



2016

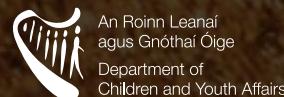
ANNUAL REPORT



léargas

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



eurodesk



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"

2016 saw some improvement in the support provided to Léargas in its operation as a National Agency for Erasmus+ and other programmes. Staff shortages and restrictions imposed by Government have had a severe impact on the organisation for some time. The advent of 'delegated sanction' has given our organisation more control over staffing issues and led to the recruitment of several staff recently. We are fortunate to have had the ability to develop talent from within our ranks, as well as bringing in new faces from other areas, hopefully creating a productive blend of the new and the old! We thank the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and more specifically the Department of Education and Skills for their critical support in this period.

These developments have come not a moment too soon, as the level of Erasmus+ funding is set to increase substantially over the next while. We look forward to providing quality support to all those who have an interest in promoting mobility and cooperation across many fields and areas. Erasmus+ and its predecessors are reaching their 30th birthday and the programmes have had considerable impact. The Commission and many personalities have highlighted these, even letting us know that several children have been born to people who met on Erasmus! A generation of Europeans now take these opportunities for granted but they could not happen without the role of National Agencies and their staff, and I would particularly like to thank Léargas staff once again for all their hard work in 2016.

“Young people across the EU will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, and to respond to crisis situations such as the refugee crisis or natural disasters”

The need to update and change are constant in relation to the programmes we run. Often political leaders want quick turnaround and answers for pressing problems. 2016 saw the development of a [European Solidarity Corps](#). This is an opportunity for the EU to help create opportunities for young people. This solidarity is offered voluntarily. Young people across the EU will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, and to respond to crisis situations such as the refugee crisis or natural disasters.



Erasmus+ and the National Agencies that implement it have been flexible, creative and innovative in responding to many challenges recently. This is important but has its limitations: such programmes are not simply short-term tools to fix day-to-day problems. They are designed also to have long-term benefits for those who take part. The programmes, in short, cannot fix every problem that Europe confronts. Increased resources will bring new challenges, but we also need to reflect on the fundamental aims of European programmes which have met with such success down the years.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Jim Mullin
Executive Director**



"I am happy to say that Léargas has prioritised being adaptable, resilient and sustainable over the 30 years"

2016 was a momentous year for us: we celebrated 30 years of Léargas! I am very proud of the work we have achieved over the 30 years, and I believe that our success throughout this time results from our unwavering focus on supporting organisations across a broad spectrum of sectors. Accessibility to programmes has always been at the heart of what we do, and this remains our emphasis today. Throughout our 30 years we have consistently taken a collaborative and supportive approach, working closely with applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for Irish citizens and fellow Europeans working together across cultural, geographical and sectoral boundaries.

I am happy to say that Léargas has also prioritised being adaptable, resilient and sustainable over the 30 years. We have seen many programmes develop and change entirely over this period. We have worked hard to ensure effective implementation of the programmes, with quality projects and good outcomes for people and organisations who have taken part.

Reflecting this adaptability, we have gone through some organisational restructuring over the last four years, in response to changing programme structures and challenging external circumstances. These changes have presented challenges for staff, but I am confident now that the dust has settled we are more productive than ever. For this, I have to commend and thank the staff for their good will and collective can-do attitude during this time. Happily, towards the end of 2016, we were given sanction to hire staff, ending a long recruitment embargo. Being able to bring our numbers back to full complement has been a most welcome development, and we thank the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for their support in this. We welcome all new staff, and thank those who retired at the end of 2016. We were

"We have actively been involved in EVS since its beginnings and have helped to shape its purpose and ensure its focus on the development of individual volunteers"

sorry to bid farewell to trusted colleagues but wish them the very best in their retirement!

2016 was also the year that the European Voluntary Service (EVS) turned 20. We have actively been involved in EVS since its beginnings and have helped to shape its purpose and ensure its focus on the development of individual volunteers. We were delighted to see EVS volunteers in Ireland take part in our ['Pay It Forward'](#) campaign, celebrating what their volunteering meant to them. One of our outgoing volunteers, [Michael Ward](#), has since become a recognised Erasmus+ alumnus and he will be taking part in international Erasmus+ 30 celebrations throughout 2017.

Our annual Léargas Forum continues to grow as a bespoke event for attendees from all sectors, and is a successful platform for those who want to know more about the work we do. The [2016 Forum](#) was a great success, with something for everyone.

Professor Maurice Devlin of Maynooth University gave an excellent [keynote speech](#) on current research into the impact that European exchange and cooperation has had on youth work, tying in nicely with our 30th anniversary. We heard voices of participants themselves in TED-type talks later in the day. You can find all of these on our [YouTube](#) and [SoundCloud](#) channels. Indeed, our growing presence online and our engagement across social platforms supports our work in making our programmes more accessible and has allowed us to engage with new audiences. We recognise the power and value of communications for continued success and growth in the work we do and in the work we support.

