailed knowledge specific to a given chapter's topic.

Following the official launch of Youth Wiki Ireland in 2020, we increasingly promoted Youth Wiki at both local and national levels during 2021. Due to the pandemic, much of this promotional activity took place online, for example through online information sessions.

Léargas' strong emphasis on collaboration was also furthered through Youth Wiki Ireland's work - for example, we took part in the National Youth Council of Ireland's International Policy Advisory Committee. We held successful meetings with various organisations working across the youth sector, informing them of the resources available from Youth Wiki.

Visit the [Youth Wiki site](#) to see chapters on:

1. Youth Policy Governance
2. Voluntary Activities
3. Employment & Entrepreneurship
4. Social Inclusion
5. Participation
6. Education and Training
7. Health and Well-Being
8. Creativity and Culture
9. Youth and the World
10. Youth Work

LÉARGAS NCGE ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2021

Jennifer McKenzie
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The statement is available on line.

LÉARGAS FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2021

Derek Garland
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The Statement is available on the Léargas website.

LÉARGAS BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE 2021

X	Attending
A	Apologies
	Not Applicable

Board Member	Dates of Meetings and Attendance								Total
	01-Feb	09-Mar	20-Apr	15-Jun	23-24 Aug	21-Sep	02-Nov	07-Dec	
Hugh MacConville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Maria Lorigan	X	X	X	A	A	A			3
Jean -Marie Cullen	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	7
Dipti Pandya	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Frank Crummey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Margaret Waters	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	7
Nuala Keher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	7

LÉARGAS FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE 2021

Committee Member	Dates of Meetings and Attendance								Total
	01-Feb	09-Mar	20-Apr	14-Jun	10-Aug	14-Sep	26-Oct	07-Dec	
Nuala Keher		X	X	X	X	X	X	A	7
Hugh MacConville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Margaret Guinan	X	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	6
Frank Crummey					X	X	X	X	4

LÉARGAS PROGRAMME SELECTION COMMITTEES 2021

Round 1			
Sectors	Type	Date	Committee Members
Erasmus+ VET	KA121, KA122	15/07/2021	Charis Hughes Emma Grainger Jennifer McKenzie John Taite
Erasmus+ Youth	KA151, KA152, KA153, KA154	09/07/2021	Jean-Marie Cullen Hilary Tierney Aine Beamish
Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps	ESC51 and KA150 Accreditation	09/02/2021	Aine Beamish Emma O'Callaghan Jean-Marie Cullen
Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education and Youth; and European Solidarity Corps	ESC30, ESC50, ESC51, ESC52, KA121, KA122, KA210, KA220	22/07/2021	Hugh McConville Margaret Waters Niamh McClelland
Erasmus+ VET	KA2	18/08/2021	Dipti Pandya Mark Skinner Emma Grainger Charis Hughes
Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education and VET	KA120	10/02/2021	Aine Beamish Carol Guildea Manika-Nia Dixon
Round 2			
Sectors	Type	Date	Committee Members
Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education and VET	KA122	01/12/2021	Hugh McConville Margie Waters Manika Nia Dixon
Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps	KA150, KA152, KA153, KA154, ESC30, ESC51	26/11/2021	Charis Hughes Elisaveta Babei Hilary Tierney
European Solidarity Corps	ESC50	20/09/2021	Niamh McClelland Darren O'Connor Emma Grainger

LÉARGAS PROGRAMME ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEES 2021

Date: 12/01/2021	
Committee Member	For 29 October 2020 Deadline Actions: KA120/KA226/KA227
Brian Desmond	Communications Officer
Áine Beamish	Communications Officer
Laura Auste-Gray	Youth Wiki Officer

Date: 23/06/2021	
Committee Member	For 18 May 2021 Deadline Actions: KA121 and KA122
Charis Hughes	Acting Manager, Communications
Brian Desmond	Communications Officer
Manika-Nia Dixon	EPALE Officer

Date: 09/07/2021	
Committee Member	For 28 May 2021 Deadline Actions: KA2
Charis Hughes	Acting Manager, Communications
Aine Beamish	Communications Officer
Manika-Nia Dixon	EPALE Officer



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