

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture

Evaluation Report



**Galway
2020
Gaillimh**

**European
Capital
of Culture**



the audience agency

Report

Contents

1.	Chairperson's Address	5
2.	Definitions	7
3.	Overview	9
4.	Galway 2020 in numbers	18
5.	Galway 2020 evaluation approach	22
6.	Strategic context for Galway 2020	26
7.	From bid to delivery: overview of activities and programme	37

8.	Cultural Capacity	46
9.	Building engagement with Galway 2020	66
10.	Social and Cultural Outcomes	84
11.	Participation	114
12.	Community collaboration, co-creation and partnership	128
13.	Social & Economic Benefit	151
14.	Commentary	166



1

Chairperson's Address

I wrote in my introduction to the 2019 Annual Report for Galway 2020:

“Perhaps the most abiding impact of Galway 2020 will be the legacy that it can engender through:

- *Its investment in local artists and cultural organisations*
- *Its building of confidence and expertise within the cultural sector*
- *Its embedding of the value of culture in the community at large*
- *Its recognition and celebration of the increasing diversity of the population of Galway and the region*
- *Its creation of a large volunteering programme – the Wave Makers (which at the time comprised 700 volunteers from 55 countries and who spoke 77 languages)*
- *Its long-term impact on the international reputation of Galway and of Ireland as world class centres of creative endeavour and achievement*
- *Its encouragement of the need for significant investment in the physical infrastructure for culture in Galway*
- *Its resultant contribution to the economic development of Galway and the region”*

Although there have been huge disappointments in terms of what we were unable to do due to the pandemic, I genuinely believe that the above impacts were delivered. With our wonderful Cultural Partners, we undertook a re-imagining of our programme which saw as much of the programme as possible migrate online. The speed and efficiency with which this was undertaken is a tribute to the creative community in Galway as well as the Galway 2020 staff. However, unfortunately we had no alternative but to initiate a redundancy programme for many of our staff who had given their all to Galway 2020 and without whom we would not have had the depth of programme, and strength of organisation, that we were so proud of.

The priority of the Company, faced with these unprecedented challenges, was to try to ring-fence the programme funding and so ensure that artists and cultural workers were supported financially and vocationally. A process of negotiation with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, as well as with the Galway Local Authorities, was swiftly undertaken, and assurances were achieved that the funding that had been allocated for our programme would remain available for that purpose. The responses of these agencies are deeply appreciated.

We also initiated requests to have the year of culture extended to facilitate the presentation of as much of our programme as possible. Happily, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, on a proposal of the European Commission, decided to officially extend the title year to 30 April 2021.

It is noteworthy that Galway 2020 has generated a considerable body of work available for online consumption into the future. Most importantly the lives and livelihoods of many artists and cultural workers in Galway have been sustained through 2020 because of the activities of Galway 2020. Much of the legacy of Galway 2020 is rooted in the years of preparation for the event, going back to 2015.

If the Covid-19 pandemic has left us as a society with anything positive, it is perhaps the universally articulated respect and regard which the public have for the cultural sector. The absence of cultural opportunities has highlighted the important place culture occupies in the lives of the public. An opportunity for enlightened future policies on the support of culture has emerged.

In 2022 the Company will focus on a detailed analysis of the activities in 2020 and will develop a strategic pathway by which the legacy of Galway 2020 will be secured and applied long into the future.

Arthur Lappin, Chairman

2

Definitions

The following defines key terms used in the report.

- **Projects** is used as a holistic term for work produced, whether by Galway 2020, Cultural Partners or Small Towns Big Ideas, which encompasses the development and delivery of one or more activities, events or commissions.
- **Activities and events** are the public facing elements delivered as part of the Galway 2020 programme between 2016 and 2021 for audiences and participants – this includes performances, exhibitions, installations, participatory activities, workshops, talks and panel discussions, podcasts, publications, films and training.
- **Galway 2020** produced projects are the activities and events produced or directly commissioned by Galway 2020 as part of the Galway 2020 programme.
- **Cultural Partners** are the arts and cultural organisations, producers and artists who developed projects and delivered activities and events as part of Galway 2020. Artists may also be referred to separately in an artistic role.
- **Small Towns Big Ideas (STBI)** refers to: the activities and deliverables delivered by the 67 Small Towns Big Ideas projects funded as part of the Galway 2020 programme.
- **Stakeholders** include a wide range of local, regional, national and international bodies, agencies and individuals listed in Section 6.
- **Delivery partners and collaborators** are individuals or organisations engaged with across the programme for the delivery of projects, this is distinct to the Cultural Partners defined above.
- **Community Engagement** refers to the activities and events delivered or co-created with the communities of Galway as part of the Galway 2020 programme.
- **Regional programme** refers to: the activities and events delivered by the eight regional projects funded as part of the Galway 2020 programme, including the following local authorities: Clare County Council, Roscommon County Council, Cork County Council, Offaly County Council, Tipperary County Council, Waterford County Council, Dublin City Council and Limerick City Council.
- **Audiences** are those engaging with public facing activities and events in venues, in the public realm or digitally.

- **Participants** are those actively taking part in project activity, for example in a workshop or other participatory element.
- **Attender** or **booker** refers to an individual who experiences a public facing event or activity, whether in person or digitally.
- **The Wave Makers** is Galway 2020's volunteer programme.
- **Networks** are groupings of individuals or organisations whether formally or informally constituted who come together with a common aim. It refers to local, regional, national or international networks.
- **Suppliers** are those providing a paid service as a result of the Cultural Partners Galway 2020 project activity.
- **Engagements** refers to the number of times activities or events are seen/ experienced/engaged with – so one person may have engaged more than once with the same or different activities or events.
- In a digital context, **views** describe how many times a digitally distributed creative experience has been seen (not the number of individuals who have seen them).
- **The Audience Agency (TAA)** is the agency commissioned for the evaluation of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture.

3

Overview

Galway 2020 was the 62nd European Capital of Culture, designated by the European Union, taking place with its sister city Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture in Croatia. It was the third time that Ireland had hosted a European Capital of Culture, following Dublin in 1991 and Cork in 2005.

Galway was one of four candidate cities in Ireland for the year. Dublin was eliminated at the pre-selection round, with Limerick and the joint Three Sisters bid of Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny reaching the final selection phase alongside Galway. Galway was designated European Capital of Culture for 2020 on 15 July 2016.

Galway's final bid was presented under the banner of 'Making Waves' and was shaped around three key themes, 'Migration, Landscape and Language'.

In common with Rijeka 2020, Galway 2020 decided to run the year from February 2020 to February 2021. This was envisaged so as to match the Celtic Year, with the four seasons Imbolc (February-April), Bealtaine (May-July), Lughnasa (August-October), and Samhain (November - January). The Galway 2020 programme was officially launched on 18 September 2019.

After the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme was interrupted in March 2020, relaunched in September 2020, and on 23 December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a proposal by the European Commission for Galway and Rijeka to extend their 'years' to April 2021.

Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company CLG, trading as Galway 2020, carried out the creation, organisation, promotion and sustainable development of artistic and cultural activities as a cultural programme of activity for the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2020 in Galway City, Galway County and the wider community, constituted in 2016 on designation of the title. As of 2019, Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company CLG was a Registered Charity (CRA No. 20204768). Full information about the governance and financial reporting of Galway 2020 is available here <https://galway2020.ie/en/about/governance/> along with the monitoring reports by the European Commission.

This report

This report is the independent evaluation of Galway 2020 and outlines the main findings of the evaluation undertaken by The Audience Agency from September 2019 to May 2021. It is an initial assessment of the outcomes and impacts of Galway 2020, and it is expected that further studies may research particular aspects of the ECoC as well as its legacy. The evaluation assesses the outcomes and impacts (immediate and potential) of the delivery of Galway 2020 from its designation in 2016 to the end of its delivery period in April 2021. As the programme was relaunched in September 2020 so the evaluation process was also re-formed and adapted to meet the new circumstances of the year in the context of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The data collected and methods used are outlined in Section 5 below. The evaluation's main purpose is to assess how well the vision and aims of Galway 2020 were realised and to what extent it fulfilled the objectives of a European Capital of Culture, and to present conclusions and recommendations that will be useful for Galway, Ireland and for future European Capitals of Culture.

Achieving European Capital of Culture objectives

The EU sets out the following hierarchy of objectives as an outline for the evaluation, whilst also noting that it is likely that the individual nature of an ECoC will require different areas of focus in the light of 'evolving circumstances' and 'unexpected developments'. It also notes that: 'On top of these common indicators, cities should also define any additional indicators needed in the light of their own context, priorities and activities and reflecting their own performance targets.'

Table: European Capitals of Culture objectives

General Objectives (GO)			
Safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space (GO1), and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities (GO2)			
Specific objectives (SO)			
SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension for the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational co-operation	SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture	SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors	SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture
Operational Objectives			
Stimulate extensive cultural programmes of high artistic quality	Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation	Involve a wide range of citizens and stakeholders in preparing and implementing the cultural programme	
Develop the skills, capacity and governance of the cultural sector	Stimulate partnership and co-operation with other sectors	Promote the city and its cultural programme	
Create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events	Improve the international outlook of residents	Improve cultural infrastructure	

Source – Europa: ECoC guidelines for cities own evaluations 2020-2023

<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-04/ecoc-guidelines-for-cities-own-evaluations-2020-2033.pdf> (page 6)

In their report about Galway winning the bid, the ECoC panel drew attention to the following:

1. Its basis on Galway City's Cultural Strategy 2016-2026 and its place within the longer-term development of the area.
2. Its aim to involve the wider region, proposing a mix of 50% of activities in both city and county, including the ambition for rural activity.
3. The inclusion of digital and virtual events as an innovative element of the ECoC.
4. The high proportion of Irish 'non-nationals' in the area.
5. The potential for linking with Europe-wide initiatives, networks and projects.
6. The track record in the area of managing major initiatives, festivals and events.
7. The need to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities between board, senior staff and other team members. The 3% increase in local business rates to be ring-fenced for the ECoC.
8. The commitment of funding from City, County and National Government.
9. The support of politicians at a regional and national level.

The Bid Book became the 'the de facto contract between the designated city and its citizens, the monitoring panel, the ministry, and the European Commission.'

Source: EU Selection of the European Capital of Culture, 2016

"The artistic vision for our cultural programme is that it will be authentically of Galway, while being presented through a European lens and supported by partners and collaborators in Europe and beyond."

Source: Bid Book II

The aims and outcomes for Galway 2020 include three overall areas of impact drawn from the ECoC objectives:

- Cultural Capacity
- Cultural Engagement and Community Involvement – a programme rooted in people and place
- Social and Economic Benefit

Galway 2020, over four years of its designation, and ultimately in challenging circumstances, fulfilled its ambition as set out in its Bid Book and achieved the general and specific objectives of a European Capital of Culture and the operational objectives relevant to individual ECoCs.

By devising and delivering 1,285 different events and activities in partnership with its 33 Cultural Partners and 67 Small Towns Big Ideas (STBI) community-based projects, Galway 2020 enhanced the range and diversity of the cultural offering in Galway. It delivered an entire programme of 147 new works and commissions, including bridging between artforms, cross-media activity, content creation, creative collaborations and the introduction of six new cultural organisations.

- The programme elements which particularly resonated with audiences were ‘international culture or arts’ (46%), ‘Innovative or new work’ (44%) and ‘Work of emerging artists or new talent’ (40%).¹

On the way to 2020 Galway explored its relationship with the rest of Europe through the lens of culture, and its residents have been proud to hold the designation. Developing and delivering the work involved 40 partnerships with organisations based in Europe and participation in 25 European networks. The European dimension has been embedded across the programme by bringing artists and companies together from across Europe to work with and be hosted by those based in Galway and by recognising and involving those who have come from elsewhere to live in the city and by entering into exchanges hosted by other European cities.

- 49% of Galway residents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘Galway 2020 makes me feel more European’, compared to 41% of the national population.²

The programme widened access to and participation in culture through opportunities to engage with the programme across City and County, in new venues, the public realm and digitally – connecting with Galway and its communities through the themes of migration, language and landscape. Opportunities to engage in person included Druid Theatre’s tour of village halls and community venues, Branar’s *Sruth na Teanga* (Theatre) in the old airport, Lousie Manifold’s *Aerial/Sparks* unique art trail on the island of Inis Oírr, *Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann Turas Chonamara* - Faoi Ruin artworks set on the Ros Muc peninsula curated by Ríonach Ní Néill, and *Mirror Pavilion* in a 4,000-year-old bog at Derrigimlagh in Connemara.

Activities and events delivered digitally opened up the opportunity for global audiences to engage alongside local audiences, through projects such as Macnas’ *Gilgamesh* and *Music for Galway’s Cellissimo* series. Activity was based in the heart of communities through Small Towns Big Ideas projects as well as offering a wide range of participative opportunities, including Galway Community Circus’ funambulism workshops and the community cast for the opening Fire Tour. Participation was tailored to the needs and interests of 7,485 young people through projects such as *Livefeed* and *Symphonic Waves* and through education work with schools. The programme reflected the character of Galway and the Gaeltacht area, for instance, as projects included Irish language elements, such as *The Aistriú Project* by NUI Galway and Manchán Magan’s *Sea Tamagotchi*, as well as focusing on the area’s resources and industries through *Project BAA BAA*. Galway 2020 raised the profile of local artists and companies and used creativity to focus on universal issues,

1 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

2 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

such as climate change through Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann project with a wide range of children and adults.

- 52% extremely satisfied (scored 10) with 94% rating it 7 -10 for the overall experience of Galway 2020 by audiences and participants.
- 62% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'I discovered something new or unexpected'.
- 36% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'I have not had a cultural experience like this before'.
- 70% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'It has inspired me to seek out more cultural experiences'.

Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

From bid stage to delivery the diverse communities of Galway were involved in 39 public fora which informed the Bid Book, to the devising of STBI projects by communities across City and County, to membership of the Wave Makers volunteer programme. A range of communities have taken part in the programme through support of festivals and integration of projects which explored themes of conservation, education, gender-based violence, climate change and sustainability, anti-racism and discrimination, challenging prejudice as well as commemorating local people and events. Community leaders have developed their skills and capacities.

- 61% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'The Galway 2020 programme reflects the people, places and culture of Galway'.³

Through the delivery of 122 projects by Cultural Partners and STBI, Galway 2020 offered the cultural sector an opportunity to build its capacity in the context of a European Capital of Culture. The strength and resilience of the sector was proven as it responded to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, re-scoping the work in response to the restrictions imposed, repeatedly, in order to continue to deliver the programme. Galway 2020 supported 894 jobs to deliver the programme and over half the suppliers required to deliver the ECoC were based in Galway. The cultural and creative economy including community organisations, volunteers, artists, producers and cultural organisations have worked together, exchanging skills, developing new models of working and building tangible and intangible assets which have potential national and international impact. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic not only necessitated creative re-scoping but working with other sectors to build skills in digital collaboration and presentation, as well as a requiring a new level of risk assessment across activity and finances.

3 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

- 64% of Wave Makers said that they had learned new skills.
- 61% of Wave Makers developed their creativity.⁴
- 56% of Small Towns Big Ideas projects supported 'local' artists or talent and 50% 'emerging' artist or talent.⁵
- 71% of Small Towns Big Ideas project leads 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the project helped them to 'Increase confidence in developing creative ideas' through delivering a project.
- 73% of Small Towns Big Ideas project leads 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that it 'built their skills'.
- 55% of Small Towns Big Ideas project leads 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that it helped them to develop a 'leadership role for the benefit of a community'.⁶

The legacy of Galway 2020 will not be counted in terms of its boost to the economy, nor was it possible to welcome visitors. Nevertheless, it has created a cultural sector in Galway which is now able to approach culture in a different way from previously. Alongside, its communities have been invited to consider how culture can be rethought and integrated into the recovery and rebuilding of their places. As a unique example of a major event delivered through a pandemic, Galway 2020 and its partners point the way to a new model of working – which is potentially more sustainable, relies on technology as an enabler and engages a local and global audience.

Looking ahead, Galway 2020's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was considered to be positive for both communities and the cultural sector.

- 75% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'The continuation is a good response by the cultural sector to the Covid-19 pandemic'.
- 77% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'The continuation demonstrates the resilience of our cultural organisations and communities'.
- 74% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'The continuation has a role to play in the economic and social recovery of Galway through the Covid-19 pandemic'.

Source TAA: Cultural Engagers Survey 2020

4 Source: TAA Wave Makers Survey, May 2021

5 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Projects Lead Survey, May 2021

6 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Projects Lead Survey, May 2021

While Galway previously had a strong reputation as a cultural destination, its offer has been strongly led by festivals. Galway 2020 has demonstrated that involvement in culture can be more varied, that it helped people weather the pandemic and it shone a light on the different communities of Galway. It also enabled Galway to re-examine its place in the world, looking outwards to the rest of Europe, finding inspiration from international artists and organisations.

- 79% audiences and participants for Galway 2020 ‘very much so’ or ‘to some extent’ saw it as ‘an opportunity to experience or engage with international culture and arts’. ⁷
- There was strong agreement that ‘Galway 2020 will leave a positive legacy for arts and creativity in Galway’ with 75% nationally and 64% in Galway who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’. ⁸

There is also a clear sense from the national and Galway population of the value of arts and culture and its importance for life and thriving communities which has been strengthened as a result of Galway 2020 to some extent. ⁹

- The strength of feeling for Galway residents that ‘the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life’ has increased by 6% between 2019 and 2021. For Galway residents it is also 6% higher than that of the national population in 2021.
- The role of arts in expressing regional or national identity continued to be important nationally and in Galway, with this felt more keenly in Galway in 2021 compared to 2019. In 2021 Galway residents agreed ‘the arts locally help give my county or region a distinctive identity’ 9% more than the national view, having increased by 9% since 2019.
- Agreement that ‘the arts help us express and define what it is to be Irish’ was a few percentage points higher for Galway compared to nationally.

Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019, and TAA Population Survey, 2021.

7 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021

8 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

9 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021



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Galway 2020 in numbers

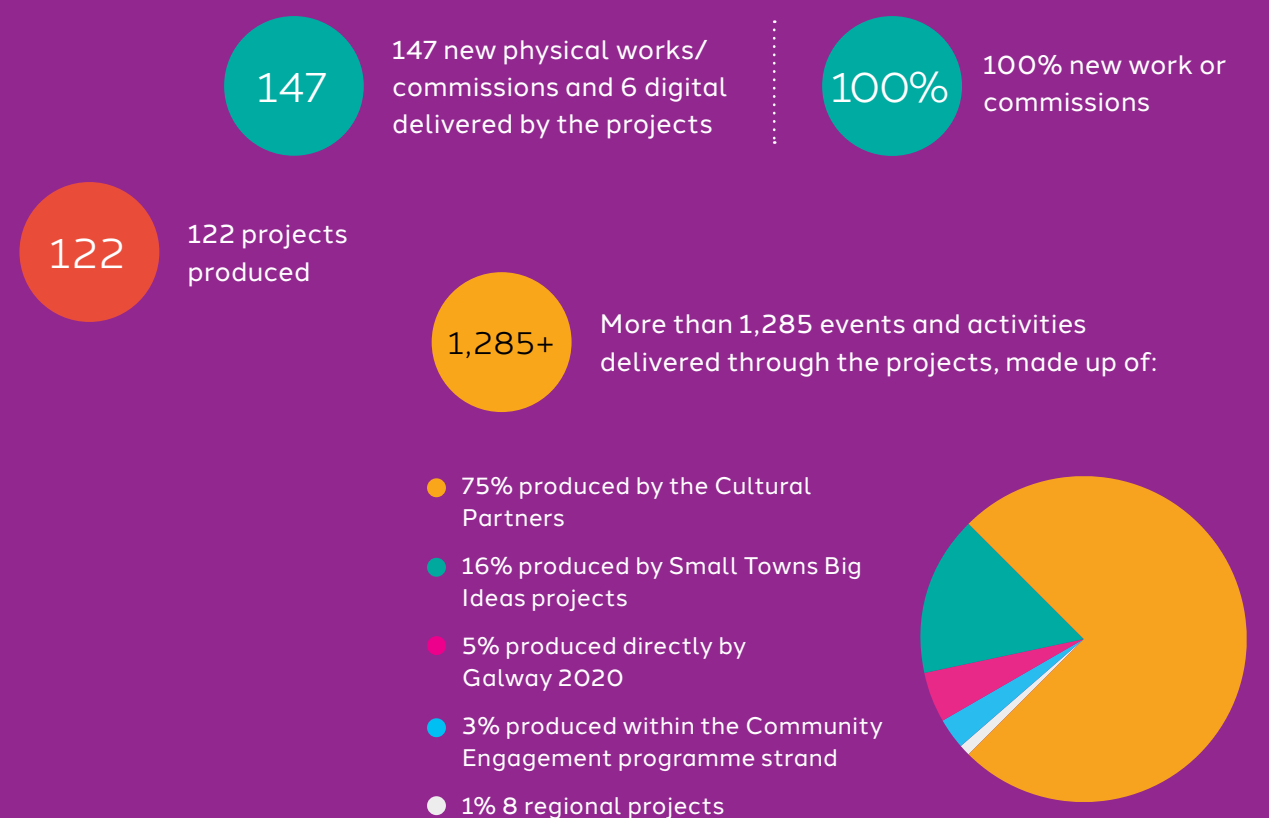
Galway 2020 in numbers shows where and how people could engage or be involved in the programme, the size and breadth of the programme delivered and the capacity and resources required to develop and deliver the programme.

Developing the Bid



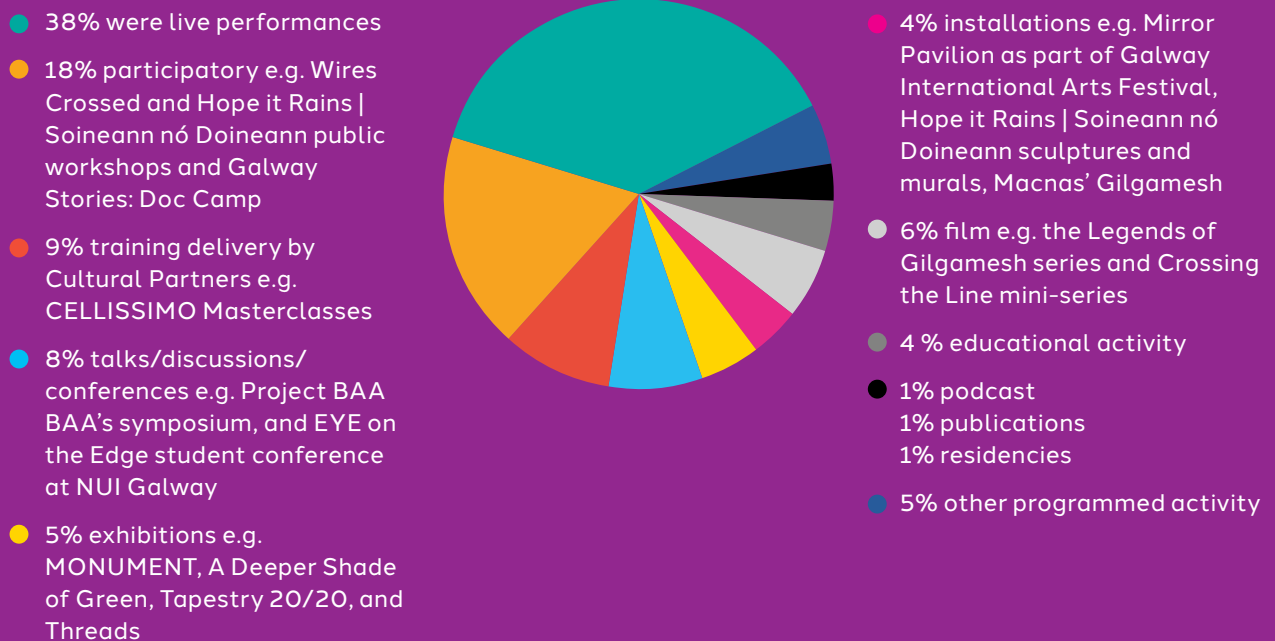
Galway 2020 delivery 2016 - 2021

Projects, activities and events

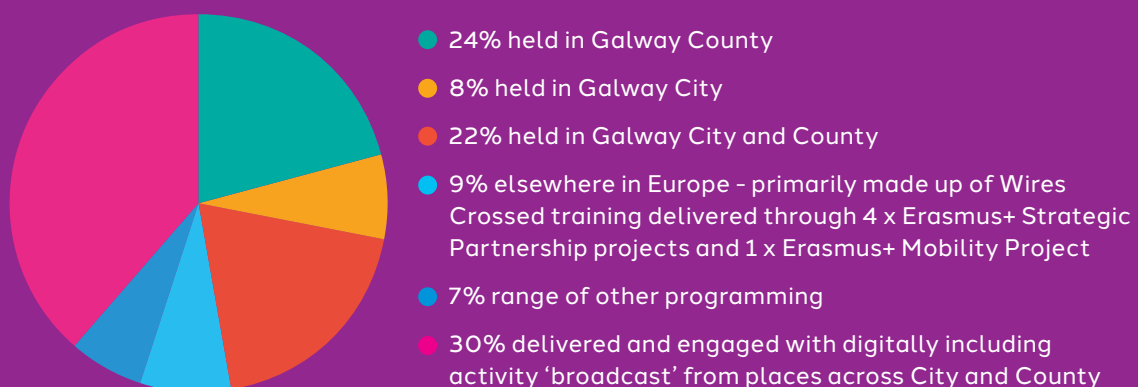


Galway 2020 delivery 2016 - 2021

Activities and events – by type



Activities and events – location and format



- 44% available to engage with in person (majority in period 2016 to March 2020) across Galway City and County
- 30% delivered and engaged with digitally including activity 'broadcast' from places across City and County
- 26% combined digital and in-person across Galway City and County

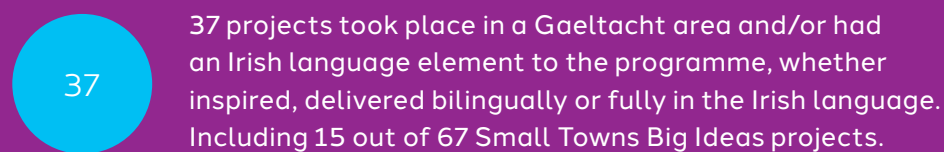


Galway 2020 delivery 2016 - 2021

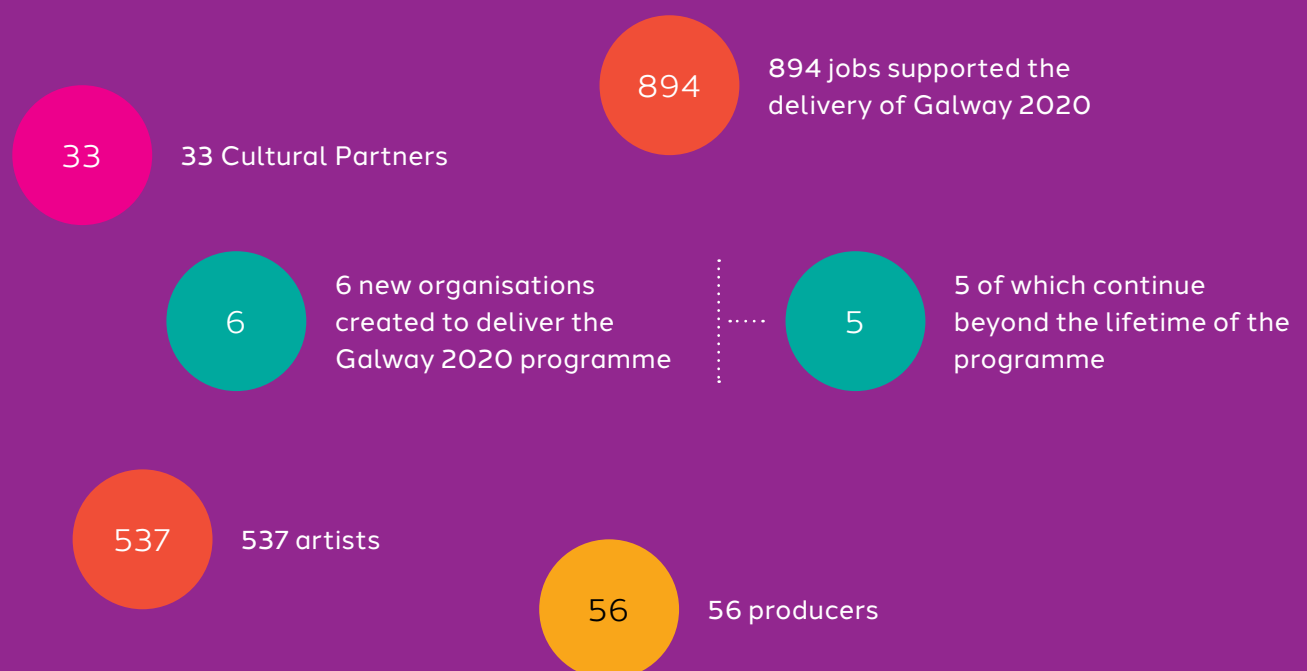
Small Towns Big Ideas Projects



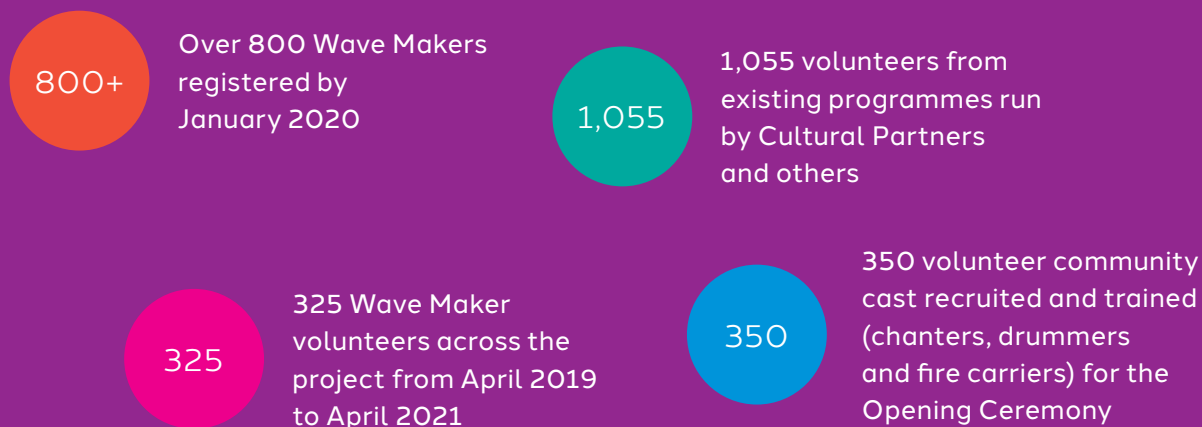
Irish Language



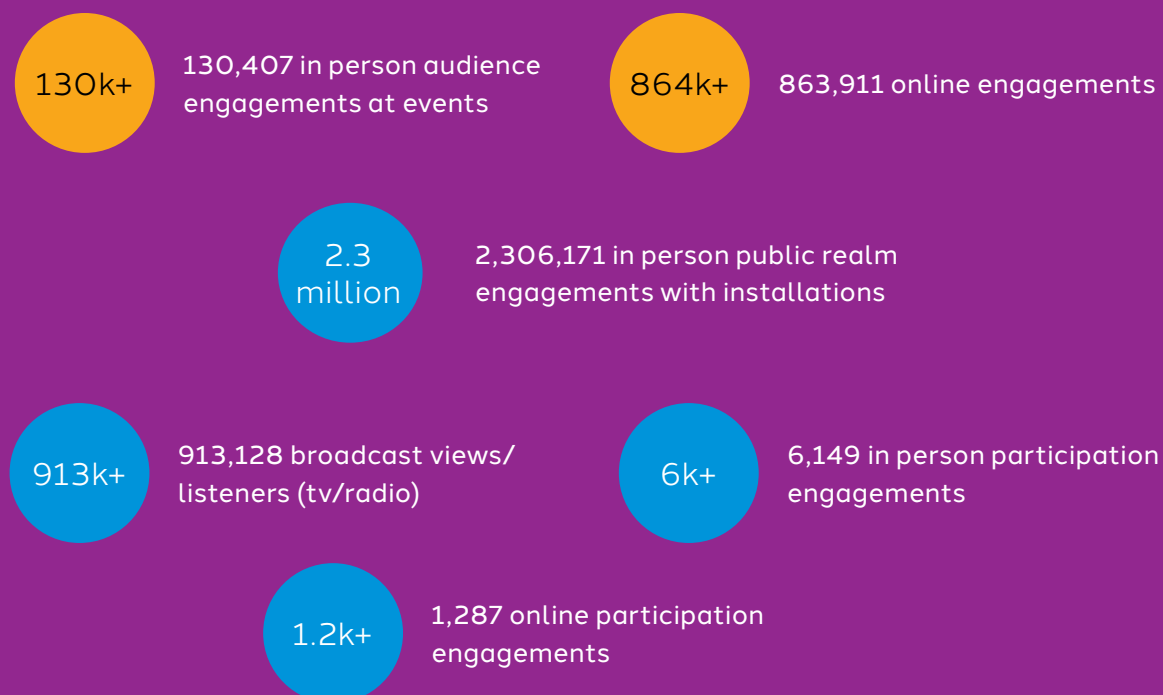
Cultural Capacity



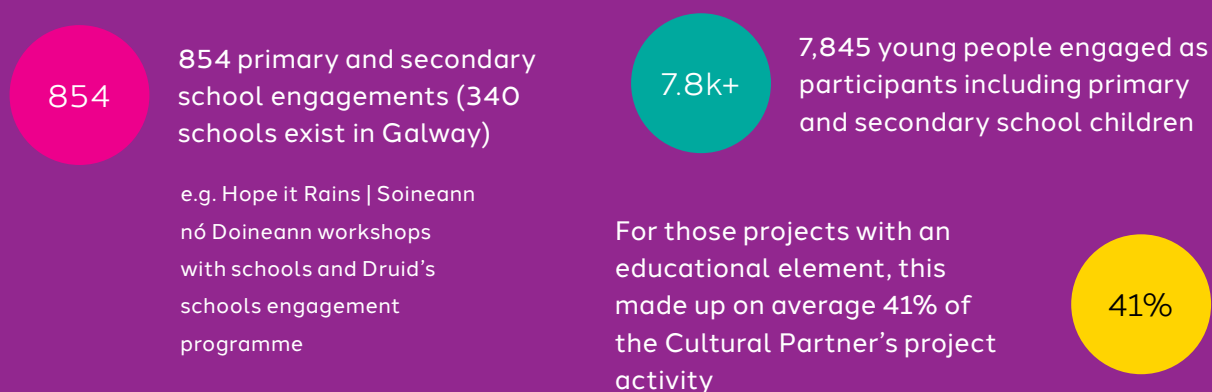
Volunteers



Audiences and participant engagements



Educational activity and engagement with young people



5

Galway 2020 evaluation approach

The evaluation commission

In 2014, the EU took a decision (No 445/2014/EU) which laid down new procedures for the implementation of the ECoC action for the period 2020 to 2033. This included the obligation for the ECoCs to carry out their own independent comprehensive evaluation. Galway 2020 and Rijeka 2020 are therefore the first in this new phase to be required to conduct evaluation in this way.

The Audience Agency (TAA) was commissioned in July 2019 following an open competition to undertake the evaluation of Galway 2020 ECoC, with NUI Galway acting in an advisory role. The principles for the delivery of the evaluation were drawn from Galway's ambition: to work in collaboration with stakeholders and consider outcomes and indicators which would have meaning for the programme, place, people, scope and scale of Galway 2020.

The Audience Agency is a leading not-for-profit international consultancy based in the UK and specialising in public engagement. It prides itself on being professional having a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity and a collaborative style of working with, and for, the sector. It has extensive experience of large-scale multi-partner evaluation using mixed methods for data collection.

Evaluation against the designed outcomes for Galway 2020 was combined with monitoring of all activity and engagement (by Galway 2020, Cultural Partners, Small Towns Big Ideas, and for community engagement, participation and volunteering). A mixed method approach was used including quantitative and qualitative primary research, workshops and tracking of the type and scale of activity that happened. This provided data on the programme of activity, how many people engaged with the programme, who they were and the outcomes for them and impact it had on them.

Full details of the approach to evaluation is included in the Appendices.

Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on evaluation

At lockdown in March 2020 the evaluation was paused and once existing funding to continue Galway 2020 was confirmed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, The Audience Agency continued to deliver the evaluation. The original outcomes framework was reviewed in light of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in consultation with Galway 2020, The Department and Cultural Partners; however, the planned outcomes were not materially altered.

The new framework was agreed in Summer 2020 in anticipation of the re-launch of the programme in September 2020, and Cultural Partners re-engaged with its requirements. It should be noted that over Summer 2020, restrictions had started to ease and it was hoped that the Galway 2020 programme would be able to engage audiences in person before the end of 2020. However, as detailed in Section 8, from October 2020 restrictions tightened again, and the programme became almost entirely delivered digitally, which in turn had impacts on the shape and scope of the evaluation.