Changing times may lie ahead, not least resulting from our nearest neighbour's decision to leave the EU, although we have been happy to learn that Erasmus+ projects and applications involving UK partners will continue as normal until at least 2020. I'm confident that we entered 2017 well prepared for challenge, with an enthusiastic and hard-working staff, an engaged Board, and supportive colleagues in 'our' two Government Departments. I thank them all.



SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

Project	Income (€)	Expenditure (€)	Retained surplus/ deficit for the year (€)
Youth & Adult Education	574,249	574,249	0
Schools & VET	694,729	694,729	0
Communications	400,074	400,074	0
Operations & Finance	903,355	903,355	0
Miscellaneous	619,817	619,817	0
NCGE	791,920	791,920	0
TOTAL	3,850,513	3,850,513	0

REPORTS



LÉARGAS REPORT



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



LÉARGAS COMMITTEES



NCGE REPORT



2016 NOTABLE EVENTS

January

BT Young Scientist Award Winners!

Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan were the overall winner at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Competition in January 2016. The school's Science teachers were part of an Erasmus+ Key Action 1 School Education project, the Inquiry-Based Science Education project. The training undertaken by the teachers as part of the Erasmus+ project allowed them to integrate innovative practices and methodologies across the science syllabus.

April

NA Cooperation Meeting

It was a great pleasure to host colleagues from 23 National Agencies around Europe for our informal NA Cooperation meeting on 13 and 14 April in Dublin. Staff working on the same Erasmus+ programmes rarely meet and, as the event facilitator said, "You can't cooperate if you don't know each other!". There was rigorous discussion about Adult Education, and it was an eventful and industrious two days resulting in great work.



June

Big decisions in Europe

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to withdraw their membership from the European Union. As a result of this Léargas received some questions about what the UK's decision to leave the EU will mean for Erasmus+ projects with UK partners. At the time, Léargas advice was that all projects and applications involving UK partners could continue as normal throughout 2016. Léargas hopes that Brexit will not prevent UK citizens from enjoying the opportunities, experiences and knowledge that Erasmus+ can provide in the future.

August

Causeway Review

Causeway published its four-year review. From 2012–2016 there have been 26 Youth Exchanges, four Special Projects and one Contact Exchange. The conclusions were very positive: project and participant surveys showed that Causeway provided a sense of community pride and improved community identity.

September

20 years of EVS!

The European Voluntary Service turned 20 in 2016. Léargas celebrated this milestone by hosting a national conference at the Aisling Hotel, Dublin. The day featured best practice workshops and showcased the results of our 'Pay it Forward' campaign, including the winning submission from Youth Work Ireland Galway. The conference was an opportunity for EVS organisations to network and share experiences, as well as for organisations considering EVS to get informed.



September

European Language Label Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the European Language Label! Each winning project or Language Learner received a certificate and prize, presented in an Awards Ceremony at Farmleigh, Dublin on 30 September 2016. The winners are featured in our custom-made videos and you also download the booklet profiling their projects and learning journeys.

November

Recruitment Drive

Léargas held a recruitment drive in November. Positions opened up in areas from Client Services and Strategic Initiatives to eTwinning and EPALE. There was significant interest in all positions. It is anticipated that all positions will be filled and Léargas will be fully staffed in 2017.



December

Léargas Forum

The Léargas Forum was a great success this year and over 130 people from all over Ireland attended. The theme for 2016 was the 'road less travelled', inspired by the words of poet Robert Frost: "*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –, I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference*". Prof. Maurice Devlin from Maynooth University was our keynote speaker and gave a great review of Léargas turning 30, highlighting programmes and changes, especially within the youth arena, over those years.

Attendees took part in facilitated workshops throughout the morning and after lunch had the chance to explore the different roads that participants have taken because of Léargas programmes, and the impact that has made on their work. There were 'TED-type' talks from speakers from many walks of life. The eTwinning National Quality Labels acknowledged the hard work of students and teachers, and there were performances from UCD Bórd na Gaeilge and the Williams Syndrome Association of Ireland. A project showcase rounded off a very successful day.



Erasmus+

Changing lives, opening minds

4

Sectors

Adult Education

School Education

VET

Youth

3

Key Actions

KA1: Mobility of Individuals

KA2: Strategic Partnerships

KA3: Support for Policy Reform

€10.2m

Funding allocated in 2016

181

Projects

9,500

Participants

3,266 KA1 participants across all fields

5,646 KA2 participants across all fields

604 KA3 participants across all fields

ERASMUS+ ADULT EDUCATION

€890,222

Total Allocated Funding



Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 1 (KA1) **€148,435**



7
Projects



83
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) **€741,787**



3
Projects



553
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



Mobility of Adult Education staff

**Templemore College of Further Education,
Tipperary**

**Blog: 'A Wonderful Experience in Adult
Education for Templemore CFE'**

"Our objective at Templemore College is for each student to learn new skills and become more competent in the area they are studying. We've been actively involved in a number of European projects, including mobility projects where our VET trainees did work placements abroad. We started with three trainees in 2009 and the numbers have now risen to 35!"

