

A stylized globe in light grey is the background, surrounded by several large, vibrant paint splashes in red and yellow. The splashes are of various sizes and orientations, creating a dynamic and energetic feel. The word 'léargas' is written in a red, serif font across the center of the globe.

# léargas

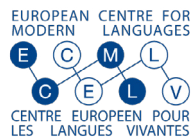
ANNUAL REPORT

2015



# léargas

Léargas manages national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, youth and community work, vocational education and training, and adult education.





# léargas

Insight through exchange

2015

**10m+**  
in Funding

**160+**  
Projects

**5**  
Sectors

Adult Education  
School Education  
Third Level  
VET  
Youth

**10**  
Programmes

**6500+**  
People

# Foreword

## Michael McLoughlin Chair of the Léargas Board



“We hope the programmes we deliver enhance people’s ability to make sense of a rapidly changing world”

The last year has been an interesting time in Ireland and Europe. At home we saw much change with Ireland becoming the first country in the world to adopt marriage equality by popular vote. Around Europe we unfortunately witnessed a huge crisis with the influx of refugees and asylum seekers illustrating once again that world and European events are intrinsically linked to our day-to-day lives here. In our own small way we hope that the programmes we deliver broaden and enhance people’s ability to make sense of a rapidly changing world.

EU policies are placing a greater emphasis on responding to the challenges of the refugee and asylum crisis and the main programmes we offer are no different. These challenges will confront all our client groups in working with young people, in schools, in vocational education, in languages and with adult learners. Recently at EU level the President of the European Commission has launched a consultation on a renewed Pillar of Social Rights, and EU programmes should play a major part in this.

Another year saw another office move, which we hope will be the last in a while! All the staff and our stakeholders are to be commended on their forbearance and co-operation in this area. Notwithstanding this, we continue to enhance our client focus and can use our new premises to ensure maximum engagement in our programmes. We also continue to increase the focus on outcomes in our work, and have enhanced the visual and online presentation of our work in the last year.

At the time of writing we have a new Government and a new Minister in Ireland. We look forward to a continuing partnership and indeed enhanced support for our work from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, particularly with more room in the public finances.

As always I would like to thank and pay specific tribute to the Board and staff of the organisation who go above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis.

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# Message from the Director

**Jim Mullin**  
**Executive Director**



“We had  
100% funding  
allocation  
... and excellent  
quality  
outcomes”

2015 was a very busy year for Léargas. New programmes like EPALE came on board, some of our established programmes celebrated 10 and 20 years of ongoing work, and there was more ‘bedding down’ of Erasmus+, the main programme that we manage.

Erasmus+ implementation was very successful in Ireland in 2015, despite some ongoing administrative difficulties with IT tools! We had 100% allocation of funding across the sectors we manage in Léargas, and not only was the funding successfully distributed to participants but the outcomes of the projects they created were of excellent quality (see the project ‘stories’ later in this report or check the [Léargas blog](#) for more). Strategic Partnerships, which are one of the modified approaches in Erasmus+, had a great take-up in all sectors, while Mobility projects are increasing from year to year. However, our analysis of 2015 participation identified that there is certainly still untapped potential in Erasmus+ that could be used to support apprenticeships and work placements in the VET sector – something that is very much in keeping with the aims of [Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025](#). We intend to focus on highlighting this opportunity to our colleagues in the sector in 2016.

Sharing the message about the potential of Erasmus+ (and our other programmes) is very much a part of our [Strategy Statement 2015-2017](#), as is providing support to all those who wish to take part. The approach we set out in our strategy and in the operational plans that flow from it received particular praise from the European Commission’s review of our Erasmus+ work plan. The Commission also noted how well we had implemented our plan, despite ongoing staffing

shortages. This would not have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of the depleted Léargas staff team and I wish to thank them sincerely for their efforts in making our programmes work so well for so many people.

Tracking how Erasmus+ works was another aim of our strategy and we set ourselves the task of developing a Performance Framework for the programme. In 2015, we submitted our proposed framework to the DES for approval; our staff received training in its implementation; and we workshopped it with programme participants at the annual [Léargas Forum](#) in December 2015. Our expectation is that, pending changes in staffing, we will be able to introduce the framework later in 2016.

As well as devoting much of our time to Erasmus+, we were delighted to be appointed the National Support Service for EPALE in 2015. We also looked at working with colleagues in the Education Authority of Northern Ireland to create and implement a cross-border education initiative based on Peace IV funding.