As the Galway 2020 team was reduced in size from May 2020, it should also be noted that the management of the evaluation contract transferred to a new team member. However, a core team in Galway 2020 was retained to work on the legacy strategy from June to December 2021, which has continued to manage the evaluation contract. Further details of the timeline in relation to Galway 2020 and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic are in Section 7.

Methodology

The Audience Agency developed a detailed data collection framework that was designed to draw from a number of touchpoints, pre, during and post the main Galway 2020 activity. As the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the programme was re-designed, the methodology was also adapted.

The initial design included a range of research approaches to gather data to inform the evaluation, including:

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection from audiences and participants across the programme for Galway 2020 produced events and activities, coordinated and collected by The Audience Agency.
- Quantitative data collection from audiences and participants delivered by Cultural Partners, with guidance and tools provided by The Audience Agency.
- Collection and collation of digital insights and analytics by both Cultural Partners and The Audience Agency, for Galway 2020's digital platforms, for work presented or distributed digitally.
- Ticketing and booker data to be collated and analysed by The Audience Agency, from the Galway 2020 and venue box offices.
- Quantitative population survey and surveys to bookers, local arts attenders, Galway 2020 mailing lists delivered by The Audience Agency.
- Quantitative and qualitative data collection from Wave Makers collected by The Audience Agency.
- Quantitative and qualitative data collection from Small Towns Big Ideas project leads and participants by The Audience Agency.
- Qualitative data collection from a wide range of stakeholders.

With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of the data was collected digitally through e-surveys and remote discussions and interviews, except for the period January to March 2020 when face to face data collection was possible. The majority of the data from audiences and participants was delivered in partnership with the Cultural Partners. Ticketing data available through the Galway 2020 box office system included bookers of Kari Kola's Savage Beauty (although no in person attendance was permitted for this event due to restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic), the Wild Atlantic Women series, Midwinter Festival, Imagine Ireland and the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland and Symphonic Waves.

Data collection through the programme was supported by the Galway 2020 team, both through effective documentation of programme activity and assistance in liaising with Cultural Partners, Stakeholders and Wave Makers.

Baselines and benchmarks

The main source of baseline information for Galway 2020 was 'Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey'. This population survey was commissioned by the Arts Council and delivered by the research agency, Behaviour & Attitudes in Autumn 2019. A representative sample of residents aged 16 or older from across Ireland were asked about their cultural engagement generally and perceptions and attitudes towards Galway 2020. In total, there was a sample of 1,303 respondents nationally with a locally 'boosted' sample of 364 respondents from Galway. This survey data is referred to in the report in various places where relevant.

After the end of the revised Galway 2020 programme a further national population survey was carried out by The Audience Agency. This provided an overview of the cultural engagement of the population of Ireland and engagement with and perceptions of Galway 2020. Nationally the sample size was 877 respondents of which 454 respondents lived in Galway.

Two further sources have been used to benchmark findings from the audience and participant research. These are:

- Population data (Census 2016) - This has been used for the population profile, comparing the 16+ residents of Galway City, Galway County and the rest of Ireland in terms of their location, size, age and socio-demographics.
- European Citizenship data (Standard Eurobarometer 91, 2019, Kantar) - To identify 'Europeanness' in terms of citizens' attachment to their city/town/village, country, Europe and the European Union.

6

Strategic context for Galway 2020

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture was designed to deliver on the ECoC objectives outlined in the overview of this report. However, with a city surrounded by small towns and rural areas, a distinct history, geography and cultural heritage, Galway 2020 developed its programme with these important considerations in mind, to deliver an ECoC which was rooted in its place.

Galway

Galway has for many centuries had strategic and cultural significance. Located on the west coast of Ireland, it was important as a trading centre for Europe and in latter centuries for North America. It is often referred to as Ireland's 'cultural heart' and is well known for its festivals and events. The Irish language is widely spoken, with Galway representing 49% of the Gaeltacht population, and it is the home to Ireland's Irish-language public service broadcaster TG4.

'County Galway is located along the western coast of Ireland and has a population of 258,058. County Galway saw a population growth of 8.2% in the period 2006-2011 and a further 3% growth between 2011-2016. 34 per cent of the population is under 25-years-old.'

Source: Irish Census 2016 <https://statbank.cso.ie/>

'Galway is a key centre for many progressive Irish and multinational industries particularly in the software and medical devices Sectors. The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway) and the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) are the West's most important educational and research resources. Both the University and the Institute have close links with industry sectors across the region.'

Source: Bid Book I

Galway Strategic Context

Galway 2020 was designed to respond to a range of strategic challenges for Galway, articulated through a series of reports and strategies, which informed the key pillars of the programme alongside delivering on the core ECoC objectives.

The Galway 2020 bid was a component of the delivery of the new Cultural Strategy for Galway City 2016-2025¹⁰ and responded to The City of Equals report, promoting an Intercultural City, published in 2009.¹¹

“The vision for the strategy is to build a model of cultural excellence for Galway; a model of excellence in cultural curation, artistic innovation and provision, community participation, social inclusion, economic sustainability and environmental responsibility.”

Source: Bid Book I

Central to the Galway 2020 initiative was the involvement of county as well as city, making it a capital for the whole, not just the city, of Galway, supported by Galway County Council and the Arts Council’s regional programmes.

“Our ambition is to design, drive and deliver a strategy that transforms Galway into a working model of cultural sustainability, community participation and world class cultural and creative experiences. This model begins with the City, extends into the County and engages with additional delivery partners in the western region.”

Source: Bid Book II

The Galway 2020 programme responded to these issues and, after consultation, distilled this ambition into three main themes – landscape, language and migration – and set out to involve communities creatively to develop a relevant programme.

Alongside Galway City and County Councils, Ireland’s Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has been committed to Galway 2020, seeing it contributing to the achievement of the Department’s mission in, ‘promoting, nurturing and developing Ireland’s arts, culture and heritage, to be achieved through developing engagement with arts, culture and creativity by individuals and communities and promoting Ireland’s arts and culture globally’.¹²

As a European Capital of Culture, the European dimension had to be central. Galway 2020 took place at a time of renewed attention on Europe and of membership of the European Union. In 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU and as Ireland is its closest neighbour and sharing a land border, this decision provided a further context for the year. Ireland has been a committed and active member of the European Union for many years. It is part of the Eurozone area and has held seven EU presidencies. Ireland contributes to and benefits from approximately €2 billion each year in the EU budget.

10 https://www.galwaycity.ie/uploads/downloads/publications/corporate_services/Galway_City_cultural_strategy.pdf

11 https://www.eccar.info/sites/default/files/document/galway_city.pdf

12 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/df0a3-european-capital-of-culture/>

Galway 2020 vision, mission and aims

The vision for Galway 2020 was articulated in the second Bid Book:

“Our vision for Galway 2020 is that it will be a catalyst for a future of inclusivity, participation and cultural sustainability.”

Source: Bid Book II

This was encapsulated in the title ‘Making Waves’:

“a metaphor for a series of actions that will challenge the status quo and enable a shift in behaviour so that we achieve solidarity in diversity and replace apathy with cultural confidence.”

Source: Bid Book II

The programme’s themes of ‘migration, language and landscape’ connected Galway 2020 to its people and place:

“Elemental themes in the make-up of Galway, as they are in European and world cultures. It is in their detail and their combination that our uniqueness is manifest. They are the foundation stones, but also the touchstones, upon which we build our programme for Galway 2020.”

Source: Bid Book II

The four key aims of Galway 2020 were:

- To regenerate the cultural life of Galway and spread its influence across Europe.
- To re-open eyes to the immense cultural landscape of Galway and of Europe.
- To re-energise communities that have been undermined by economic decline and migration.
- To re-instil a confidence in the power of culture to shape the lived environment.

Source: Bid Book II

As interpreted from the Bid Book and consultations with the Galway 2020 team, the stories that Galway 2020 wanted to tell were:

- Galway 2020 is a catalyst for change.
- Galway builds its reputation as a centre for innovative and emergent practice.
- Galway City and County benefit equally from culture-led social and economic renewal.
- Galway’s cultural identity is increasingly recognised as multi-faceted and diverse.
- People and places in Galway have increased agency over their own future.
- Galway’s cultural and creative sectors draw inspiration from and exchange with European and international connections.
- Galway identifies new models of sustainability, particularly for the creative and tourism sectors.
- Galway 2020 facilitates increased capability, collection and use of data and insights for culture and cultural engagement.

Galway 2020 Governance

Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company CLG, trading as Galway 2020, was set up during the European Capital of Culture bid process in line the EU Expert Panel recommendation that the delivery structure should be clear and independent. In this regard, an independent, non-profit or charitable organisation governed by a board of directors is the organisational structure established for all European Capitals of Culture in the period 2016 to 2022.

The Galway 2020 bid book set out that the company would be managed by a Board of Directors. The members of the board were selected on the basis of the breadth and depth of their expertise and experience in overseeing a crucial agenda and providing strategic direction and drive. The expertise represented on the board included legal, finance, business and artistic knowledge and skills.

The board was to consist of 12–15 members and have the final responsibility for legal and financial accountability of the project. One third of the board included ex-officio, the CEOs and Lord Mayor/Chair of Galway City and County Councils, as well as a nominee of the Department. This ensured understanding of respective priorities and communication between the G2020 company and its major funding stakeholders. Current and past members of the board are listed here: <https://galway2020.ie/en/board-of-directors/>

The company's main objective is to carry out the creation, organisation, promotion and sustainable development of artistic and cultural activities domestically and internationally for social, industrial or commercial benefit resulting in the direct or indirect enhancement of Galway City, Galway County and the wider community.

It is the role of the board:

- To employ senior executives.
- Establish and ensure implementation of strategic policy objectives.
- Ensure the highest standards of governance and transparency.
- Appointing sub-committees/working groups to ensure access to the broadest range of specialist expertise and advice in all aspects of its work.
- Account fully for its activities at the end of Galway 2020 and in particular providing leadership and continuity towards maximising the legacy benefits of the ECoC year.

A Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) between Galway 2020 and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Department) was signed on 6 November 2018, "to define the respective roles and responsibilities of Galway 2020 and the Department and to ensure resources are used in an effective and cost-effective manner to deliver an agreed work programme by Galway 2020".

This PDA required Galway 2020 to provide a management report and independent auditor report to the Department in advance of bilateral quarterly meetings on progress towards agreed milestones under key performance indicators set out in the schedule to the PDA.

As part of this PDA, it was agreed that there would be independent quarterly financial audits and independent annual audits. These were presented to the Galway 2020 Board and the Department and annual reports are published on the Galway 2020 website here: <https://galway2020.ie/en/about/governance/>. The Company was granted charitable status in 2019 and subsequent financial statements are prepared applying Section 1A of FRS 102 Standard and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Service Level Agreements were also signed between Galway 2020 and Galway City Council and Galway County Council for the provision of funding on a phased basis to support the delivery of the programme under Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture project.

At the European level, an expert panel is responsible for selecting and monitoring the progress of the designated European Capital of Culture as it prepares for the title year, with their reports on the two stages of the 2020 bid and the three Galway 2020 monitoring reports available on the EC website here: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/galway-and-rijeka> .

Following the formal end of the ECoC in April 2021, the board decided that the company be continued with a small team to manage the post ECoC business and to develop a framework for its immediate legacy supported by a slimmed down board and continued to be led by Chairman Arthur Lappin.

Galway 2020 staffing

On Galway 2020's designation as European Capital of Culture, the organisation constituted at bid stage entered a new phase, overseen by a Board, and led by CEO Hannah Kiely and Creative Director Chris Baldwin and a Head of Operations. The original Creative Director and CEO respectively departed in May and September 2018.

A new CEO Patricia Philbin, seconded from Galway City Council, then took up the reigns in October 2018, followed by Marilyn Gaughan Reddan's promotion to the position of Head of Programme. A new Creative Director, Helen Marriage of Artichoke, was engaged in January 2019. The Creative Director remained in position until the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the delivery, bringing their contract to an end.

From April 2020, the Programme was managed by the Head of Programme, with a clear focus on the delivery of the Bid Book projects and a focus on supporting local artists.

Average staff numbers in Galway 2020 over the period 2017 to 2021 are set out in the following. Following the hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, over half the staff were made redundant. From May 2020, 11 staff or 6.7 full time equivalents remained working in the organisation. From July 2021, this was further reduced to 6 staff members or 3.8 full time equivalents.

Table: Total and average monthly employee numbers for Galway 2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total employee numbers	6	15	26	20	7
Average monthly numbers during the year					
Finance & Administration	6	6	7	5	3
Creative	0	4	5	4	3
Volunteering	0	1	2	1	1
International Relations	0	1	1	1	0
Production	0	1	1	1	0
Comms	0	2	7	5	0
Box Office	0	0	1	1	0
Partnership	0	0	2	2	0

Source: Galway 2020 documentation.

Stakeholders

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture was designed as a multi-dimensional project that would see contributions from and benefits for a wide variety of stakeholders.

Focusing on Galway as both a city and county, it aimed to raise and change the profile and bring attention to an area that was already well known for its culture. The support and funding of Galway City and County Councils were important from the early stages. By linking to their cultural strategies, one of the key aims was the involvement of the already nationally significant and internationally involved cultural sector in Galway. Through a programme oriented around key themes and the facilitation of European partnerships, it would be an opportunity to support the enhancement and progression of the cultural sector in the area. It was also seen as an opportunity to involve a wider range of the public in arts and culture through community participation and audience development, recognising the shifts and changes in the economy and society in both the city and county. Alongside Galway City and County Councils, The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media was one of the major stakeholders of Galway 2020.

The European Union is the instigator of the European Capitals of Culture initiative. It is responsible for the designation of the selected year from those that bid for the title, monitors its progress, awards the €1.5million Melina Mercouri Prize and receives the evaluation and reports afterwards. This is facilitated through a delegated independent expert panel. The European Capitals of Culture are described as, *“an initiative putting culture at the heart of European cities with EU support for a yearlong celebration of art and culture”*. It has a particular interest in its European dimension, such as increasing appreciation of both the diversity and common aspects of culture in Europe and of encouraging European collaboration between member states.

As well as the major bodies, vital stakeholders of Galway 2020 also include the Cultural Partners, the organising/producing teams – both independent and the Galway 2020 team, artists and creatives, creative industries, businesses, education providers, temporary workers, community leaders, volunteers, audiences and participants and the residents of Galway as a whole, as well as visitors both domestic and international to Galway and the international and ECoC project and programme delivery partners. Each contributed and benefited from the project in unique and distinctive ways and these are assessed in this evaluation.

Finance

At bid stage, Galway 2020 proposed an ambitious programme with a budget of over €45 million¹³. The final expenditure to the end of December 2021 was €22.7 million against an income of €23,689,886 (2017-2021). Bidding costs of €2.2million incurred in 2015-2017 by the Galway City Council have been excluded. Finally, the balance remaining upon completion of the programme delivery (as at December 2021), will be appropriated towards Legacy initiatives.

The budgeting was developed under the principles of 73% for public facing activity (in line with the Bid Book) and 5% for contingency. The final budget was contingent on the funding attracted from different sources – national, city and county and a further fundraising budget (a campaign was launched in 2018).

The final budget reflected the commitment of funders to enable delivery of the programme during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Income

Table: Galway 2020 projected and actual income (2017-2021)

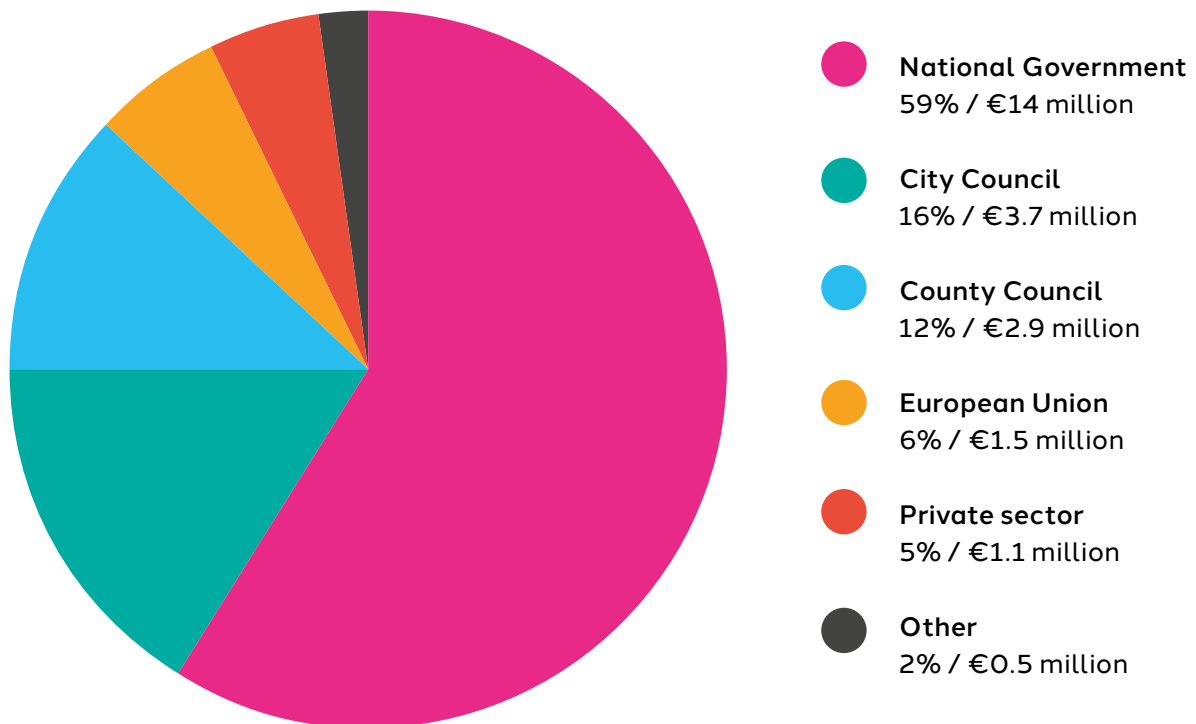
Income	Projected at Bid Book II		Actual at December 2021	
	€million	%	€million	%
Department	15.0	33	14.0 ¹⁴	59
Local authorities Galway City and County Councils	12.0	26	6.6 (County Council 2.9, City Council 3.7)	28 (County Council 12, City Council 16)
Region	3.5	8	-	-
EU	3.0	6	1.5	6
Private Sector	6.8	15	1.1	5
Other	5.5	12	0.5	2
Total	45.8		23.7	

Source: Bid Book II and Galway 2020 Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report.

13 EU monitoring report 2018 <https://galway2020.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Galway-European-Capital-of-Culture-2020-Second-Monitoring-Meeting-Report-by-the-Expert-Panel.pdf>

14 Final €1m from the National Government €15m commitment remains for legacy initiatives in 2022

Chart: Galway 2020 distribution of actual income by source (2017-2021)



Source: Galway 2020 Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report.

Private sector income

The Galway 2020 ECoC application envisaged €6.8 million private sector income which comprised sponsorship and box office receipts. The actual income of €1.1 million reported by Galway 2020 includes €501,141 cash and €520,958 in 'in kind' income being a cost estimate for the time and other resources provided by stakeholders.

The total box office income received by Galway 2020 was €36,180 [2020: €14,976, 2019: €21,204]. This amount is net of €58,465 refunded for events cancelled due the Covid-19 pandemic.

Expenditure

Table: Galway 2020 projected and actual expenditure (2017-2021)

	Bid Book 2		Actual	
Operating expenditure	€ million	%	€ million	%
Programme expenditure*	33.4	72.9%	15.0	66.0%
Promotion & marketing**	5.5	12.0%	1.9	8.2%
Wages, overheads, & administration***	6.9	15.1%	5.8	25.8%
Total	45.8		22.7	

*Includes Cultural Programme, Programme Management

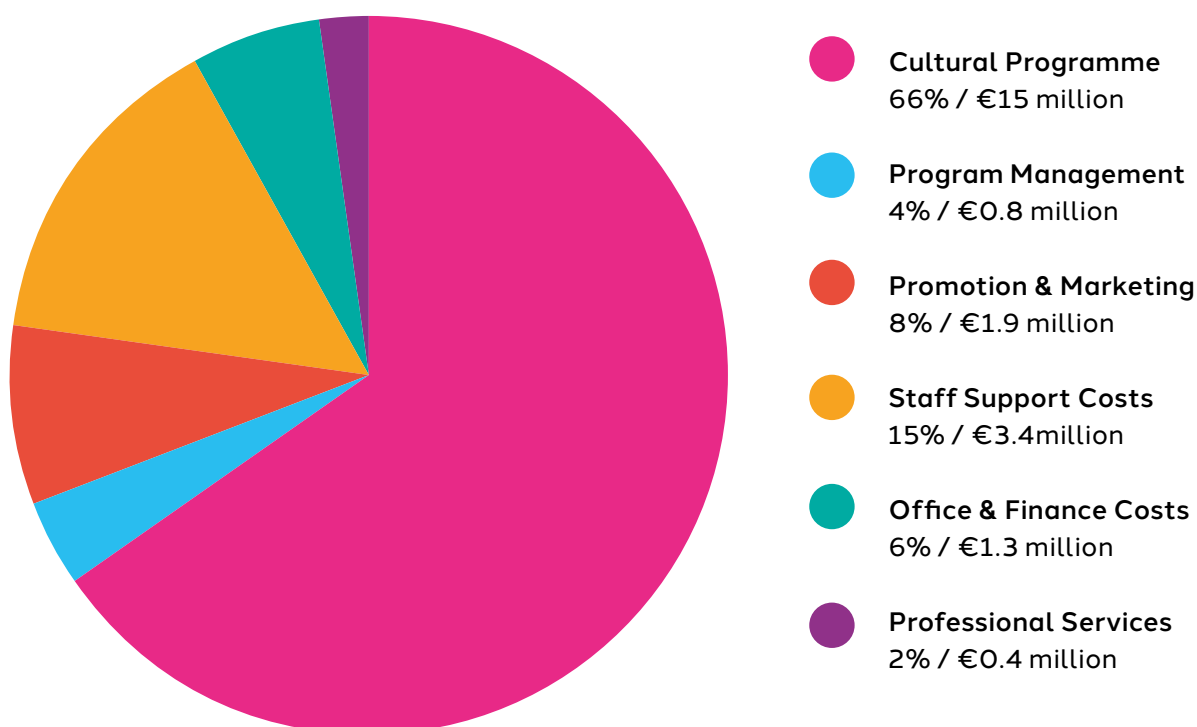
** Includes Marketing & Promotion

*** Includes Staff Support Costs, Office & Finance Costs, Professional Services

Source: Bid Book I, Bid Book II and Galway 2020 Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report

Chart: Distribution of actual expenditure by activity (2017-2021)

It is also useful to consider how the budget was spent over the years of the operation of Galway 2020.

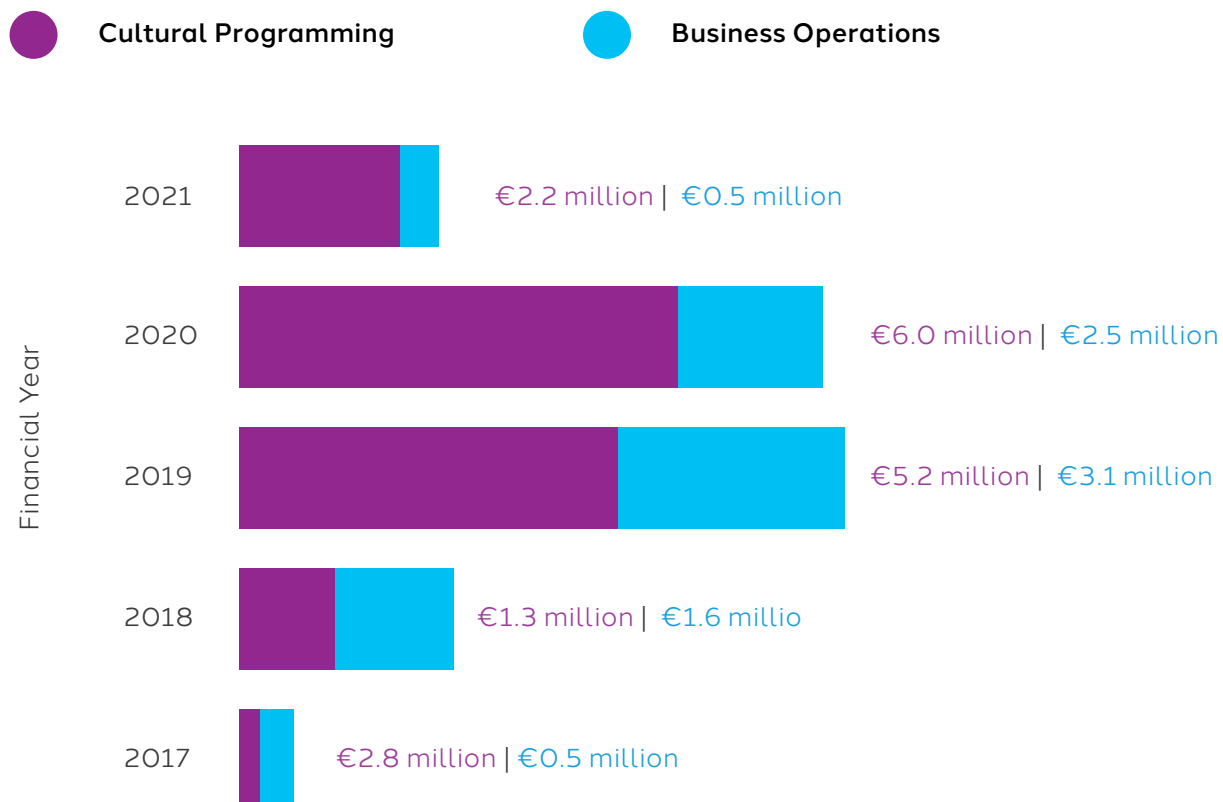


Source: Bid Book I, Bid Book II and Galway 2020 Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report

Table: Expenditure per annum Cultural Programming vs Business Operations (€ million)

	Cultural Programming		Business Operations	
Operating expenditure	€	%	€	%
FY 2021	2.2	81%	0.5	19%
FY 2020	6.0	75%	2.0	25%
FY 2019	5.2	63%	3.1	37%
FY 2018	1.3	45%	1.6	55%
FY 2017	0.3	38%	0.5	63%
Total	15.0	66%	7.7	34%

Source: Galway 2020: Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report

Chart: Expenditure per annum Cultural Programming vs Business Operations (€)

Source: Galway 2020: Analysis per Financial Monitoring Report

7

From bid to delivery: overview of activities and programme

The lifetime of Galway 2020 starts with the development of the bid which began in 2015, followed by its designation in 2016 and a four-year development period leading to the delivery year (which was extended a further four months into 2021). This journey involved a wide range of local, national and European stakeholders and each stage was characterised by different kinds of activity – with the final stage severely affected by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bid development

The bid development phase invited a wide range of artists, creatives and organisations from Galway, across Ireland and Europe, as well as residents of Galway to become involved. In Phase 1, the consultation for the bid involved 39 open public fora, or ‘Public Speak Outs’, which attracted 1,200 attendees; the thoughts and ideas generated at these sessions were then fed through to 16 advisory group meetings and further developed in 48 thematic sub-group meetings. Wider stakeholders (including businesses associations, industry, academic institutions, local tourism sector, sports organisations and politicians) and the communities of Galway (such as local public participation networks, young people, older people, ethnic minority groups, disability groups, and a direct provision (asylum seeker) centre) were engaged through meetings, discussions and presentations at a further 300 sessions. Artists and local participants were involved in 6 Artform specific workshops, 12 European workshops, 38 project workshops.

In Phase 2, a further 556 meetings took place, 11 open public fora, ‘Public Speak Out’s and 3 European workshops, with 982 people volunteering their time to take part. From over 348 crowd sourced ideas, visions and projects explored 90 were developed into projects through a process of rigorous collaborative assessment led by the Galway 2020 bid team for inclusion in the Bid Book II. Ideas came from meetings and discussions with artists and cultural producers including Virtual Capital of Culture workshops with 120 makers/artists/hackers, workshops on the themes of ‘migration, landscape and language’ with local participants and An Artist in Every Place workshops with 129 artists.

The final submission included 58 cultural organisations in Galway involved in delivering projects and 35 artists. At this stage there were over 320 project partners confirmed, 8 funding agencies and 10 local authorities committed to the Galway 2020 programme.

Table: Timeline of Galway 2020 Bid and development process

Date	Activity
April 2014	European Parliament and Council established a list of the member states that can apply to host the ECoC title annually from 2020 to 2033. Ireland and Croatia were listed for 2020
December 2014	Call for applications to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Bid lead by Galway City Council
April - October 2015	Phase 1 programme design (Bid & development) Call for applicants Small Towns Big Ideas Pilot 1 Community Hub created 30,000 Followers on social media creating a dialogue with public
17 October 2015	Submission of Bid Book I ECoC application submitted to Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Four applications received from Dublin, Galway, Limerick and the Three Sisters (Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny) https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/df0a3-european-capital-of-culture/
12 November 2015	Dublin eliminated at EU pre-selection meeting, remaining three progressed to final selection phase
Feb 2016	Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company limited by guarantee, trading as Galway 2020 registered with the Companies Registration Office
November 2015 – June 2016	Phase 2 programme design (Bid & development) Delivery of: • 4 Residencies commenced for An Artist in Every Place Pilot Project following workshops • 3 Small Towns Big Ideas pilot projects up and running, with 75 artists living in Galway engaged • Over 90 children engaged in Hope it Rains Pilot project, Immersive Classroom Pilot and Hy Brasil Pilot project
July 2016	Submission of Bid Book II
15 July 2016	Final EU selection meeting designates Galway as European Capital of Culture 2020

Source: Bid Book I, Bid Book II and Galway 2020 documentation

From designation to delivery year

From designation to delivery, the programme continued to be developed with Galway positioning itself internationally developing European and international relations, further designations and promotional activity. These included designation as UNESCO City of Film for Galway City in 2014, winning a European Green Leaf Award by the European Commission for Galway City in 2017 and designation as European Region of Gastronomy 2018 for Galway as a whole.

Following pilot phases of projects and initiatives (such as Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann, An Artist in every place and Small Towns Big Ideas), on designation, Galway 2020 had two rounds of calls for Small Towns Big Ideas projects inviting the communities of Galway to develop their own projects (explored further in Section 8 and 12). During this period participative work with young people was also initiated through Livefeed and the instigation of Symphonic Waves and Galway 2020 supported further developments for Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann.

Table: Timeline of programme development and deliver before 2020

Date	Activity
15 July 2016	Galway designated European Capital of Culture 2020
November 2016 – February 2017	2 Project Erasmus+ project funding applications 3 Creative Europe projects submitted at its November 16 deadline In 2017 Galway City was a winner of a European Green Leaf Award by the European Commission, which recognised the efforts and commitments made by municipal authorities to improving the urban environment Galway, West of Ireland, European Region of Gastronomy 2018¹⁵
January – March 2018	Call for applicants Small Towns Big Ideas Round 1
April – May 2019	Call for applicants Small Towns Big Ideas Round 2
18 September 2019	Galway 2020 Programme Launch event, Eire Square, produced by Galway 2020
	Galway City

¹⁵ <http://www.galwaygastronomy.ie/>

Date	Activity	
September 2019	Small Towns Big Ideas Round 1 projects:	
	Let the Stories Be Told workshops produced by Skylight 47	Galway City
	The Elephant in the Room workshops produced by Ballygar Arts & Theatre Space	Galway County, Ballygar
	Shorelines Arts Festival performances produced by Portumna Arts Group	Galway County, Portumna
	Misleór: Festival of Nomadic Cultures performances produced by Galway Traveller Movement	Galway City
	Úlla Buaile exhibition produced by Devon Park Residents Association	Galway City Salthill
	Connemara Songlines performances produced by Cantairi Chonamara	Galway County Clifden
	Hear Our Voice! performances produced by Galway Autism Partnership	Galway City
	Shot by the Sea, produced by The Village Salthill	Galway County Clifden Galway City
September - December 2019	Livefeed workshops and in person performances, Cultural Partner	Galway City, Gort, Kinvara, Headford, Dublin, Tuam, Not Bad Festival
	Hope it Rains Soineann nó Doineann new commissions, talks and workshops (Hope it Rains Soineann nó Doineann, Turas Chonamara, Weatherplay, Umbrella Orphanage, Weatherproof Me, Bad Weather Play, Build a water blaster, woodland explorers, Painting with rain, Drowned Galway) created by Ríonach Ní Néill and produced by Milestone Inventive	Galway City and County

Source: Bid Book I, Bid Book II and Galway 2020 documentation.

Delegations and international relations

Throughout this period, Galway developed relationships locally, nationally and across Europe. Galway 2020 played host to 21 embassies and 12 delegations from institutions, agencies, universities and cultural organisations from around the world, including others in the ECoC community, who were looking to understand, discuss and explore the Galway 2020 model for a European Capital of Culture and exchange with its artists, creatives, cultural organisations, volunteers and residents.

The Galway 2020 team and its partners and stakeholders also engaged with a range of networks, conferences, debates, discussions and exchanges with organisations and agencies across Europe. These included: Kaunas Forum Audience Development, a conference on EU External Relations in Culture, the 3rd Culture & Ruralities Forum, Soria, Spain and the European Week of Regions. Having researched and consulted with other ECoCs, such as Aarhus, on volunteering, The Wave Makers programme was launched in Galway, Aarhus and Valletta and once up and running Wave Makers entered into exchange visits to FITS Sibiu, Matera, and attended the closing ceremonies of Plovdiv, Aarhus and Matera ECoCs. Galway and Rijeka 2020 community programmes Small Towns Big Ideas and 27 Neighbourhoods came together to share their practice and the ECoC community visited Headford, home of the Headford Lace Project which led two Small Towns Big Ideas projects.

The Galway 2020 programme itself was promoted across the world through international tourism events and agencies, and it was launched in Dublin, London, Brussels, France, New York, Germany and Italy.

A full list of international visits, exchanges and networking is included in the Appendices.

Delivery 'year' 2020/21

The timelines fall into two phases: the period of delivery from January 2020 to the March 2020 lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the picking up of the programme from June 2020 and relaunch in September 2020 through to May 2021.

See Appendices for the programme timeline tables 'Delivery timeline 2020/21 in person events and activities', 'Delivery timeline June 2020 to April 2021 events and activities' and 'Delivery timeline for project after April 2021'.

Delivery in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic

Galway 2020 faced significant challenges. The finale of its week-long Opening Ceremony in February 2020 was disrupted by Storm Ciara and subsequently the delivery of the cultural programme was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. While most European Capitals of Culture have experienced their own challenges, they ultimately had a year of in person activity and events to be judged by. Unfortunately, Galway 2020 did not have this opportunity, and therefore a fair assessment needs to be based on what it did achieve; with its further legacy to be assessed in subsequent years.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused lockdown in Ireland from 12 March 2020, six weeks into the delivery of the Galway 2020 programme. At this point, all public engagement with the programme in person was suspended.

By May 2020, it was clear that the Galway 2020 organisation would not be able to carry on as it was, and there was a temporary layoff of staff. An increasing recognition of the nature of the pandemic made it clear that it was not a short-term crisis. A proposal was put to the Department by the Galway 2020 Board and Senior Management as to how Galway 2020 could continue. The Department reviewed the proposal and fully supported the continuation based on a restructured cultural programme for delivery in a hybrid format as required, which was confirmed in July 2020.

The board re-configured the organisation and it carried on as a core team of eleven, many of which were part time (all other staff officially being made redundant), supported by the board, led by CEO Patricia Philbin and Head of Programme Marilyn Gaughan Reddan. Helen Marriage as Creative Director and her team from Artichoke stood down. At this stage, the organisation was concerned for its partners at local level and the decision was made to progress with a sole and exclusive focus on sustaining the local cultural economy and ensuring the artists and producers on the project were supported. The core team's focus was then to support the Cultural Partners in delivering their projects, alongside a few others produced by Galway 2020 which were already up and running and/or were longer-term projects. The public programme was then re-launched in September 2020.

At this point, further monitoring measures were instigated by the Department, in addition to those already followed as an organisation and charity and for the European Commission. These involved fortnightly meetings between The Department and Galway 2020 and written monthly Progress Status Reports, including financial monitoring, risk assessments and health and safety checks, in order to be able to proceed appropriately and make the right decisions in light of the ever-changing restrictions caused by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Cultural Partners were required to provide information for the Progress Status Reports and information against their milestones and deliverables, they were also asked to highlight and escalate any strategic or operational risks they were encountering. This involved continuous revision of delivery in response to the escalating levels of restriction by all projects – with accompanying ongoing project management, risk assessment and communications and full consultation with The Department throughout. As a result, there was the safe delivery of over 500 events with no breach of the regulations or Guidelines.