Due to the success of these projects we wanted to extend the opportunity to our Adult Education staff. They were open to sharing and observing new techniques and methods to enhance the learning experience. They also wanted training to help them provide meaningful life skills, as well as formal qualifications, to second-chance education participants. We discussed the needs of our learners and organisation, and then identified relevant training areas. Their own skills ensured that their learning would be efficiently communicated to other staff members. My colleagues and I found the project to be a wonderful experience, both professionally and personally. My colleagues say they learned a lot about the differences in educational systems across Europe, and make more use of educational websites to share information with students and teachers." *Kathleen Grimes, Templemore CFE*

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog](#)

ERASMUS+ ADULT EDUCATION



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KA2



Strategic Partnership

Age Action

**Socio-drama Tackling Ageism,
Preventing Abuse project**

'Socio-drama Tackling Ageism, Preventing Abuse' designed an educational programme providing learning opportunities about human rights and empathy to prevent abuse of the elderly. A series of drama workshops was developed to help care workers and older people in residential settings challenge ageism and prevent elder abuse.

The aims of the programme were to empower older adults through education on human rights, foster empathy among formal carers and tackle ageism. It is hoped that as a result of the workshops the care settings for elderly people will develop policy to include the prevention of elder abuse. This project was led by Age Action and the Gaiety School of Acting with partners in Finland, Italy and Romania that use drama workshops to educate older people and carers about elder abuse.

Dr Marita O'Brien of Age Action said: "Over recent months we've worked with the Gaiety School of Acting and our European partners to develop a series of workshops that can be run in nursing homes or other residential settings. It's a creative and interactive way for care staff to learn how their actions can be perceived by older people, and it helps older people to understand the kinds of behaviour they should not accept. It encourages them to act if they believe they are being abused."

[Read more on the Age Action website.](#)

ERASMUS+ SCHOOL EDUCATION



€2,485,061
Total Allocated Funding



ERASMUS+ SCHOOL EDUCATION



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KA1



Mobility of School Education staff

**Holy Spirit Boys' National School,
Ballymun, Dublin**

**Blog: 'Bringing Learning from Berlin to
Ballymun with Erasmus+'**

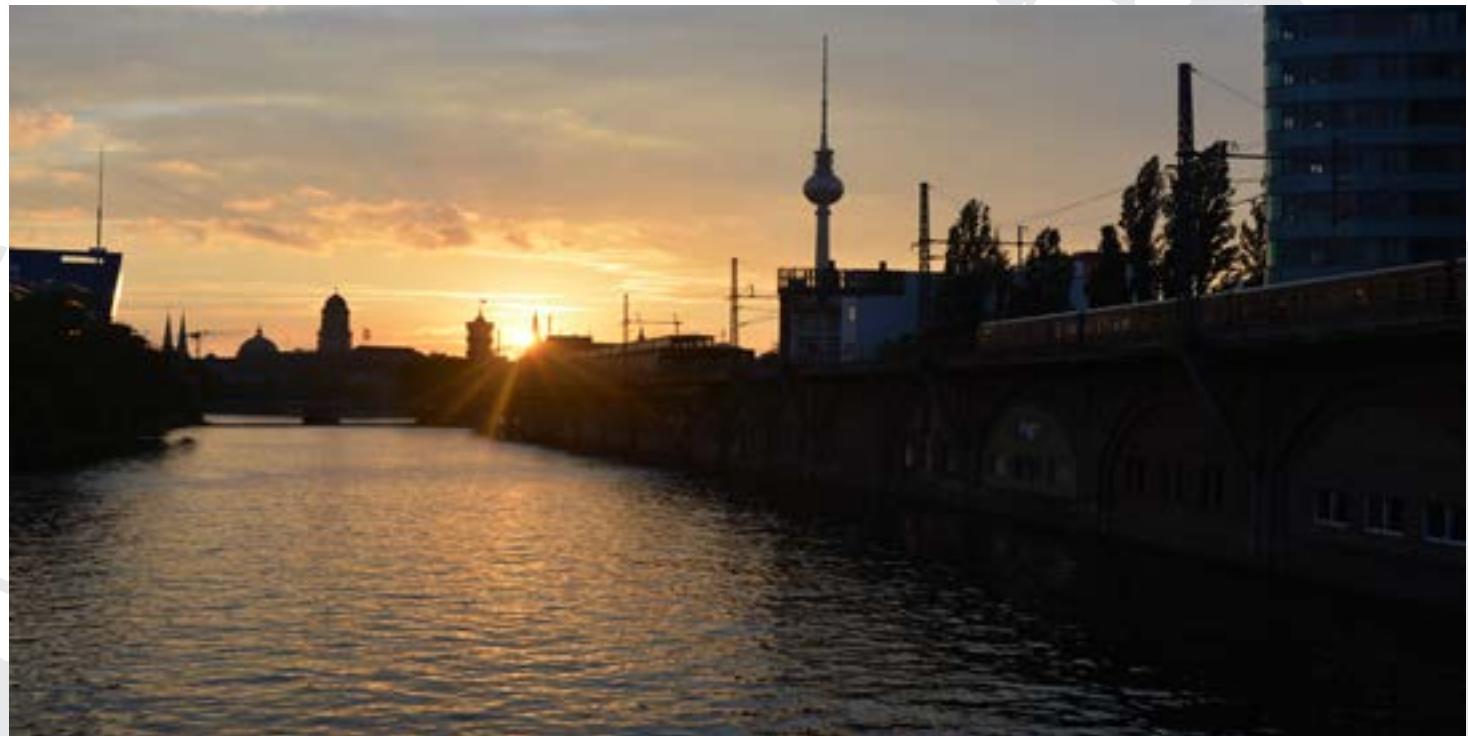
"Imagine being in charge of education provision in Berlin. You are told 100,000 men, women and children are coming to your city, and most of them will not be able to speak the local language. You need to integrate a large number of these children into your education system. What would you do?