While looking forward to new programmes and initiatives, we also celebrated 10 years of eTwinning and 20 years of Eurodesk. In 2016 we will focus on 20 years of the European Voluntary Service, while Léargas itself will celebrate 30 years in the business of managing European funding to enable Irish citizens gain good outcomes in education, training and youth work. Throughout that time, the Léargas Board, in all its incarnations, has served the agency well, as have the Department of Education and Skills and the Department for Children and Youth Affairs: I thank all our colleagues for their support, not just in 2015 but down through the years, and I look forward to many more fruitful years of working together.



# Summary of Accounts



Project	Income (€)	Expenditure (€)	Retained surplus/ deficit for the year (€)
Youth & Adult Education	533,174	533,174	0
Schools & VET	710,152	710,152	0
Communications	451,745	451,745	0
Operations & Finance	877,196	877,196	0
Miscellaneous	478,738	478,738	0
NCGE	799,508	799,508	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,850,513</b>	<b>3,850,513</b>	<b>0</b>



# Reports



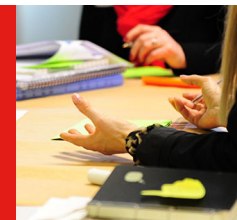
**Directors' Report**



**Chairman's Report**



**Léargas Committees**



**NCGE Report**



# 2015 Highlights

## January

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### Happy anniversary!

2015 marked the tenth year of eTwinning and the 20th of Eurodesk. Schools around the country organised anniversary events—with cake!—for eTwinning day, while Eurodesk celebrated at the 'Time to Move' event in September.

## May

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### Our new website goes live

The revamped, responsive leargas.ie website went live, complete with a new look, blogs, event calendar, programme 'how to...' guidelines, and integrated social media feed. By the end of the year we had connected with more than 2,000 users on Twitter and Facebook!

## June

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### European Youth Mobility Cert launch

Our NUI Certificate in European Youth Mobility Project Management,



developed with colleagues in NUI Maynooth, is the first specifically designed to develop expertise in this area. The first student cohort began their studies in September 2015.

## July

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### Erasmus+ Performance Framework

After significant consultation with external experts and participating organisations, we developed a self-assessment Performance Framework for Erasmus+. The framework will help

organisations to track and develop the impact of their projects. It was introduced to the wider beneficiary group at the Léargas Forum, and will be implemented in 2016-17.

## August

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### New 'Inclusion Officer' role

Trisha Dalton (now Wilkinson) from the Youth Unit became our first Youth Inclusion Officer. As part of the wider Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity strategy, Trisha helps applicants to overcome obstacles, supports organisations in developing high-quality, inclusive projects, and connects with new groups that could benefit from Erasmus+.

## September

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### European Language Label awards

Writer and world-traveller Manchán Magan presented the awards to six projects and three individuals for demonstrating outstanding skill in teaching and promoting languages. Ranging from a pioneering language



exchange scheme at university level to a passionate advocate for Irish sign language, all winners were commended for their part in using languages to 'widen the vision'.

### **European Day of Languages**

We marked the day by asking schools to imagine 'A Day in the Life of...' a historical figure, and write about it in the language they would have used. Lucan Community College, Dublin won with their German diary of Holocaust survivor Tomi Reichenthal. The prize was a trip to a European city and—thanks to the generosity of a local travel agent—the entire class was able to visit Bruges, Belgium!

## **October**

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### **EPALE Launch**

We introduced EPALE, the new Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, to the adult learning community in Ireland at our launch event in Croke Park. EPALE connects adult learning professionals across Europe and is a hub for news, reports, events and discussion.

### **IAESTE Trainee of the Year awards**

Eight Irish students related their life-changing experiences working in countries including China, Brazil, Iran and Germany over the summer. Winner Joseph Bollard did his traineeship in Split, Croatia, and said "Any organisation that brings together so many enthusiastic and innovative young people is doing something right!"

## **November**

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### **'Quality in VET' Seminar**

We welcomed fifty colleagues from nine countries to our first Transnational Cooperation Activity in the field of VET, discussing how to improve quality in all aspects of VET projects.

## **December**

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### **Léargas Forum**

Dancers from Inchicore CFE, singers from Hands in Motion Deaf choir, and a keynote speech from Father Peter McVerry inspired and moved us all at the second Léargas Forum. Experienced practitioners joined project workshops and discussions, while our afternoon showcase encouraged newcomers to explore the possibilities Léargas offers. In all, more than 150 people came together to connect and to celebrate international collaboration!