In December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council agreed to an extension of the designation for Galway 2020 as a European Capital of Culture until April 2021, at which time it also postponed the 2021 ECoC Designations to the following year.

Table: Covid-19 pandemic and Galway 2020 timeline

Date	Activity
11 March 2020	WHO declared the outbreak of Covid-19 to be a pandemic.
12 Mar 2020	Public activity ceased Health (Preservation and Protection and Other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Act 2020 (Act 1 of 2020)
7 April 2020	Galway 2020 issue statement on future of programme to be considered
8 April 2020	Restriction of movement of persons from their place of residence and restrictions on events
28 May 2020	Galway 2020 submitted revised programme, in light of the impact of Covid-19 on funding and operations, to the Department for approval
15 July 2020	Department approved revised programme
July 2020	Wave Makers reactivated
August 2020	Fortnightly meetings between the Department and Galway 2020 commenced and continued to quarter 2 2021

Date	Activity
September 2020	Re-launch of Galway 2020 programme: Various projects given the option to take place virtually or postpone until a time when they can take place in person
9 October 2020	Public gatherings limited to 15
21 October 2020	No public gatherings permitted Restricted movement to 5 kilometres
October 2020	Galway events move to an online platform and any in-person events are postponed
November	Agreed that the Department must clear any press statements in relation to postponement of events
December 2020	Health (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2021 (Act No. 24 of 2021) continuation of public health act amendment into 2021
December 2020	Contingency planning for level 5 lockdown impact on programme
30 December 2020	Level 5 lockdown announced
March 2021	Only online events took place; filming for online projects allowed but only with essential workers and nothing to take place that would encourage gatherings
5 April 2021	End of level 5 lockdown
April 2021	Final set of 50 events to take place
30 April 2021	Galway 2020 ECoC designation ends

Delivering Galway 2020 within the restrictions

The Cultural Partners and Galway 2020 team worked to deliver the programme during the Covid-19 pandemic, in difficult circumstances and October 2020, it was clear that the majority of the programme would need to be delivered digitally.

In the first instance, a quick decision was made to film Kari Kola's *Savage Beauty* and distribute it digitally in March 2020, just as lockdown began. Subsequently, some work could be presented in person in September 2020, such as *Druid's tour*, albeit to audiences of 15 by the end of the tour. Outdoor installations did proceed: *Mirror Pavilion* as part of Galway International Arts Festival, *Hope it Rains* | *Soineann nó Doineann* sculptures/murals created and produced by Ríonach Ní Néill and Ciotóg and *Gilgamesh* murals produced by Macnas, delivered under strict social distancing rules.

In the meantime, collaboration and creative development was happening primarily digitally between artists and their partners, facilitated remotely using digital tools. To enable work to be produced, the team followed guidelines designed for safe working in broadcast production and the construction and building industries. In this way, the expertise and ingenuity used across Galway 2020 leaves a legacy of learning and an ability to be flexible and adaptive. The *Wave Makers* volunteers were also re-activated in July 2020 and supported activities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The majority of projects proposed in Bid Book II, which were still in the programme by March 2020, came to fruition by the end of April 2021, with some projects presenting work in June to September in 2021 (for example GIAFs' *Mirror Pavilion*, Macnas' *Gilgamesh* and The Aistriú projects' *Ar Ais Aris* theatre) and other projects planning delivery into 2022. There were compromises, and inevitably, Galway 2020 was not what it could have been in its delivery year, however the outputs for the year represent a sizeable body of work.

See Appendices for descriptions of the project and activities delivered as part of the cultural programme.

8

Cultural Capacity

Overall goal/ambition: To develop Galway's Cultural Capacity

ECoC objective: Stimulate extensive cultural programmes of high artistic quality

ECoC objective: Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation

ECoC objective: Develop the skills, capacity and governance of the cultural sector

ECoC objective: Stimulate partnership and co-operation with other sectors

ECoC objective: Improve cultural infrastructure

Galway 2020 aimed to build the 'capacity' of the cultural sector, for which a holistic approach was taken in line with its vision. Building cultural capacity therefore encompassed a variety of elements, involving those across the cultural sector, such as a wide range of professionals, cultural organisations, artists and community associations, as well as those in connected sectors such as the public services, education or the wider creative industries.

This approach included the development of skills, creation of jobs, new artistic commissions or creation of cultural assets alongside the building of partnerships and networks. Crucially, the development and delivery of projects for Galway 2020 integrated innovation in creative methodology and production, business models and organisational processes.

Develop Galway's cultural capacity

AIMS

- Galway 2020 inspires creativity which is relevant to and involves a diversity of people and communities
- Galway 2020 develops the connectivity of Galway's creative and cultural sectors nationally and internationally
- Galway 2020 helps build the sustainability and resilience of the creative/ cultural sectors

ACTIVITY

Galway 2020 cultural programme commissioned and delivered in collaboration with the sectors

- New works produced involving national and international partnerships, collaborations, networks and funding
- A European dimension to all elements of programming
- The programme delivered digitally and physically (across City and County) using new platforms and approaches to production and cross-sector working
- Jobs and skills developed to deliver Galway 2020 projects

OUTCOMES

Developed and diversified cultural production and creativity

Diversified cultural and creative sectors

Increased connectivity and networking across the sectors

Long term partnerships and connections to Europe developed

Increased skills and resilience of the sectors

One of the associated elements, covered in later sections of this report, and a measure of its success could also be said to be the changed perceptions of culture by the public, especially in Galway itself – building its capacity to be involved and engage with a range of new and innovative cultural activity. In this way, Galway 2020 as part of the European Capitals of Culture, was as much about change through its programme as it was about delivering cultural outputs.

This was articulated in the first sentence of the Bid Book II:

“We need to unlock the vast cultural capacity of Galway City and County which, for reasons of economic social and sectoral challenges, is inhibited from finding full expression in citizenship, inclusivity and creativity.”

These challenges relate to a range of historic circumstances such as the interaction of the urban and the rural, the evolving population and the developing economy. The cultural sector itself is established, well supported and with a significant reputation, though also made up of many relatively small and minimally staffed organisations.

The European Capital of Culture presented an opportunity for the sector to benefit and learn through the whole process. This could come from both structured elements such as skills development sessions or funding for special activities, as well as through the possibilities offered by European connections or networking taking place in Galway or across Europe.

From 2020 onwards, the Covid-19 pandemic had a particular impact on the development of cultural capacity. Firstly, of course, it meant certain in-person activities could not happen. For example, the Wave Makers had training in a variety of areas of work such as conducting survey fieldwork or stewarding at events, and although they were still able to work on several smaller scale events as stewards, they were not able to have the fuller scale involvement which had been originally intended.

On the other hand, the pandemic required artists, organisations and the public to be flexible and resilient in the face of what was no longer possible. This typically meant having to pivot to deliver events and activities digitally or in other alternative ways which naturally necessitated the development of new skills or connecting and liaising with those that could contribute to those skills. Responding to the impacts of the pandemic brought an unexpected intensity to capacity building in the sector across Galway.

Elements of Galway 2020 particularly important to the development of cultural capacity included:

- Planning group meetings of cultural organisations taking place before the year.
- Sessions and meetings to support applications and delivery for Small Towns Big Ideas.
- In-person seminars for the sector with a special emphasis or topic such as audience development.



Photograph: Julia Dunin Photography

Gilgamesh

Produced by	Macnas
	September 2020 – September 2021
Locations	Galway City and County
	Gilgamesh
Web	Gilgamesh

Macnas, the masters of storytelling and spectacle, devised a dramatic new interpretation of Gilgamesh, the first ever hero's journey and world's oldest story written over 3,000 years ago. This ancient tale explored contemporary themes of human relationships, love, power and death.

The project was originally conceived as a creative programme of large-scale public performances in celebration of Galway European Capital of Culture 2020 with smaller interventions and accompanying digital content. However, Covid-19 saw Macnas deliver a reimagined vision for the project, firmly rooted in Galway, with a series of short films; a film presented in a theatre, a digital storybook, and the Gilgamesh Experience online all photographed and filmed across the City and County.

- European networking meetings in Galway (such as Fresh Street) or elsewhere (such as IETM meeting in Rijeka, Croatia)¹⁶.
- International partnerships (such as the EU Japan Festival – Galway 2020 connection).
- Bilateral events with ECoC associations and partnerships such as with Leeuwarden ECoC 2018 and the informal European Capitals of Culture Network.
- Collaborative project development with European and international partners.
- Seminars and webinars related to monitoring and evaluation conducted by The Audience Agency.
- Participation by young people in special projects such as music or film skills.
- Training sessions for Wave Makers (volunteers).
- Implementation of experience gained directly from previous ECoC volunteer programmes such as Aarhus 2017.
- Rehearsal sessions for volunteers to form the community cast for the opening ceremony.
- Skills and capacities developed in the course of delivering Galway 2020 projects and pivoting projects in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically digital skills.

In terms of assessing how well these different elements achieved the aim of increasing cultural capacity and developing wider impact, the evaluation refers to specific output metrics, responses from surveys and contributions in discussion groups and interviews from across the different stakeholders who delivered Galway 2020's cultural programme outlined here.

16 See Appendices for a list of European networks the Galway 2020 team engaged with.

Volunteer participation and capacity building

Public participation in Galway 2020 is examined more thoroughly in Section 12 below, however, from a public perspective, the volunteer engagement represents a vital facet of cultural capacity building for Galway, including training or other developmental elements. Wave Makers, the volunteer programme for Galway 2020, was informed by the research and evaluation of previous successful ECoC volunteer programmes such as Aarhus 2017 Rethinkers. From this a programme was developed.

- 350 volunteers were recruited and trained for the community cast, 100 of whom performed in the Fire Tour in six of Galway's towns, and all were set to perform at the planned Opening Ceremony in Galway City which could not take place on account of Storm Ciara. The lead up had involved rehearsals and capacity building through training, sharing and working together.
- 325 Wave Makers were involved across the whole project from April 2019 to April 2021 (800 had been recruited prior to the year but the Covid-19 pandemic meant there was drop-off). They received direct training prior to Galway 2020 and then during and following the onset of the pandemic were involved in other activities outlined in Section 12).
- Other organisations and associations engaged their own existing volunteers, with 1,055 roles created across the programme.

People joined the community cast or became a volunteer for a variety of reasons, but the Wave Makers questionnaires demonstrated that the skills to be gained alongside other opportunities for development (explored in later sections) were important.

Table: What were your main reasons for becoming a Wave Maker with Galway 2020?

Statement	%
I wanted to learn new skills	43%
I wanted to learn more about Galway	38%
To learn more about Europe	22%
It is useful experience that I can use to get a job	22%

Source: TAA Wave Makers Baseline Survey, January 2020 - Base 214.

They were also asked for their thoughts on the Wave Makers events and activities that had taken place up to that point (Core Training, Local Expert workshops, Creative Training and a Walking Tour of Galway City Centre). These had been well attended and highly regarded, with praise for the 'Local Expert' event. Of those who had attended, 91% said they enjoyed or really enjoyed the event and 94% said it was 'useful' or 'very useful'.¹⁷

Although the Covid-19 pandemic meant that most of the Wave Makers programme had to be changed, many of the volunteers carried on for the revised activities in 2020 and 2021, with new ways of contributing and benefiting from the scheme being devised. In May 2021, the Wave Makers were asked again about their experience in which they showed that despite the revisions, they had gained a great deal.

Table: Thinking of your experience as a volunteer over the whole Galway 2020 programme to what extent do you agree with the following?

Statement	Strongly agreed	Agreed
I felt part of a community or group with similar interests	51%	39%
I learnt something about my own heritage or about other cultures	41%	48%
I learnt new skills	27%	37%
I developed my creativity	23%	38%
It was a useful experience that will support my career or professional development	20%	30%

Source: TAA Wave Makers Final Survey, May 2021 - Base 111.

When asked if they would continue volunteering given the opportunity, 64% said they were 'definitely planning to' and 33% that they 'probably would'.¹⁸

¹⁷ Source: Wave Makers baseline Survey, January 2020

¹⁸ Source: Wave Makers final Survey, May 2021

Community involvement and co-creation: Small Towns Big Ideas

- 67 Small Towns Big Ideas projects. Of which:
 - » 55% of projects were located in Galway County.
 - » 39% Galway City.
 - » 6% in Galway City and County.
- 2,789 estimated participant engagements.

While a wide range of people were supported to become involved in the programme, including young people and a range of community leaders, it was the Small Towns Big Ideas programme which perhaps best demonstrates how capacity-building opportunities reached across the City and County.

Small Towns Big Ideas took place over four years from 2017–2021, involving a range of community associations, artists and specially formed groups. To inform and devise this strand of work, many attended events in the early stages of the Galway 2020 programme development, including an open public forum, or ‘Public Speak Out’ event, consultation and ‘communities of interest’ meetings, volunteer meetups and sessions at the Galway 2020 hub on education, health and wellbeing. The projects also had the development of local capacity as an integral element. The following statistics are from a survey carried out by The Audience Agency with Small Towns Big Ideas project leads in May 2021.

- 50% of Small Towns Big Ideas project leads stated that their projects were relevant in ‘supporting emerging artists or talent’.
- 56% that it was relevant in ‘supporting local artists or talent’.
- 58% that there was an ‘international or European dimension’ to the project.

When asked about the impact of the projects on their communities, 69% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that ‘The project provided an opportunity for people in my area to experience something new and different’ and 41% that ‘The project increased the capacity of communities to develop projects at scale’.

For the project leads themselves, most identified ways they had benefited with skills and capacity building. This included:

- 71% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the project helped them to ‘increase confidence in developing creative ideas’ through delivering a project.
- 73% that it ‘built their skills’.
- 55% that it helped them to develop a ‘leadership role for the benefit of a community’.

When asked further about how the Small Towns Big Ideas projects had helped, comments included:

“It gave me a great confidence in my leadership ability, being able to bring the community together [in location] that would not know of each other’s existence.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

“Writing funding applications, building and working with a team to plan and deliver the project, making changes as the project evolved, working with overseas partners.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

The project leaders spoke positively about the support they received from Galway 2020 and the opportunity it gave them to try something different or turn great ideas into practice, something which they were less likely to have been able to do otherwise. Many were supported with advice from the Galway 2020 team who helped them shape their plans and apply for funding, as well as provide advice on being able to change projects to digital formats as the Covid-19 pandemic took effect. In the case of one project, the Covid-19 pandemic forced a local cinema to close, putting the project in danger, but with advice, it was *“delivered online [rescuing] the project and [allowing] us to see how it could be delivered finally as a live event”* Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

Being part of Galway 2020 also offered a unique opportunity for many artists and communities:

“It gave us the chance to create a new video artwork that focused on our home town [...] and allowed us to explore aspects of the character and mythology of midlands in a way that hasn’t been done before.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

“It provided... valuable contacts and collaborators for future ventures!”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

“Recognition of being part of a celebration of Galway and a community effort through all our cultures heritages and customs.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

The European dimension was integrated across the STBI programme with partnerships initiated, however the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic made developing relationships unfeasible for most. Nevertheless, seven STBI projects did develop and sustain European partner collaborations in their project delivery.

In terms of feedback about cultural capacity, some identified training they would have liked (or would like in future), including practical event management on issues such as insurance, marketing, permissions or working with local authorities. More generally, many of the project leads reflected on the difficulty of planning and organising complex projects when their dedicated time can be limited; the nature of these sorts of projects being that they are usually run by volunteers and/or people doing this as a second job or on a part time-basis.

“As this was my first time coordinating a large-scale project, I sometimes struggled with the project management tasks; we managed, but I would have loved some formal or informal training aimed at community workers managing projects like this.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

“We created lasting friendships, networks, working relationships, goodwill, pride, skills, ambition that will help us to repeat the process with other projects IF (and it’s a big IF) we don’t burn out, get sufficient future funding AND support AND pay our producers AS WELL as our artists. It’s been a very tough year in 2020 and there is a huge sense of accomplishment but also unfortunately exhaustion.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

The Small Towns Big Ideas strand demonstrated how much can be achieved by working in partnership with communities, co-creating and allowing open-ended outputs. These approaches allowed the development of cultural capacity for a range of people and in places that would not normally be involved in this sort of activity. The main area of suggested improvement would seem to be in terms of more substantial training programmes on practical aspects of delivery. Another consideration is the reliance that such projects have on the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved, who must operate without much or any professional paid time to organise projects, which is a longer-term issue for the development of cultural capacity within and for communities.

Cultural Partners

As well as the STBI projects there were the Cultural Partners, the existing and new cultural organisations in Galway, responsible for delivering a significant part of the programme.

- 33 Cultural Partners produced new work or commissions.
- Of which 5 were new organisations created for Galway 2020 and which continue to operate.
- 537 artist, 56 producers and 301 production jobs to deliver Galway 2020.

The cultural organisations and practitioners involved with Galway 2020 formed a vital part of the way the programme was delivered, from Bid Book development to its manifestation during the Covid-19 pandemic. This frequently needed a complex set of skills and approaches. Whilst many cultural organisations had existed for some time and were highly competent and expert in their work, Galway 2020 presented new opportunities and challenges such as working internationally or developing new commissions. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic also demanded another new set of competencies. These themes were explored in a series of group discussions and individual interviews in 2021.

Many Cultural Partners described a complex journey over several years, with different phases affecting them in various positive and negative ways, though all building towards greater cultural capacity. In the early phases there was generally enthusiasm for the bid and the designation, matched with a sense of celebration and anticipation. This was followed for some with a degree of disappointment, mainly because they were not given the level of funding they had expected and/or had lacked communication from the central team about the situation at a time that was also accompanied by some negative commentary. In the final phase, there was a renewed sense of belief and ownership, augmented by the decision following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in the summer of 2020 to re-start the programme with a focus on Galway 2020 working in collaboration to develop and support delivery of the Cultural Partners' projects.

The process of being resilient and flexible in the face of adversity led to some notable developments in cultural capacity, with Cultural Partners identifying both practical aspects such as working with larger audience groups, complex project and financial management and complicated construction and set building, and on the other hand more intangible aspects such as navigating challenges and developing negotiation skills.

“I’m delivering in new formats, doing really big projects and programmes on building relationships with audiences, navigating reporting structures and changing project reporting.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency led workshop, May 2021

Others identified the way they were given the capacity to work with new audiences, participants or communities which will be beneficial in the longer term.

“There is a kind of learning that can be shared and there is a potential now to do more work with the people who are themselves putting themselves forwards, being involved in young curation and ideas around thinking about spaces where young people can be creative.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency led workshop, May 2021

Many Cultural Partners welcomed the opportunity for a large degree of freedom ultimately in what they delivered. This ‘freedom to fail’ meant they could experiment and take risks in what they were doing. It also led to the development of creative methodologies, working cross-artform, or in new expressions of artforms.

Some projects were built more concretely on artistic and organisational development; in essence, they were research and development projects which were testing and piloting new areas of work.

“Our project was never aimed towards the public really; it was about building capacity.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“It was a kind of international or pan European collaboration, to get some artists and professionals to work together on what’s called ‘virtual production’ which is a new kind of technique for short film [...] We’re one of the first organisations nationally at least. And one of the first even in Europe to focus on it to such a degree.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“We were bridging the gap between academia and, I suppose, practitioners.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

The opportunity to build creative capacity through the Galway 2020 commissions points to new and varied opportunities for audiences in the coming years.

Creative capacity for Galway was also developed through the creation of six new cultural organisations as part of the Galway 2020 programme. These included Project BAA BAA, which completed their work at the end of the programme, and Livefeed, Symphonic Waves Youth Orchestra, Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann, InterAction, and The Aistriú Project which continue to operate.

Another key element of this capacity building for Cultural Partners was through a European dimension. A selection of organisations was introduced to or supported in applying for new European funding (such as through Creative Europe) and collaborated directly with, or more broadly participated in, European networks, as well as exploring opportunities across Europe. Of the 220 delivery partners and collaborators across the programme, 22% were European, and of the 73 networks engaged with across the programme, 32% were European. Linked to this was the possibility of developing an extensive international profile.

“The Capital of Culture kind of catalysed it as a project... bringing those partners in.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“So, I think in terms of the wider network outside of Ireland and into Europe, I think we’re looking towards the future for that, and relationships that have been and will continue to be established, are the results of this project. And as a result of being involved potentially working with capitals of culture or European partners down the line.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had an important effect on the cultural capacity of the Cultural Partners. In some cases, the transformation of delivery led to the requirement and acquisition of a whole range of skills.

“And so, when it came to, you know, what can we do and Covid, we consciously made a decision, which was, we don’t want to create the work that we were planning to create, and then record it because we felt that that was what a lot of people were doing [...] It was a huge learning curve. We were hugely proud of the work [that was eventually produced].”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“So, we held the last conference completely online earlier this year. And it was just an absolute explosive success. Because the amount of people that we were able to connect, we had a live stream via YouTube and forced questions in different ways, things like that.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

It has also led to many areas for debate, as the cultural sector in Galway, Ireland and Europe comes to terms with people not being able or willing to travel as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic or climate change.

“We were able to source some incredible talent and professionals from work in the games industry for a long time from abroad who were willing and able to take part because they didn’t have to sacrifice three or four days to kind of come to Ireland.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“And we reached people that normally I don’t think would have been in Galway. For this, you know, they tended to be more coastal island communities, and people visiting there.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

The Cultural Partners enjoyed the ability to network and meet others, but some expressed a wish for more opportunities for them to meet, find common areas of working and develop new, perhaps unlikely partnerships. It is difficult to have such ‘open-ended’ meetings in the process of such an initiative because attention is focused on producing events. At the same time others involved in Galway 2020 felt that they had offered such opportunities, but they were not always taken up. Nevertheless, it does show an unfulfilled need of the Cultural Partners. It could also be said to demonstrate a collegiate sense from the Cultural Partners recognising and working together in response to the difficult cultural environment created by the pandemic.

One way of dealing with this and of cultural capacity in general, for example, in future ECoCs would be to have a central training programme for cultural organisations, similar to that which took place in Rijeka 2020 for their ‘Classrooms’ initiative, including training in audience development, event production and other areas of work. There also appeared to be little experience of the vital role of monitoring and evaluation in such projects, which often led to complaints from cultural partners about there being ‘too much reporting’ and this would seem to be another area that might be advanced in the future.

Despite these difficulties, the Cultural Partners were positive with the outcomes of their projects, appreciative of the opportunity that Galway 2020 gave them and pleased with what had been achieved.

“In some ways, what happened in Galway allowed others with not the huge resources behind them to flourish, you know, the chances became available to them [...] But in some ways it really benefited people who will be in Galway next year, and hopefully in 10 years.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

“Everyone’s saying about, you know, bigger, bigger, more and more and you know it’s almost like the shiny, sparkly things, are the shiny, sparkly things, whereas the maybe less apparently, shiny and sparkly events are what are really interesting.”

Cultural Partner in The Audience Agency evaluation discussion, July 2021

To fully evaluate the impacts for the Cultural Partners and cultural capacity overall, it will be important to further review how the experience of Galway 2020 has affected the Galway cultural sector over the coming months and years.

Partnerships and relationships

- 220 partnerships and collaborations¹⁹ – 61% new, one third based in Galway and a fifth European. 38% of partners were based in Galway, 33% national, 22% European and 8% international.
- 73 networks involved²⁰ – 39% new and 37% were national (Ireland), 32% European, 19% international and 12% local.

Galway 2020 supported the development of new and existing relationships and the involvement and development of networks locally, nationally and in Europe and beyond; from artistic collaboration with partners to the creation of elements of the events and activities, to the engagement of networks and groups in broader discussions around learning and development. The European dimension of these relationships and networks was particularly evident in Cultural Partners' projects:

- **Peripheral Visions**, produced by Galway Film Fleadh, founded a new network of independent film festivals (Europa Film Festivals) and a legacy that will continue beyond Galway 2020 along with an annual showcase of independent European cinema. The network is dedicated to the promotion, stimulation and encouragement of the distribution and exhibition of European cinema, across borders. Peripheral Visions, in association with Galway 2020, has contributed to a unique opportunity to learn, share and invest in long-standing connections with festivals on the fringes.
- **The Northern Peripheries** project, led by Galway Film Centre (GFC), enabled GFC to run a project with Virtual Production (VP) as its focus, with experts from across the industry from Ireland, the UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark; pan-European participants, along with the development and support of the 15 members of the Screen Talent Europe Network (STE). GFC are now capable of supporting the production of films within the VP workflow and have launched a short film bursary for 2021, building capacity within the region and extending the expertise within GFC. Continued engagement in the STE will also provide connections with professionals across Europe in many different countries, which will have huge potential for international collaboration and learning.
- **Wires Crossed**, produced by Galway Community Circus, created and strengthened existing European partnerships, involving 20 European partners from 13 countries. Through the delivery of seven Erasmus+ and one Creative Europe projects, it expanded the European Funambulism Network, providing a catalyst for public programmes in EU partner countries.
- **Oró...** an immersive production by Ealaín na Gaeltachta, - incorporating music, dance, theatre, with elements of visual art, and its themes of language, survival, identity, cultural diversity had a cast of 14 (9 Irish and 5 International) from five countries with minority languages - Ireland, Alba, Basque, Cornwall and Friesland.

19 See Appendices for a list of 'Delivery partners and collaborators across the programme (Cultural Partners and Eye on the Edge projects)'.

20 See Appendices for a list of 'Networks engaged with across the programme (Cultural Partner projects)'.

- **Aerial / Sparks** created by Irish artist Louise Manifold was presented as a unique art trail on the island of Inis Oírr over 3 weeks in September 2020. Visitors traversed the island by foot and bike to discover sound works housed in various venues across the island including a handball alley, a lighthouse, Aras Eanna Arts Centre and a Church. The trail included work by participating artists: Ailís Ní Ríain, Carol Anne Connolly, Kennedy Browne and Kevin Barry from Ireland, David Stalling from Germany, Magz Hall from England and Robertina Šebjanič from Slovenia.

The development of relationships and networks also took place in the Small Towns Big Ideas projects, where relationships and networks built between community organisations, producers and artists, has left a legacy on which community project leaders feel more confident to develop and deliver work and project in the future. This is not a formal network as such, but could become one, providing useful support and a place for sharing of resources including personnel who can work on future initiatives. In terms of European partnerships for STBI, there was a good working relationship built with Rijeka 2020's '27 Neighbourhoods' with a view to creating programme links. However, the pandemic prevented this from being developed further. By the end of the project there were seven STBI projects that had been able to develop and sustain European partner collaborations in their delivery.

The Wave Makers programme built local relationships among the communities of Galway and beyond and has been an active member of the European Capital of Culture Network, taking part in volunteer exchanges with other ECoCs.

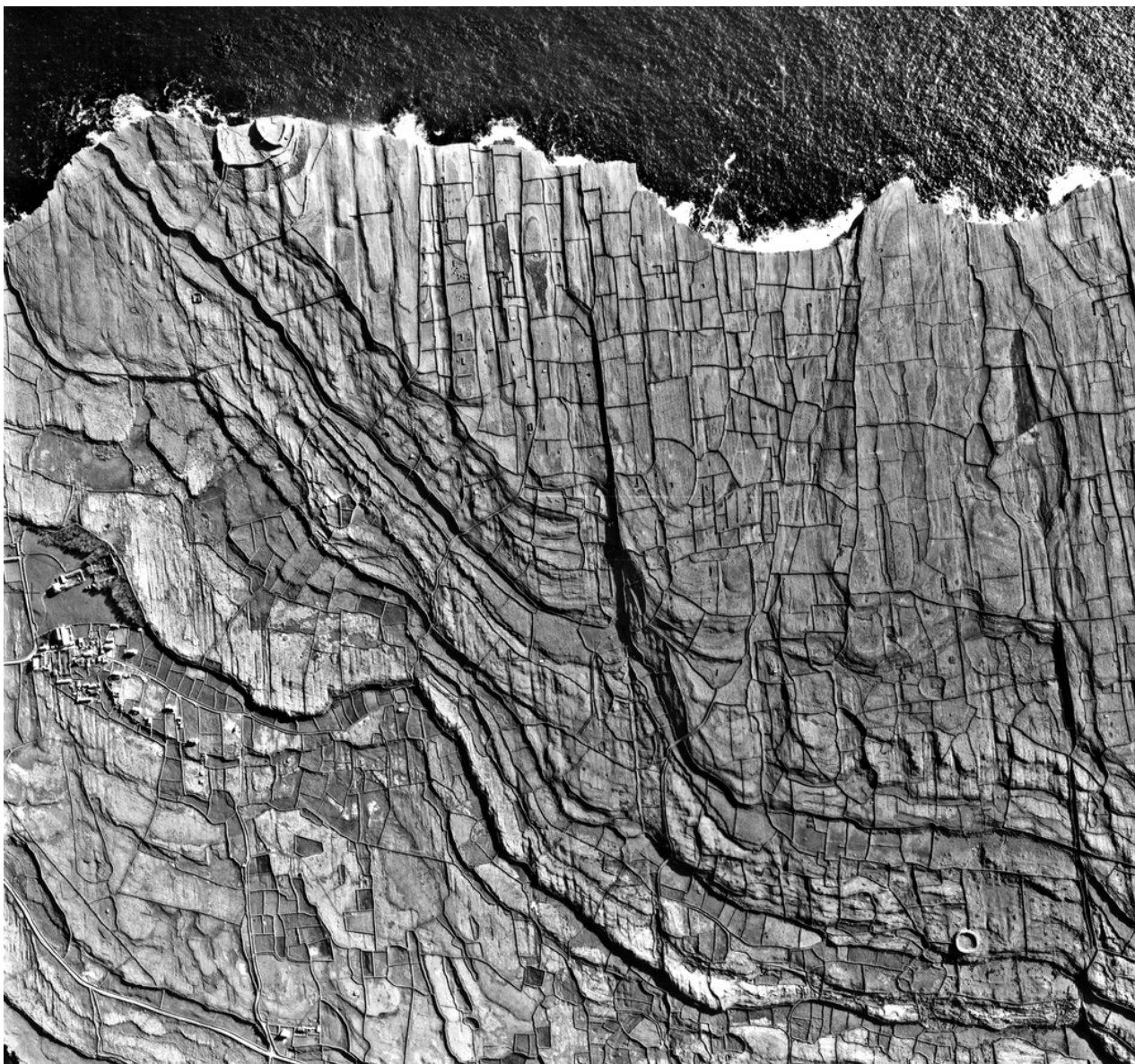
Cultural assets and legacies

As a result of Galway 2020 a whole range of assets, both digital and physical, tangible and intangible, have been created or developed, as well as plans for investment and development by organisations. It remains to be seen if the outcomes of Galway 2020 contribute to an evidence base for the case for future infrastructure developments.

A sample of some of the other cultural assets and legacies include:

- Physical assets include seven artists' works from Aerial Sparks, Symphonic Waves' instrument bank and music library and Project BAA BAA's array of resources including the Puzzle Sheep puzzle; Primary School SHEEP PROJECT Book; International Contemporary Tapestry Catalogue; Recipe Book - Lamb and Wild Herbs Discovering Regional Delicacies plus a whole range of equipment; and the Opening Ceremony instruments and spheres.
- The Aistriú project leaves a new publication of Nuala Ni Dhomhnail poems in translation published by The Gallery Press, new choral compositions by Ian Wilson, a film commission by Tonnta and a new VR film commission by Bru Theatre as well as physical assets including a new sculpture for NUI Galway campus; two paintings by Miho Ohtsubo for NUI Galway art collection (funded by NUI Galway university in support of The Aistriú project).
- Machan Mangan's work, Sea Tamagotchi, on capturing phrases, words and sayings from the West Coast of Ireland has been developed into a website archive as well as being turned into a book.
- The Monument exhibition at the Galway City Museum leaves eight artistic commissions which form part of Galway City Museum's permanent collection and a specially commissioned aerial film of the Aran Islands and accompanying book. Its development also included a new gallery floor for the museum involving high specification exhibition and interpretation equipment and environmental upgrades.
- Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann leaves a catalogue of installations, films, Apps, publications, a wearable wind generator, weather-activated musical instruments, portable rain shelters and designs and murals.
- Music for Galway's Cellissimo leaves The Galway Cello (built of wood mostly grown in Galway County) and the libretto for Paper Boat Opera.
- Digital assets include websites documenting projects, photo archives, films – capturing live performances as well as documenting activity, such as the Crossing the Line mini-series capturing the partnership, festival, production and Galway 2020 journey.
- There is also a whole range of intellectual assets, including a training methodology for teaching FunLine and Funambulism developed by Galway Community Circus, and for Northern Peripheries' Galway Stories project, a series of video seminars on virtual production. There is also a wealth of relationships, some informal and others more constituted, such as Northern Peripheries' involvement with the Screen Talent Europe Network with 15 constituent organisations.

Other potential developments, which would amount to developed infrastructure in the form of buildings or venues, include progressed plans for the Galway Community Circus and Irish Centre for Funambulism. It is anticipated that the needs for further infrastructure developments are being addressed as part of the cultural strategies and arts plans for Galway City and County which were consulted on during 2020. These plans integrate the aim to take a collaborative approach to addressing identified deficits in the arts infrastructure working with the arts sector and in relation to developmental strategic and policy areas such as regeneration, economic growth, development and planning.



Monument Dun Aghansa Irish Air Corp Mid twentieth Century

Public perception

Looking at the bigger picture, the 2021 population survey provides an overview of how the public locally and nationally regarded the impact of Galway 2020 ECoC on arts and creativity in Galway.

Those that had heard of Galway 2020 were asked to what extent they agreed that 'Galway 2020 will leave a positive legacy for arts and creativity in Galway'. 75% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement. There was a contrast in responses between those living locally in Galway where the figure is lower at 64% and those living in the rest of Ireland where it is 77%.

Table: Legacy of Galway 2020 for arts and creativity in Galway

To what extent would you agree or disagree Galway 2020 will leave a positive legacy for arts and creativity in Galway

	National	Galway (City or County)	Rest of Ireland
Strongly agree	40%	25%	42%
Agree	35%	39%	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	16%	17%
Disagree	5%	12%	4%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	1%	6%	1%

Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021 – Bases from 191 to 606 – Note figures are weighted to reflect population size in each area.

Another perspective on cultural capacity could involve looking at how the public might have new or different types of engagement with arts and culture, creating a sense of appreciation, knowledge and understanding of arts and culture in general, which is explored in Section 10 on social and cultural outcomes.

This aspect of capacity, whilst not related directly to delivery, demonstrates how Galway 2020 supported audiences to explore other types of artistic experience, potentially increasing appetite for more such work in the future. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that many opportunities were curtailed or limited, which makes it difficult to assess how far this would have been augmented or developed at a wider scale – for example, involving many who would normally be less likely to engage in arts and culture.



Photograph: Declan Colohan

9

Building engagement with Galway 2020

Overall goal/ambition: To deliver a programme rooted in people and place

ECoC objective: Create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events

Galway's cultural offer is well known and attracts audiences from home and visitors from abroad, including for such events as Galway International Arts Festival, Clifden Arts Week, Baboró International Arts Festival for Children, Galway Film Fleadh, TULCA Festival of Visual Arts, Macnas' Halloween parade, and Cúirt International Festival of Literature, alongside the work of Music for Galway, Galway Community Circus, Druid and Branar Téatar do Pháistí. Each has its place in a local, national and international context along with a wide range of artists and producers based in Galway. Cultural engagement by the people of Galway has tended to be focused on locally produced and delivered festivals and events, including street arts and traditional and Irish arts. This can at least partly be attributed to cultural provision in the area, with certain artforms being better provided for than others and consequently being more accessible.

Into this situation, Galway 2020 was a new dynamic which caught the attention of its residents and the wider national population.

Cultural engagement - Baselines and context

Using research from the National Arts Engagement Survey before Galway 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible to build a picture of cultural engagement in Galway and compare this to engagement nationally.