As part of my school's Erasmus+ project, I visited Germany and met the educators involved. Their underlying principle was 'Sprache Als Schlüssel Zur Integration', or 'Language as the key to integration'. It is a priority that each newly arrived child is taught, as quickly as possible, to understand, speak and write German. This is done through special 'Willkommensklassen' (Welcome Classes). The classes have a pupil:teacher ratio of 12 to 1 and all teachers hold specific qualifications in German as a second language. The goal is for 90% of children to have a high enough standard of German to enter mainstream classes within 6 to 12 months of arrival.

Teachers themselves were the driving force behind the provision of Willkommensklassen. As the numbers of non-German speaking children coming to Berlin began to rise, teachers began to argue that ad hoc arrival placed too many pressures on them. Teachers felt they were inadequately resourced to

meet these children's needs while maintaining education standards for existing class members. It was for this reason Willkommensklassen were established in 2011.

I will be returning to Berlin to speak directly with teachers and observe the day-to-day realities of Willkommensklassen. Along with other staff in the school who have given incredibly positive reviews of their own Erasmus+ courses, I will begin introducing what I have learnt into my own classroom."



- *Alex O'Mahony, Holy Spirit Boys' National School*

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog](#) and [listen to Alex O'Mahony's TED-type talk at Léargas Forum 2016](#)

ERASMUS+ SCHOOL EDUCATION



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KA2



Strategic Partnership

St Joseph's Secondary School Rush

Strip to Identity project

Pupils from St. Joseph's Secondary School in Rush, Co. Dublin, took part in long-term mobility placements as part of their Erasmus+ project 'Strip to Identity'. Four pupils spent terms at a partner secondary school in Leuven, Belgium. One student, Patrick, sent this snapshot of the highs and lows of living and studying away from home:

"This week Ciarán and Michael flew home to Ireland and Evelina was in St. Pieters College, so I was by myself. On Friday Dirk invited me to go with him to go to the Irish College. It was only a ten minute walk so it was easy to get to. When we arrived in the college we were greeted by an Irish band who played in the institute the day before and by Christina Geary, the conference coordinator. The Irish College was old but modern at the same time. It had pictures of Ireland so it made me feel like I was home. The Strip to Identity final conference will be held there.

The next Tuesday I thought was going to be a normal day in school but it wasn't. We got news that two bombs went off in Brussels airport. It's crazy to think that we were in that airport a week ago. Within the next few minutes another bomb went off in the Metro station beside the EU buildings. I started to get worried as my host mother works near there but I texted her and she was ok. My nerves began to ease. Belgium has been on lockdown ever since. I feel horrible for the innocent people that were in the tragedy and people who have lost a loved one. I'm really enjoying myself in Belgium but it's going to be different now that this tragedy has happened."

ERASMUS+ VET

€3,937,689

Total Allocated Funding



Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 1 (KA1) €1,610,120



16
Projects



723
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) €2,327,569



11
Projects



2,291
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



Mobility of Staff and Learners

Inchicore College of Further Education,
Dublin

Blog: '[The Best Three Weeks of My Life](#)'

Dance trainees Grace English, Niamh Byrne and Deirdre Lavin talked to us about their experiences on work placements in Grenoble, France and Vienna, Austria: "It was amazing. We did such a range of classes at the dance festival in Vienna. In Grenoble we were doing choreography. We were in one studio and a professional dance company was in the other, so we got to see their piece evolving. We choreographed a piece with the other eight dancers who went. Every day we had a professional master class in technical contemporary dance, then we'd have a workshop in a different type of contemporary dance or improvisation. There were styles you wouldn't really find in Ireland. We also went to a lot of shows by well-known choreographers, so we got to witness what contemporary dance looks like in France as opposed to what it looks like here, and there's a huge difference.

It's really changed our choreography as a group. We've taken on influences from everything we've seen. We saw a professional piece being put together in France and it really helped us. Also, just living in such close quarters to each other—you develop telepathy, we can kind of read each other's minds now and on stage that helps so much! People say that we have a secret language for talking to each other.