# Erasmus+

Changing lives, opening minds

# 4

Sectors

Adult Education  
School Education  
VET  
Youth

# €10.4m

Funding allocated in 2015

# 3

Key Actions

KA1: Mobility of Individuals  
KA2: Strategic Partnerships  
KA3: Support for Policy Reform

# 162

Projects

# 6,500

Participants

**2,584** KA1 participants across all fields

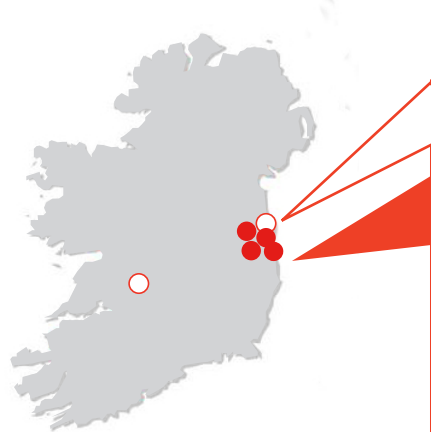
**3,251** KA2 participants across all fields

**668** KA3 participants across all fields

# Erasmus+ Adult Education

**€896,710**

Total Allocated Funding



## Mobility of Individuals

**Key Action 1 (KA1) €22,430**



**2**

Projects



**10**

Participants

### Mobility projects for adult education staff

This action allows organisations to send staff to other European countries to undertake a dedicated period of learning or professional experience, such as job shadowing, training, volunteering, or gaining work experience.

## Strategic Partnerships

**Key Action 2 (KA2) €874,280**



**4**

Projects



**179**

Participants

### Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships allow organisations active in adult education to cooperate with other relevant organisations to promote the development and use of innovative methods.

# Erasmus+ Adult Education



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## KA1



The Wild Atlantic Way stretches from the headlands of Donegal to the Ring of Kerry. More a journey than a destination, it is a route not only connecting Ireland's most stunning landscapes but also its people. Inspired by it, the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) of Donegal and Kerry joined together for their Erasmus+ Adult Education Key Action 1 project 'From the Wild Atlantic Way to North East Sicily'.

The project brought Adult Education staff from both ETBs together in north eastern Sicily to address shared training needs. Through group work, 'walk and talk' outings and problem-posing facilitation, the group explored themes such as working in an intercultural environment, motivation of adult educators and learners, the development of problem-solving skills as well as team-working skills and collaboration.

Working in the surrounds of Sicily provided an atmosphere that was for Martina Needham, the Basic Education Coordinator in Donegal ETB, "both motivating and conducive to engagement". Participants from Donegal and Kerry "worked, laughed, learned and shared together" and developed personal and working relationships which will ensure continued collaboration between both Basic Education Services along the Wild Atlantic Way for years to come.

[Read more about Martina's experiences on the Léargas blog.](#)

**Mobility of Adult Education staff**

**Donegal ETB & Kerry ETB**

**'From the Wild Atlantic Way  
to Northern Sicily'**

# Erasmus+ Adult Education



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## KA2



**Strategic Partnership (Adult Education)**

**Smashing Times Theatre Company**

**'Drama for Change'**

When Smashing Times Company manager, Freda Manweiler says “now let’s get on our feet!” the project partners involved in ‘Drama for Change: Creative approaches to promoting social inclusion’ do not hesitate to “push back the tables and form a circle”. This Strategic Partnership is all about using creative methods and interactive drama workshops to promote social inclusion, gender equality and inclusion when working with adult learners.

Drawing from their experiences working in cross-border peace and reconciliation projects in Ireland, this Irish drama company were keen to build and co-ordinate a larger cross-sectoral European project addressing the unfolding refugee crisis gripping our world. As Freda explains in her blog “Taking into account that Europe is now home to a great diversity of people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, we looked to develop a project that would build on the learning we gained working in Northern Ireland and the border counties”.

[Find out more about the project by reading Freda’s blog.](#)

# Erasmus+ School Education

## €2,903,915

Total Allocated Funding



### Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 1 (KA1) €440,122



## 18

Projects



## 204

Participants

### Mobility projects for school staff

This action allows organisations to send staff to other European countries to undertake a dedicated period of learning or professional experience, such as job shadowing, training, volunteering, or gaining work experience.