Attendance by artform in person – pre pandemic

The National Arts Engagement Survey (2019) indicated that there were different patterns of engagement for Galway residents across artforms compared to the national average. Residents of Galway were more likely to attend street arts, country music, plays and traditional Irish/folk music events than the national average.²¹

21 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Deliver a programme rooted in people and place

AIMS

- Galway 2020 makes connections to people, place and identity - through the themes of language, migration and landscape.
- Galway 2020 connects Galway people to Europe and the European context
- Galway 2020 engages a diversity of people and communities, attracts new audiences and participants and delivers new kinds of cultural experiences
- Galway 2020 is devised and delivered in collaboration with the people of Galway through co-creation and participation

ACTIVITY

Galway 2020 takes an inclusive approach to programming and commissioning including:

- Stakeholders, communities and residents involved in the development of the programme
- Programme delivered across Galway City and County (and regionally), in person and online
- Participative opportunities - through programme, for young people, community cast and Wave Makers
- Programme delivered through collaboration, co-creation and partnership with communities and residents

OUTCOMES

A diversity of Galway residents involved and represented

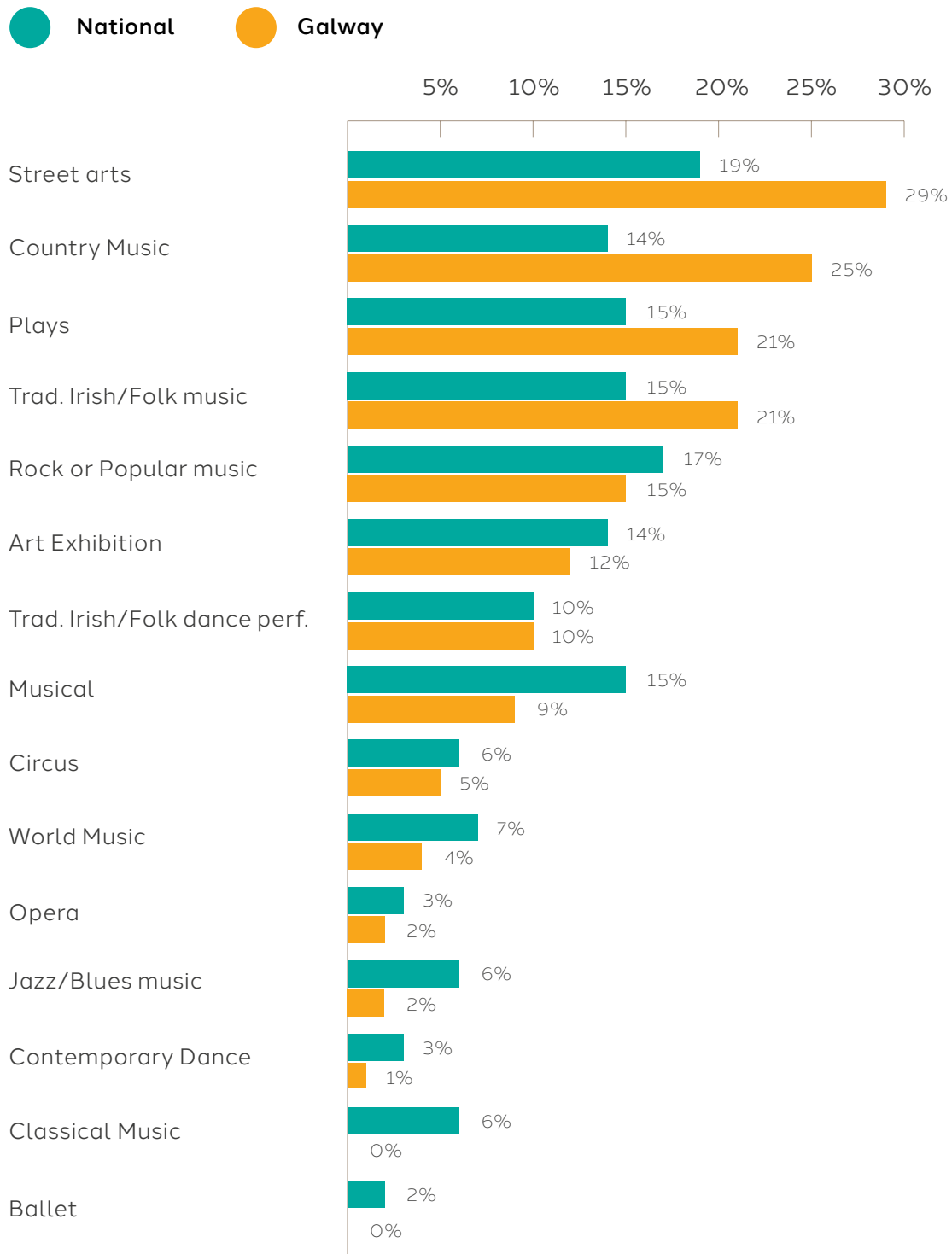
New and positive cultural experiences

Increased social integration

Changed perceptions of people and place

Increased community activism and leadership

Chart: Percentage of residents who engaged in person in the past 12 months (2019 data)

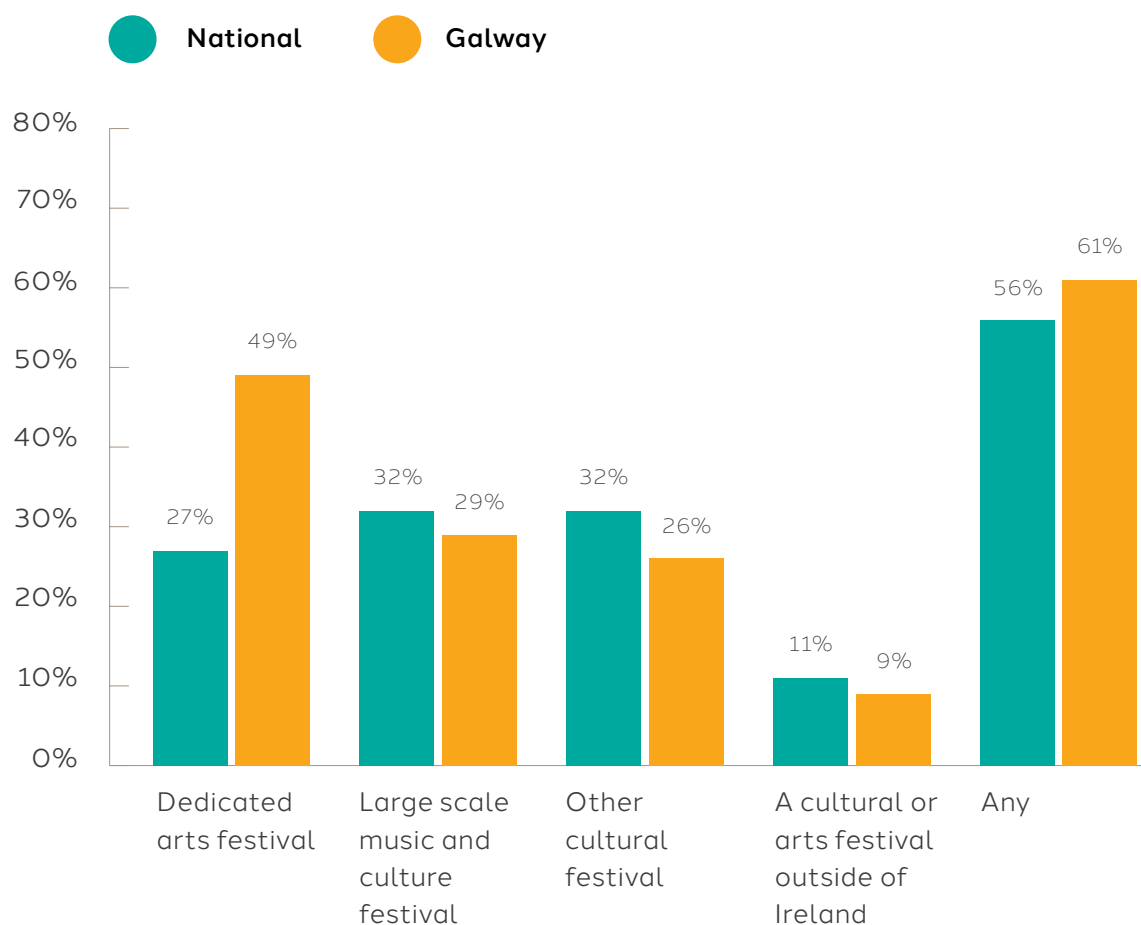


Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Festival attendance in person – pre pandemic

Galway is particularly known for its arts festivals and the baseline research in 2019 showed high levels of attendance at those described as ‘Dedicated Arts festivals’. Almost half of people from Galway (49%) said that they had been to one ‘at some point’, compared to 27% nationally.²²

Chart: Percentage of residents who had ‘ever’ attended festivals (2019 data)



Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Galway residents had a greater tendency to attend local events than the population nationally. 31% of Galway residents said that they had attended local events ‘many times’ compared to 21% nationally.²³

²² Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

²³ Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Motivations for cultural engagement – pre-pandemic

The National Arts Engagement Survey in 2019 provided insight into the motivations of Galway residents to attend arts events. Important reasons were ‘to have fun/enjoy themselves’, ‘to spend time with friends/family’, ‘to see a specific performer, artist or company’ or that they ‘like going to that type of event’. For some, there were impacts beyond cultural engagement; one in four felt that it added to their ‘quality of life’.

Attending local arts events was also perceived to be good for the local community and arts scene. 63% of Galway residents said, ‘I support it because it’s in my local community and brings us together’ and 48%, ‘It’s good to support local arts events’.²⁴

The stage was set for Galway 2020 to introduce audiences in Galway to new experiences, to showcase a diversity of artists and places (including more of Galway County) and offer opportunities for all parts of the population to be involved and included.

Digital engagement with culture

The population research carried out by The Audience Agency in May 2021, included questions about levels of digital engagement with culture pre and during the pandemic, as well as with Galway 2020.

Nationally, 35% of the population said that they had experienced a recording or stream of a music, performing arts or literature event prior to the pandemic in 2019. This compared to a higher proportion of the Dublin population at 51% and lower proportion at 21%, of Galway population. 16% of the national population had taken a virtual tour of a museum, gallery or art exhibition, compared to 11% for Galway residents.²⁵

24 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

25 Source: TAA Population Survey 2021

In person and digital engagement – impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on ‘in person’ cultural engagement. Opportunities for engagement in person suddenly ceased from the first lockdown in March 2020 which involved a ban on movement more than 5km from home.

In terms of Galway 2020, following the re-launch of the programme in September 2020, there were small windows when in person engagement was possible. In September and October 2020, attendance was possible for audiences of a maximum of 50 people indoors and 100-200 outdoors. This reduced to 15 indoors on 9 October 2020, and then no events were allowed from 21 October 2020 on returning to level 5 restrictions.

The 2021 population survey provides understanding about how cultural engagement was affected outside of the Galway 2020 programme, as well as how people engaged with the Galway 2020 programme itself (covered in later sections). The data shows that engagement with Galway 2020’s cultural programme was one of the few opportunities in Galway and wider Ireland during the lockdown period.

The research showed that across a 15-month period (March 2020 to June 2021), attendance at in person events which were not part of Galway 2020, dropped lower than the levels observed in the pre pandemic 2019 research.

Table: Cultural engagement during the pandemic (not including attendance at Galway 2020)

Not including as part of Galway 2020, have you done any of the following during the pandemic (i.e. since March 2020)?

Activity	%
Watched a stream or recording of a music performance - ONLINE	32%
Been to an outdoor historic park, garden or heritage place - IN PERSON	28%
Attended a film at a cinema or other venue - IN PERSON	25%
Watched a stream or recording of another arts performance - ONLINE	18%
Been to an indoor gallery, museum or heritage place - IN PERSON	15%
Taken a virtual tour of a museum, gallery or heritage building - ONLINE	11%
Attended a live performance including music or theatre - IN PERSON	9%
Done another arts, heritage or cultural activity - IN PERSON	8%
None of the above	31%

Source: TAA Population Survey 2021 – Base 877.

However, as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, the 2021 population survey showed that people continued to engage digitally, though there is no evidence to show that national digital engagement increased since the pandemic onset as an absolute figure.

Awareness of Galway 2020

Using a combination of research sources, it is possible to assess awareness of Galway 2020 both before it began and at the end of the programme in 2021.

In the Autumn of 2019, the National Arts Engagement Survey indicated that awareness of Galway 2020 was particularly high in Galway, with 86% of residents having heard of it. This compared to 56% at an overall national level. When the same awareness question was asked again in 2021 after the end of the programme, 92% of Galway residents said that they were aware, and a slightly lower 45% nationally. Galway 2020 therefore managed to maintain good levels of awareness, although it did drop slightly outside Galway.

In the 2021 population survey, those that had some awareness of Galway 2020 were subsequently asked a range of further questions about their knowledge and attitudes to Galway 2020. The following percentages are based on those who had some overall 'awareness' of Galway 2020.

- Understanding of the specific programme of Galway 2020 events was good. 61% of Galway respondents were 'very aware' or 'fairly aware' of the programme and 52% nationally. Within Galway, the awareness was particularly high in Galway City (80%) compared to Galway County (53%).
- Three quarters of Galway respondents (75%) were aware that Galway 2020 meant that Galway was designated the European Capital of Culture 2020 and 67% nationally.
- Half (49%) of Galway residents were aware that Galway 2020 ECoC was an initiative of the European Union and 35% nationally.

While there was good general awareness of Galway 2020 and its continuation through to 2021, maintaining the promotion and awareness of specific events in the changing Covid-19 pandemic environment was more challenging.

Table: Galway and national figures for awareness of various key moments in the Galway 2020 programme - based on answers from those that had some awareness of Galway 2020.

Of those that were aware of Galway 2020, what proportion knew...

	National	Galway
That Galway 2020 planned an opening event in February 2020 across the city and county	34%	52%
That Galway 2020 re-launched its programme in Autumn 2020 following a pause of activity at the first lockdown in March 2020	28%	39%
That Galway 2020 presented a programme of activity and events online as the Covid pandemic continued	28%	37%
That Galway 2020 ended in May 2021 with a handover ceremony delivered online	10%	28%
Not aware of any of these	10%	7%

Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

Intention to attend Galway 2020

To understand more about the potential of Galway 2020, it is possible to look at the public 'intention to attend' at different moments from 2019 through to reflections once the programme was delivered.

In 2019, before Galway 2020 launched, there was a strong intention by Galway residents to attend - 79% showed some level of interest. This was made up of 37% who said that they were 'definitely going to attend or participate', 26% 'probably attend or participate' and a further 16% 'might attend or participate when they find out more about it'.

Although the national figures were much lower, they still represent a healthy level of interest in attending or participating. 8% said they definitely would, 11% probably and a further 20% might have done once they found out more about it.²⁶

²⁶ Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Table: Which of the following best describes your own attitude to Galway 2020?

Interest in attending	National	Galway
I am definitely planning to attend or participate in Galway 2020	8%	37%
I will probably attend or participate in Galway 2020	11%	26%
I might attend or participate in Galway 2020 once I find out more about it	20%	16%
It sounds interesting but I'm not likely to travel to Galway specifically to attend	25%	8%
I have little interest in attending Galway 2020	36%	14%

Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

In Galway, there were relatively low numbers of residents that said they were unlikely to engage in the programme. The research showed that 14% of the residents of Galway said that they had little interest in attending Galway 2020 and a further 8% said that while it sounded interesting, they were unlikely to travel specifically for a Galway 2020 event. Nationally, these figures were 36% and 25% respectively, although a much higher proportion of 'rejectors' still had a healthy level of interest.²⁷

In 2020, additional research was carried out with those who could be considered culturally engaged (e.g. bookers, local arts attenders, members of Galway 2020 mailing list). When asked how they felt when Galway 2020 was first announced, 90% said they 'felt excited'. This excitement was tempered during the intervening years and more concretely dropped as the Covid-19 pandemic caused disruption and restrictions to the programme.²⁸

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on interest and attendance was also shown by those that responded to the 2021 population survey (carried out after Galway 2020 had finished). While 20% of Galway residents said that they did make it to an in-person event, an additional 24% said that they 'intended to go to an event in person but were unable to because of the pandemic'. The figures nationally were 6% and 18% respectively, with a strong interest in attending from those living in Dublin.

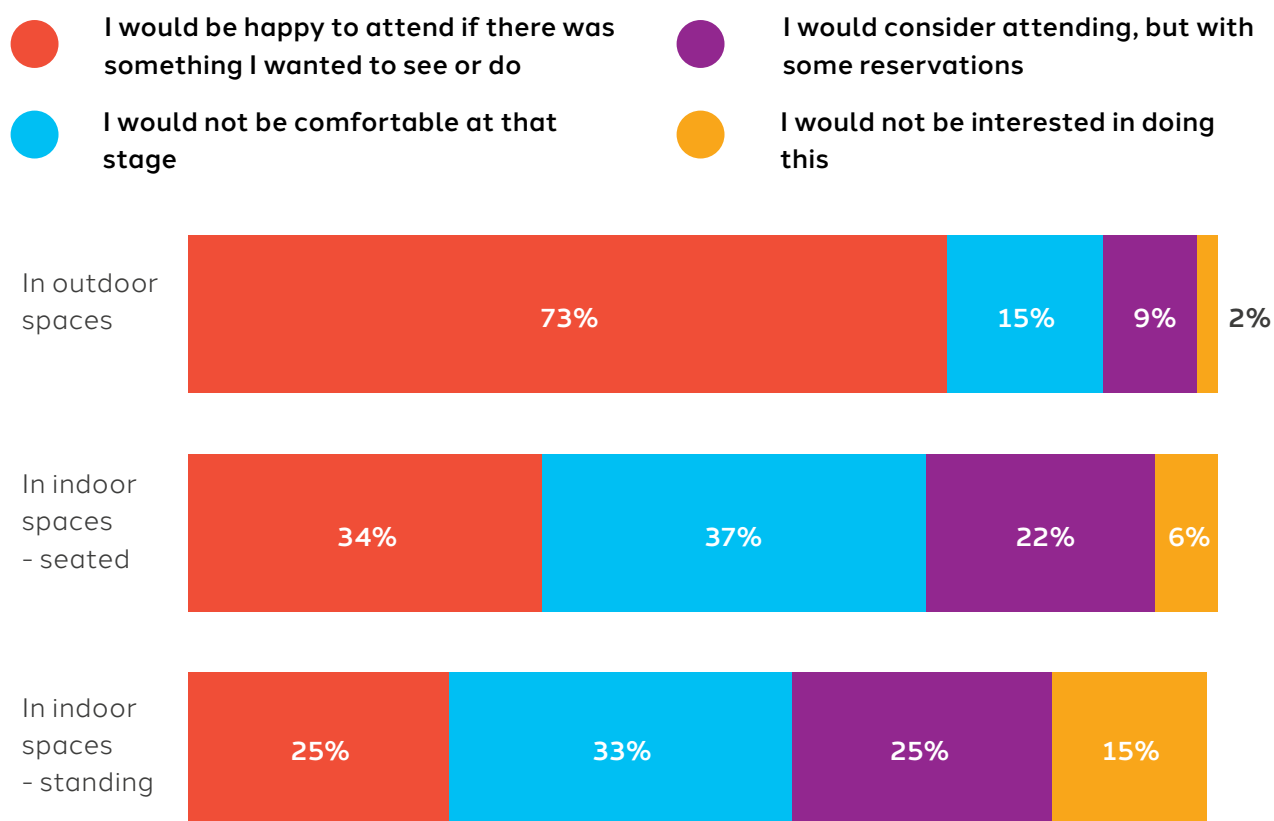
²⁷ Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

²⁸ Source: TAA Cultural Engagers Survey March 2021

The impact of the pandemic was also shown in the research with those that were considered to be culturally engaged (e.g. bookers, local arts attenders, members of Galway 2020 mailing list). Many felt apprehensive about attending physically due to the risk of Covid-19. While 73% said that they would be happy to attend if there was something they wanted to see or do in an outdoor space, the figure dropped to just 34% for indoor seated spaces and 25% for standing indoor spaces.²⁹

Chart: In terms of Covid-19 safety, when legislation is amended to the level that allows physical events to happen again, which best describes how you currently feel about this? – Research with existing cultural engagers

Source: TAA: Cultural Engagers Survey March 2021



Many of those who intended to visit in person but were unable to, did take an interest in the digital programme. However, it was not for everyone. There were several reasons mentioned, including 'screen fatigue', lack of access to a device or an expectation that the experience would not be what they were looking for. For some, it was also felt to be harder to find out what was happening, given that it was not so visible and information was all online, so effectively they did not engage with the programme.

²⁹ Source: TAA Cultural Engagers Survey March 2021

"I'm not great online, and I don't go online but I do go to the local papers, but I didn't see them on it. I saw reviews of different things afterwards, which is no good if you want to go to something...And that left me disappointed really that I didn't see these things...Or even [hear them] announced on the radio or something."

Audience member focus group participant

"In regard to watching things online – if there's a show on at a particular date then you make your mind up to go to it, but if it's online and it's going to be available [at any time], you might not get to it."

Audience member focus group participant

"Just Covid I suppose. Because obviously, if things were still happening, I'd be trying my best to go."

Audience member focus group participant

Galway 2020 - Audiences and participants facts and figures

Galway 2020 aimed to raise its profile across Europe and internationally as a centre for cultural production and celebration, and to put the people and places at the heart of this offer. Until March 2020, the projects being developed, marked a sea change in the ambition of the creatives involved, and combined with the potential of the larger scale events in Galway City and County, Galway 2020 looked set to make its mark and attract large audiences. However, as the Covid-19 pandemic restricted movement by the population and artists, there was an inevitable shift in who and how Galway 2020 could reach its intended audiences. Nevertheless, as the following sections describe, Galway 2020 became a feature in the lives of many during 2020 and into 2021, generating various impacts and outcomes.

At the heart of Galway 2020 was the engagement of audiences and participants with the events and activities, before and during the year itself. The nature of this engagement changed over the course of these years, with the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns affecting how this could take place. The scale and type of attendance and participation therefore changed considerably from what was intended, producing a kaleidoscope of types of engagement involving in person, digital, in public and at home. The figures outlined here have been compiled from different sources and cross-checked to improve accuracy.

In person audiences 2016-2021

130,407 **in person** audience engagements at **events**

Galway 2020 had 130,407 **in person** audience engagements between 2016 and 2021, reported by Cultural Partners, Galway 2020 (for events produced by the organisation), Small Towns Big Ideas projects, Regional and Community Engagement projects.

Across the Cultural Partners' projects alone, it was estimated that 'in person' audience engagements would have been more than 300,000 had the Covid-19 pandemic not occurred, not including the additional work that was produced/ to be produced by Galway 2020 organisation and the wider community involvement programme.

Notable 'in person' events between July and October 2020:

- **Druid Gregory** had 38 performances with 1,200 patrons seeing a performance between 15 September and 17 October (reduced to audiences of 15 after 9 October).
- **Óró...** produced by Ealaín na Gaeltachta had 11 in person performances with 324 audience members between Monday 21 – Saturday 26 September (audience capacity restricted to 50 at the time due to Covid restrictions).
- **MONUMENT** exhibition produced by Galway City Museum was open for audiences to visit between September – October with a maximum capacity of 50 audience members.
- **Aerial/Sparks** exhibitions and art trail produced by Louise Manifold between 11-27 September.
- **Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann** workshops, performances and guided tour (Turas Chonamara, Umbrella Orphanage, Drowned Galway) created and produced by Ríonach Ní Néill and Ciotóg.
- 3,832 tickets were sold for **Savage Beauty** which did not take place in person due to the Covid-19 pandemic but converted to 327,817 digital audience engagements, including video views 39,102; reach 139,880; impressions 113,982 and page views 34,853 between 2016 – 2021.

2,306,171 **in person** audience engagements in the **public realm**

Installations led by the Cultural Partners had 2,306,171 estimated audience engagements. The installations included: Mirror Pavilion (as part of Galway International Arts Festival), Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann sculptures/ murals created and produced by Rónach Ní Néill and Ciotóg and Gilgamesh murals presented by Macnas.

See the Appendices for further information on the in person at event and in person public realm audience engagements between 2016-2021.

Participants for Galway 2020

- **6,149** estimated in person participant engagements.
- **1,287** online estimated participant engagements.
- **325** Wave Makers engaged across the project April 2019 to April 2021.
- **1,055** other volunteer roles supporting projects.
- **350** Community Cast for the Fire Tour and opening ceremony.

Digital audiences

- 863,911 **digital** audience engagements with creative content between 2016 and 2021.
- 913,128 broadcast viewers/listens on TV or radio of Cultural Partner led activity.

The broadcast views/listens included Symphonic Waves Youth Orchestra broadcast of their performance on national TV; Wires Crossed short film; Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann TG4 TV broadcast, Unselfing WEATHER GODS - Reprised radio play; Galway 2020 handover ceremony May 2021 and The Mighty Ocean TG4 broadcast.

See the Appendices for further information on the digital audience engagements and broadcast views/listens between 2016-2021.

Digital reach

Visits to the Galway 2020 website peaked in February 2020, with 76,775 users. After March 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the numbers reduced to an average of 7,648 users per month.

The filmed version of *Savage Beauty* attracted a large number of digital engagements – the link to the *Savage Beauty* film was the most visited page on the Galway 2020 site with 43,396 visits and a large number of other video views hosted across other sites, including Kari Kola's website. This is in comparison to the 3,832 tickets booked by audiences who planned to see it in person but were then prevented from doing so due to the restrictions imposed at the first lockdown.

As the Galway 2020 programme moved to primarily digital delivery in September 2020, visits to project pages with links to 'digital events' (live streams, films and other creative content) increased, following the hiatus in activity after the announcement of the lockdown in March 2020. Towards the end of the programme in 2021, projects such as the *EYE on the Edge*, an online event for students and young people, were some of the most popular.

In terms of social media, Facebook was the most effective channel for Galway 2020, with a high number of engagements and engagement rate³⁰. Between January 2020 and May 2021 there were 210,259 Facebook engagements and the average engagement rate was 2.76%.

See Appendices for an overview of Galway 2020 social media and website metrics between January 2020 to May 2021.

30 The engagement rate is calculated as Engagements divided by Reach.

Media coverage overview

An overview of the media reach attracted by Galway 2020 provides a generalised view of how the profile of the programme in the delivery 'year' was raised. A comprehensive media analysis was not undertaken and Galway 2020's press and media relations were delivered between Galway 2020 team member and a number of external agencies. Inevitably the Covid-19 pandemic, both in terms of the hiatus in the programme it caused and the shifts in responsibility for media relations due to a reduction in the internal communications team, had an impact on the coverage that was possible in 2020 and 2021. Nevertheless, the Galway 2020 programme was represented in the media focused on the work of the Cultural Partners, artists and creatives involved. Data is presented separately for January to April 2020 compared to May 2020 to May 2021, as in the latter period True Hawk Media were engaged to deliver media relations and extracts from their report are included here, with data collected for the earlier period from Meltwater online monitoring tool (the data for each period is therefore not comparable as Meltwater does not capture non-digital press coverage).

From January to April 2020 there were 542 broadcast and online 5,084 media items or coverage which attracted visits, views and listens, with the peak of the broadcast coverage in January 2020 as the programme was beginning, with the online coverage building for February and March. There was a severe drop in coverage as the Covid-19 pandemic lock down began into April 2020.³¹

From May 2020 to May 2021 the potential reach of the media coverage is calculated at 96 million, with the peak of coverage in September 2020 at the re-launch, which slowly reduced until it built again in March to May 2021. A total of 1,272 media items were counted – including press and online coverage which attracted reads, visits, views and listens. These include 594 print items, 524 online items and 154 broadcast items. The majority of the 96 million reach was through print (61%), then online (28%) and finally broadcast (11%).³²

There was a combined total of 6,898 media items of which 594 print (9%), 5,608 online (81%) and 696 broadcast (10%) were attracted with 6,432 media items in 2020 and 466 in 2021.

See Appendices for further data on media coverage.

31 Source: Meltwater: Galway 2020 media exposure dashboard January 2020 to April 2020

32 Source: True Hawk Media: Galway 2020 Media Analysis report, 25 May 2021.

Welcoming a diversity of audiences and communities

One of the main aims of Galway 2020 was to identify and design cultural projects that had diverse appeal; projects that resonated with people of a range of backgrounds and offered scope and capacity to enable participation, celebrating Galway's diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, and languages.

Audiences and participants

The combined³³ Galway 2020 audience and participant profile across both 'in person' and digital activity indicated that Galway 2020 reached a diverse audience, in terms of location, ethnicity, nationality and birthplace.

The location of audiences and participants meets the ambition to engage across the City and County of Galway and reach international audiences:

- 30% were resident in Galway City, 31% Galway County, 28% elsewhere in Ireland and 10% in another country.
- 45% were resident in a rural area, 24% a city, 15% a small town (1,500 – 4,999 population) and 16% a large town (5,000+ population).

Ethnicity, nationality and language:

- 77% identified their ethnicity as 'White: Irish', 17% 'White: Any other White background', 1% 'Other ethnic or cultural background, including mixed background' and 1% 'Black or Black Irish: African'.
- 78% identified their nationality as Irish and 52% indicated that they can speak Irish. Of those that speak Irish, 57% said this was less often than weekly, 16% weekly and 22% daily.
- Although the majority identified their nationality as Irish, 1 in 5 (22%) identified with another nationality, a significant proportion of audiences and participants.
- When asked about where they were born 35% of the sample indicated that they were not born in Ireland.

Gender, age and disability:

- 69% identified as female and 28% as male.
- Older age groups were represented in greater proportions, 66% aged 40-69, with the highest proportion 14% in the 60-64 age group.
- In terms of disability, 13% indicated that they have a long-lasting condition, impairment or difficulty.

33 Based on a combined dataset of responses from TAA Audience & Participant Survey, 2020-2021 - 90% of the responses from audiences and 10% from participants.

Digital engagement with Galway 2020

As Galway 2020 continued through the Covid-19 pandemic, from October 2020, most of the programme moved to be digital delivery. As well as offering the residents of Galway an opportunity to engage with the programme, this opened up opportunities for a larger reach for the programme, across Galway, to the rest of Ireland and globally.

In the post-Galway 2020 population survey (2021), 11% of Galway residents reported that they had viewed a Galway 2020 event digitally, compared with 9% nationally. This higher level of digital engagement by Galway residents reverses the baseline figures observed for digital engagement in which the national level of digital engagement including Dublin tended to be higher than for Galway.

While the move to a digital programme reduced the opportunity for in person engagement from Galway's residents, and visitors from elsewhere, it did offer greater opportunities for engagement with creative content by remote audiences globally. Indicatively, while around half of Galway 2020 website users were from Ireland, visitors from United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, France and Spain made up over 27% of users for the period of delivery from September 2020 to its close in April 2021.³⁴

34 Source: All website visitors on Galway 2020 site, Jan 2020-May 2021.

10

Social and Cultural Outcomes

ECOC objective: Create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events

ECOC objective: Improve the international outlook of residents

At the heart of Galway 2020 were the people and places of Galway, and the connections made within and around Galway, to the West of Ireland, Ireland as a whole and to Europe and the rest of the world.

- 61% of audiences and participants ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘The Galway 2020 programme reflects the people, places and culture of Galway’.³⁵

“The way things like Galway 2020 operate, they’re quite democratic. And, you know, there are always aspects of their programmes that are public that are not ticketed... there are an awful lot of events that are for everyone... And I think people feeling like it’s not something exclusive... Makes, that feeling of belonging. A very important part of people’s daily lives and aspects of their well-being.”

Audience member focus group participant

Galway 2020 Connecting people and place

The ambition for Galway 2020 was to have a 50:50 split of programme developed and presented across Galway City and County to enable artists and audiences to explore the landscapes of Galway and for Galwegians resident outside the city to enjoy culture and creativity in their own towns and places. The consultation at bid stage revealed that many of the county’s towns had suffered through economic downturns leaving a stark urban/rural divide, so involving all parts of Galway in the programme was an essential principle of Galway 2020.

Despite disruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in limited live in person activity, programme delivery and engagement was spread across Galway City and County, and around a third of the programme was delivered digitally from both.

35 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021.

Table: Location of activity and event delivery

Location of audience/participant engagements with programme event and activity 2016-2021	Percentage of overall programme
Galway County	24%
Galway City	8%
Galway City and County	22%
Digitally – delivered and engaged digitally – including activity ‘broadcast’ from places across City and County.	30%
Elsewhere in Europe - primarily made up of Wires Crossed training delivered through 4 x Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership projects and 1 x Erasmus+ Mobility Project.	9%
Range of other programming	7%

Source: TAA Programme Categorisation 2021

“One of the things that was very good about it was that there seemed to be a big emphasis on not having it just in the city, that there were a lot of events like all throughout the county...that might be one of the positive things to come from it. The recognition that you don’t have to be in the city to appreciate all these cultural events or take part in them. Something that can be for everybody”.

Audience member focus group participant

The Fire Tour, in February 2020, which was to lead to the launch event in Galway City, engaged Galway’s market towns. Druid Theatre’s production of *DruidGregory* spanned the city and county with live performances in community venues (albeit to small audiences due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions). Macnas’ epic and episodic presentation of *Gilgamesh* retained some of its elements as a ‘pop-up’ activity, with the final presentation, originally set to attract a large audience, transformed into a series of films – the locations for which were across City and County. *Livefeed* based itself in several County towns initially and then delivered performances digitally.



Druid - the Galway Tour

DruidGregory

Produced by	Druid Theatre
	15 September – 17 October 2020
Locations	Galway City and County
Web	DruidGregory

Druid returned to live theatre in the magic fields, woods and gardens of Coole Park in a tribute to the life and works of Galway's Augusta Lady Gregory. Launched in the historic setting of her Coole Park home, DruidGregory included five of Lady Gregory's one-act plays, performed by a company of 12 actors and musicians, and directed by Garry Hynes.

This was followed by a 15 venue, four-week tour of Gregory's beloved county Galway, from Portumna to Glenamaddy, Ballinasloe to Clifden, and many communities in between. The tour included one-off outdoor performances at some of Galway's famous, historic sites such as Kylemore Abbey, Teach an Phiarsaigh and Ballyglunin Station. The plays included *The Rising of the Moon*, *Hyacinth Halvey*, *The Gaol Gate*, *McDonough's Wife* and the revolutionary *Cathleen ní Houlihan*.

Additionally, as part of the Education and Community strand of the tour, DruidGregory included a series of one-off, outdoor performances of Galway writer Tom Murphy's first play, *On the Outside*.

'A theatre highlight of the decade'
- Irish Independent

'Druid has defied a pandemic'
- Sunday Times



Stories of Galway Market (Photograph: David Szlaga)

Galway Stories: 2020

Produced by Doire Press

March 2020

Locations Galway City and County

Galway Stories: 2020 is a collection of short fiction set throughout the neighbourhoods of the city and county, by writers who live, have lived, or who have a strong connection to Galway.

In reading these stories you are taken on a tour of the neighbourhoods, getting to know them through the words of the writers and the eyes of their characters. From the perfume counter at a chemist's shop in Ballinasloe to the silver line separating the sea from the sky at Silver Strand Beach in Barna; from a barstool at Mick Taylor's Pub in the city centre to the steps leading away from the pier where the ferryboats dock on Inisbofin. Some of the stories present vivid portraits of the neighbourhoods using specific landmarks and detail; others capture the spirit of the neighbourhoods and its people.

Together the stories celebrate Galway and the people who live there. Writers featured in Galway Stories: 2020 include: Niamh Boyce, June Caldwell, Danny Denton, Elaine Feeney, Caoilinn Hughes, Una Mannion, Patrick McCabe and Nuala O'Connor. The anthology also features photos and background information on each neighbourhood, as well as local listings and a map displaying where each of the stories takes place.

Audiences and participants were invited to notice and experience work relevant to Galway's cultural traditions and the diversity of its communities – whether through the main programme, community engagement or the Small Towns Big Ideas projects.

- 61% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'the Galway 2020 programme reflects the people, places and culture of Galway'.³⁶

Table: Audience and participant experience or engagement with themes

To what extent did the themes of Galway 2020 give opportunities to experience or engage with..

Answered 'very much so' or 'to some extent'	%
Irish culture or Arts	90%
The places or landscape of Galway	76%
Traditional Work	69%
The culturally diverse communities of Galway	60%
Work in the Irish language	30%

Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021, Bases 409 to 444.

36 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021

Migration, landscape and language

The themes of migration, landscape and language emerged through the Bid Book consultation process and were woven throughout the programme as a vital link to the people and places of Galway.

“I came from India originally. Galway has a wonderful diversity of national languages. I think the peak of the volunteering programme, I think we had possibly around 70 different nationalities speaking a lot of languages. Obviously, Galway being, along the wild Atlantic way. And I suppose the furthest point in Europe, kind of brought the landscape element into a lot of the events and that were organised, you know, so a language obviously, I don’t speak Gaelic, but it is obviously very important that native language.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

Migration

Migration is a key theme for Galway, with 23% of the population born outside Galway.³⁷

“I’m new here. So, I’m just going to say I love Galway. And I know we are part of Europe. And diversity. I’ve met a lot of people from everywhere. And even if I meet people, and they go like, how is Galway and I say, you want to see diversity? Come to Galway, you want to learn about the Irish language, Connemara, come to Galway”.

Wave Maker focus group participant

Many projects in the Galway 2020 programme took the theme of migration as an overall consideration and several international projects had a specific focus on migration.

- **InterAction 2.0** produced by Galway Theatre Festival - During 2020, 6 resident artists researched, shared and created work with Irish, European and international peers creating work which explored the role of passivity and responsibility in 21st Century Europe. This challenged the audience’s role in defining the trajectory of society’s response to issues such as forced migration, landscape and climate change, and social inequality.
- The **Aistriú** project consisted of a series of commissions produced by NUI Galway. When Europe is faced with unprecedented migration, twentieth-century Irish language texts provide a vocabulary to respond to contemporary challenges. The Aistriú project shed new light on some of the best-known Irish language writers and engaged new readers around the globe through original translations and creative responses aiming to present Irish language poetry and prose as part of a tapestry of contemporary multilingual world literatures.