The placement was one of the best things we ever got out of this course. So many opportunities came from the piece we developed using the choreography we learned in France. We performed at the Bel Fest '15 Dance Festival in Belfast, at Belfast Heritage night, in the Lir Theatre, and at the Léargas Forum. The festival in Vienna was 'all dance, every day' from the middle of July to the middle of August." Deirdre adds, "It was the best three weeks of my life, honestly." [Read the full story on the Léargas blog.](#)

ERASMUS+ VET



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KA2



Strategic Partnership

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

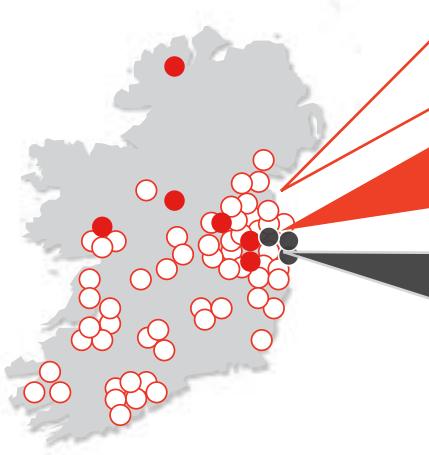
Blog: 'QUAKE and ECVET: Action from the Ground Up'

QUAKE involves seven partners from five European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Ireland, and Spain). Its aim is to develop the capacity of VET teachers and their schools/colleges to use ECVET. The project brings together government ministries, higher education institutions, and a provider of VET in horticulture. A total of 25 learner mobilities have been organised, providing the basis not just for an exciting learning experience for the learners, but also for the professional development of over 30 teachers. A minimum of five teachers from each country will take part in the project.

The learning gained has culminated in the production of a number of documents, including a guide for teachers, bringing the learning to an even bigger group. Such a focus on the professional development of teachers reflects the realisation that, apart from the need for the necessary policies at a system level, the use of ECVET depends on the knowledge, skill and attitudes of teachers who will ultimately be the people who drive it and make it happen.

While the project has not yet finished, it is possible at this stage to identify a number of important insights. QUAKE has provided the participating teachers and schools with the knowledge and support required for using ECVET mobilities in their teaching of horticulture. This enabled teachers to deepen their knowledge about teaching, learning and assessment. [Read the full story on the Léargas blog.](#)

ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION



Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 1 (KA1)

€2,214,033



80
Projects



2,255
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)

€541,282



6
Projects



707
Participants

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

€2,834,063

Total Allocated Funding

Support for Policy Reform

Key Action 3 (KA3)

€78,748



3
Projects



604
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



Mobility of Individuals – Youth Exchange

St. Andrew's Talk About Youth

Blog: 'The Benefits of Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges'

"The Youth Exchange 'Clap Lab 2' in Italy was such an eye-opener for me. Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Denmark and the Netherlands took part, and I made new friends from all the different cultures. The exchange centred on 'Unity through Diversity', particularly in human rights. We did workshops on different topics like the refugee crisis and the EU, LGBT+ rights, empowerment and making a positive change. We did a workshop called Power Walk which had us stand in someone else's shoes, and then compare their lives in different countries. It was so strange to see that someone with the same attributes did better than others depending on which country they were from.

We all took part in a final event in Lucca, Italy, called "I Care!" We proved that even though we were all from different countries and cultures, we could become one united group to make a difference and create something beautiful. All this helped broaden my perspective and see the world from different points of view. I will continue to use all the skills I learned and improve on them in the future."

– Leah, participant

"I took part in Clap Lab Youth Exchange as a participant last year. This year, it was a whole different story: I was a Leader. I had to take on extra responsibility, which added to the high pressure I had already put myself under. Mixing with big groups of people has become a huge issue for me since I came out as transgender.

"I quickly identified my strengths and weaknesses. It made me conscious of myself and how I work, but also made me aware that different people have different ways of working"



I was so scared that everyone would instantly judge me. I don't think I have ever been so happy to be wrong. And wow, how wrong was I!

Everyone accepted me for who I am and wanted to learn more about being transgender. Everyone made me feel so comfortable. It was strange but the other leaders, participants and supporting staff gave me so much joy and hope. Being a Leader was so different to being a participant. I quickly identified my strengths and weaknesses.

It made me conscious of myself and how I work, but also made me aware that different people have different ways of working. Taking part as a Leader is something I will always remember. The lessons I learned on this project have already bettered me on a personal and a professional level".

- Youth Leader

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog](#)

ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION



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KA1



European Voluntary Service

Citywise Education - STEM

Blog: 'European Voluntary Service in the Community'

"My name is **David Andrés** and I'm from Spain. My role in Citywise (a not-for-profit organisation running education, sport and personal development programmes in Tallaght, Dublin) is to help in the STEM education programme, preparing young people for careers in engineering, maths and IT. In Citywise, there are many generous teenagers who are willing to lend a helping hand. I have seen with my own eyes how a lad helped another student on his first day of class, as if he were the very teacher. There are many examples of big hearts between each other; seeing that is really edifying. Having worked for three years in different social programmes in Spain, I see that the methods used in Citywise actually work, achieving fantastic results. Additionally, having felt the social reality of Jobstown, I think Citywise is a golden opportunity for children and teenagers living in this area of Dublin: to be encouraged to study in order to go to university, to have professional ambitions, to broaden horizons, etc. At Citywise I find children with immense potential. However their lack of self-esteem and social issues often prevent them from achieving their ambitions. Day-to-day life in their area can be a deterrent to college, and that's a pity, especially when it comes to young talent."