### Strategic Partnerships

Key Action 2 (KA2)

€2,463,793

Strategic Partnerships

€1,922,101



## 8

Projects



## 509

Participants

School-to-School Partnerships

€541,692



## 20

Projects



## 2,384

Participants

Strategic Partnerships allow organisations active in school education to cooperate with other relevant organisations to promote the development and use of innovative methods.



# Erasmus+ School Education



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## KA1



### Mobility of School Education staff

### St Paul's Primary School, Portlaoise

### 'Fellow Europeans Learning Through Collaboration'

St. Paul's Primary School is a senior boys' school in Portlaoise, Co. Laois with over 400 pupils and a very diverse student profile. In 2015, the school undertook an Erasmus+ KA1 project on the theme of Inclusive Education. Kieran Brosnan, Assistant Principal and Project Co-Ordinator, outlines the project and how the whole school now benefits from the experience.

"Our Erasmus+ experience was just an amazing and exciting learning journey where staff members got the opportunity to travel to Europe to undertake professional development opportunities. A positive aspect of Erasmus+ is that the school could source and select the activities that would best meet the needs identified in its European Development Plan.

The first stop was Riga, Latvia to attend a course for one week on European Diversity Education. Next was Madrid to attend a course on co-operative learning. This was followed by two school visits: one week in a school in Maribor, Slovenia and the other in Zonguldak, Turkey.

So, how has our school, its teachers and students benefited from this 12-month project? The one benefit that all the participants speak of is that

“Our travelling is finished but our project lives on in the life of the school”

they have developed empathy and understanding of the cultural background and individual needs of each child. This is something that they are now very conscious of in day-to-day life in the classroom.

On a professional level, the teachers have received an excellent professional development opportunity. Meeting and working with teachers from other European countries gave an added dimension to the training and allowed for the sharing of new ideas and practices. I can honestly say that attending these courses has been the best professional development I have ever undertaken.

The children in our school also see the benefits of the project. They are enjoying more diverse teaching styles and report that they really enjoy participating in the co-operative learning activities. We also now see cultural and linguistic diversity as a positive and we explicitly promote inclusion. The children, no matter their background, now feel valued and enjoy enhanced self-esteem.

Our travelling is finished but our project lives on in the life of our school. I cannot emphasise strongly enough what a marvellous opportunity an Erasmus+ project can be. I know that in the next school year I will be sitting down with a new application form so as to continue our marvellous European adventures!”

[Read more on the Léargas blog.](#)



# Erasmus+ School Education



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## KA2



**Strategic Partnership  
(School Education)**

**Show Racism the Red Card Ireland**

**'Training for Trainers'**

“At a time when the far right are calling for a ‘closure of all borders’ [...] it is vital that anti-racism knows no borders” (Ged Grebby, Show Racism the Red Card (SRTRC), UK). This Strategic Partnership project, ‘Training the Trainers’, is all about ensuring this.

The project harnesses the high profile of professional footballers to combat racism. Ex-professionals and education workers deliver anti-racism workshops in schools and youth groups in the partner countries. Sessions bring together students to challenge racist attitudes as well as bringing together teachers, principals and youth workers to discuss how best to tackle racism in their context.

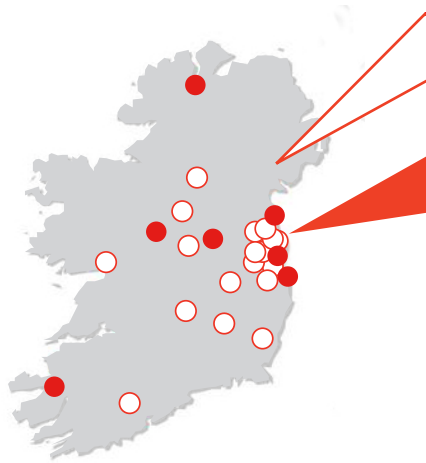
The partnership involves partners in Ireland, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland and Britain. SRTRC Ireland hosted an international meeting in 2015 and Garrett Mullan gives details on the Léargas blog about the issues discussed: teachers challenging racist terms; traveller young people engaging local politicians and others to support their message of making a stand against racism; and Football Associations developing strategies to overcome racism and sectarianism on the terraces.

[Find out more about the project on the Léargas blog.](#)

# Erasmus+ VET

## €3,869,990

Total Allocated Funding



### Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 1 (KA1) €1,724,797



**17**  
Projects



**726**  
Participants

### Mobility projects for staff and learners

This action allows VET organisations to send learners and/or staff to other European countries to undertake a dedicated period of learning or professional experience, such as job shadowing, training, volunteering, or gaining work experience.