37 Source: Irish Census 2016.

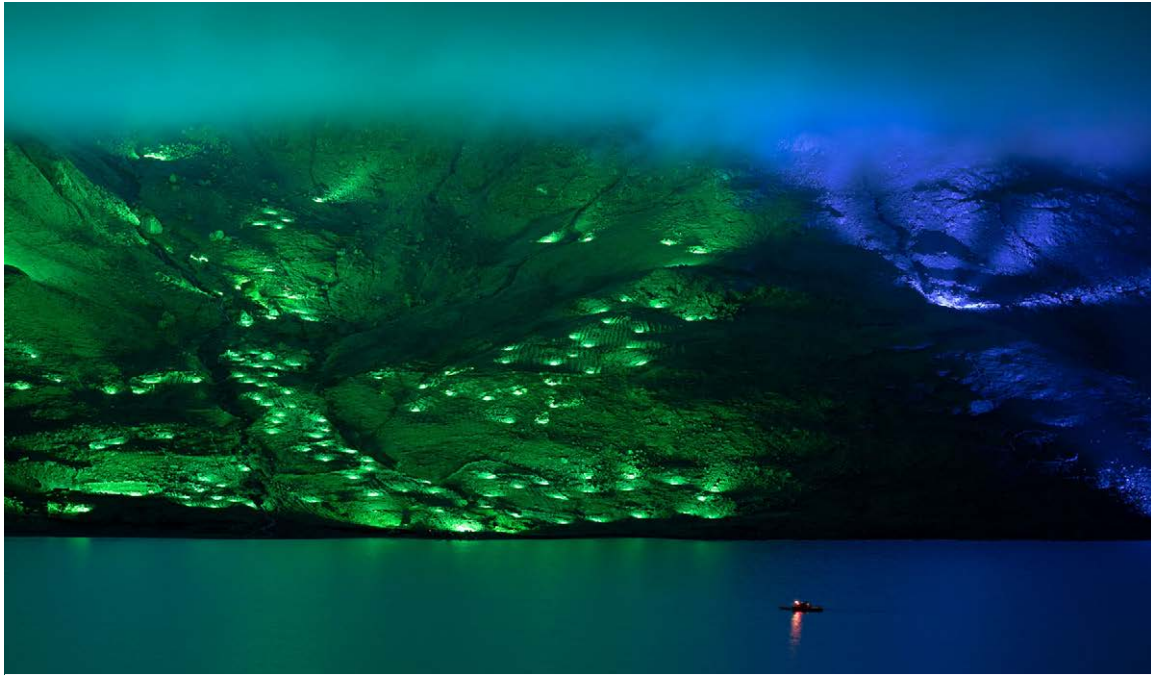
-
- **A Small Clue / Leide Beag** was a new short film of music, movement and spoken word, featuring a newly composed vocal sextet entitled Leide Beag, commissioned as part of the Aistriú project in partnership with NUI Galway. Taking its name from a poem by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, A Small Clue // Leide Beag was inspired by lived, inherited and ancestral stories of migration. This film provided artistic responses to a collective experience of up-rooting and re-rooting. Made during lockdown, Leide Beag was a statement of welcome, connection, freedom and home for this present moment.
- **Murmuration** - installation by artist Nicola Anthony. Following engagement with the Aistriú texts, Nicola created a mixed media installation entitled 'Murmuration' based on the poem 'Fáilte Uí Dhonnchú' by Louis De Paor. The motif of birds in flight was an allegory for the many people across the world who have had to migrate from their homes and settle in a new village, city, land or community.. It was born from a year of research working with isolated communities across Ireland, to understand the experience and impact of loneliness on the human spirit.
- **Ar Ais Arís** A moment of departure. A moment of return. A moment of reckoning. Brú Theatre created a Virtual Reality exploration of music, movement and migration, within the landscape of Connemara. Inspired by the writing of Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Pádraic Ó Conaire and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and using 180° immersive Virtual Reality film, it captured the emotional journey of migration which has impacted Ireland for generations.

Landscape

Galway's inhabited islands are home to 10,000 people or 86% of island dwellers in Ireland. They are unique communities with ancient cultures. The urban landscapes and extensive seascape, together with the rural landscape, have all inspired the Galway 2020 programme.

Savage Beauty lit up the hills of Connemara, Mirror Pavilion sat in the City and County's street and landscapes, Aerial/Sparks was presented on the Island of Inis Oirr, Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann Turas Chonamara - Faoi Ruin was a series of site-specific artworks set on the Ros Muc peninsula, a Small Towns Ideas Project was a film festival 'Shot by the Sea' and the backdrop of the sea took a central role in the opening Fire Tour and Aerial/Sparks.

- **MONUMENT** produced by Galway City Museum, had a primary focus on the stone forts of Aran, and on Dún Aonghasa in particular, this exhibition investigated some of Europe's most impressive stone monuments located on some of Europe's smallest islands.
- **Studio Drop** an architecture and design project produced by Drop Everything, was inspired by both the aesthetic and construction methods found along Ireland's West coast landscape – from ancient stone walls and Beehive Huts to Martello Towers and Lighthouses. Designer Jordan Ralph also took inspiration from construction methods used by local boat builders in Galway. After an inspired visit with boat builders restoring the 'Loveen' Galway Hooker, Jordan reworked his design to use the traditional techniques seen in Hooker builds. This project explored off-grid, deployable and temporary modular spaces; which can relocate if necessary.



Special Digital Edition of Savage Beauty

Savage Beauty

Produced by	Galway 2020 and Kari Kola March 2020
Locations	Loch na Fuaiche, Galway and Online
Web	Savage Beauty

Described as “a savage beauty” by Oscar Wilde, Connemara is rural Ireland at its most dramatic and served as the inspiration for the internationally acclaimed Finnish light artist Kari Kola. Kola’s installation of 1,000 lights spread over a distance of 5 kilometres, his largest site-specific artwork to date, transforming the Ceann Garbh mountainside overlooking Loch na Fuaiche in north Connemara.

Initially planned as a public event from 14-17 March, the commencement of Covid-19 restrictions meant it could not go ahead as an in-person event. However, the Savage Beauty installation was made available **digitally** which captures the magic of this artwork and the landscape.

Galway 2020 & the Irish Language *Gaillimh 2020 agus an Teanga Gaeilge*

Galway's importance for the Irish language – Gaelic – is indicated by the way that Galway City was designated Ireland's first Bilingual City in 2016. With Counties Mayo and Donegal strategic partners of Galway 2020, the region includes two of the three major Gaeltacht (substantially Irish language speaking areas as designated by the Gaeltacht Areas Orders)³⁸ areas in Ireland. 49% of Galway County's residents could speak Irish in 2016, as compared to 41% for Galway City and 40% of the Ireland population overall. 9,445 of Galway residents speak Irish on a daily basis at 2016.³⁹

It was therefore important for Galway 2020 both to ensure events and communication were made accessible to those speaking the Irish language and to incorporate projects specifically based on the language.

Projects that incorporated the Irish Language included Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann, Turas Connemara, Aistriú; Crossing Territories, Óró... (formally called Bua Teangacha in Bid Book), Project BAA BAA, Sea Tamagotchi, Sruth Na Teanga, Monument, To the Island, The Handover Ceremony, as well as a number of the Small Towns Big Ideas projects.

38 <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1956/si/245/made/en/print>

39 Source: Irish Census 2016 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil/ilg/>



Sruth na Teanga

Produced by Branar Téatar do Pháistí

2 to 12 March 2020

Locations Galway Airport, Carnmore, Galway

Web [Sruth na Teanga](#)

Through *Sruth na Teanga*, Branar brought young audiences on an epic journey of the native language. Presented in Galway Airport buildings, *Sruth na Teanga* was an immersive, bilingual theatre event that demonstrated the evolution and life of the Irish language.

This project represented one of the largest ever children's projects created for a European Capital of Culture programme and during its run in March 2020 it engaged with over 40 local schools and delivered over 100 performances to over 1,000 people.

Unfortunately, *Sruth na Teanga*'s run coincided with the arrival of COVID-19 in Ireland and the first lockdown and therefore the show had to close halfway through its month-long run in mid-March.

From September 1- 18 2021 as part of the Galway International Arts Festival *Sruth na Teanga* was remounted at Galway Airport.

"Director Marc Mac Lochlainn has gathered together an incredible creative team to execute his vision. Maeve Clancy's immersive design is breath-taking in detail, while the art department's execution is faultless. The scale model of a Famine ship and the haunted figures boarding is just one image that the audience will carry with them long after the experience has finished."

Irish Times 14 March

Language

As well as being one of the three major Gaeltacht areas in Ireland, it is also recognised that migrants from abroad have introduced a diversity of other languages and culture to Galway. In one school in Galway City 41 languages are spoken by pupils.⁴⁰

These themes translated into the make-up of the overall audiences and participants for Galway 2020, attracting a high proportion of Irish speakers:

- 52% of audiences and participants speak Irish, with 16% using it on a weekly basis⁴¹
- 37 projects took place in a Gaeltacht area and/or had an Irish language element to the programme, whether inspired, delivered bilingually or fully in the Irish language:
 - » **Delivered bilingually:** The Mighty Ocean film produced by Galway 2020 and Galway Music Residency; Sea Tamagotchi linguistic art project produced by Manchán Magan; To the Island lyrical picture book produced by Patricia Forde; Ceiliúradh Eilís Dillon: Language, Legacy & Landscape online event produced by Cúirt International Festival of Literature and Galway Libraries, Scéalaíocht... Stória...Contes storytelling events produced by Galway Public Libraries, Storytellers of Ireland and Galway 2020; The Aistriú project translations, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill publication, Murmuration Sculpture and short film Leide Beag // A Small Clue; MONUMENT exhibition produced by Galway City Museum; The Galway 2020 Handover short film produced by Galway 2020; and Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann and Turas Chonamara events including Weatherplay, Weatherproof Me! and Weatherbots created and produced by Ríonach Ní Néill & Ciotóg.
 - » **Delivered fully in the Irish language:** Turas Connemara digital and audio map and Faoi Rún a series of site-specific artworks set on the Ros Muc peninsula Connemara produced by Ríonach Ní Néill & Ciotóg; The Aistriú Project production of Ar Ais Arís by Brú Theatre; and Branar Téatar do Pháistí production of Sruth Na Teanga.
- **Small Towns Big Ideas** projects delivered bilingually or fully in the Irish language: Deasghnátha an Chroí / Rituals of the Heart by Traidphicni; The Life and Times of Richard Murphy by Cleggan Claddaghduff Community Council; Ceall Cluaine Culture by Milltown Community Centre; The Curiosity Trail by Galway Arts Centre; Galway Mother Tongues Festival by Mother Tongues Festival; Lóchrann Chonamara by Cumann Forbartha Chois Fharraige; Connemara Songlines by Cantairi Chonamara; Galway Sessions by Galway Sessions; Echoes of Calling by Áras Éanna and Galway Dance Project; Take Back Our Past by Comhar Chuigeal Teo; Claregalway Community Festival by Claregalway Community Hub; Set In Stone by Oughterard Courthouse Arts Programme; Cultural Horizons by Clifden 2012 and Mexican Community of Galway; Clay Journeys by Clay Galway; and The Foul Sound by Louise Manifold.

40 Source: Irish Census 2016.

41 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021.

- **Óró..** presented a live theatrical experience, fusing contemporary dance, theatre, music, poetry and visual art to tell a story about language, identity and survival. The project facilitated a large and diverse artistic collaboration and incorporated five different minority languages and 9 Irish artists collaborated with 5 Artists from Alba, Basque, Cornwall and Friesland, performed primarily in Irish, demonstrating the importance of diversity and cooperation in all spheres of life.

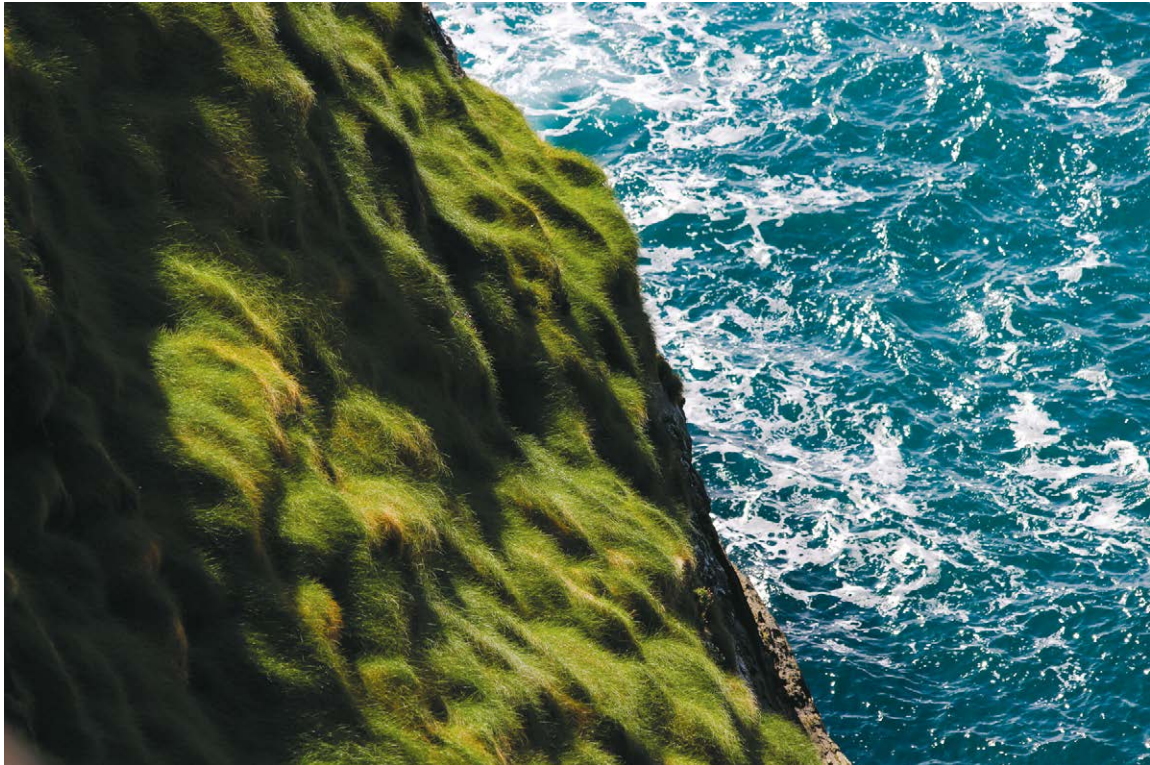
See appendices for a 'Summary of projects that took place in a Gaeltacht area and/or had an Irish language element to the programme'.

The programme explored language, from Branar Téatar do Pháistí production of *Sruth Na Teanga* exploring the history of the Irish language, to *Sea Tamagotchi* produced by Manchán Magan which passed language from person to person. The *Sea Tamagotchi* project went through several stages, adapting to the circumstances and needs of the project. It followed on from Manchán Magan's previous research into lesser-known parts of the language and aimed to highlight what could potentially be lost forever. Originally devised as an oral history that would be presented in book form, it was transferred on to a website so that people could hear the raw audio recordings. Some of these in turn were interpreted with animation. Despite plans changing, ultimately it was possible for it to be presented in a book which has been reprinted after quickly selling all copies.

"With the language, like I'd be very interested in that because Irish is my first language. I've actually noticed that much more lately with the words related to the sea (Sea Tamagotchi)...I follow Galway 2020 on Instagram, so that's what comes up every day, the words that he collected."

Audience member focus group participant

Notably this project was therefore not only a piece of important historical research but has also found a straightforward way of enabling accessible public engagement. Furthermore, *Sea Tamagotchi* in considering the role not only of 'minority languages' but also of aspects of the language which have oral colloquial use, has natural connections for endangered languages in Europe and across the world, leading to potential further European projects, including some connected to future European Capitals of Culture.



Sea Tamagotchi. Photograph: Kari Cahill

Sea Tamagotchi

Produced by	Manchán Maga
	November 2020 to April 2021
Locations	West Coast of Ireland and Online
Web	Sea Tamagotchi

Sea Tamagotchi: Foclóir Farraige was a linguistic art project celebrating endangered maritime words and placenames in the coastal regions of Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Donegal.

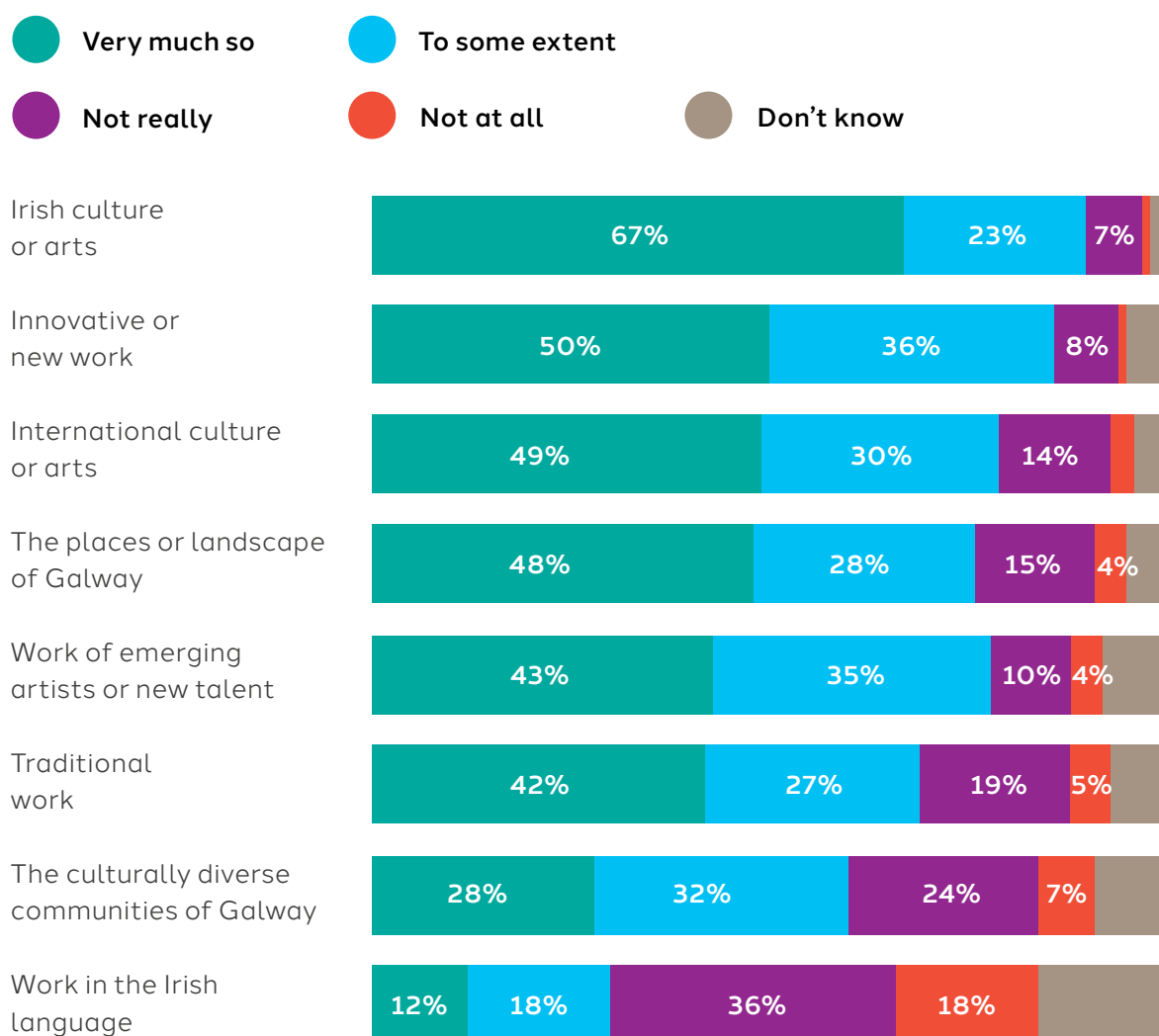
Irish writer and television programme maker Manchán Magan roamed the sea-roads and coastal trails of the Atlantic coast in the company of local folklorists, fishermen and linguists, seeking and collecting forgotten placenames and words, gathered into individual sound files.

In the tradition of the tamagotchi (a handheld digital pet that must be looked after), the public is invited to keep these words alive, nurturing them in the routine of their daily lives. The project shared these special words in a variety of media, including via a social media campaign, a series of podcasts, the project website and the *Sea Tamagotchi* book.

These themes of Language, Migration and Landscape therefore guided the programming in different ways throughout and in the surveys of Galway 2020 events a question was asked of the audiences and participants in terms of how they interpreted activity in relation to the themes.

Of the various themes presented, 'Irish Culture and the Arts' was recognised most widely with 90% saying 'very much so' or 'to some extent' when asked if Galway 2020 provided opportunities to engage with it. Also recognised were the themes of 'The places or landscape of Galway' (76% 'very much so' or 'to some extent') and 'The culturally diverse communities of Galway' (60%). This would seem to indicate that for those attending, the key themes of Galway 2020 were recognisable by most of the audience and participants, amongst other themes which were also important opportunities for audiences and participants referred to elsewhere in this report.⁴²

Extent Galway 2020 provided opportunities to experience or engage with themes



Source: Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

42 Source: TAA Audience and participant Survey 2020-2021

Identity and the European dimension

ECoC objective: Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation

ECoC objective: Improve the international outlook of residents

The European dimension was seeded across the programme through artists, partnerships, connections and themes and is explored in different sections in this report. The evaluation assessed how Galway 2020 affected feelings of being European by residents of Galway and Ireland. This was put in the context of a general understanding of the population's attachment to Galway, Ireland, Europe or the EU, using the approach of the Eurobarometer ongoing research which asks about attachment to various identities.

In 2019, the National Arts Engagement Survey⁴³ indicated that Galway 2020's European Capital of Culture designation was having an impact on the population of Ireland and Galway, prior to the delivery year. Feeling more European as a result of Galway's designation was felt slightly more strongly by Galway residents than the national population and by urban rather than the rural population and by younger age ranges.

- 49% of Galway residents 'strongly agreed or 'slightly agreed' that 'Galway 2020 makes me feel more European', compared to 41% of the national population.
- 43% of Ireland's urban population 'strongly agreed or 'slightly agreed' that 'Galway 2020 makes me feel more European', compared to 36% of the rural population.
- The strongest agreement came from the 35-49 years age range, 48% of whom 'strongly agreed or 'slightly agreed' that 'Galway 2020 makes me feel more European'.

This sentiment extended into the delivery year.

"Loved the whole thing made me feel more European. and would've been a lovely celebration if it weren't for Covid"

Audience member focus group participant

43 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

It is useful to understand this in the context of a general sense of attachment to Europe. When asked in 2021, Galway residents were strongly attached to Galway, rather than to Ireland, EU or Europe. Although, in the context of the national population Galway residents were only slightly less attached to Europe or the EU; around less than one in five of the national and Galway population said they were very attached to Europe or the EU⁴⁴. At this stage then, it appears that the overall influence of Galway 2020 had little impact on a feeling of Europeanness. However, given current events at this time, other factors were probably more important in terms of Europeanness.

- For residents of Ireland (including residents of Galway), the greatest sense of attachment was to Ireland (71% very attached), then Galway (22% very attached), then Europe (23% very attached) and finally the EU (17% very attached).
- For Galway City and County residents, their attachment is greatest to Galway (79% very attached), then Ireland (74% very attached), and then to Europe and the EU (both 17% very attached).⁴⁵

Using the 2021 population data⁴⁶ it is interesting to note a high correlation between attachment to Europe and high awareness and in person attendance at Galway 2020 which indicates a relationship, whether causal or not.

- 86% of those who were very aware of the Galway 2020 programme were 'very' or 'fairly' attached to Europe.
- 87% of those who went in person to Galway 2020 programme, were 'very' or 'fairly' attached to Europe.

There was great pride in Galway winning the European Capital of Culture designation by its residents and Galway 2020 posed questions of identity in a European context. However, it was current events which appear to have had the largest impact on defining identity and affiliations with Europe over the period of Galway 2020, in response to Brexit and the US elections.

44 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

45 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

46 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

“I would definitely think of myself as Irish first and foremost. I’ve never thought of myself as European or anything like that.”

Audience member, participant, Wave Maker focus group participant

“And I would see myself as Irish, and in terms of European I’m not too sure. I think part of it is that we are the island sitting out on the west coast and I don’t know if being European impacts [as much as being part of mainland Europe]”.

Wave Maker, participant focus group participant

“I’ve been here 46 years and no intention of leaving. I feel myself very much Irish but I also feel much more European than I ever did in the past. I think the Brexit debate convinced me that I was European as well.”

Wave Maker, participant focus group participant

“I’d say I’m Irish, but I suppose we’re all more globalised now. I’m proud to be European now because of everything that’s happened in the US and the UK. Well, I am from Galway, I grew up here, I was born here”

Audience member, participant focus group participant

The European dimension of the ECoC also took Galway’s international connections in a different direction, away from the English-speaking world, although the potential impacts of the European dimension are perceived to have been limited, as visitors from Europe could not come to Galway during 2020.

“...kind of moved away from other English language countries like, you know, taking a lot of the lead from the UK, Australia and America that it was nice to, maybe you look a little bit more towards people that have a different language. But I think again, that that was one of the things that was hit by not being able to have visiting artists so much from Europe”.

Audience member focus group participant

More broadly, research with audiences and participants at Galway 2020 indicated that 79% said ‘very much so’ or ‘to some extent’ when asked whether it was ‘an opportunity to experience or engage with international culture and arts’.⁴⁷

The population survey in 2021 indicated that Galway 2020 had encouraged people to feel ‘more European’ with 65% ‘strongly agreeing’ or ‘agreeing’. Only 9% ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement.

47 Source: TAA Audience and participants Survey 2020-2021

Table: Of those ‘aware’ of Galway 2020, to what extent would you agree or disagree ‘Galway 2020 made me feel more European’?

	National
Strongly agree	27%
Agree	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	25%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know	2%

Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021- Base 606.

How far the change of delivery from in person to digital may have affected the impact is difficult to assess although overall, attendance or participation with work that had a European element seemed to have an effect on feeling more European.

As noted elsewhere, there were a variety of different types of engagement with a European dimension. This included collaborations such as Galway Moves between Netherlands-based Dansnest and Galway-based dance artists; Music for Galway’s CELLISIMO masterclasses and performances between international artists; and Project BAA BAA’s tapestry symposium and online exhibitions.



Galway Moves

Produced by Galway Dance Project and Dansnest

22 - 27 April 2021

Locations Galway City and Online

Web [Galway Moves](#)

Galway Moves was a series of site-specific dance performances and films, choreographed by Dansnest, an award-winning dance company based in the Netherlands, in collaboration with five Galway based dance artists - Genevieve Ryan, Kristyn Fontanella, Mia Bradley Evans, Marta Almeida and Patricia Glynn.

Taking the challenges posed by the pandemic and themes emerging through research, Galway Moves explored the core question of 'How can we connect in times of social distancing?' Inspired by conversations with dancers about the design of their homes and personal objects within, these conversations were transformed into a choreography in which the resident and the dancer move, inspired by each other in a living room or environment.

Galway Moves celebrated community and connection and the natural resilience of dance. The inclusive and diverse dance performances consisted of original pieces of choreography, with each performance a dynamic search for connection.

Galway Moves celebrated community and connection and the natural resilience of dance. The inclusive and diverse dance performances consisted of original pieces of choreography, with each performance a dynamic search for connection.

Galway 2020 encouraged people to think about what it means to be European. Connections with Europe and a feeling of being European are described in different ways by those engaged with Galway 2020, and the impact of these connections for Galway – its residents, visitors and artists.

“I guess it advertises Galway better to the rest of Europe and that inspires people to come here and inspires interesting new artists and stuff to come see as well”.

Audience member focus group participant

“...I’m very glad we’re still part of Europe and there are only benefits we can enjoy from that...all the wonderful cultural events that are happening in Galway, connect us with the world”.

Audience member focus group participant

“But I think being part of Europe also is very important... we’re a very small island, and we have to look outwards. We have to broaden our minds and educate ourselves and just be part of the rest of the world”.

Audience member focus group participant

For those more closely involved with developing the programme, their engagement with Europe through Galway 2020 was reported as being felt more, whether as a volunteer or through organising a Small Towns Big Ideas project.

New cultural experiences

The Galway 2020 programme included opportunities for audiences to have new kinds of cultural experiences, whether in terms of a venue, place or artform. In addition, projects or events designed to be interdisciplinary and non-artform specific or to have a cross-sectoral approach aimed to attract new audiences or to widen the types of cultural participation.

- Visual artists worked alongside scientists at the Marine Institute of Ireland to reflect on a history of experimental marine radio communications as part of the project Aerial/Sparks.
- Studio Drop, an architecture and design project produced by Drop Everything, whilst it was not able to welcome large numbers of attendees due to the effect of the pandemic, introduced people living locally on the island to a very different sort of cultural intervention as well as demonstrating how an innovative artistic and architectural experience can fit with the landscape, be created sustainably and be a stimulus for artistic interpretation of the coast of Ireland.
- Branar Téatar do Pháistí presented the immersive production *Sruth Na Teanga* in Galway's unused airport.
- Saolta Arts, as part of The Deeper Shade of Green programme delivered *Viriditas* a song cycle composed by acclaimed Irish artist and singer Ceara Conway as a series of intimate performances by Ceara with singer/songwriter Anna Mullarkey through the wards and waiting rooms of Galway's public hospitals.
- Other new cultural experiences came through engaging digitally, for example, the story of Gilgamesh presented by Macnas available on their website and social media.

Around a third of Galway 2020 audiences and participants said they had new cultural experiences; furthermore, over two thirds experienced a sense of discovery or the unexpected, or were inspired to seek out more, in a context of a population which was already highly culturally engaged with particular artforms.⁴⁸

- 36% of audiences 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'I have not had a cultural experience like this before'.
- 62% of audiences and participants said that 'I discovered something new or unexpected'.
- 70% of audiences and participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'It has inspired me to seek out more cultural experiences'.

48 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020-2021.



Weather Gods – Reprised, part of Unselfing project

Produced by TULCA Festival of Visual Arts

18 April 2021

Locations Radio play launch and conversation with Isadora Epstein

Web [Weather Gods](#)

Weather Gods was written and performed by Isadora Epstein. Accompanied by musicians Davy Kehoe, Daniel McAuley and Ailbhe Nic Oireachtaigh and artist Stéfane Béna Hanly, Epstein created a performance combining a mythological weather report with a train trip out West on the Great Western Railway. With live musical performances from the titular weather gods, featuring original scores and some familiar favourites, this work was somewhere between art performance and memorable theatre piece.

Originally, Weather Gods was a live performance in front of an audience on the Galway to Gort train in February 2020, cancelled because of a red weather warning. This new work was inspired by Iris Murdoch's concept of unselfing and its demand that we journey away from ourselves to be attentive to the world and be curious about the people, places, and ideas surrounding us. In 2020, the reality of re-staging the performance presented a new set of challenges. Following many twists and turns, Weather Gods is now a radio play podcast available to download from the TULCA website. Weather Gods was also broadcast on Connemara FM at 8.30pm on Thursday 22 April.

Weather Gods takes listeners on a train trip through the heavens. In this work, written and performed by Isadora Epstein, a cast of Gods announce a mythological weather report and predict a strange forecast featuring music and performances by Davy Kehoe, Daniel McAuley, Ailbhe Nic Oireachtaigh and Stéphane Béna Hanly.



Photograph: Boyd Challenger

Aerial/Sparks

Produced by Louise Manifold

9 – 27 September 2020

Locations Inis Oírr and Online

Web [Ariel/Sparks](#)

Aerial/Sparks invited audiences to connect with one of the last unknown spaces on earth; the ocean wilderness. Seven artists, writers and composers from across Europe produced a series of standalone artworks for exhibition and radio broadcast, inspired by their experiences of joining research expeditions on board the Marine Institute Ireland's RV Celtic Explorer.

Created by Irish artist Louise Manifold, Ariel/Sparks was presented as a unique art trail on the island of Inis Oírr over 3 weeks in September 2020. Visitors crossed the island by foot and bike to discover sound works housed in various venues across the island including a handball alley, a lighthouse, Aras Eanna Arts Centre and a Church.

Participating artists: Ailís Ní Ríain (IRL), Carol Anne Connolly (IRL), David Stalling (DE), Kennedy Browne (IRL), Kevin Barry (IRL), Magz Hall (EN) and Robertina Šebjanič (SI).

Ariel/Sparks also included a dedicated virtual programme of events for ARSElectronica 2020, the festival of art and technology.

Similarly, around one in five of Galway 2020 audiences and participants felt it was an opportunity to experience or engage with innovative work or new creative talent.⁴⁹

- 86% of Galway 2020's audiences and participants felt it was an opportunity to experience innovative or new work 'very much so' or 'to some extent'.
- 78% of Galway 2020's audiences and participants felt it was an opportunity to experience the work of emerging artists or new talent 'very much so' or 'to some extent'.

Whether audiences were experiencing Galway in person or digitally, it offered surprising elements, although in many cases the impact would have been greater if the experience had been in person.

"It did work out...the things that I went to see when everything was opened up again, like I really was so glad that I did go and see those things. And I felt that they give you an experience you just can't get from other things...this whole enforced staying at home made it even more valuable. When you could go to a site."

Audience member focus group participant

"A lot of the techniques that they were [showing in the Monument exhibition] I had no idea of before...And then the contemporary side was so good as well, there was some weaving and a jumper".

Audience member focus group participant

"I'm from the Aran Islands...and I thought [Monument] was going to be a good exhibition, but I was really taken aback how good it was. It has such breadth of takes from the historical things and life on the island."

Audience member focus group participant

Additionally, audiences were introduced to digital experiences. The 2021 population research showed that Galway 2020 attracted a higher proportion of audiences who had not recently engaged online. Although a small sample, and therefore indicative, the survey showed that 30% of those from Galway who engaged in Galway 2020 digitally had not engaged with culture online in the year before (2019). Nationally, the figure was much lower, at 10%.

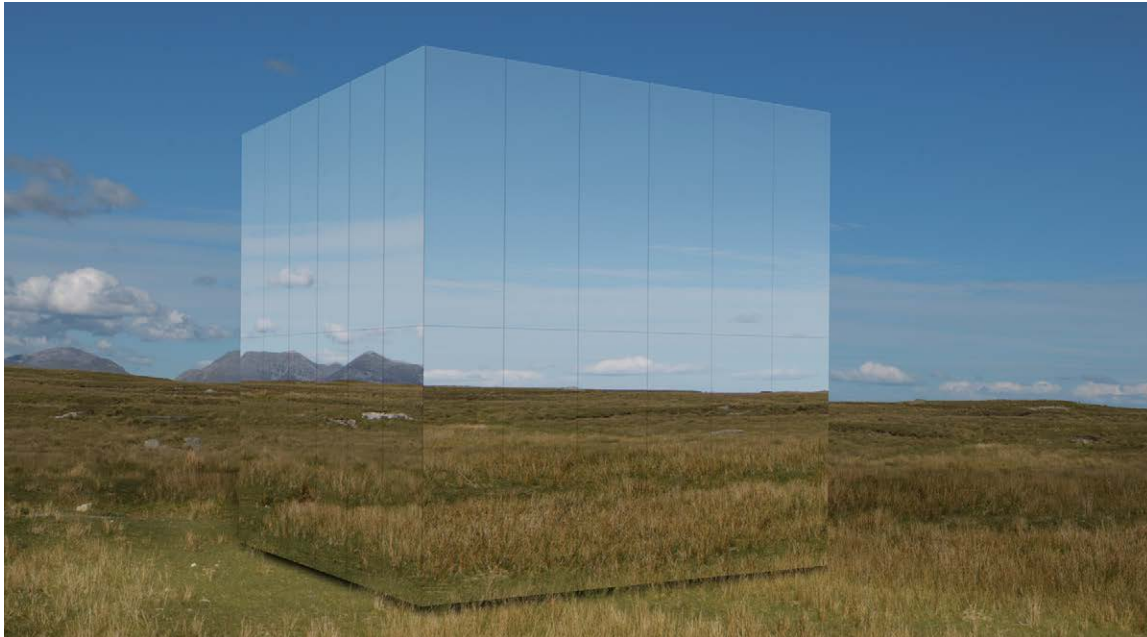
"Yeah, I definitely would [go to a similar event again]... beforehand I probably would have written off online art exhibitions as just someone taking some photos and putting it together. But it was a proper put together film thing."

Audience member focus group participant

"It was less personal...normally if you'd go to an art museum, you'd stand in front of the painting for a while and really enjoy it in a different way. [The digital event] was more of a group experience. It was still nice".

Audience member focus group participant

49 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021.