In summary, I realise that I am in an excellent place, learning day by day a form of social work which is very professional. I also learn a lot about children and their way of thinking, seeing the future, and relating to others. At the same time, I try to do my bit in the promotion of each of them, in order to improve their professional, human and social skills. As I am in a developing process myself it is my ambition that in future I will be of greater assistance to all the boys and girls that are bringing about such a wonderful change in Tallaght."

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog.](#)

ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION



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Strategic Partnerships

Makeshift Ensemble

Blog: 'Site-specific Theatre and Erasmus+'

"Site-specific theatre, particularly in a socially engaged artistic context, is a very exciting tool to use. It has the potential, through direct engagement with space and local context, to enable young people to re-imagine their situations, take ownership of their surroundings and discover hidden possibilities in themselves and their neighbourhoods."

Twenty youth workers, activists and theatre artists who work with young people or in other social contexts came to Budapest, Hungary for an eight-day residential training as part of our project 'IN-SITU'. Participants came from Hungary, Ireland, Serbia, Czech Republic, France, and Italy. All of us had an interest in working with urban communities. The training was designed for people who wanted to combine innovative theatre approaches with youth or social work, to expand their tools and the possibilities in both fields.

The venue was Gólya, a social centre in the most multicultural and at the same time marginalised district of Budapest. Parachuting an international group into this volatile, sensitive and rich context allowed the group a vivid insight into issues that they might face using site-specific theatre as a tool in their own work. We went on a condensed and intense journey through the creation of a piece of site-specific theatre: research, idea generation and finally public performance. We balanced learning new methods, reflection, theoretical input, and visits to local groups with practical tasks that encouraged peer-to-peer learning in a group with diverse expertise in art, social work, youth work and activism." [Read the full story on the Léargas blog.](#)

ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION



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KA3



Structured Dialogue

Irish Refugee Council

YOUth Speak project

Our colleagues in SALTO Inclusion identified Erasmus+ as a tool for addressing the refugee crisis in Europe. They said, “In 2015, over one million people applied for asylum in the European Union. And today, thousands still risk their lives to reach Europe. Whether they are escaping conflict or searching for better economic prospects, we are confronted with many newcomers in our countries. So it’s time to go beyond the fear of the unknown and set up projects to turn this crisis situation into positive opportunities for all.”

YOUth Speak is one such project. It will include up to 100 young asylum seekers and refugees aged 16 to 25 who are currently living in Direct Provision Centres in Ireland or who have moved out of Direct Provision within the last two years, as well as up to eight members of the European Youth in Migration Forum (EYMF).

There will be a series of youth consultation events around Ireland in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Tralee and Limerick where there are high numbers of young people in the asylum system. These consultations will be organised and facilitated by the young people from EYMF, supported by IRC’s youth worker. Information and policy recommendations from these events will be collected and shared in a final consultation between EYMF members and policy makers in Dublin.



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"Stories are the way in which we make sense of the world"

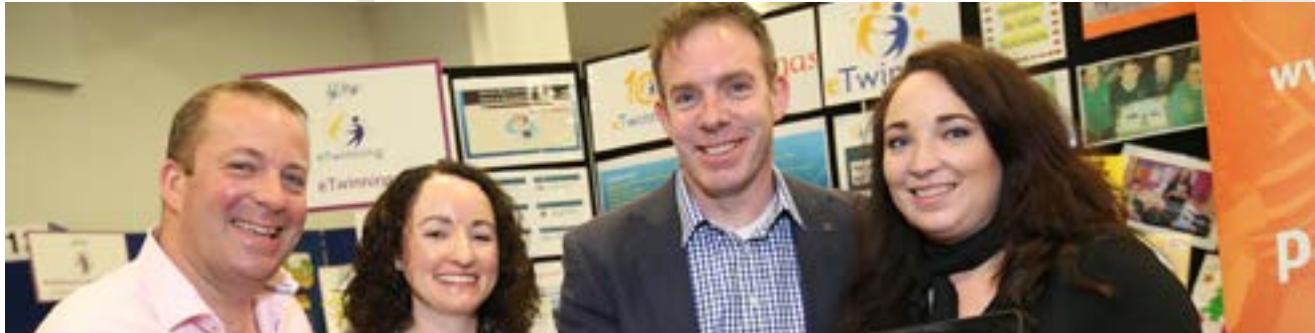
Adult educators, communications officers, tutors, facilitators and all those who engage with adult learners came together on 08 November 2016 to discover how ‘Harnessing the Power of a Story’ could help them in their work. Co-hosted with AONTAS the event in Croke Park Conference Centre helped the audience use social media, public relations and communications tools to do this.