### Strategic Partnerships

Key Action 2 (KA2) €2,145,193



**7**  
Projects



**28**  
Participants

### Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships allow organisations active in vocational education and training to cooperate with other relevant organisations to promote the development and use of innovative methods.

# Erasmus+ VET



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## KA1



Galway Technical Institute is using Erasmus+ VET KA1 funding to send close to 200 Vocational Education and Training students on placements across Europe. From areas as diverse as Fashion, Business, Art and Sport, Irish further education trainees are developing their skills in another European country as they work toward their NFQ Level 5 and 6 qualifications.

In 2015 the KA1 trainees blogged about their experiences abroad. Fashion students were surrounded by acrobats and dancers as the costumes they helped design debuted at Carnival in Spain; Sport students visited Celtic FC and explored “dynamic and fun ways to exercise to music through dance”. Others returned from Business placements having “gained many useful real-life skills that [they] can use in college and work”.

[Read all about the rich experiences of working and studying abroad on placement on our blog.](#)

**Mobility of VET Learners and Staff**

**Galway & Roscommon ETB**

**‘Mobility Abroad for  
Knowledge and Experience’**

# Erasmus+ VET



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## KA2



**Strategic Partnerships (VET)**

**CoderDojo**

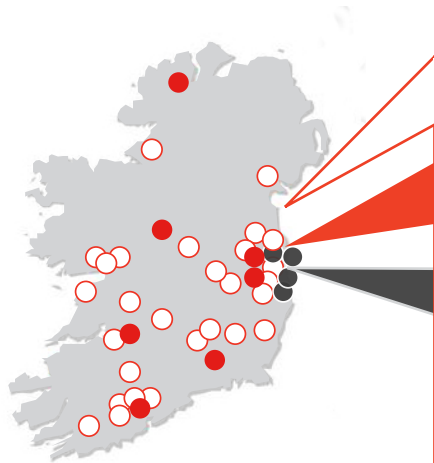
**'Training in ICT Programming Skills'**

Coderdojo is a global movement of free, volunteer-led, community-based computer programming clubs where young people aged seven to 17 explore technology in an informal and creative environment. Coderdojo Ireland are the lead partner in the 'Training in ICT Programming Skills' project, working with partners in Ireland, Spain and Poland. The project aims to identify how evidence of learning by CoderDojo participants might be recognised and to develop a CoderDojo International Toolkit.

Ross O'Neill, Community and Communications Lead at CoderDojo, says "Continued support from European programmes such as Erasmus+ is vital ... introducing coding into school curricula is a huge step in the right direction, as is making ICT training compulsory for incoming teachers. Supporting programmes like CoderDojo, held outside of the formal education system, gives European institutions a viable avenue for ensuring more youth are exposed to coding in a meaningful and creative way. CoderDojo provides an opportunity for children to maintain and further develop an interest in coding whether it was gained from taking part in Code Week or from a computational thinking class in school."

[Read more on the Léargas blog](#) and on [the Coderdojo website](#).

# Erasmus+ Youth in Action



## Mobility of Individuals

### Key Action 1 (KA1)

€1,740,390



74

Projects



1,644

Participants

This action enables organisations active in the Youth field to carry out Youth Exchanges, host and send volunteers on European Voluntary Service (EVS) and send youth workers to international learning opportunities.

## Strategic Partnerships

### Key Action 2 (KA2)

€942,312



9

Projects



179

Participants

Strategic Partnerships allow organisations active in Youth to cooperate to develop innovative methods. KA2 also includes Transnational Youth Initiatives organised by young people.

€2,751,048

Total Allocated Funding

## Support for Policy Reform

### Key Action 3 (KA3)

€68,346



3

Projects



668

Participants

KA3 promotes the active participation of young people in democratic life in Europe. It funds 'Structured Dialogue' between young people and policy makers.

# Erasmus+ Youth in Action



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## KA1



**European Voluntary Service**

**Good Energies Alliance Ireland**

**'Good Energies 2015'**

Good Energies Alliance Ireland is a voluntary organisation that promotes 'clean' energy sources and uses. In 2015 they hosted three EVS volunteers: Olga, an architect and graphic designer from Ukraine; Irina, an urban planner from Romania; and Santi, an environmental journalist from Spain. As well as working on position papers and developing GEAI's online presence, the volunteers helped to organise a major event called "Renewable Energies – Prosperous Communities" in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. Santi said of the experience:

"For somebody like me from an online communications background, promoting the conference was a little like stepping back in time. Live-streaming an event from rural Ireland is not the easiest thing to do, but like everyone else I overcame these difficulties and in the end the conference was the crowning moment of our time in Ireland. It was the culmination of many hours of hard work, with a very successful outcome.