Mirror Pavilion

Produced by Galway International Arts Festival

03 to 26 September 2020

Locations The Claddagh, Galway

Web [Mirror Pavilion](#)

Mirror Pavilion by John Gerrard was a response to the escalating climate crisis and pushed the boundaries of digital art using simulation. Gerrard used digital technology to create virtual worlds that simulate extremely detailed and authentic landscapes. The Pavilion was a beautiful and striking structure, with three sides and the roof clad in a highly reflective mirror and the fourth wall a high-resolution LED wall.

Mirror Pavilion - Corn Work was located by the River Corrib at Claddagh Quay for 3 weeks in September 2020 during Galway International Arts Festival 2020. Corn Work recalled histories of grain milling in Galway and the strong flow of water which provided a sustainable clean energy source for the city's now dismantled flour mills. Four folk figures, the Straw Boys, remade virtually, performed a symbolic wheel of production on the LED wall in the work. Changing with the seasons, they commemorated attitudes toward agriculture and the landscape that existed prior to the petroleum derived methods widely implemented today.

The second iteration, Mirror Pavilion – Leaf Work, was presented in the Derrigimlagh Bog in Connemara in September 2021 as part of Galway International Arts Festival 2021.

The second iteration, Mirror Pavilion – Leaf Work, was presented in the spectacular Derrigimlagh Bog in Connemara in September 2021 as part of Galway International Arts Festival 2021.

“I thought in the context of COVID it [Mirror Pavilion] worked quite well. I mean, you currently can’t do much indoors in a pandemic anyway. So I thought it was a kind of a talking point on social media. It was a visible presence in the landscape. I heard a few seagulls and swans crashed into it, they didn’t realise. But it was a beautiful installation. I enjoyed it and it was, like I say, it was one of the main things of 2020”.

Audience member, participant focus group participant

“The [Mirror Pavilion] site that had the video projections with the corn people, I wouldn’t have associated that with Galway before seeing it. So that was a bit new...maybe it promoted as well the little area where it was placed [because] it’s a bit forgotten... So to kind of drew attention to that.”

Audience member focus group participant

“I went and looked at [Mirror Pavilion]. And it was on my route to work every morning. So I got a glimpse of it...which was very special...something on the margins had come right into the middle of your community in terms of public art, and it’s lovely to see a piece of public art that’s so deceptively simple and also so interactive...lovely piece for children as well.”

Audience member focus group participant



Photograph: Andrew Downes

Galway Fire Tour 2020

Produced by Galway 2020 and Wonderworks

2 - 7 February 2020

Locations Clifden, An Spidéal, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Portumna, Athenry

Web [Galway 2020 Fire Tour](#)

"First thing I was involved in [as a Wave Maker],...I thought it was going to be fairly small, low key...It was going to be night-time and there's going to be fire, torches and all that. But it turned out to be actually quite a spectacular event which really wasn't publicised much for Galway...It just wasn't what I expected at all...It exceeded my expectations by a long shot, it was really quite wonderful."

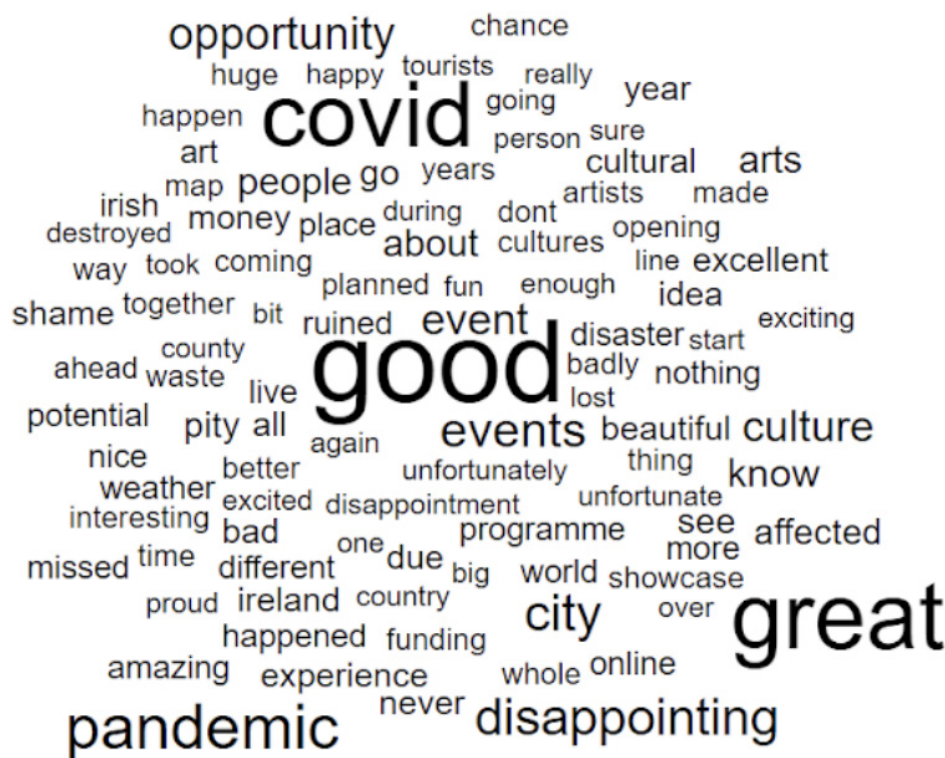
Wave Maker, audience member, participant focus group participant

Overall experience

Audiences and participants were asked to rate their overall experience of Galway 2020 events. On a scale of 1 to 10, 94% rated their experience positively (7-10 out of 10) and of this, 52% rated it 10.⁵⁰

This compares favourably to the levels of satisfaction recorded in the National Arts Engagement Survey (2019)⁵¹, although a different measure was used. For cultural experiences, prior to Galway 2020, 29% of Galway residents and 27% of the Ireland population were 'extremely satisfied'.

There were obvious challenges for Galway 2020, and this was mentioned alongside positive comments when respondents were asked to sum up what they thought of Galway 2020 in one sentence. For those who were aware of the programme, comments ranged from, 'Good for Galway', to, 'An opportunity', to 'Disappointing' with a number of comments referring to controversies and questions about funding.⁵²



50 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

51 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

52 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey 2020-2021

Table: Galway population thoughts of Galway 2020 in one sentence

Coded themes from open responses	%
Ruined by Covid	25%
Good initiative for Galway/Tourism/Artists	24%
Never really got going/Non-starter	14%
Didn't hear much/Don't really know	11%
Disappointing/Bad luck	9%
Different to other years	5%
A lot of money spent (Funding questionable)	4%
Poor weather/Washout	3%
Enjoyed it	3%
Tried their best	2%
Other	2%
Try run it again	1%

Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021 – Base 245

For those interested and aware of the programme, both the potential and reality of Galway 2020 had its impacts, although there was obvious disappointment, given the potential of the programme to be a 'showcase' for Galway.

"An inclusive, educational and fun programme that would have made a huge impact in Europe had it not been for Covid."

Audience member focus group participant

"Great opportunity for small communities to show their work."

Audience member focus group participant

However, there is much praise for how the programme was re-launched and stayed true to its ambition.

“It was inspiring to see how one city can come together while staying apart to celebrate the arts under difficult circumstances.”

Audience member focus group participant

“A re-imagined ambitious cultural programme comprising both digital and live events showcasing a range of diverse artists and talents.”

Audience member focus group participant

There was also appreciation of the wellbeing impacts it had for those who engaged with the programme, although coupled with regret that the potential for social interaction was not possible.

“The best experience I had in 2020.”

Audience member focus group participant

“It’s making the best of a bad situation and hopefully it was a bit of a morale boost and a bit of a distraction as well for people but it’s not the same...it’s not the same when you’re looking at the screen as opposed to actually being there in person... especially when the social aspect of it gets lost in translation.”

Audience member focus group participant

While some still felt it was marred by controversies, others recognised that appreciation came from actual engagement with the programme.

“Too much politics involved which created divisions.”

Audience member focus group participant

“It’s been a very positive experience, I think there was a huge difference between that experience, and what you might have read about in the national media. And I think that was very unfortunate. In this, you know, maybe a lot of those people who were being very negative, were not necessarily coming to experience anything here.”

Audience member focus group participant

11

Participation

Cultural Partner projects

As well as engaging with the diversity of events and activities in person or digitally, there were a wide range of opportunities for people to participate in the programme:

- **Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann**, created by Ríonach Ní Néill and produced by Milestone Inventive and Ciotóg, involved a series of opportunities to engage directly which were fun, participatory and educational, responding to the pressing local and global challenges of creating a healthier, more environmentally sustainable lifestyle.
- **Wires Crossed** was set to see the culmination of a four-year European-wide participatory programme focused on funambulism with local people trained in the art and due to perform at a final event (now postponed to July 2022).
- **InterAction 2.0** was a digital theatre project produced by Galway Theatre Festival including workshops for the public led by local and international artists.
- Music for Galway, in association with Galway 2020 and Irish National Opera, held preparatory work with children and community music groups for the **Paper Boat** community opera performance, where a professional cast of singers and musicians was enhanced by children and singers of Galway. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the performance took place online only.



Wave Makers. Photograph: Cormac McMahon



Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann

Produced by Ríonach Ní Néill & Ciotóg

February 2020 to April 2021

Locations Galway City and County and Online

Web [Hope It Rains](#)

Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann explored the creative and artistic potential of wet weather to effect a cultural change in our relationship with our weather in the West of Ireland and make Galway's people and places more weather and climate resilient. From 2016 to 2021 more than 20 artists were commissioned to create new outdoor works that interact and engage with the weather and offered the public positive ways to engage with Galway's rainy, stormy, unpredictable climate.

Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann formed an extensive programme of events, projects and activities that were developed and presented under four distinct clusters:

- **Weatherplay** – harnessing the wind and rain to make outdoor play fun in all weathers through new play resources, new games and community events.
- **Weatherproof Me!** - transforming the interface between people and the weather through fashion, design and public art.
- **Weatherbots** - exploring the artistic possibilities of renewable energy generation through inventor camps and functional artworks.
- **TURAS CHONAMARA** – a series of outdoor installations and an innovative digital and audio map documenting Connemara's unique language, music, oral and literary culture.

Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann received funding from various stakeholder and institutions beyond Galway 2020 and as a new organisation created as part of the Galway 2020 continues to operate.

Opening Ceremony Fire Tour February 2020 and the Community Cast

A call out was published in 2019 to invite residents and others to be part of a community cast involved in the opening ceremony of Galway 2020 – starting with the Fire Tour from 2 February in Clifden, visiting An Spidéal, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Portumna and Athenry, and ending with a proposed finale in Galway City on 8 February 2020. Coinciding with the start of the opening Imbolc Season of Galway 2020 at the beginning of February, the Fire Tour saw large community events hosted in six towns across Galway. Each event was centred around the lighting of a fire in the heart of each town, reflecting the ancient Imbolc tradition of marking the emergence from the darkness of Winter and the coming of Spring.

The Fire Tour events involved a community cast of 350 drummers, singers and fire carriers recruited from local communities and who spent several weeks rehearsing these special performances. Each event also included a performance from young musicians involved in the Galway 2020 Livefeed project, a poetry reading from a local writer/poet, and culminating in a spectacular fireworks display.

To commemorate the Fire Tour, Galway 2020 commissioned a series of unique steel sculptures (fire spheres) for each of the towns. As cultural assets, these spheres are public artworks, each reflecting the local culture, landscape and creativity. Embedded within each sphere are symbols and poetry written by a poet native to each town.

Approximately 22,000 members of the public attended the Fire Tour across the six nights.⁵³

- Over 1,000 people showed initial interest in participating in the community cast.
- 350 volunteers then actively joined the community cast (chanters, drummers and fire carriers), of which 100 performed.
- 42 community cast skills development sessions and rehearsals were delivered.

“I was part of the community group involved in drumming. I mean, it was community choir as well, and everything like that. There was like up to 200 people rehearsing at weekends before that, so I met a lot of people. And, and the same thing that was happening in An Spideal, Clifden and Tuam...that was really effective. And I think there’s potential to kind of keep something like that going.”

Community cast focus group participant

- 56% of the community cast were resident in Galway City, 32% County Galway, 6% elsewhere, 4% in another country.
- 59% aged between 35-54, 73% female, 75% identified as White: Irish, 13% White: Any other White background, 4% Black or Black Irish: African, 2% Asian or Asian Irish: Any other Asian background, and 2% Other ethnic or cultural background, including mixed background.
- 80% do not have long-lasting conditions or difficulties.
- 76% identify as being of Irish nationality, 48% can speak Irish.

53 Source: TAA Cultural Engagers Survey 2020 – Community Cast – Base 85.

Engaging Young People

A particular success for Galway 2020 was the involvement of young people from across Galway projects, which as well as further contributing to building the capacity of the cultural sector in Galway, also benefited young people, supporting their creative and social development - not least as the Covid-19 pandemic was particularly detrimental to those in education or looking to start their careers. This included work with schools and students as well as projects, and accounts for 4% of overall Galway 2020 programme activity.

- 7,485 young people engaged, including primary and secondary school pupils, members of the Symphonic Waves Youth Orchestra, Livefeed participants, Sruth Na Teanga immersive performance audiences, Hope it Rains | Soineann nó Doineann workshop participants, The Deepest Shades of Green, RISE, EYE on the Edge, Virtually Here participants, and pupils gifted To the Island book.
- 854 primary and secondary schools engagements across the 340 schools of Galway.
- 34,000 primary school students engaged via free Druid Lady Gregory bookmarks and resources (*figure excluded from total count of young people engaged*).

“Particularly where you say involving the youth, and the Youth Orchestra and other youth groups. Because if we keep things going, they are the artists of the future if you like, and they’re the economy of the future.”

Audience member focus group participant

Participatory projects included a wide range of artforms and opportunities for creative development.

- **Peripheral Visions** produced by Galway Film Fleadh attracted young people to be creative in film and the programme involved performances and presentations of selected work.
- **Crossing the Line Festival** and **Into the Dark Wood** performance produced by Blue Teapot Theatre Company worked with young artists with disabilities to create what was due to be a touring theatre performance and was reimaged into an online mini-series.
- Saolta Arts’ **The Deepest Shades of Green** project transformed the bedsides of young patients into miniature theatre spaces, providing a box of items accompanied by a suite of downloadable stories, an instruction video and soundscapes so that family-led play was possible in paediatric wards without the artists being present through its ‘A bird at my window and other stories’ project.
- Baboró’s **RISE** project St. Pat’s Lockdown Olympics, in which students and teachers from St. Patrick’s National School in the heart of Galway city centre created and competed in a zany Olympic competition digitally, working with local Galway artist James Riordan and Australia-based Canadian performance director Darren O’Donnell. Children were sent material to their home and, through a workshop with an artist online, were tasked with creating a new Olympic sport.



Symphonic Waves Youth Orchestra at National Concert Hall

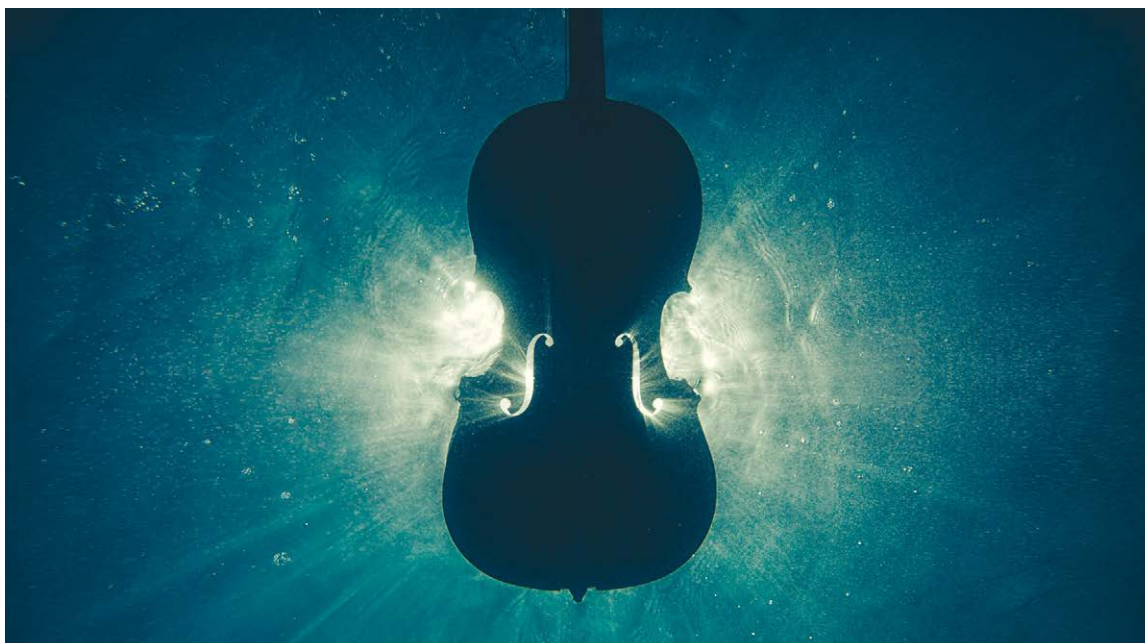
Produced by Symphonic Waves, managed by Music Generation Galway County and Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) for 13-23-year-olds

Various

Locations Various

Web [Meet the Strings](#)

Established in 2017, Symphonic Waves is a west of Ireland youth orchestra managed by Music Generation Galway County and Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB). Inspired by the Bid Book process for the European Capital of Culture 2020 for Galway, the idea for the ensemble grew from an identified need to provide high level progression pathways and ensemble performance opportunities for advanced young musicians along the western seaboard.



Symphonic Waves Youth Orchestra – Meet The Strings

Produced by Music for Galway

18 October 2020

Locations Online

Web [Meet the Strings](#)

Meet the Strings was an online series of video resources, introducing children and young people to the string instruments of the orchestra. Included in these videos was a short ensemble and solo performances from members of the Symphonic Waves youth Orchestra string section.

Conductor James Cavanagh introduced the different string instruments in a fun and engaging way, enabling children and young people to enjoy learning about the string instruments played in orchestra. James and the musicians explored the differences between the sounds each instrument make and the musicians demonstrated the various ways that rhythm and tone can be produced as they play. Participation was encouraged with viewers being invited to play along to a tango rhythm in one of the pieces, by clapping or by using anything they can find to make a percussion sound.

Performances January 2020 National Youth Orchestra of Ireland, Bailey Allen Hall, NUI Galway; Feb 2020 Festival of Youth Orchestras. National Concert Hall, Dublin; Feb 2021 Gala/Proms Concert with special guest performers. Kingfisher Hall, NUI Galway; March 21 Concert with Galway Traditional Orchestra. St Nicholas' Collegiate Church, Galway; March 21 St Patrick's performance for RTÉ & online. In-person and virtual.

Young members of Symphonic Waves found a community of interest that is inclusive and welcoming and have enjoyed taking on repertoire from different cultures.

“[Through the] collaboration...I just realized there’s so many people that really like music and like doing things together.”

Young participant, focus group participant

“I think it’s like it’s quite welcoming. So like, even like beginners as well. They don’t feel like intimidated. I was like, everyone’s really inclusive”

Young participant, focus group participant

The orchestra is seen as empowering, in terms of involvement in deciding the repertoire, providing opportunities for personal development and inspiration on pathways to further and higher education.

“At least one member of Symphonic Waves is doing music in NUIG in Galway. And I that’s just a recent course. So I found out from her that I’m able to do it in Galway now.”

Young participant, focus group participant

“I’ve been playing music since I was young. And I’ve been in like ensembles like wind bands...I was in the Midlands Youth Orchestra. And then I went to this one, and it was like, a big step up...We’ve done residential courses and...that makes a big difference. And not all orchestras do that.”

Young participant, focus group participant



Livefeed

Produced by David Boland, Tracy Bruen, Eoin Dolan

February 2020 to April 2021

Locations Galway City and County and Online

Web [Livefeed](#)

Livefeed is an ongoing dedicated youth music project that was developed as part of the Galway 2020 programme. Livefeed was created to empower young people to pursue interests in songwriting, performance, audio production, sound engineering and music photography through workshops, mentorship and hands-on experience at events.

The project provides new opportunities for young people to perform and enjoy live music in safe, alcohol-free environments through a special programme of live music events and workshops across Galway city and county.

Under Galway 2020 the Livefeed programme comprised both live and digital events engaging directly with young musicians, producers and audiences from early 2019 through to April 2021. The online iteration of Livefeed commenced in the latter half of 2020 and developed a large and popular programme of weekly livestreamed performances and special pre-recorded concerts all of which can be viewed on the Livefeed Youtube Channel.

Livefeed, as with Symphonic Waves, has enabled connections between young people, as well as enabling them to draw inspiration from 'older, wiser musicians', and to find pathways to personal, professional and career development.

"What surprised me was how friendly everyone was... it all kind of brought everyone together. And I made so many friends through doing Livefeed."

Young participant, focus group participant

"I knew that I wanted to do something in music, but I didn't want to be like a teacher or anything. And I know and I felt like, after I did [Livefeed] I realised, yeah, this is definitely what I really want to do. Just perform, not like, not educate. You know, and so, yeah... It made me realise that I do want to look into more courses that are the study of production or songwriting."

Young participant, focus group participant

"Livefeed was a really like good way to get into the music industry. I'm in a band...and before Livefeed, we didn't know anything about how to start playing gigs. Or meet new people to collaborate with or like everything from like, the workshops to the, like, the live concerts that like, put together."

Young participant, focus group participant

"The goal of like, becoming an actual musician or artist or producer. It seems a lot more achievable. Once you've got people supporting you from live feed."

Young participant, focus group participant

"A lot of people have recognised me from watching the Livefeed videos which is very cool."

Young participant, focus group participant

"There's definitely advantages...the Fire festival that we got to do...a lot of us from the Livefeed all got to do our own slot on a big stage in front of loads of people and that was a really good experience."

Young participant, focus group participant



Photograph: Cormac McMahon

EYE on the Edge

Produced by Galway 2020 & the European Parliament

23 – 25 April 2021

Locations Galway City and Online

Web [EYE on the Edge](#)

EYE on the Edge was a new festival created and curated by young people that fused politics, art and culture. Originally planned as a large 2-day event at NUI Galway campus the project was reconfigured due to COVID-19 restrictions and delivered as a 3-day online festival. The core theme of the EYE on the Edge was 'Diverse Voices', the weekend programme consisted of a series of panel discussions, workshops, presentations, performances and exhibitions that reflected this theme of diversity. EYE on the Edge represented the first local version of the EYE ([European Youth Event](#)), a biennial event in Strasbourg which brings together thousands of young people from all over the European Union and beyond to share and shape their ideas on the future of Europe. The core theme of the EYE on the Edge was 'Diverse Voices' and the weekend programme consisted of a series of panel discussions, workshops, presentations, performances and exhibitions that reflected this theme of diversity.

The festival presented the work of new and emerging talent in Galway. For example, Galway Sound Harvest produced by the Atmos Collective - a Small Towns Big Ideas project - showcased original hip-hop tracks, written, recorded and produced in a series of workshops with young people in Galway City and County.

Schools Programme

A core element of the overall vision for Galway 2020 was to create new and exciting opportunities for school children to be both audiences and participants in the cultural programme. Despite the school closures and restrictions experienced throughout 2020 and 2021, a considerable number of projects in the programme engaged directly with local schools in the creation and delivery of their projects. Galway 2020 continued to develop its schools engagement work, aiming to reach as many of Galway's 340 schools as possible, with 854 schools engagements by the end of the programme. This involved working in partnership, for example with Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board and other education partners.

- **Create Dangerously** an education programme - part of the Unselfing project produced by TULCA Festival of Visual Arts - a new arts education programme designed for school groups and teachers. TULCA commissioned three Irish artists to create new artworks for the project. Editions of these works will become permanent parts of the Create Dangerously programme which opens to schools nationally after its pilot in Spring 2021.
- **DruidGregory** as part of the DruidGregory Education and Community Programme, primary and secondary school students and teachers across Ireland can now avail of free resources that explore and highlight two Galway writers, Lady Gregory and Tom Murphy. The programme also included a number of special school performances of the Tom Murphy play *On The Outside*.
- **Sruth na Teanga** Branar Téatar do Pháistí created a unique experience that brought young audiences on the epic journey of Ireland's native language. Sruth na Teanga was an immersive, bilingual theatre event that engaged with over 40 schools during its run in March 2020.
- **Virtually Here** a new classroom and teacher training programme in the field of AR and VR, delivered online and in partnership with CISCO, Galway, and Professional Development Service for Teachers.
- **To the Island** written by Galway children's writer Patricia Forde and published in Irish and English, copies of *To the Island* were gifted to thousands of children starting school in Galway in September 2020.
- **Bádóirí an Chladaigh Outdoor Classroom** moored in the Claddagh Basin, Bádóirí an Chladaigh brought this unique outdoor classroom to local school children to learn the history and boating tradition of the Claddagh and the Galway Hookers, maritime folklore and essential water safety skills.
- **Small Towns Big Ideas** several Small Towns Big Ideas projects engaged directly with local schools in the creation of their projects through workshops and creative activities including *Giant Steps* short film, *Clay Journeys* online exhibition, Galway Sound Harvest music workshops and *Merlin Through Time* woodland walks.



To the Island

Produced by	Galway 2020
	Written By Patricia Forde, Published and Edited by Little Island.
	September 2020 - Ongoing
Locations	Galway City and Online
Web	To the Island

Music by Anna Mullarkey, Illustrations by Nicola Bernadelli and distributed in partnership with the Galway County Library Service through the Mobile Libraries.

A lyrical picture book by leading Galway children's writer Patricia Forde, with illustrations from Italian artist Nicola Bernardelli, published in Irish and English Little Island Publishing. Fia longs to see the mythical island of Hy Brasil. One night a moonbeam leads her across the bay to the island, where the air is thick with secrets. The book was gifted to every child who started school in Galway in 2020.

In December 2020 Galway singer songwriter Anna Mullarkey released her single "[To the Island](#)" - commissioned by Galway 2020 in collaboration with Sam Wright, David Shaughnessy, Black Gate Studio, Lakshika Serasinhe, Strange Brew and "To the Island" author, Patricia Forde.



Virtually Here

Produced by JoJo Hynes and Jennifer Cunningham

September 2020 to April 2021

Locations Galway City and County

Web [Virtually Here](#)

Five Galway schools were selected from an open call to take part in this collaborative project which explored through weekly online workshops how virtual reality and augmented reality can be used to study their local environment, supporting and enhancing curricular learning and foster creativity in the classroom. Participating schools included Carrabane National School- Athenry, Claregalway Educate Together National School- Claregalway, Scoil Iósaif Naofa- Oranmore, Scoil Mhuire- Clifden and Windfield National School- Ballinasloe.



Programme Launch 2019. Photograph: Declan Colohan

12

Community collaboration, co-creation and partnership

ECOC objective: Involve a wide range of citizens and stakeholders in preparing and implementing the cultural programme

From the early stages of planning and developing the bid, Galway 2020 was designed to involve its communities in close collaboration with artists and the Galway 2020 team.

An example from the early 'pre-bidding' phase included An Artist in Every Place, curated by Neil Butler Artistic Director of **UZ Arts** and produced in partnership with **TULCA Festival of Visual Arts**. At the core of its ambition was the desire to have artists living and working in every part of Galway's community and creating projects with members of the public.

This spirit continued through the programme from the development of the Wave Makers volunteer programme, the recruitment of the community cast for the opening ceremony, the Small Towns Big Ideas programme and a wider range of community engagement activity and participation opportunities outlined in previous sections.

Galway 2020 had a structured process from bid stage through to delivery to enable the artists and communities of Galway to contribute and be consulted about the programme. Aside from the work of Cultural Partners and events produced directly by Galway 2020, there were two approaches to developing projects with the community:

- **Emerge** was a delivery model set up for open calls, commissions and independent productions for artists, cultural organisations and members of the general public. Small Towns Big Ideas was the flagship programme under Emerge. Following a pilot programme in 2016 (in Athenry, Ballygar and Headford during the Galway 2020 bid phase), there were two open calls to communities which resulted in over 70 new cultural projects being produced in communities across Galway City and County. Projects ranged from active retirement groups creating street art with school children in Ballinasloe; new community festivals in south Galway; pop-up culture cafes in Doughiska; and bonfires in Connemara.

- **Impulse** was a delivery model set up to accommodate unplanned ideas or sparks of brilliance that may come to fruition during the 2020 year.

This enabled a longer-term approach which could have a legacy: an effective way of working with a diversity of communities, enabling opportunities to address challenging issues and an open door for those who had ideas for projects of their own.

“Our programme will seek to respond to the more difficult and challenging issues of racism and exclusion faced in particular by the Irish Traveller community, but also by new communities, refugees, Roma people and others. The strategies needed to properly serve these most marginalised communities are by their nature slow and deliberate and require time to form trusting engagement.”

Source: Bid Book II

As part of the Galway 2020 delivery, relationships were built with the newly formed Galway Anti-Racism Network, Galway Traveller Movement, Galway County Intercultural Forum and other local, national and European organisations working in this area to ensure these communities had a strong voice in Galway 2020 to enable the co-creation of new cultural projects that combatted racism and exclusion.

Galway’s audiences were part of an extended community of those developing and delivering events, as half knew people who had participated in Galway 2020 events or activities and a quarter knew those who volunteered.



An Artist in Every Place

Devised, commissioned and presented by Galway 2020 (bid phase)

Curated by Neil Butler UZ Arts, Scotland

Produced by TULCA Festival of Visual Arts

An Artist in Every Place was a programme piloted by Galway 2020 during the bid phase in 2016. At its centre was the ambition to have artists living and working in all parts of the community in towns, villages, cities, farms and schools creating projects with members of the public. The programme also explored frameworks of artist residences as a model, while creating opportunities for artists to develop interesting, new and sustainable practices in Galway and into Europe, co-creating projects with members of the public.

Projects included: 'On a Voyage': Artist Frank Bölter from Germany in collaboration with Kinvara Sailing Club, Port of Galway Sea Scouts, Galway Bay Boat Tours and The Claddagh Boatmen. 'Our Place': Artist Maria McCavana from Glasgow and Galway-based artists – Féilim O'hAoláin, An Ait Eile, Catherine Denning and Debbie Reilly. 'Cros-Sing': Artists Stage-Code from Czech Republic in collaboration with Cois Cladaigh, The Marine Institute of Ireland Singers, Scoil Mhuire NS Oranmore, Co Galway.

Small Towns Big Ideas

Pilot Projects 2016

As part of the Galway 2020 bid process, the core concept and model for the Small Towns Big Ideas programme was piloted with three communities in early 2016 as a means of demonstrating the methods and effectiveness of creative projects at community level.



Sugán

Ballygar, Galway County, May 2016

Sugán was a community participatory arts project inspired by the traditional rural skills and traditions of Sugán (hay rope making) and Meitheal (collective effort). The project reinterpreted these traditions, weaving threads in a contemporary exploration of community, relationships, interconnectedness and society through movement, philosophy, art performance, story and traditional Sugán making. Artists Ceara Conway, Sheila Flanagan and Bernadette Divilly held participatory workshops to explore the themes of community, and internationally acclaimed philosopher Professor Philip Pettit gave a public talk entitled 'Neo-Liberal and Neo-Republican Perspectives on Community' in Ballygar Court House.

The Nesting Lark

Headford, Galway County, May 2016

The Nesting Lark project explored the identity of the town through a series of interactive workshops, including activities such as yarnbombing and painting led by local artists working in the community. The project explored the theme of Nesting, looking at "blow ins" who set up nest in Headford while also looking at locals emigrating and those leaving empty nests and empty nests during the day as people leave Headford for work each day – all themes common to small towns around Europe. Artists working on this pilot project included Eilís Nic Dhonncha, Selma Makela, Miquel Barceló, Ester Kiely and Veronika Straberger. The Nesting Lark project was also influential in acting as a catalyst for the emergence of the hugely popular and successful Headford Lace Project.

Edible Landscapes

Athenry, Galway County, June 2016

The community of Athenry came together in early 2016 to sow hundreds of plants representing the start of the Edible Landscapes project. Local artists, schools, community groups and businesses worked in collaboration with food producers and the fruits of the Spring planting to create a live, tangible, programme of edible art ahead of Bia Lover Food Festival. The project showcased how the European Regional of Gastronomy Bid and the ECOC bid can collaborate seamlessly into the future in area renowned for its agriculture and food ethos. Local artists involved in developing Edible Landscapes included Máire Daly, Lali Morris and Ted Turton.

Wave Makers – Galway 2020 Volunteer Programme

- **325*** Wave Makers volunteered from April 2019 to April 2021.
- **2,695** volunteer hours from April 2019 to April 2021.
- **1,468** volunteer shifts from April 2019 to April 2021.
- **168** Wave Makers volunteered from July 2020 (in anticipation of the relaunch of the programme) with 350 registered.
- **1,787** volunteer hours from July 2020 to April 2021.

**When resuming activities following a three-month pause caused by the pandemic onset, the Wave Makers were asked to indicate whether they would like to continue volunteering for Galway 2020. Over 300 from the original 800 confirmed, over 50 indicated they would like to be kept on hold and some of them resumed at a later stage.*

Volunteer programmes have become highly visible, vibrant, diverse and inclusive expressions of active citizenship in cities and regions which have delivered cultural celebrations of one kind or another.

The development of the Galway 2020 Wave Makers programme commenced in 2018 through research and consultations into best practice from other Capital of Culture volunteer programmes. The Wave Makers programme was formally launched in February 2019 with Medtronic announced as the official partner of the Wave Makers programme in July 2019. By January 2020, the programme had recruited over 800 people and 500 had received core training, creating a large and skilled team of people ready to support the delivery of the Galway 2020 programme and act as ambassadors for Galway during its special year. 350 of these Wave Makers re-joined following its relaunch in July 2020.

One of the defining characteristics of the Wave Maker programme from its start was the cultural diversity within the group. It also ignited a renewed interest in volunteering from those interested, largely due to the pioneering nature and leadership of the programme⁵⁴

54 Source: TAA Wave Maker Baseline Survey, January 2020.

One of the most defining characteristics of the Wave Maker programme from its very start has been the cultural diversity within the group and that it has ignited a renewed interest in volunteering from those interested, which is wholly due to the pioneering nature and leadership of the programme.

- Around 2/3 Irish and 1/3 other nationalities. 2/3 lived in Galway City and 1/3 in the County or elsewhere (including other countries). Around 1/3 could speak Irish, a quarter of whom spoke it on a daily or weekly basis.
- The initial ethnicity profile was 56% White Irish, 23% other white backgrounds, 8% other Asian backgrounds (not Asian Irish or Asian Chinese) and 5% other ethnicities, including a mixed background, 2% Black African and Asian Chinese and the rest preferred not to say. These proportions were maintained throughout the volunteer programme to May 2021.
- Including, along with Irish people, Afghan, Argentinian, Brazilian, British, Bulgarian, Canadian, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Indian Italian, Malaysian, Mexican, Nepalese, Nigerian, Pakistani, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian, South African, Spanish, Turkish, US.
- Age range was from 18 to 75+.
- Volunteers were also engaged culturally across a range of artforms – the highest being street arts and art exhibitions. 6% had not engaged with a range of cultural activity in the last 12 months.
- Before 2020, 12% of signed up Wave Makers had not volunteered before, and 36% had done a little bit of volunteering..

Source: TAA Wave Maker Baseline Survey January 2020

“Galway is a good city for volunteering and even without Galway 2020 because of the Arts Festival...there’s a lot of volunteering associated with the college...the thing about the Wave Makers [that was different] is that with so many people from different countries and different cultures.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

“Using the Irish language and meeting people from many cultures”

Wave Maker focus group participant

Wave Makers’ primary motivations for signing up were to ‘help make Galway 2020 a success’ and ‘take advantage of this unique opportunity’, ‘to get involved in arts and culture’ and ‘meet new people’.⁵⁵

55 Source: TAA Wave Makers Baseline Survey, January 2020 – Base 214.

Table: What were your main reasons for becoming a Wave Maker with Galway2020?

Reason for becoming a Wave Maker	%
I wanted to help make Galway 2020 a success	74%
This is a special or unique opportunity	68%
To meet new people	68%
It is an opportunity to get involved in arts and culture	68%
I wanted to give something back to Galway	57%
I wanted to do something for my community	54%
It is an opportunity to do something with family and friends	12%

Source: TAA Wave Makers Baseline Survey January 2020

In Autumn 2020 with the relaunch of the programme, 87% of Wave Makers ‘felt that they could make a positive contribution to Galway 2020 post-lockdown’ and 80% of Wave Makers ‘were positive about the contribution that Galway 2020 could make to Galway post-lockdown’.

A final survey was undertaken in May 2021 asking Wave Makers on their reflections about their time as Wave Makers and despite the challenges encountered, their expectations were largely met.⁵⁶

Table: Thinking of your experience as a volunteer over the whole Galway 2020 programme to what extent do you agree with the following?

Statement	% agreed
I felt I was able to do something for the Galway community	97%
I met new people	97%
I felt I was able to contribute to the success of Galway 2020	89%
It had a positive impact on my wellbeing overall	88%
I learnt more about Europe and Galway’s European cultural connections	85%
It boosted my mood during the COVID-19 pandemic	71%

Source: TAA Wave Makers Final Survey, May 2021 – Base 111.