In their keynote speeches, RTE’s Bryan Dobson and Senator Lynn Ruane shared their personal experiences of how a powerful story can connect with an audience, whether told on a TV broadcast or in a casual conversation. Bryan noted that “Stories are the way in which we make sense of the world” and need five elements to be compelling: structure, the unusual, singularity, human interest and resolution. Lynn said of her own story of returning to education at the age of 26, “When I tell my story, I hope that it’s a signpost for people like me who left school early and they’ll think ‘I can do that’.”

Expert workshops from Léargas and AONTAS staff gave in-depth instructions on using blogging and social media to tell stories, and on effective public relations. Participants were challenged to tell their own stories of the day in six words on Twitter, with some great results: “They spoke, I listened, we learned”; “In a box? Smash the walls”; “Riveting reporter, stimulating Senator, thought-provoked teacher” and the very satisfying “Came Twitterless, leaving social media savvy”.

[Read more on Storify.](#)

ETWINNING



"We joined a vibrant community of educators with a shared goal of improving teaching and learning throughout the European schools"

"We first dipped our toes into eTwinning in 2016 and joined a vibrant online community of progressive and enthusiastic educators across Europe. Whatever your needs, objectives, level of skills or depth of knowledge there is something for you within this community. I got involved through the support of eTwinning Ambassador Brendan Colleran from Castletroy College in Limerick, who invited me to a workshop and guided me through how it works. As an eTwinning Ambassador now myself, I have been actively promoting eTwinning in schools across Kerry.

Some of our staff have already participated in eTwinning webinars, and I recently attended a Professional Development Workshop in Munich. eTwinning workshops are an opportunity to meet with teachers from other European schools, share best practices, develop policies, 'show and tell' the positive work that is happening in our schools, and develop good working relationships.

eTwinning can work in parallel to the great work that is already being carried out in schools, but complement it in a way that brings learning to life for the students. For those with reservations that eTwinning means extra work, more paperwork and long hours: please be reassured this is not the case! We've found that eTwinning provides almost unlimited support and resources for those involved. Ireland has much to be proud of in terms of its education system and, while we still have much to learn, we also have very much to share with our European colleagues. We are looking forward to further developing our links with European Schoolnet and the eTwinning community over the coming years and are happy to share our learning with other schools who wish to learn more!"

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[Read more on the Léargas blog](#)

EURODESK



"We exchanged information, data, ideas, success stories and personal testimonies from young people"

What does the term “mobility”, promoted by Eurodesk and often used in Erasmus+, really mean for young people in Ireland? What kind of information and support do young people need in order to become ‘mobile’? How can Eurodesk multipliers and organisations working with young people encourage them to work, study or volunteer abroad, or take part in a youth exchange, and why? How difficult is it for young people to leave their comfort zone, if leaving home for work abroad is associated with forced emigration rather than an opportunity to grow and learn, gain new experiences and discover the world--and ourselves?

All these questions were at the heart of Eurodesk Ireland activities and events in 2016, starting with the Eurodesk Network Meeting in April 2016 in Kippure. Professor Maurice Devlin of Maynooth University spoke about ‘motility’, defined as the set of personal characteristics that allows people to be mobile in geographical, economic and social spaces. Motility as a capacity to move between those spaces is necessary for people to take a decision and prepare for a move, be it to the next town or another country or from being unemployed to starting a training course. In Kippure we also heard from Pauline Strappe, Tipperary Youth Services, about the important role of youth information workers who provide young people with information and support tailored to their specific needs and personal context, and who help them develop their motility skills, step by step, so that one day they are able to leave their comfort zone and start a new journey. In October we discussed and reflected on the benefits and challenges of international mobility at our national event “Time To Move” in Dublin Castle. Together with guest speakers we exchanged information, data, ideas, success stories and personal testimonies from young people who took the chance to go abroad as well as from those who had supported them in their journey. - **Malgorzata Fiedot-Davies**

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"The people I have met and the things I have experienced as an IAESTE trainee will always stay with me."

IAESTE arranges paid traineeships for third-level students from all over the world by exchanging work placements between 87 countries in the IAESTE network. In 2016 fourteen students from Ireland travelled for traineeships in countries far and near including Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Macedonia, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, UK, India and Iran.

In Ireland many well-known Irish companies and academic institutions hosted IAESTE exchange students for work placements in Engineering, Science and Information Technology. Among our employers this year were NUI Galway, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Tara Mines, Threefold Project Management, SAP, SmartSimple and Ericsson Ireland. We organised social events for the trainees in Ireland including weekend visits to Cork, Belfast and Dublin, where we also met up with our IAESTE partners from Northern Ireland. The trainees also got a lot of exercise visiting beauty spots like Glendalough and the Bray-Greystones cliff walk!