The three of us had a great experience in Leitrim in 2015, and we want to wish the new EVS volunteers a year as rewarding as ours has been."

[Read more on the Léargas blog.](#)



# Erasmus+ Youth in Action



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## KA2



**Transnational Youth Initiative**

**FDYS**

**'Inspiration Exchange-  
Encouraging active citizenship'**

'How you gonna live your life?' is an important question for everyone, but particularly for young people. In early 2014 a group of ten young people from New Ross, Co. Wexford, came together with the name 'WHOT?!: We Have Opinions Too?!' Having all experienced negative stereotyping, they began to discuss 'whot' bothered them and what they might do about it. With the help of youth worker Nora Furlong, the group developed a strategic partnership project with ten young people from Gavoi in Sardinia, Italy. The groups connected at first by exchanging postcards, videos and quizzes, and then each created murals in their own towns expressing messages of equality, friendship, and creativity. The project built towards two transnational meetings, where each group hosted the other in their town. This was a platform for the young people to connect to their local community and beyond, using creativity to challenge negative stereotypes that young people often face. The groups documented their experiences with videos, photos, blogs and even a song asking that important question: how you gonna live your life?

After the project, Nora Furlong commented: "I think it had a massive impact on the next steps for the young people involved and the shape their lives

will take and how they will impact the lives of others". One Irish participant, Keri, put it this way: "I've learned so much about life in general. I've learned the effects of social injustice. It is important for us all to play a part and make a difference to the world. When there was something to do we always got it done, but we had an amazing experience as well as having the craic. I made new friends, new memories, and got myself a lot of confidence ... I always felt good and proud of what I achieved."

[Find out more on the Léargas blog](#) and at the [WHOT? Tumblr](#).



# Erasmus+ Youth in Action



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## KA3



**Support for Policy Reform**

**National Youth Council of Ireland**

**'Youth Empowerment for  
Political Participation,  
European Structured Dialogue'**

'Youth Empowerment for Political Participation' was the theme to be discussed by young people across the EU Member States during the Trio Presidencies of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg in 2015. In Ireland the National Youth Council of Ireland used KA3 to discover young people's perceptions of empowerment and how they could be put into action to help shape society: "One should never underestimate the importance of the start point for a project like this and for us it was about our 'belief'. We *believed* that young people should be more involved in political participation and we *believed* that young people wanted to be more involved in political participation!"

Our focus was about designing a process—or creating a journey—that would give young people an authentic experience of participation, where they could join the journey at any point and be able to look back on the road travelled and forward to the next destination. The vehicle that would take us on this journey was KA3: essentially the funding gives us the opportunity to support the conversations that need to happen between young people and policy makers in order to build momentum for positive change."

[Read about the whole journey and its destination on our blog.](#)

# LLP Programme 2007-2013



**€5,729,103**

Still funded in 2015

## Leonardo da Vinci

Vocational Education  
and Training

**€3,871,153**

 **41**  
Projects

**19** €342,000

Leonardo da Vinci  
Partnerships

**6** €1,658,768

Leonardo da Vinci  
Transfer of Innovation

**16** €1,870,385

Leonardo da Vinci  
Mobility

## Comenius

School Education

**€1,284,000**

 **67**  
Projects

**64** €1,230,000

Comenius School  
Partnerships

**3** €54,000

Comenius Bilateral  
Partnerships

## Grundtvig

Adult Education

**€573,950**

 **32**  
Projects

**30** €528,000

Grundtvig Learning  
Partnerships

**1** €14,000

Grundtvig Senior  
Volunteering Project

**1** €31,950

Grundtvig Workshop

# Youth in Action 2007-2013



## Youth Initiatives

### Action 1.2

€13,100



2

Projects



17

Participants

Youth Initiatives support group projects designed by young people at local, regional and national level. They also support the networking of similar projects between different countries, in order to strengthen their European aspect

## Youth Democracy

### Action 1.3

€35,888



1

Project



45

Participants

Youth Democracy Projects support young people's participation in the democratic life of their local, regional or national community, and at international level.