⁵⁶ Source: TAA Wave Makers Mid-point Survey, September 2020.

64% of Wave Makers said that they were definitely planning to continue volunteering as a result of their Wave Maker experience – either continuing as a Wave Maker or with cultural or community organisations.

“It was just amazing how people came from all walks of life. I mean, you had pensioners, you have doctors, you have asylum seekers, you have nurses, it was just a variety diversity of people. I think we were over 50 nationalities within the first two months just signing up. So an amazing, completely different class. It’s just an amazing experience.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

“A feeling of belonging and family and feeling safe...coming from the background I come from [as a refugee] from so much unsafety...To feel this community and togetherness and to meet such unbelievable people...family is not blood. So I’ve met a lot of new people in Galway. So that was quite a blessing...And I can be myself and try new things, be sociable meeting people from all walks of life. I felt safe, I grew a lot in confidence.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

The Wave Makers Hub in the Cornstore opened in January 2020, providing a place for the volunteers, as well as being a public information point for Galway 2020. The activities on offer for Wave Makers varied and offered the opportunity to work with different people and make a positive contribution. Wave Makers were assigned across the programme to Cultural Partners’ projects, Small Towns Big Ideas projects, data collection or supervising other volunteers and being advocates for Galway 2020.

“The diversity of the volunteering roles within Galway was great because it enabled me to use different skills. There was the monument exhibition [where we learned the context to share with visitors] then there was chanting and drumming and then there was the poetry reading of the anti-racism activity. It wasn’t doing the same thing every week. So that made it very rich.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

“Involvement with creative project leaders like Rionach O’Neill, who gave so many opportunities to the Wave Makers.”

Wave Maker focus group participant

“Walked a tightrope (literally, not figuratively) and realised it is my soul’s desire! Well named... funambulism!”

Wave Maker focus group participant

“Making a contribution... feeling valued.”

Wave Maker focus group participant



There were also frequent favourable comments made by those who worked with the Wave Makers, commending their spirit and recognising that the scheme presented a legacy for Galway.

“It was really great to work with Galway 2020 and in particular the Wave Makers Volunteers. The collaboration between the Wave Makers and our Tourist Information Centre staff was really inspirational. They are a wonderful resource for Galway and for visitors to the city.”

Gary Breen, Head of Visitor Engagement, Fáilte Ireland

“Galway City Museum were delighted to be part of the Galway 2020 Wave Makers Programme. The work of the volunteers on the Monument exhibition was excellent. What impressed us most was the consistently high quality of volunteer participation in the programme and the interest, enthusiasm and understanding the volunteers brought to their work.”

Eithne Verling, Director, Galway City Museum

The Wave Makers Programme has also developed a strong European dimension. Galway has and continues to be an active member of the European Capital of Culture Network and also actively participates in the network of European Capital of Culture Volunteer Programmes where previous, current and future capitals share best practice and expertise in the development of volunteer programmes.

This network facilitates collaborative projects and volunteer exchanges between capitals and to date Wave Makers have travelled to Sibiu, Matera and Plovdiv and volunteers from Aarhus, Matera and Plovdiv have travelled to Galway. Throughout the pandemic, the network has remained active and engaged, promoting regular virtual exchanges among international volunteers.⁵⁷

57 See Appendices for an overview of the Wave Makers physical and virtual exchanges.

The spirit of involvement and ownership continued with the Wave Makers, although its leadership frequently cited as crucial.

"[Galway 2020 team member] ...we had great leadership within our programme. And I think I think all of us appreciated that... there was also opportunity for us to contribute in our own way, too. And that really helped. Because you know, when you can, you can also put your own ideas forward and that we feel that we are being heard. So it's wonderful."

Wave Maker focus group participant

The programme continued to be active during the lockdowns with beach and city clean-ups, assisting with the St. Nicholas Saturday Market and letter writing to residents in nursing homes, alongside a range of online activities on a weekly basis – 'Be a language teacher for a day', 'Cooking around the World' with Wave Makers social media feature and a photographic competition. The Wave Makers are primed to be at the centre of the legacy of Galway 2020.

"This was a demonstration of being in it together - super job done by 2020."

Wave Maker focus group participant

"I hope the Wave Makers will be part of the lasting legacy of Galway 2020."

Wave Maker focus group participant

As the programme came to an end, there were a couple of specific projects, including a photo project 'My 5km Perspectives': during lockdown, 30 Wave Makers participated in a photo competition with the aim of taking pictures within 5km of their own home (this was the limit on travel in Ireland at that time) enabling them to see new/different perspectives, using creativity and capturing moments/objects/ spaces that the general public could also relate to.

This project was featured on the website of 'Europe At Home' by Faro ECoC candidate city 2027 and online cultural exchange activities.

In addition, podcasts were produced at the end of the project based on the themes of language, landscape and migration, offering participants a way to share their backgrounds and stories, with many having moved to Galway from other places in Ireland or abroad.

Small Towns Big Ideas

Galway 2020 set out to involve the communities and artists across Galway, reaching beyond the City into the County. Small Towns Big Ideas was designed to recognise and celebrate the diversity of Galway - its places, its communities and its rich culture - in both urban and rural settings.

The model for Small Towns Big Ideas projects was piloted during the Galway 2020 bid phase with groups in Athenry, Ballygar and Headford. The programme was then developed and rolled out through two open calls for proposals in 2018 and 2019. From the two open calls, over 70 new cultural projects were selected to be developed with local communities across Galway City and County.

Small Towns Big Ideas projects involved and addressed a diversity and combinations of themes, artforms and locations with a range of projects which focused on the creativity of the people and places of Galway. Nearly all projects were new initiatives, having not taken place before and around half were supported local artists or emerging talent.⁵⁸

- Artforms spanning contemporary and traditional visual arts were by far the most popular (64% combined), with outdoor arts second (31%). The remainder represented a wide range of themes and artforms nature, children and family events, contemporary music, plays/drama, other traditional arts and history.
- The majority of projects took advantage of outdoor spaces, with 59% of activities taking place in streets, squares or rural locations as well as in community venues, schools and shop windows.

Small Towns Big Ideas projects benefitted from more in person activity than the overall Galway 2020 programme due to many projects completing before the Covid-19 pandemic. The most popular in-person activities delivered by Small Towns Big Ideas projects were participative workshops, performances and exhibitions.⁵⁹

Some of the second round of projects delivered in 2020 needed to introduce a digital element in response to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, with 12% of the Small Towns Big Ideas programme delivered and engaged with digitally including use of social media, films and video and online exhibitions.⁶⁰

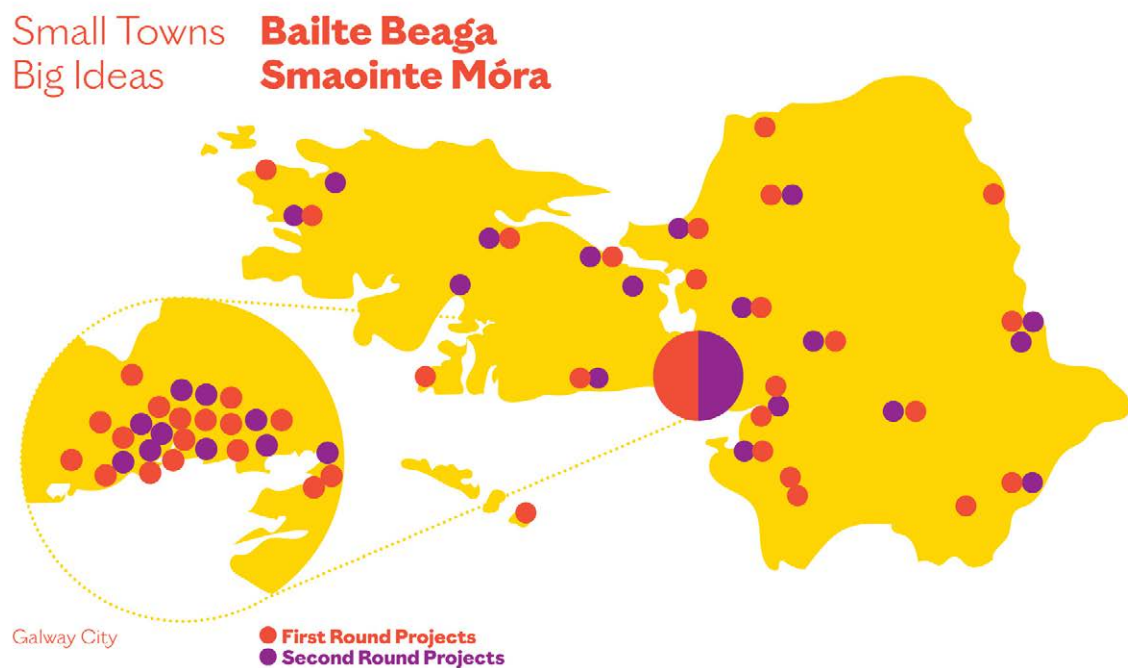
58 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey, May 2021.

59 Source: TAA Programme Categorisation 2021 – see appendices ‘Small Towns Big Ideas Programme Activity/Deliverables by Format of Delivery (In Person)’

60 Source: TAA Programme Categorisation 2021, Galway 2020 documentation and TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey, May 2021.

- For example, Clay Journeys, produced by Clay Galway, drew together the explorations of nine community projects facilitated in Galway City and County by Clay Galway artists were due to be present in person but shifted to digital in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Circuit Arts Festival, produced by 126 Artist Run Gallery, was originally planned as a new ten-day transdisciplinary art festival, presented instead as a series of digital and in-person events providing a platform for ten young artists in Galway and Ireland. Including spoken word artists, poets and live re-recorded performances.
- Amhráin, produced by Citóg Records and The Black Gate, saw members of the Citóg Records music collective creating new versions of their favourite songs by local artists, past and present. The result was Amhráin, a series of intimate performances filmed in beautiful and iconic locations in Galway city such as The Cornstore, Bell, Book & Candle and the Galway Arts Centre released online on the Black Gate YouTube Channel.

Map: Distributions of Small Towns Big Ideas projects



Source: Galway 2020 Annual Report 2021

- Projects took place in the City (39%) and County (55%) or in both the city and county (6%) - An Spidéal, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Ballinderreen, Ballygar, Casla, Claddaghduff, Claregalway, Clifden, Coastal towns, Coole Park near Gort, Galway City, Headford, Inverin, Loughrea, Moycullen, Oranmore, Oughterard, Portumna, Tuam and Woodford.⁶¹
- 83% reported that ‘landscape’ was the theme most relevant to their project with ‘language’, ‘engaging the diverse communities of Galway’ and ‘migration’ also relevant to many projects.⁶²
- 15 projects (15%) took place in a Gaeltacht area and/or had an Irish language or bilingual element to the programme⁶³ as listed in Section 10.
- 26 (39%) involved people speaking in Irish language⁶⁴
- An international or European element to the project was common to over half of the projects (58%)⁶⁵
- Projects explored themes of conservation, education, gender-based violence, climate change and sustainability and anti-racism and discrimination and challenging prejudice, as well as commemorating a local event and person.⁶⁶

These themes were exemplified by projects such as Culture Café, taking place in Doughiska, one of the most multicultural suburbs in Ireland where 41 different languages are spoken in the local school, and as a result of the project, “*learning about other’s cultures and ways of life may have opened up people’s minds/changed prejudice and broken down barriers*”, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

Hear our Voice was able to develop strong and positive relationships with local and international artists and those involved “*had the opportunity to meet with some of the kindest, friendliest and most hard-working people in Galway and Rijeka*”, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

Projects introduced participants to the Irish language: Connemara Songlines worked with international choral singers to help them “*with the Irish words and pronunciation for them, and non-Irish speakers in our own choir*”, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

Project leads were positive about the impacts they had in providing their community with opportunities to come together, discover or learn something new and support long term ambitions.

61 Source: TAA Programme Categorisation 2021

62 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021

63 Source: Galway 2020 Documentation

64 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021

65 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021

66 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021

"I attended the...Úlla Buaille exhibition from Devon [Park] Residents Association...but I didn't know that gallery existed until I went there."

Audience member, Wave Maker, focus group participant

"Previously I only thought Athenry was a hurling and camogie town...But now I realise there's like, loads, more clubs, activity stuff that doesn't revolve around sports and creativity instead."

Small Towns Big Ideas project participant, focus group participant

With regards to the long-term ambitions of projects, the majority of project leads 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'the project helped to identify future opportunities to continue work in a community'.⁶⁷

Others mentioned the impact on different parts of the community:

"The young people who engaged learned about the importance of cultural awareness."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

"Students who never wrote, spoke or even stood up in front of an audience did so."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

"The people who participated and attended these events will have the memories and hopefully attending such events - learning about other's cultures and ways of life may have opened up people's minds/ changed prejudice and broken down barriers."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

Delivering Small Towns Big Ideas projects

Community organisations, artists and individuals, were invited to propose their projects, and supported by Galway 2020 to develop their ideas and bids for funding. Promotional, technical and practical advice was given and guidance on transferring activity to online delivery in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Galway 2020 provided support and advice at every stage of the project."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

"[Galway 2020 team member] was an absolute star from beginning to end. Helpful, available, reliable and very efficient. Other members of the team were always there to answer any questions."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

It was clear that the "Funding, profile, networks, audience, pride of participation, feeling of support/backing" (Small Towns Big Ideas project lead) that Galway 2020 offered, enabled projects to develop in a way that they might not have otherwise, and communities felt proud that their place was 'on the map'. Although some projects did feel dislocation and a lack of support, others were experienced enough to proceed with their projects fairly independently. A few were cancelled due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

67 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey, May 2021.

We would never have been able to do it without the funding. Opportunities for such significant funding for a small group like us are hard to come by. We also hope that having proved we can deliver will help us to access further large-scale funding in the future. Probably the 2020 profile helped us to attract high calibre artists from overseas. Dissemination of online material via 2020 increased our reach considerably, particularly outside the lace making community.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

Small Towns Big Ideas was crucial to achieving the Galway 2020 ambition of inclusion in the programme and for giving profile to the ‘lesser known aspects of rural Ireland’. Projects successfully put artists at the centre and built relationships across and between artists and creatives and communities.

“Support for cultural rights and the recognition of minorities must be kept central to the arts agenda. The Small Towns Big Ideas was an excellent idea and enabled grassroots participation.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

The greatest challenge in delivering the projects, aside from the practicalities of weather, event management and insurance and for some, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, was managing expectations. Devising projects for and with a community goes to the heart of democratising creativity, enhancing sense of place and shining a light on a diversity of people and places across Galway. However, it also usually requires someone or some people to step up and take a lead, and expectations can outstrip what’s possible; such projects require practical support locally and involvement, as well as a local ‘audience’, and inevitably some of these projects required more time and effort than had been planned for, particularly in relation to building community relationships.

Galway 2020 set out to raise questions and initiate dialogue prompted by its themes of landscape, migration and language, and the Small Towns Big Ideas projects were designed to engage in this dialogue within their communities. Projects therefore had to find how best to explore these themes in places, as one project put it, where *“raising the theme of racism is tricky and particularly in a small rural community. It’s a delicate balance to try to open up discussion”* Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

As a result, projects cite the importance of their learning; for instance, the importance of *“providing a safe space in the workshop to participate”* Small Towns Big Ideas project lead.

A wealth of legacy is left by the projects, tangible and intangible, in the form of artworks, content, relationships, skills and audiences. However, capitalising on the impacts is harder and will take time to develop, although some projects have already secured further funding and partners.

“We created lasting friendships, networks, working relationships, goodwill, pride, skills, ambition that will help us to repeat the process with other projects IF (and it’s a big IF) we don’t burn out, get sufficient future funding AND support AND pay our producers AS WELL as our artists. It’s been a very tough year in 2020 and there is a huge sense of accomplishment but also unfortunately exhaustion”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

Small Towns Big Ideas was a ‘proof of concept’ which demonstrated demand and realised ambition, profiling communities, artists, people and places. As community-based projects they are poised to have further social and economic impacts, however this takes leadership, skills, funding and support, and working out how to realise this sustainably is for Galway 2020’s legacy.



Headford Lace Project

Headford Lace Project delivered two Small Towns Big Ideas projects, The Space Between and the Lace Matrix.

“For people to see what lace has to offer that isn’t just seriously doilies and collars and things like that. It is a valid art form. And a valid expressive art form is really important.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project participant, focus group participant

The Space Between

By Headford Lace Project

Headford, Co. Galway, October 2020

Curated by international lace artist Fiona Harrington, The Space Between was an international exhibition of lace, comprising artwork selected from 34 artists, from 11 countries across four continents. Taking the form of an art trail, the windows of local businesses and buildings were transformed into a series of tiny galleries.

Lace Matrix

By Headford Lace Project

Headford, Co. Galway, March 2019 to October 2021

Lace Matrix saw Headford Lace Project work with international artist Róisín de Buitléar to deliver a series of community design workshops and the creation of a permanent public art piece celebrating local lace making traditions. Installed in Headford on 12 November 2021.

Being part of Galway 2020 enabled the Headford Lace Project to commission work which attracted a high calibre of potential collaborators who were attracted to the project by the spotlight being on Galway. They hope to work with many of these collaborators in the future, as well as the two who contributed to these projects.

The funding received by HLP has helped significantly in establishing both our reputation and our skills in delivering large scale projects. We hope we have challenged existing attitudes to contemporary lacemaking in Ireland and abroad and changed the perception of Headford within the town and beyond. No small feat!"

Headford Lace Project, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead evaluation interview 2021

"Overall the Headford Lace Project continues. ... We have successfully branded Headford as a lacemaking town and brought the heritage of lacemaking to a much wider audience. There is a certain pride in Headford that we managed to pull this project off in the middle of a pandemic. We hope this will be enhanced by the addition of a permanent art-work and a second lace bench in the town ensuring that the heritage is never forgotten again."

Headford Lace Project, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead evaluation interview 2021

"A big takeaway from that for us now is that we now have track record of running a project that size, and administering a project that size, which will stand to us. And if we had started and go in 2020 wasn't in the mix, we would have been an awful lot longer getting to that level...[it has also been a] Catalyst for a range of community groups to start coordinating"

Headford Lace Project, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead evaluation interview 2021

"The lovely thing about it, as well as that during Covid, for the first time, I started using Instagram, and started meeting what they call your tribe....So I would have made kind of friends through Instagram, because it's easier that way for lacemakers. And then it was quite a joy to come across the five people who I've met from across the world, from South Africa, and from America and from Australia, to see their work then being accepted and my work to be there [in the exhibition]."

Small Towns Big Ideas project participant, focus group participant



The Other: Together

By Ballygar Eco Cultural Group

Ballygar, Co. Galway, June 2019

Poetry and creative writing project that worked with local schools and local community in the Ballygar area and produced a poetry and spoken word event with the local community.

“Creating an audience especially in a small town is not easy. A lot of rural dwellers choose to live outside the settlement limits to avail of larger plots etc and consequently a ‘journey’ into town makes a barrier. There is great enthusiasm for attending sporting events that are the lifeblood now of community get togethers. That is fantastic on so many levels and of course there are cultural crossovers. However cultural activities and especially poetry are a ‘hard sell.’ Very bad school memories and a sense of elitism conspire to make poetry very uninspiring. So, participation in the adult workshops was quite a challenge and co-creation of new work not possible. My local connections and personal interactions were vital to encouraging and cajoling engagement.”

The Other: Together, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead evaluation interview 2021

The Elephant in the Room

Ballygar Arts & Theatre Space

Ballygar, Co. Galway, September 2019

A week-long programme of panel discussions, workshops, music, documentary screenings and installations exploring institutional and everyday racism and the role the arts can play in combatting racism.

Many conversations were entered into with different communities, and as reported some, *“were very open and revealing of the sense of otherness deeply felt in small rural communities”*. However, there was little interest in taking part in live performance, so audio recordings of participants reading a favourite poem in their own language, Romanian and Italian, were integrated, alongside productive sessions with schools in the classroom setting.

“We worked with 8 schools and a youth group. (4 primary schools in the area and 4 secondary schools). We had conversations, we created art pieces and we chatted about themes of feelings of otherness. Some of the schools came and visited the exhibition during the week of the events also and we talked about the artworks and the themes once again. Most of these children would have never attended an art exhibition, most of these children don’t get the chance to voice their feelings of being outsiders and they were a big part of our week and I hope that this exposure to gentle conversation, to listening, to creating art and being part of a bigger community project will stay with them into the future.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

“...the legacy is intended to be sustained in local tourism and arts activities. I organised an online poetry jamboree for Ballygar Carnival 2020 and we had participating poets from Yorkshire, Llanelli, Swansea, Singapore and Madrid with the main hub in the Coffee Shop in Ballygar. Depending on what is permitted in 2021 we will build on this probably with both on the street and online events.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

Connecting the Dots

By Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association

Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, May 2019

Intergenerational project bringing primary school children together with older generations through music and art. Through a number of facilitated workshops with classical musicians ConTempo Quartet and street artist Finbar McHugh, participants worked together to create visual representations and an exhibition of their collective experience of the quartet's performances.



Photograph: Darach Photography

Make A Joyful Noise

By Gliondar Community Arts Group

Athenry, Co. Galway, October 2020

Make A Joyful Noise brought together an eclectic mix of people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds to create a piece of street theatre that provided a short sharp burst of joy for the local community in Athenry in early October 2020. Gliondar brought its Make A Joyful Noise performance to three housing estates in Athenry where the local community could enjoy this very special performance in a safe and fun environment.

McHugh, participants worked together to create visual representations and an exhibition of their collective experience of the quartet's performances.

A collaboration between Gliondar Community Arts, Rhythm Drum School, Athenry Music School and its choirs and Cruthu Studio, Make a Joyful Noise grew from the tradition of the St Patrick's Day parade, inspired by the landscape of town and its gates, and an ambition to begin a local Samba band to reach into the communities of Athenry, including settled children from elsewhere and the Traveller community. While the project was evolving, rehearsals involving young people were going well and lanterns designed and made. However, after the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown hit the project quickly converted to rehearsing in 'pods' online and delivering Covid-safe events in housing estates in and around Athenry.

While the Samba band is still going, despite many of the younger members having moved on, it is felt that it is essential that it continues as a multi-generational project, to keep a sense of continuity and to support younger people participating. Athenry was also approached by neighbouring towns to see how they could develop similar work in their places, and there is a legacy of a growing local network of creatives, supported by some bursary monies. In other towns there is support from Galway County Arts for continued activity and events.

"They were asking us in the Samba band if there's something we were finding too hard to do or like, too easy, or we want to add something new or takeaway. They were considering and they're like, yes, we can do this, or we should add that. They weren't like, Oh, you do this, they were giving us ideas. Like, would you like to put this in? It might look good. Or if we said no. So it was really like, there wasn't like them telling us what to do, or was telling us what them to do is always and we kind of like shared ideas and went with it."

Small Towns Big Ideas project participant, focus group participant

"It really pushed and really stretched me. It made me deliver and it gave me the deadlines, and there was challenges as well...If we hadn't felt the responsibility of being the European Capital of Culture, we wouldn't have felt the responsibility to come up with alternative ideas and kind of rise above it... Make A Joyful Noise' have expanded their horizons 'with folk joining us from Gort, Loughrea & Glenamady, we're exploring developing more ties in other towns in the county'."

Make a Joyful Noise, Small Towns Big Ideas project lead evaluation interview 2021

Community Engagement

Beyond the Small Towns Big Ideas programme, Galway 2020 worked with a range of communities, events and organisations which represented the people and interests of the diverse communities of Galway.

This broad community engagement programme was developed from the bid phase right through to programme delivery. It included the Speak Outs, community consultations and other engagement activities during the bid phase (as outlined in Section 7) as well as an ongoing community engagement programme through projects with local and national groups. The focus of this work was on participation and inclusion – developing cultural projects that facilitated the direct participation of different minority groups.

Projects such as those with the Galway Anti-Racism Network on two photographic exhibitions called Asylum demonstrated the harsh reality of asylum-seeking and immigration processes both in Ireland and across Europe, presenting the work of refugee photographers Abdulazez Dukhan, Haasen Mohep-Alden and Vukasin Nedeljkovic, in November 2016.

Galway 2020 worked with Galway Food Festival in 2017 and 2018 to produce the event Breaking Bread - a large, free community event celebrating Galway's multiculturalism through food. The event saw different ethnic communities share their food heritage through a vibrant, family friendly community feast that also included traditional costume, dance and music from around the world. The 2017 event was outdoors while the 2018 event was indoors with both events attracting audiences in excess of 2,000.

Other events which Galway 2020 supported included,

- Forest Days, produced with Bardzo Ladnie Foundation and Polska Eire Festival in June 2017 which celebrated Polish-Irish cultural connections.
- An intercultural Futsal League, produced with FAI, Galway Sports Partnership, Galway City Partnership, in February 2018 involving amateur football teams and supporting the participation of refugees and other migrants.
- Co-hosting the Creating Inclusion event as part of Social Inclusion Week 2018 with local authorities, disability organisations and groups.
- The national arts and mental health festival First Fortnight in both 2019 and 2020 through participating in a number of collaborative workshops, exhibitions and panel discussions with local organisations.
- Festival in a Van, International Day of Older Persons, a creative response to the pandemic, was a mobile live outdoor venue that brought the magic of live performances to community settings in a safe, Covid-proof manner in October 2020 in Carraroe, Clifden, Tuam, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Galway City.
- Oein DeBhairduin's celebrated book *Why The Moon Travels* was presented as a digital exhibition featuring Leanne McDonagh illustrations with audio recordings from the book, as part of the Misleór festival celebrating Irish Traveller and other nomadic cultures in November 2020.
- Marking International Day Against Racism on 21 March 2021 Galway 2020 and partners produced a series of collaborations with local and national organisations. These projects, all online and digital, saw Galway making a strong and unequivocal statement against racism through art, dialogue and education. Events included a [panel discussion](#) Off The Ball, Ireland's premier sports radio show; [#TogetherAgainstRacism](#) exhibition and video created by Galway 2020 Wave Makers; 3 short films [Stand In My Shoes](#) by local groups The Melting Potluck and Visionation; the launch of the virtual platform [Music, Memory and The Night](#) celebrating Afro-Irish culture; and the launch of the Onside Schools Programme with several specially designed classroom and schoolyard modules that educate young people about racism and facilitate language learning and cultural exchange through football.
- On World Storytelling Day 2021 in March 2021, Scéalaíocht...Storia....Contes was a series of online family-friendly stories and performances appealing to children and young people of all ages, including an event, 'Oiche Airneáin', bringing five storytellers together in conversation to discuss diversity and universality in storytelling in collaboration with Galway Public Libraries and Storytellers of Ireland. Galway-based storytellers Máirín Mhic Lochlainn and Órla Mc Govern were joined by Raccontamiunastori, Paola Bardi and Davide Balbi from Rome and Monique Burg from Langue d'Oc in France.

13

Social & Economic Benefit

Overall Goal/ambition: To deliver social and economic benefit for Galway

ECoC objective: Create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events

ECoC objective: Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation

ECoC objective: Improve the international outlook of residents

ECoC objective: Promote the city and its cultural programme

The data for this evaluation has been brought together within six months of the ending of the Galway 2020 delivery period (which had been extended to April 2021), so this report is a first assessment of its immediate outcomes and impacts.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the nature of Galway 2020's cultural, social and economic impacts were different from previous ECoCs and similar initiatives. Some of the original ambitions also became problematic in the changing environment of 2020 and 2021.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic there were no large-scale public events, very few visitors to Galway and therefore little opportunity to assess the impact on the local economy. It is nevertheless notable that the delivery of Galway involved 969 suppliers engaged across the project (providing a paid service as a result of the project activity), of which 60% were based locally in Galway, 28% nationally (Ireland), 8% from rest of Europe and 4% internationally (outside of Europe).

The challenges and impacts of the pandemic have taken precedence in the lives of the people of Galway. However, for those who were engaged with Galway 2020 either directly or indirectly, the projects, activities and events have had impacts for people and communities – issues have been raised or addressed, perceptions changed, and new kinds of experiences encountered. There was therefore a detected expectation from those who did feel the benefit, that Galway 2020 should leave something behind and that there is a responsibility to build on its work and achievements.

Bring social and economic benefit for Galway

AIMS

- Galway 2020 increases cross-community understanding and increased pride in place
- Galway 2020 increases the profile locally, nationally and internationally of Galway's culture and creativity
- Galway 2020 increases visitors from across Ireland and beyond
- Galway 2020 supports recovery and rebuilding in relation to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Galway 2020 provides a legacy for the development of the cultural and creative sectors in Galway

ACTIVITY

Galway 2020 development and delivery designed to:

- Make opportunities for communities to come together
- Identify opportunities for European and international connections
- Promote the cultural offer to visitors - national and international
- Build an evidence base for the social impacts of culture and creativity

OUTCOMES

Increased cross-community understanding, trust and sense of belonging

Increased value of culture and creativity across stakeholders

Increased pride in Galway and its European context

Increased profile and changed perceptions of Galway as a cultural destination

Build evidence for the case for a legacy for Galway 2020 and increased investment in culture

One effect of the pandemic globally speaking, has been to demonstrate the value of community integration and cohesion. The public of Galway have shown that they value the role that culture, and creativity can have in supporting such social outcomes. The development of community leadership, active citizens and improved wellbeing are all demonstrable outcomes of engagement with the activity of Galway 2020 and are also indicated as having value in the recovery process from the Covid-19 pandemic, both social and economic.

The value of culture and creativity

Insights collected before and after the Galway 2020 programme delivery indicate that the arts, culture and creativity are important to the people of Galway and nationally for the population of Ireland, both personally, as part of education and in terms of identity - or for residents and those who may visit.

In the Autumn of 2019, the National Arts Engagement Survey (2019) ⁶⁸ indicated that Galway and wider Ireland residents value the arts and that Ireland is a creative nation, and its reputation for high quality arts helps bring visitors and tourists to Ireland. There is strong agreement in Galway and nationally that arts make for a richer and more meaningful life and help to express what it means to be Irish. Combined with this, arts from different cultures give an insight into the lives of people from different cultures.

Following the end of the programme delivery, in terms of findings from the 2021 population survey, the data indicates a strong sense that arts, culture and creativity continued to be good for people and communities – in terms both of well-being and cultural identity for Galway and nationally. There are a few notable differences emerging when comparing Galway data between 2019 and 2021 and between perceptions of the Galway and national populations.

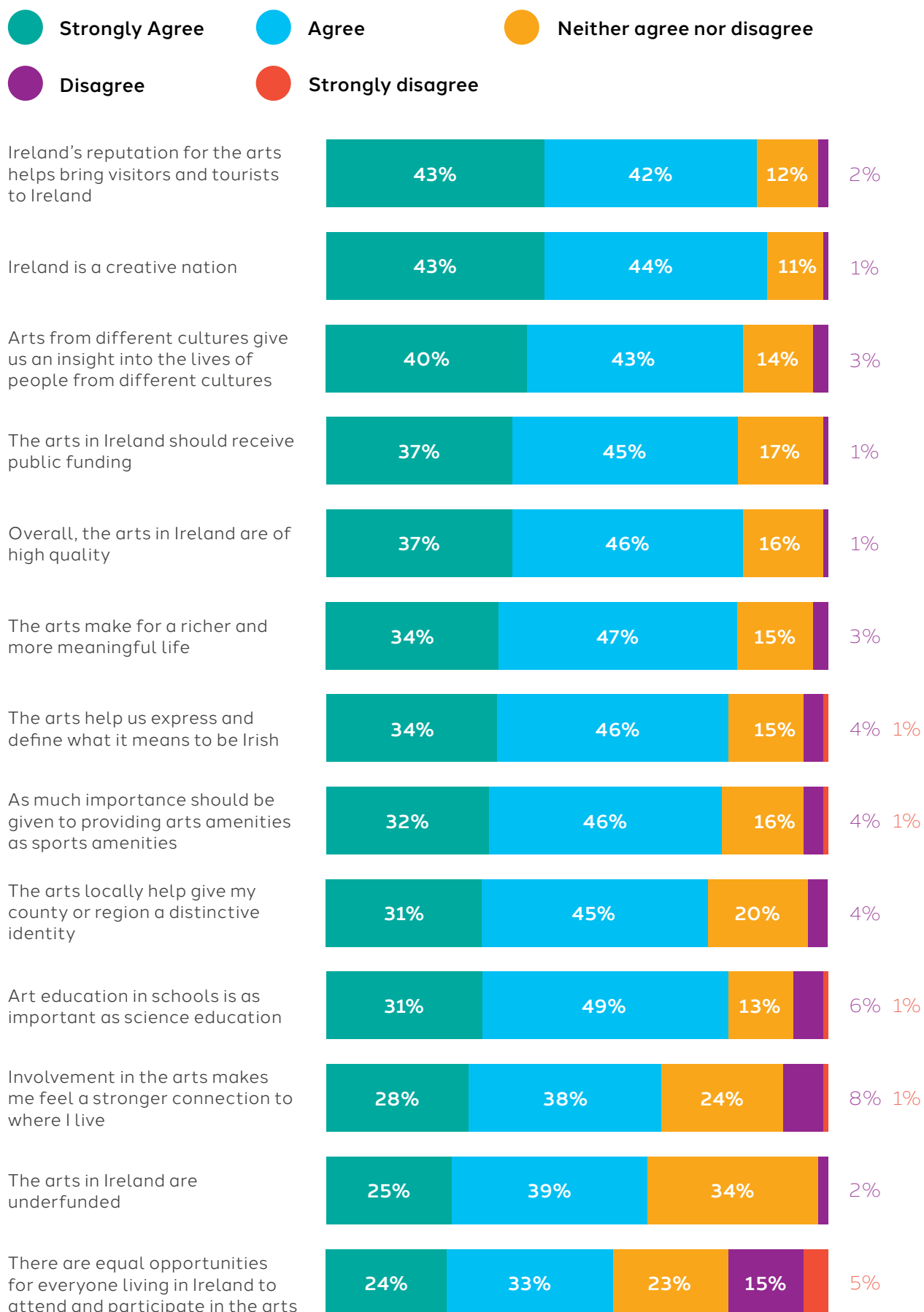
- The strength of feeling for Galway residents that ‘the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life’ has increased by 6% between 2019 and 2021. For Galway residents it is also 6% higher than that of the national population in 2021.
- The role of arts in expressing regional or national identity continued to be important nationally and in Galway, with this felt more keenly again in Galway in 2021 compared to 2019. In 2021 Galway residents agreed ‘the arts locally help give my county or region a distinctive identity’ 9% more than the national view, having increased by 9% since 2019.
- Agreement that ‘the arts help us express and define what it is to be Irish’ was slightly higher for Galway than nationally.

This pattern of Galway residents valuing arts at a slightly higher level compared to the national picture in 2019 and 2021 continues in relation to more personal impacts: for example, to some extent in agreement with ‘arts from different cultures give us an insight into the lives of people from different cultures’.

68 Source - Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

Chart: Galway residents – Attitudes to the arts (2019 data)

Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019



**Table: Galway and national residents
– Attitudes to the arts (2019 and 2021)**

	Year and location	ANY - Agree	ANY - Disagree
The arts make for a richer and more meaningful life	National 2019	79%	4%
	National 2021	81%	3%
	Galway 2019	81%	3%
	Galway 2021	87%	7%
The arts locally help give my county or region a distinctive identity	National 2019	76%	5%
	National 2021	76%	4%
	Galway 2019	76%	4%
	Galway 2021	85%	8%
Arts from different cultures give us an insight into the lives of people from different cultures	National 2019	85%	1%
	National 2021	82%	2%
	Galway 2019	83%	3%
	Galway 2021	89%	5%
The arts help us express and define what it is to be Irish	National 2019	82%	3%
	National 2021	81%	5%
	Galway 2019	80%	5%
	Galway 2021	86%	8%

Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019 and TAA: Population survey 2021 – Base from 364 to 1,303

Despite the disappointment that events were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, those who were culturally engaged in Galway – bookers, local arts attenders and Galway 2020 mailing list members – valued the continuation of the re-worked programme both from the point of view of the cultural sector and its wider implications for Covid-19 recovery⁶⁹

- 75% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘The continuation is a good response by the cultural sector to the Covid-19 pandemic’.
- 77% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘The continuation demonstrates the resilience of our cultural organisations and communities’.
- 74% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘The continuation has a role to play in the economic and social recovery of Galway through the Covid-19 pandemic’.