Paul Whitford, a student of Manufacturing and Design Engineering at Dublin Institute of Technology, did his traineeship in Switzerland and reported "In ABC Engineering I worked as part of a team to design amusement ride components. I mainly worked with 2D and 3D CAD software packages but also solved mathematical equations for the mechanical side of the projects. The people I have met and the things I have experienced as an IAESTE trainee will always stay with me."

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CAUSEWAY



"You learn a lot about different cultures and make new friends"

St. Andrew's Talk About Youth Project is based in Pearse Street, Dublin and provides activities for young people aged ten to 21. Activities include dance, drama, music, photography, swimming, team challenges, outdoor pursuits, drug education and awareness, relationship and sexuality education and international cultural activities. Their partner, Shrewsbury House in Liverpool, works with five to twenty -year-olds. The two organisations carried out this Causeway project as they felt the experience would enrich the lives of all the young people involved, and provide them with an unforgettable experience. The project aims were to promote a healthy relationship between the young people living in Ireland and England, to develop the young people's social skills through interaction with their peers and, in turn, boost their confidence. The project was an opportunity to include young people who are socially excluded.

The exchange took place in the Cavan Adventure Centre over a period of five days. The programme was structured to allow maximum participation of all the young people. Activities included group discussions, cultural visits, sports and team challenges. The young people involved broadened their horizons and shared experiences about their cultures and communities.

[Find out more about Causeway](#)

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LANGUAGES



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European
Language
Label 2016

“Winning has
driven us to
improve how
we teach Irish”

This year, Moontour was one of the award winners in the project category of the European Language Label. The Language Label jury were impressed with its innovative and accessible approach to teaching Irish while having adventures! Moontour believes the best way to learn a language is to have fun while learning it. With a combination of paddle boarding, yoga and Instagram photography, the children on a Moontour adventure can have a fun time together and learn Irish simultaneously.

So what's it like to win the award? Seán Greif of Moontour explained what receiving the award has meant to him and his company:

“It is a defining moment for the organisation. Since I founded Moontour two years ago, we have been driven to improve Irish language teaching and revitalise the language learning experience. As with any new venture or methodology, it can be difficult to gain momentum and credibility. Internally, we were confident in the change we could bring to the Irish language. However, receiving the external validation from such a respected organisation was a huge boost for the organisation and our team. After going through the application process and the awards, we returned to Moontour reinvigorated and motivated. The experience not only recognised and validated our principles of adventure learning, but has also driven us to improve how we teach Irish through our school tours and summer courses.”

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog](#)

LANGUAGES



European Day
of Languages
2016

"This
competition
gave pupils a
true linguistic
challenge"

To mark the 2016 European Day of Languages we asked language teachers to work with Geography teachers to help pupils consider climate change in a particular country: how it's viewed there, what its effects are, and what solutions are possible. Pupils prepared a two-page report, with pictures, in the language spoken in the country they chose. Our Languages Coordinator **Nellie Tattersall** reviewed all the entries and wrote about the themes that emerged.

"Several thousand pupils across the country, from Donegal to Kerry and Sligo to Dublin, looked at the incredibly serious topic of climate change. This competition gave pupils a true linguistic challenge. While they wouldn't necessarily have dealt with climate change in their regular language class, they embraced the subject and did some fantastic work. Maybe this will have an impact on some of them; they might not have considered studying a science or a social science in France, Germany or Spain, but this is a realistic option for lots of pupils!"

After much deliberation, the judges chose the deserving winner: the Third Years at Christian Brothers College, Cork. Their Irish-language entry looked at climate change here at home. Their comprehensive study and qualitative research ranged from interviewing local TDs about the current Government's solutions for climate change, to a survey at UCC about what students think about climate change. The effort, enthusiasm, research, hard work and good presentation that went into their winning entry was clear."

[Read the full story on the Léargas blog](#)

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ECVET



"ECVET is a particularly useful tool for VET professionals whose learners take part in mobility placements"

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a framework for transferring and recognising learning outcomes across VET learning environments. VET learners can accumulate units of learning outcomes from different training providers in different countries, and have them assessed as part of their final recognised qualification. Consequently, ECVET is a particularly useful tool for VET professionals whose learners take part in mobility placements.

Léargas established a national panel of ECVET experts to advise and make recommendations on using ECVET and to feed into the work of the [ECVET Secretariat](#). In 2016, members of the panel and Léargas attended several working group and user group meetings in Belgium, the ECVET Forum in Italy, and a Peer Learning Activity in Latvia.

We also surveyed other relevant experts in Ireland for their perspectives on the best future strategy for ECVET. Their feedback highlighted the need to raise awareness and understanding among teachers about assessment, and how different countries may use different approaches. This would help demystify the process of assessment, and help teachers become more familiar with the idea of entrusting the assessment of their learners to teachers in other settings. Citing the ECVET toolkit as an example of best practice in the management of Erasmus+ projects would also increase knowledge of its benefits. The experts also recommended that a framework with elements of learning outcomes which can be achieved could be developed. This would be similar to the QQI Work Experience (in Ireland) and be separate from any vocational or sectoral aspect of the learner's experience.

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