€231,280

Still funded in 2015

## European Voluntary Service

### Key Action 2.1

€182,292



8

Projects



29

Participants

The aim of the European Voluntary Service is to support young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the European Union.

# EPALE



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**“We want to collaborate with people outside of our bubble”**

There was something in the air when we launched EPALE in Ireland at Croke Park Conference Centre in November—and for once it wasn't rain, it was bubbles! The sixty stakeholders in adult learning who came to the event all received small glasses of champagne, which were in fact mini bubble-blowing kits.

Aside from their celebratory aspect, we asked the audience of adult learning tutors, project managers, directors and researchers to look at the bubble as a metaphor for what EPALE is trying to achieve. Emma Grainger, our EPALE executive, said: “We all work within our own bubbles to some extent. These may be the field of education we work in; the institution or organisation we are part of; our region; or even that we mainly work in a national context. It can be difficult to move outside these bubbles or to burst them. Hopefully when we see what EPALE has to offer, what is already on the site and what it can be used for, we will want to collaborate with people outside of our own bubble.”

Bubbles can also be a symbol for ideas, like the ‘thought bubbles’ we see coming from cartoon characters’ heads. Emma asked attendees not to let their own thought bubbles float away, but instead to gather them up and share them on EPALE.

[Read more on the EPALE blog.](#)

# eTwinning



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In 2015,  
there were  
close to 1100  
Irish schools  
registered with  
eTwinning

Just over ten years after its launch on 7 May 2005, eTwinning registered its 300,000th user. The online platform connects schools and develops collaborative learning for both teachers and students across the whole of Europe.

In 2015, close to 1100 Irish schools were registered with eTwinning. They marked the 10th anniversary in unique ways. At St Michael's Boys' NS in Mervue, Co. Galway, students went outdoors to form a massive circle around the letters 'EU', created an exhibition of their European work, and displayed the eTwinning Quality Label Awards the school has received over the years. "During the day all classes visited the hall and each pupil marked his country of origin with a pin. Derek Nolan TD spoke to the senior classes about the workings of the EU and hosted a question and answer session. Pupils were delighted to guide him around the exhibition and tell him about their work."

Meanwhile in Kilglass National School "pupils studied EU countries and capitals through various art activities...Senior classes designed birthday posters, and all children were treated to samples of food from EU countries...We had a Skype session with an eTwinning Spanish school and a quiz about EU capitals. However the biggest buzz for all ages was hand-decorating birthday balloons with various messages and logos: a unique way to celebrate the programme's success and to spread the eTwinning message at the start of its eleventh year. A fun day was had by all!"

[Read more on the Léargas blog.](#)

# Eurodesk



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Talks and  
workshops,  
stands and  
cupcakes!

There was a Minister (Kevin Humphreys TD), there were cupcakes... *and* over 70 young people, youth workers and volunteers as well as information stands run by Euroguidance, EURES, Eurodesk, Youth Information Centres and Voluntary Service International. What was it? It was our national event to mark Time To Move: a two-week annual event that runs across Europe to promote opportunities for young people to work, volunteer, study and train in Europe.

Eurodesk Ireland held the event on 25 September in the Carmelite Community Centre in Dublin, both to promote Time to Move and to celebrate 20 years of Eurodesk in Ireland (and 25 in Europe!). Eurodesk got great support in running the event from several Youth Information Services, Europe Direct Information Centres and SpunOut.

Talks from volunteers—Sheila Quigley who did a short-term placement in Macedonia, and Maria Mangaoang who volunteered in Slovenia—complemented European Voluntary Service (EVS) workshops. And a presentation from Youth Information Coordinator Helen Butler on the many and diverse benefits of international experiences set the stage for workshops on youth mobility.

[It was all captured and distilled into a fast-moving two-minute video by Diane Zamora Pastor, an EVS volunteer with Donegal Youth Service.](#)



# IAESTE



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**“We had a fantastic turn out from all of our new trainees and an action-packed weekend..”**

Summer... and no matter the weather, it must be time for the incoming IAESTE trainees to be welcomed to Ireland and helped to settle in. This is just the job for the IAESTE Dublin Local Committee and in July the Committee vice-president Camille O'Malley described on our blog how trainees from Brazil, Poland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Austria and Switzerland (along with visiting friends from IAESTE Wales and Northern Ireland) were given a warm welcome and their first taste of Irish culture and life.