Celebrating the work of artists and cultural organisations

ECoC objective: Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation

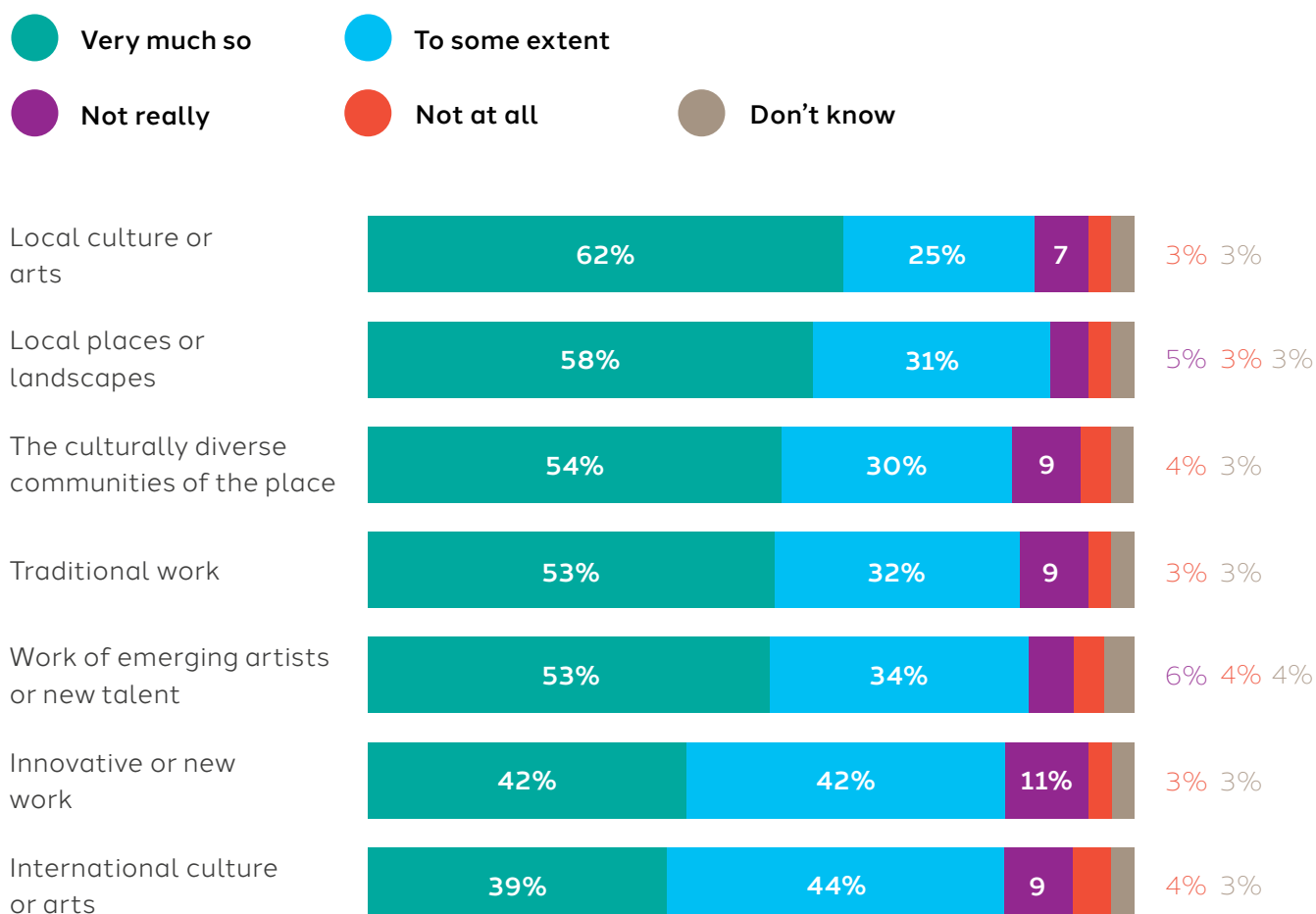
ECoC objective: Improve the international outlook of residents

In terms of expectations of an ECoC, as indicated in the 2021 population survey, there was a strong sense of agreement, from one in five of Galway and national residents, that Galway 2020 was an opportunity to celebrate the work of artists and cultural organisations from Galway, and equally the work of artists from Ireland as a whole and Europe and beyond, as well as other elements to do with innovation and new work.

69 Source: TAA Cultural Engagers Survey 2021

Chart: We are interested in your thoughts on what European Capitals of Culture should be. To what extent do you feel a European Capital of Culture should include opportunities to experience the following themes?

Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021 – Base 877.



When asked for the most important element from the themes presented, the responses followed a similar pattern, with the same top four options coming through. ‘Local places or landscape’ was of greater importance to those aged 55+ years and ‘the culturally diverse communities of the place’ was of more importance to 16 to 34 year olds. For those who did go on to attend Galway 2020 events in person, ‘Local culture or arts’ was more likely to be important.

This was reflected in audiences’ and participants’ experience of the Galway 2020 programme, with work created and/or delivered in partnership with artists and cultural organisations from Galway, Ireland, Europe and beyond – whether through the main programme, community engagement or the Small Towns Big Ideas projects.

“I suppose maybe we all might have been aware of the knitting kind of tradition coming out of the Aran Islands, but how they connected it to contemporary industries, really textile industries that do exist on the Aran Islands. I thought that was beautiful. Very clever.”

Audience member focus group participant [Project BAA BAA event attendee]

“I think it was a great opportunity for Galway artists...but there's a lot of artists that are living here who aren't from Galway. So, you know, for them to be included would be appropriate as well...There's a lot of talent and Galway is renowned for the culture and the talent anyway. It was an ideal opportunity to portray it to Europe and the world.”

Non-attender focus group participant

“...when you think of the standards of what we actually have here... I'm open to seeing and it's great to see international visual art, which is my thing...I think Galway itself, even though it has a wealth of artists, and some very good visual artists, doesn't actually have venues for visual art. But it has great theatre, music, traditions ... And so I think they could have lent a bit more towards what we have here. But it is nice to have some of the international flavour.”

Audience member and participant, focus group participant

“Yeah, I think bringing international people, to some extent, helps...I think you need a mixture.”

Wave Maker, participant and audience member, focus group participant

“...it was a mixture of Irish and European artists. And then with the arts festival every year, there tends to be like quite a lot of European acts as well. So I think it [Galway 2020] kind of was maybe building on something that was there already.”

Audience member focus group participant

A project that illustrates works created and/or delivered in partnership with artists and cultural organisations from Galway is the Crossing The Line project led by Blue Teapot Theatre Company, which developed international connections with several leading European arts and disability organisations. Along with six partner organisations from Sweden, Poland, Netherlands, England, Wales and France, Blue Teapot worked towards the Crossing The Line festival with over 100 Irish and European artists and theatre makers. The festival was reimagined and reconfigured as a digital mini-series themed ‘The Festival that never was, the celebration that is’.



Crossing the Line - Jenny Cox in Dancing at Lunasa

Crossing The Line

Produced by Blue Teapot Theatre Company

April and May 2021

Locations Galway City and Online

Web [Crossing the Line](#)

Originally planned for May 2020 the Crossing The Line festival by Blue Teapot Theatre Company and its international partners was reimagined and reconfigured as a digital mini-series themed 'The Festival that never was, the celebration that is'. The digital mini-series highlighted a nine-year span of work, reflecting the origins and evolution of the Crossing The Line project and the development of Blue Teapot's international connections with several leading European arts and disability organisations. Along with six partner organisations from Sweden, Poland, Netherlands, England, Wales & France, Blue Teapot worked towards their most ambitious project yet – the Crossing The Line festival with over 100 Irish and European artists, and theatre makers. This digital mini-series captures their journey from project inception, through project development, navigating the challenges of the pandemic and arriving at a reimagined vision for the festival reflecting the changed world we now live in.

Bringing people and communities together

There was a general sense by Galway residents that the ECoC designation was something of which they could be proud. Looking back on Galway 2020, the population survey carried out in 2021 showed that there was still a high level of pride that the European Capital of Culture was held in Galway, despite the challenge of Covid-19. Of those that recalled hearing about Galway 2020, 83% nationally, ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the statement ‘I am proud that the European Capital of Culture was held in Galway’.⁷⁰

“I feel very proud that Galway was chosen to be the European Capital of Culture. I think they worked very hard to get it...They went all out to try and include everybody.”

Audience member focus group participant

“There’s been a lot of work put into it. And there was pride in like, the fact that Galway was awarded that.”

Participant and audience member, focus group participant

“If it hadn’t been for Covid, there would have been thousands and thousands of visitors and it would have impacted our economy in a very positive way.”

Audience member focus group participant

Earlier in 2020, there was a sense of “the positivity and the commitment and people willing to get involved and be a part of it” (Audience member focus group participant) and 69% of audiences and participants ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘Galway 2020 is an opportunity for the people of Galway to come together’.⁷¹

The 67 Small Towns Big Ideas projects were at the heart of engaging local communities across Galway, with 72% of projects ‘engaging the diversity of communities in Galway’ and 95% of projects ‘providing an opportunity for people in my area to experience something new and different’.⁷²

“There was a pride in the locality that our community were involved in some way even if many people didn’t exactly get directly involved themselves. They were proud that Ballygar was on the map.”

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

70 Source: TAA Population Survey 2021

71 Source: TAA Audience and Participant Survey, 2020–2021

72 Source: TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021

The Wave Makers programme provided volunteers with an opportunity to meet new people and build a sense of community; 97% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' they 'met new people' and 90% 'felt part of a community or group with similar interests'.⁷³

"Togetherness, and for me, the new thing is community...people from all walks of life doesn't matter if you were young, or disabled or whatever. Everybody's just working together."

Wave Maker focus group participant

Volunteers not only felt part of a community within the programme, but 97% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' it 'provided an opportunity to do something for the Galway community'.⁷⁴ This was reflected in the continuation of the activity in the reimagined volunteer programme from July 2020.

Galway 2020 also supported community leadership, particularly through the Small Towns Big Ideas projects, with 70% of project leads 'identifying future opportunities to continue work in a community' and 55% saying they had developed 'a leadership role for the benefit of a community'.⁷⁵

"Taking on overall leadership from planning, organising vendors and community groups... production of event and responsible for the Finance side. It gave me a great confidence in my leadership ability... And the knowledge for creating projects in the future for the community."

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

The project developed leadership qualities in some of its project leads.

"Writing funding application, building and working with a team to plan and deliver the project, making changes as the project evolved, working with overseas partners"

Small Towns Big Ideas project lead

73 Source: TAA Wave Makers Final Survey, May 2021.

74 Source: TAA Wave Makers Final Survey, May 2021.

75 TAA Small Towns Big Ideas Project Lead Survey May 2021.

Positive impact on wellbeing

As indicated in the 2021 population survey, arts and culture generally is seen to have a positive effect on wellbeing and sense of connection or belonging to place across the population. Galway 2020 was also identified as having a particular role in improving mood and general wellbeing, for volunteers for instance, particularly in light of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 75% nationally ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘engaging with arts or creative activities either as an audience member or participant is good for my wellbeing’; this was higher in proportion for the younger age group 16–34 years at 79% compared to over 55 years at 73%.⁷⁶
- Levels of agreement with ‘involvement in the arts and creative activities makes me feel a stronger connection to where I live’, was higher in proportion for Galway at 82% compared to the rest of Ireland at 70%.

Table: Galway and national residents – Attitudes to the arts (2019 and 2021)

		ANY - Agree	ANY - Disagree
Engaging with arts or creative activities either as an audience member or participant is good for my wellbeing	National 2021	75%	3%
	Galway 2021	84%	8%
Involvement in the arts and creative activities makes me feel a stronger connection to where I live	National 2019	63%	11%
	National 2021	71%	6%
	Galway 2019	66%	9%
	Galway 2021	82%	9%

Source: TAA Population Survey 2021 and Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019 - Bases from 365 to 1,303

“It was really good fun. And we there was a lot of meeting new people. And everyone enjoyed it. And I think it really helped everyone with socialising after Covid.”

Small Towns Big Ideas participant, focus group participant

“If Covid has taught us anything it maybe has taught us that we need more than just our jobs, and our kind of daily existences in order to survive, we need a connection with other kinds of activities. We need to engage in things that are uplifting...may be music, generating music...festivals and celebrations of culture, like Galway 2020 are so important in all of that.”

Audience member focus group participant

⁷⁶ Source: TAA Population Survey 2021

With many elements of the programme being reimaged digitally or in person, supporting participation in creative activities became more challenging but with creative approaches employed, projects continued to engage with a wide range of participants. RISE for example, created the St. Pat's Lockdown Olympics, which involved sending materials directly to children's homes who then took part in an activity led by the team virtually.

Involvement in the Wave Maker programme over course of the Galway 2020 programme had a 'positive impact on volunteers' wellbeing' overall, with 88% who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed', while 71% said it 'boosted their mood during the Covid-19 pandemic'.

"There was so much going on, not just in the city, but out of the city as well. And it did turn out like that actually, I really enjoyed that."

Wave Maker focus group participant

Galway as a cultural destination

ECOC objective: Promote the city and its cultural programme

Promotion of the City and County by Fáilte Ireland accompanied Galway 2020's marketing and communications, with Galway 2020 added into the mix at international travel fairs as well as hosting familiarisation visits from international journalists (reference Section 7) in anticipation of the year. The range of designations in the years prior to the delivery year, e.g. European Region of Gastronomy 2018, were also instrumental in attracting further international attention to Galway, alongside the European and international collaborations embedded across the programme.

However, due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is difficult to assess Galway 2020 in straightforward terms in relation to its impact on the visitor economy or Galway as a destination, as no international and few domestic visitors could be welcomed from March 2020 to April 2021. The impact of restrictions on international travel from 2020 into 2021 are reflected in a recent tourism industry barometer across Ireland in May 2021 which found nearly all bookings for accommodation to be from the domestic market with very little overseas bookings.⁷⁷

Though travel was restricted throughout the Galway 2020 programme, its profile as a cultural destination continued to increase with new listings in Conde Nast 2021 as one of the Top 10 Best Cities to Live in, while Galway City and the Aran Islands both feature in a new list by Lonely Planet of the 20 most incredible places to visit in Ireland. The travel guide names the Wild Atlantic Way as best for road trippers, with Galway City described as 'best for immersing yourself in Irish culture'.

As outlined in Section 9, it is also clear that Galway 2020 did reach a global audience digitally, which as a proportion of those who engaged is significant.

The place the creative and cultural sector can take in supporting the regeneration of the visitor economy and its future remains to be assessed through the coming years. Galway 2020 has demonstrated that a global cultural audience can be reached digitally, so the implications for the visitor economy in Galway as well as for cultural tourism more generally will continue to be debated in the months to come as the effects of the pandemic and climate change become an increasing concern.

77 Source: Fáilte Ireland and Strategic Research and Insights, Barometer Wave 1 – June https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Final-REPORT-Failte-Ireland-Barometer-Wave-1-June.pdf?ext=.pdf

Expectation of legacy

While the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the programme delivery in 2020-2021, the population survey in 2021 indicated that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, there was a strong sense that Galway 2020 was positive for the people of Galway and for the artists and creatives, and that its legacy was an opportunity for this cultural development to continue. The following percentages relate to those that recall hearing about Galway 2020 only.⁷⁸

- Overall in Ireland, 77% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘Galway 2020 was a good thing for the people of Galway despite the impact of Covid-19’. There were high proportions in agreement with this statement at 78% for Ireland compared to 71% in Galway.
- As outlined previously, a similar pattern was seen for those who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘Galway 2020 will leave a positive legacy for arts and creativity in Galway’ with 75% nationally, compared to 76% in the rest of Ireland and 64% in Galway.
- There was slightly higher agreement with these statements for the over-55s compared to the 16-34 age group.

There were a number of areas highlighted by audiences and participants which they would look forward to in the legacy of Galway 2020, which reflect those outcomes which were felt to be particularly impactful:⁷⁹

- A physical or visible thing that reminds people that Galway 2020 was a European Capital of Culture, the Fire Tour spheres were referred to in this context.
- In the context of, “*hopefully, going forward, culture can be something that helps us recover.*” (Audience member focus group participant) audiences were suggesting that they are looking for more creative experiences like those experienced during Galway 2020 to support their wellbeing.
- Continued investment in culture, framed as, “*A bit of investment in culture can go a long way to impact the lives of people.*” Audience member focus group participant.
- Volunteering at venues, exhibitions, events and to welcome visitors.
- Supporting community organisations and culture in towns.
- Hybrid digital and physical experiences.
- Opportunities to have new experiences and meet new people.

78 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021.

79 Source: TAA Audience Focus Group, 2021.

14

Commentary

A note on this evaluation

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture, like all cultural activity, was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns and regulations. However, the initiative was more than the year itself, as work on the Bid Book started in 2015 and the legacy of Galway 2020 will continue beyond 2021. The evaluation accounts for this, as well as assessing the activity of the year itself. It is difficult to speculate on what might have been and this report tries to avoid doing so. On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has illuminated issues and outcomes which might not have been otherwise obvious.

The evaluation has revealed a spectrum of opinion and findings, as well as some strong opinions, that represent the strengths and weaknesses of Galway 2020. The feedback received from individuals involved in Galway 2020 was generous, varied and useful, and the evaluators thank them for their time, honesty and insight.

During the evaluation process, occasional mention was made about media and other commentary about Galway 2020. It has been difficult in the evaluation to assess its accuracy or validity and this evaluation does not include media analysis. Therefore, the evaluation does not include detail or judgement about this commentary except to note that it was raised by some of those consulted.

Programme development and capacity building

Looking at Galway 2020 from the earliest stages, the Bid Book development process was widely regarded as positive, being collaborative, visionary and relevant. The level of ambition was high, perhaps indicating a level of idealism or a sense of purpose to 'win' the bid. This had consequences, as expectations were set high at an early stage, with Galway 2020 being continually measured against high aims. These were originally articulated within a budget of €45m, with the final expenditure being approximately half that at €22.7m.

Nevertheless, the spirit and imagination of the Bid Book process was frequently mentioned, as was a feeling that it was not capitalised on in the following years. Such a phenomenon, in the evaluators' experience, is not uncommon in projects of this type. In the particular case of Galway 2020, there are various reasons which were mentioned by those consulted for this evaluation, including slowness of development of programme activity following designation; leadership changes between 2017 and 2018; lack of involvement after designation of those who had been instrumental in the Bid Book development and changes in budget allocation.

The model for delivery was layered, including work produced directly by Galway 2020, work produced by Cultural Partners and a programme involving Small Towns Big Ideas and other community-based projects. As a result of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, a decision was taken for the year itself to be largely focused on the work produced by Cultural Partners, supported by the Galway 2020 team. The impacts of the pandemic also resulted in a much smaller number of directly produced central events by the organising body Galway 2020 itself, than had been envisioned. Three quarters of the overall activities were produced by the Cultural Partners, 16% through the Small Towns Big Ideas projects, 5% produced directly by Galway 2020, 3% within the Community Engagement programme strand and 1% the 8 regional projects.

One of the factors that contributed to the success of Galway 2020 was the longevity in delivery, with time for the projects to be conceived, planned and delivered. At the same time, a frequent criticism from Cultural Partners related to the way they felt they had been encouraged to be 'more ambitious' in the early stages of the initiative (in 2017-2018), changed their plans accordingly, and then found that the amount of funding available was not what had been anticipated for such ambition. Less positive feedback also came from those who felt that their ideas and planning had been frustrated and interrupted by a lack of clarity over the type of project that was needed.

Linked to this, communication seemed to be problematic in several ways. Many felt uninformed about the progress of Galway 2020 and their role within it, especially during 2017 and 2018. This happened at a time of changes in leadership personnel leading to a loss of the early excitement. It also meant that some local partnerships, such as with business and tourism, were not capitalised on, with some feeling uninformed. This not only meant that further projects struggled to be developed, but it also helped engender a 'rumour-mill' of difficulties surrounding the project.

It was clear that despite differences of approach and type, many of the cultural organisations had developed a collegiate sense of working together. Indeed, Cultural Partners cited how they would have liked to have had more occasions to meet and network and find collaborative connections, although the logistics of how they would have liked to have this facilitated effectively is less clear. This remains an opportunity which can be further exploited in the legacy of Galway 2020 and is also a consideration for future European Capitals of Culture.

There were some partnerships formed with the business community. They contributed €1.1 million, including around half 'in kind', although this was significantly less than had been envisaged. Early networking meetings were regarded as positive and promising, facilitated by organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce. However, ultimately this appears to have been an area of under-achievement. Then, with the onset of the pandemic, further possibilities that might have been explored were curtailed.

However, the findings of this report demonstrate that Galway 2020 delivered many excellent cultural events and activities in extremely difficult circumstances. In the year itself, there was impressive adaptation, resilience and creative responses to the most extreme of conditions. In addition, audiences and participants consistently demonstrated a positive response to the events and activities of Galway 2020 with which they engaged.

Impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on programming/cultural capacity

Cultural organisations converted themselves from performers and exhibitors in physical spaces and places to online digital or media producers or adapted their work so it could be engaged with in socially distanced ways. For example, there were several projects that were produced as installations or murals in public spaces, developed as films or took place through online participation as a response to the limitations imposed. The skills developed have themselves become part of the capacity building within cultural organisations in Galway.

Community-led/involvement

The Small Towns Big Ideas strand of work involved a range of artistic projects taking place around the city and county. These took place in situ, using the talents of people based locally and often co-created with the community. They can be commended for involving people who would not normally participate in artistic projects and were from Galway's diverse communities, representing depth of engagement and quality outputs, taking place away from the 'bright lights' of the city centre, and also drawing on artists who might not normally work in this context.

The volunteer - 'Wave Makers' - scheme was positively regarded, both by the Wave Makers themselves and those working with them. Even after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic the Wave Makers continued, albeit in a different form, with more than 300 carrying on till the end of the project. They received training and became part of a supportive network that adapted to the circumstances of the pandemic. Although their role changed during 2020, they were still able to take part and help with many of the projects that did take place. Crucially, they developed their own activities such as podcasts on the Galway 2020 themes of language, landscape and migration, and a photography project featured on the 'Europe At Home' website (Faro 2027). It was also an area of work that demonstrated diversity, with participants finding a home to share their backgrounds and stories, with many having moved to Galway from other places in Ireland or abroad.

European dimension

The European dimension of Galway 2020 had an output that was different from the original plans. In particular, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that there could be few visitors during the year itself, whether European, Irish or from elsewhere. Furthermore, it was difficult for some artistic and organisational exchanges to take place. Nevertheless, Galway 2020 was able to fulfil its European ambitions in other ways. For example, there were several projects related to the Irish language which were located in a wider European context of 'minority' languages, revealing its heritage, contemporary usage and connection with wider aspects of Irish culture. Many projects worked with artists from Europe who made valued artistic and cultural contributions. There were also many delegations and exchanges between Galway and other ECoCs past and present, such as Leeuwarden 2018 and Rijeka 2020. Prior to the year itself there were also international meetings such as that of Fresh Street or IETM. In the year itself, the European artistic collaborations continued digitally online rather than in person.

The population surveys undertaken prior to and following the year demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a European Capital of Culture as well as an appreciation of the status such a designation provides for Ireland and Galway. There had been an ambition to assess the concept of an increased sense of 'Europeanness' coming through the year and whilst the circumstances of Galway 2020's delivery made it difficult to research and understand this connection, the evaluation shows that overall Galway 2020 was appreciated for its Europeanness. It would also appear that the very idea of the ECoC designation from an early stage encouraged partners to look beyond Ireland to explore the European opportunities available, something which is likely to have a legacy beyond the year itself.

Engaging audiences

Engagement with the Galway 2020 programme between 2016 and 2021 included 130,407 in person audience engagements, 863,911 digital engagements, 6,149 in person participant engagements and 1,287 digital participant engagements for 1,285 events and activities.

One of the areas that has distinguished Galway from many other ECoCs is the way it delivered a programme outside of the city, in rural areas. Ultimately, 24% of the activities and events were located in the County, 8% in the City and 22% in both City and County (others were located in Europe or elsewhere).

Despite reported difficulties in relation to the potential impact of the communications, the wider public in Galway and beyond were largely aware of Galway 2020 and what it was. In the Arts Council survey of 2019⁸⁰, 86%, of those in Galway City and County had heard of it; nationally, the figure was lower at 56%. In the population survey in 2021⁸¹, 92% in Galway and 42% in the rest of Ireland recalled hearing about Galway 2020.

For people who had heard of Galway 2020 they also indicated a desire to attend. Of those who recalled hearing about Galway 2020, 13% said they went to an event in person and 20% engaged with an event digitally. A further 42% said they had intended to attend but were unable to because of the pandemic. The Cultural Partners estimated that audience engagements with their work would have been over 300,000 (compared to 130,407) if it had not been for the Covid-19 pandemic; many of the events that were cancelled were large-scale public events that were likely to have engaged larger numbers of people. The evidence available implies that the biggest losses of attendance came from the rest of Ireland, especially Dublin. There would also likely have been a large attendance from abroad, but it was not possible to assess how much within this evaluation.

Of those who did engage with Galway 2020 events in some way, there was a high degree of appreciation and satisfaction. This is reflected in the event attender surveys, focus groups and in the population survey 2021, on a scale of 1 to 10, 94% rated their experience positively (7-10 out of 10) and of this, 52% rated it 10. Comments in the surveys showed that the main disappointments were around not being able to go to more events due to the pandemic.

80 Source: Arts Council, Arts Insight: The National Arts Engagement Survey, 2019

81 Source: TAA Population Survey, 2021

Performance of Galway 2020

Galway 2020 had to adapt to the radical circumstances of the pandemic. External circumstances dictated that it could not achieve all of its planned outcomes as originally articulated, but it was able to deliver a wide-ranging programme based on the Bid Book.

In addition, looking at past ECoCs, the impacts of the delivery ‘years’ themselves were often significant in enabling prior scepticism to be overcome. For Galway 2020 it is only possible to evaluate what did happen. Aside from its particular achievements or disappointments, it is clear that there are lessons for all such initiatives which are outlined in this report. In light of the pandemic and with consideration for climate change as well as its diversified mode of delivery, Galway 2020 sets up some interesting questions for similar initiatives in terms of how they are planned, delivered and placed within ongoing strategies.

In the end, Galway 2020 was unable to achieve its full potential. However, the project and its partners showed a high degree of resilience, flexibility and imagination to make the project happen. Much of its achievement was less visible, taking place between artists or digitally, and should be assessed in terms of the quality of engagement realised for all stakeholders, and the longer-term legacy for Galway.

Casting Forward – future needs

For Galway

- The people of Galway have demonstrated a big appetite for the production, engagement and participation in culture during the Galway 2020 initiative. It is important to capitalise on this moment, building on the foundations and successful elements of Galway 2020 and looking to those ideas which are still to be fulfilled or created. The legacy plan will be a welcome step forward, but it needs support from Galway City and County Councils, the Department, the Arts Council and other stakeholders to make sure it reaches its full potential.
- The cultural organisations of Galway have demonstrated their capacity for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurialism but in order to make the most of this and to take it to a higher level, it needs co-ordination. There is a strong desire for more networking and the development of new partnerships, with a stakeholder or other person/body being required to take responsibility for facilitating this to happen.
- Capacity building amongst a range of those involved such as cultural organisations, producers, artists, volunteers and community groups needs to continue. This can build on skills developed during Galway 2020 such as producing work online, audience development, evaluation, project management and fundraising/business planning.
- The Wave Makers project has capacity to continue and develop, but attention should be paid to the reasons for its success, which include the way that sharing, training and contributing to the life of Galway were integral elements, as were leadership and the breadth of opportunity for participants. It should not be considered a source of cheap labour or have peoples' involvement taken for granted.
- There were many successful community engagement projects, especially in rural areas. These are often small set ups, led by volunteers (often creative practitioners) who are local and committed, but developing projects and activity in addition to their 'day jobs'. There is an opportunity for these to continue and whilst some will progress of their own momentum, in order to realise their potential, they need support, advice and funding. A further consideration is the way in which established cultural organisations with paid professional staff might be able to partner community groups.
- Where new models of working, such as in producing/co-creating/partnering or collaborating, have been developed, these can be 'captured' and disseminated, with the learning becoming part of the legacy.
- The practices developed, both individually and collectively, have much to show the rest of Europe, including those ECoCs that are considering involving a wider area beyond the 'city'. There is potential for interesting local-European connections, between organisations in professional and community contexts.
- Projects inspired by the different cultures and places of the West of Ireland were often small and less visible, but they were projects that were distinctive and original. There is an opportunity for these to be shared and connected further and for more such initiatives to be created. They could also become part of wider partnerships across Europe, working with similar sorts of themes such as minority languages, social justice or the effect of climate change on landscape.
- Some cultural organisations were recipients of European funding and collaborated

widely. The embedding of these projects in the cultural landscape of Galway and the generation of further European initiatives is vital to exploit the full potential of Galway 2020 as a European Capital of Culture.

- There is a clear need for monitoring and evaluation to become core practice in Galway. This includes a variety of elements: ongoing data collection, regular reporting and learning processes, at individual organisation and stakeholder level. Having a proper evidence base will enable improvement in practice, help defend and advocate for the sector and provide a basis for funding, as well as achieving organisational development and diversifying artist and public engagement.
- Galway 2020 demonstrated that it can engage a wide range of audiences and participants and there were some notable individual successes, but key ideas of audience development are not widely understood or frequently practiced in Galway. This is an important area for capacity building and there is a need for it to be a bigger strategic priority locally and nationally.
- The way that artistic activity was presented digitally and online within Galway 2020 is a natural legacy to be pursued. Aside from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to develop projects which are more environmentally sustainable is coming into focus. It is important therefore to look at what a 'hybrid' model will look like for Galway, especially in terms of public engagement.
- Infrastructure in different guises was something which many felt was a missed opportunity within Galway 2020 and there are several areas which have emerged during consultation as needs for the area. These are being taken on through the legacy planning and are not outlined specifically here. However, the need for combined spaces which could be used in different ways as artists' workshops, rehearsal spaces or media studios seem to be an obvious need in Galway.
- The involvement of young people in Galway 2020, especially in participatory ways, presents a natural area for progression. This might mean taking existing projects forwards or developing other projects of their type, both within the formal education system, through which many young people were introduced to Galway 2020 and arts and culture more generally, and outside the formal education system by cultural and other organisations. There are opportunities for more substantial projects to be developed, perhaps along the lines of an initiative such as a Creative Ireland programme. A natural area to include here is the position of digital in the mix and how this can be capitalised on for future initiatives and for creative career opportunities.

During 2021 the cultural sector and other stakeholders were consulted for the new City and County cultural strategies and these arts plans should capitalise on the outcomes and learnings of Galway 2020 and form part of its legacy approach.

For Ireland

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic raised many questions for society and culture globally and in the case of Ireland, this also came during the year of the European Capital of Culture which naturally focused attention on some key areas. It demonstrated the value of culture as a vital part of wellbeing. The Department, the Arts Council and other stakeholders have a challenge now to build on this, providing support at a local level.
- Whilst the impacts of the pandemic will pass, it raises other linked issues such as the environmental impact of culture. It has been assumed within ECoCs and similar initiatives that they should be encouraging visits within Ireland and internationally. During and after the pandemic, an emphasis on persuading people to travel within Ireland in line with prevailing public health requirements seems to have been successful. It indicates the likely success of domestic tourism based on the idea of discovering the undiscovered in your own country.
- There is a distinct need for a more substantial approach to data collection, evaluation and research in Ireland. Whilst there are some academic studies and occasional research projects, Galway 2020 demonstrated a lack of ongoing data collection and protocols and robust research and of the sharing of such information. The Arts Council research in 2019 was a good starting point and the surveys conducted by The Audience Agency as part of the Galway 2020 evaluation indicate their value. This needs to be a priority for The Department and the Arts Council and may also be part of the remit of Creative Ireland and other stakeholders.
- Cultural activity in rural settings is a challenge, but Galway 2020 showed how it could be done. This was a key success and therefore should not only be shared with future ECoCs but also built on in Ireland. Connecting urban and rural with digital online initiatives sitting alongside is another component of this. It also shows how culture and creativity can address challenging local issues and provide a means of delivering a range of social impacts.
- Many Galway 2020 projects had the Irish language as a key element. It demonstrated the demand and desire for such work which now requires more support and development.
- The roles of different governing bodies and stakeholders in Ireland require some clarification and greater liaison. In particular, the Arts Council, which might have taken a bigger role in Galway 2020, has an opportunity alongside the Department and Creative Ireland to look more closely at the way in which it encourages public engagement in culture. The Create Places scheme has great potential but other initiatives supporting and encouraging cultural organisations to consider audience development more substantially appears to be a gap.

- As noted in the Galway section, there are many legacies which can evolve from Galway 2020 ECoC which The Department and other stakeholders could support:
 - » Schools' engagement with culture – embedding programmes and initiatives.
 - » Infrastructure and other support for culture in Galway and elsewhere. This area needs more exploration but there are already initiatives such as Galway Community Circus's plan for a Centre for Funambulism.
 - » There are new models of working and innovations within Galway 2020 which need to be capitalised on and shared further afield, for example with other ECoCs.
- The Department has done well to support Galway 2020 during difficult times. A key element of this has been a focus on facts, evidence and transparency. The challenge now is to ensure that this continues to be an essential part of making the case for culture in Ireland.

For the operation of European Capitals of Culture

- The difficulties that European Capitals of Culture face, as well as the benefits they bring, have been well documented over the years, and this is now another important moment for reflection. The Covid-19 pandemic has focused attention on the nature of physical or online delivery as well as on the consequences arising from changes in the nature of travel. Climate change points to new questions about the link with the visitor economy which may require new models. Smaller scale exchanges, virtual and online interaction and working with immigrant/ settled residents to consider Europe and European connections in a different sort of way are implied.
- Given the changing nature of travel and of the visitor economy, it will also be necessary for ECoCs to review the frame for Economic Impact, which is still traditionally based on visitor spend in a place.
- The monitoring and advice of the ECoC panel was well appreciated, but there is room for more and different advice. The gap between the first and second monitoring reports is too long and it was during this period (March 2017 to July 2018) that stakeholders perceived a lack of momentum in the project. There was also a suggestion from those most closely involved in the project that ongoing advice of official representatives from the European Commission / ECoC panel would reduce the need for independent consultants..
- Galway (as did Rijeka) decided to start its year in February, but the implications of ECoCs being based on a calendar year mean it usually starts in winter which can be difficult, not only in terms of the weather but other difficulties of starting shortly after a festive season. There is scope for the ECoCs to be given more flexibility over the timeabling of the way the year itself takes place.

- Galway is a big city within Ireland but compared to other previous European Capitals of Culture it could be considered smaller. How far it is a deliberate strategy for ECoCs to be in smaller cities or areas is unclear, but smaller areas have different assets and capacities and have different needs.
- Galway 2020 has shown how important the rural can be, but it frequently has different strengths which are to do with quality community engagement. It is important that in future years, as smaller places and areas with more rural populations are considered, that ECoCs are discouraged from the need to demonstrate 'big numbers'. Galway points a way to the weight of evidence for ECoCs to be measured in ways beyond the numerical.
- The place of audience development with ECoCs needs to be clearly articulated as to what is expected, encouraging capitals to consider how the different parts of the population are to be engaged, not just through communication or education strategies but within the overall programme. Segmentation of audiences needs to be based on a range of characteristics, be based on reality and not subsumed to purely demographic or social labelling.
- An important debate which the Galway 2020 evaluation prompts has been the appropriate mix of centrally set up and produced events and activities, compared to provision by the existing sector organisations. In places such as Galway, which already has a strong cultural sector, it is important that the ECoC works with that sector, helping to augment, develop and amplify, for example by developing European connections, rather than imposing a new framework on the area. It is acknowledged that this is difficult to achieve in practice and different views were found within the evaluation process as to the exact role of an artistic/creative director.
- The Galway 2020 organisation was an independent organisation (i.e. not part of the local authority) which has advantages in terms of freedom from bureaucracy or political constraints. It has some potential problems, however, in terms of political or public ownership and integration of legacy into local strategy. The ECoC panel might need to reconsider what might be the best sorts of recommended model(s) for administration and governance.
- The way that a European Capital of Culture should be described has received attention and consideration at a European level, but this needs to be well articulated at a local and national level. This is a difficult task to achieve, but designations would benefit from instruction as to how this should be communicated, including clarity over describing the amount of European funding such a title receives.
- The pressure to be successful in designation naturally leads to big ambition at the Bid Book stage. As noted in the evaluation conclusions, this can lead to disillusionment about what is achieved. Encouraging ECoCs to be realistic as well as ambitious would be helpful for future capitals.

- Whilst in Ireland there is good experience of managing major initiatives it should be realised that an ECoC involves managing a ‘mega’ one-off initiative and there may not be local experience. There is naturally a skills gap which needs addressing and a necessity for the learning of each year to be passed on to subsequent years. As the evaluation process of ECoCs becomes more fundamental, it is also vital that learning related to this is passed on down the line.
- It is important to encourage ECoCs to think of their years as catalysts rather than a one-off celebration, and therefore the legacy must be integral to the whole process, with ECoCs required to dedicate resourcing and a plan to its legacy. It is about changing the dialogue rather than reaching a conclusion and this needs to be central to the essence of European Capitals of Culture in the future.



European Capital
of Culture



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
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