“Bright and early on Saturday, we started with our ‘Dublin City Challenge’ scavenger hunt that brought the competitive nature of our members out in full force! The teams had to get such Dublin items as a DART ticket, a photo with Molly Malone, and video of themselves feeding a duck. Bonus points were available for appearances by leprechauns, red-haired people, and the ‘hungry tree’! After lunch we moved on to the Guinness Storehouse...we finished off the tour with pints of ‘the black stuff’ and later a céilí in the Arlington Hotel, where we were treated to some fantastic Irish dancing classes. Big shout out to our trainee Pablo for introducing flamenco dancing in the middle of the set!”

After that it was down to business as the trainees headed to work in UCD, SAP, SmartSimple, VMWare and TCD, some just for the summer, others for six months to a year.

[Read more on the Léargas blog here.](#)

# Causeway



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**“You learn a lot  
about different  
cultures and  
make new  
friends”**

Little Bray Youth Project work with young people aged between seven and 23. They run a number of life-skills groups, drop-in centres and provide educational support. They undertook a Causeway exchange with a group from Northern Ireland on the theme of ‘Cultural Diversity and Inclusion through the provision of Sport and Physical Activity’. It involved young men aged between 14 and 16. During the exchange the groups focused on themes such as Cultural Diversity and Inclusion and Appreciation of Difference, and addressed issues that face young teenage men. They also engaged in sports activities and visits to places of interest.

The exchange offered the local community the opportunity to meet people from a different culture and this in turn broadened their horizons. The young men who took part found the experience positive and educational.

“A bit of hard work and a lot of challenging sessions. Thank you for giving our young people the chance to see outside of their own area” - leader, Northern Ireland.

“I would recommend this to other young people because it is very educational. You learn a lot about different cultures and make new friends” - young participant.

[Find out more about Causeway here.](#)

# Languages



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What answer did you get? In the case of the European Language Label Jury in 2015, one of the answers they got was Lingua-App. One of [six winners of the Label in 2015](#), the Lingua-App project combined target language learning and app development to create a learning resource for students, parents and teachers.

Developed by Irish language teacher Edel Ní Arrachtáin, Lingua-App was intended to provide a language learning tool in the classroom, using the target language method. In the classroom, complementary tools such as showcards and A3 posters provide a series of grammatical terms and tips. A set of laminated showcards can be used for AFL (assessment for learning) and classroom revision. The posters are printed on heavy card and can be used as wall displays and for group work.

Students can download the app and check their spelling. Lingua-App keeps the score, allowing them to learn and progress at their own pace. It was also designed to assist parents—even those with a limited experience of Irish—to help their children with their homework. In July 2013, Lingua-App was accepted by the Apple Appstore; it was released on Android devices in November 2014. As Edel said on our blog, “My idea has become a reality and I could not be more thrilled!”

[Read more about this project here.](#) [Watch videos of all the winners here.](#)

Cén freagra a  
fuair tú?

# Languages



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## Tying together language and history

What could bring together Karl Marx and Josephine Baker? Che Guevara and Catherine of Aragon? In 2015 it was our European Day of Languages competition. We asked language teachers to work with history teachers to help pupils produce a diary entry that combined both subjects. The pupils would imagine 'A Day in the Life...' of a historical figure and write a diary entry about that day, in the language the figure would have spoken. The prize was for one language and one history teacher to take a group of pupils to a European city.

Close to 700 entries came in to Léargas, with pupils ranging from fifth class to sixth year and writing in Spanish, German, French, Irish and Italian. Pupils embraced the opportunity to be creative: there was humour, passion, fear and a whole range of other emotions across the entries. In some cases the diary entries themselves were works of art, featuring scrolls and wax seals. Combining history with language worked very well and many of the students clearly came to empathise with the person whose diary entry they were writing.

For the winning entry, Transition Year student Thomas O'Neill and his class (from Lucan Community College) imagined days in the life of Tomi Reichental, a Holocaust survivor who lives in Dublin and who had recently given a talk to pupils, staff and parents at the school. For their prize, the school chose to visit Bruges, Belgium. To read more about the competition, the range of entries, and the generosity of a local business person who turned a prize for a small group of students into a trip for the whole class, see the [Léargas blog here](#).

# Contributors

Annual Report compiled, designed and edited by Léargas Communications ©2016 Léargas the Exchange Bureau

Project stories in this report have been adapted from material originally appearing in the Léargas blog, [Insights](#).  
A huge thank you to all who contributed!

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