



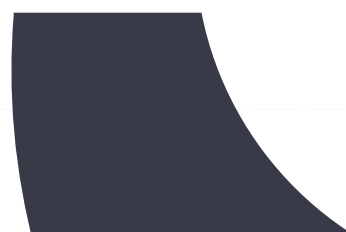
Léargas

Annual Report

2023



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**Let's reflect on
the year that's
been...**

Message from Executive Director, Lorraine Gilligan



It is with immense pleasure that I take this opportunity to reflect on Léargas' achievements and milestones in 2023, as we continue to advance our mission of facilitating international and cultural exchange and promoting education and youth development.

A highpoint for Léargas this year was participating in the 'European Year of Skills', an awareness campaign designed by the European Commission to highlight the importance of skills development in fostering social inclusion and empowering individuals to thrive in an ever-changing world. Celebrated across Europe, the European Year of Skills aimed to create a fresh focus on lifelong learning, while promoting the mindset of skills-development, reskilling, and upskilling. Léargas embedded this theme throughout our work all year and contributed by promoting skills development and lifelong learning opportunities through our various initiatives and partnerships. We see every day how European programmes like Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, eTwinning, EPAL and Youth Wiki foster skills development, and this year was an opportunity to reflect on and enhance those developments further.

Over the last number of years, our own research shows that the skills development gained through our European offerings, spans all sectors (schools, youth, adult education and vocational education and training) and has a substantial impact on participants. For example, our [2022 Erasmus+ School Education Impact Report](#), shows that 95% of school staff who took part in Erasmus+ mobilities gained skills relevant to their role and continuous professional development. And, in a study on [Erasmus+ International Work Placements for Vocational Learners](#), 93% of participants expressed that Erasmus+ increased their chances of obtaining a new or better job.

While employability skills are undoubtedly important, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps also facilitate broader skills development across all aspects of life, such as enjoyment and enrichment. The RAY Network (Research-based analysis of European youth programmes) conducted a study on 23,571 participants in Erasmus+ Youth, finding that most participants believed they had improved their skills in several areas, including:



to **communicate** with people who speak another language

93%



to **think** logically and draw conclusions

79%



to cooperate in a **team**

94%



to negotiate joint **solutions** when there are different viewpoints

90%



to **get along with people** who have a different cultural background

94%

These studies demonstrate the positive impact of our programmes and the opportunities available within them. They illustrate that the programmes are achieving their objectives to create stronger, more inclusive societies through exchange and collaboration.

A key milestone for Léargas in 2023 was the successful conclusion of our six-year CASE PEACE IV Project, a programme which promoted the importance of collaboration and cooperation between schools in Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland. Aiming to engage primary and post-primary schools in positive relations and shared education, CASE supported 386 primary and post-primary schools, trained over 2,000 teachers to deliver Shared Education lessons and both in-person and online collaboration, and most impressively, engaged over 140,000 pupils in lessons and activities through local partnerships on a cross-sectoral and cross-border basis.

The findings from the [PEACE IV Shared Education Impact Evaluation](#) (CASE Report) demonstrate improved mutual understanding and tolerance among children, the forging of cross-community friendships between pupils and parents, and crucially, an ability for children to acknowledge, accept and celebrate differences between themselves and their peers from different communities or backgrounds (whether religious or otherwise). The teachers involved in CASE commented on the widespread education outcomes and positive results in teacher confidence and professional development, with 94% reporting improved teaching skills and knowledge.

With the closing of one door in 2023, we also embraced the opening of another. Léargas welcomed a new sector into the Erasmus+ family, Erasmus+ Sport. The Sports action supports the professional development of coaches, paid staff, and volunteers in grassroots sport, as well as learning mobilities for staff in non-grassroot sport. Successfully launching its first deadline in February 2023, Erasmus+ Sport awarded thirteen grassroots sports mobility projects, granting over 200,000 euros in funding.

In our annual report, we provide detailed insights into the achievements and impact of our activities across the sectors we serve. From facilitating Erasmus+ exchanges in Adult Education, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Youth, and Sport, to promoting language initiatives such as the European Language Label and the European Day of Languages, we have continued to enhance educational experiences and promote cultural and linguistic diversity. This report also demonstrates how Léargas remains committed to our [strategic vision](#), striving to support 'an inclusive Ireland where we all can participate in and enjoy the transformational value of national and international learning experiences and be supported to reach our potential'.

Our ethos of providing friendly and supportive guidance to programme applicants and beneficiaries remains at the forefront of our operations. We pride ourselves on our dedication to ensuring that all participants receive the necessary support to fully engage with our programmes and realise their potential. Achieving this would not be possible without the commitment, dedication, and expertise within our staff team. We are committed to equipping our staff with the necessary training and skills to excel in their roles. This includes providing staff with mandatory trainings throughout the year, such as IT Security Protection Training, Manual Handling and Ergonomic Assessment, as well as courses and trainings for reskilling, upskilling and professional growth. Some professional development opportunities undertaken by our staff and supported by Léargas include courses on Governance, Charity Law, GDPR, Project Management, Payroll, Leadership and Management, and Human Rights. This investment in our staff is vital to our mission and enhances our capacity to deliver exceptional support to our communities.

As we look to the future, Léargas is strengthened in our commitment to driving innovation, fostering collaboration, and upholding excellence in all aspects of our work. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our stakeholders, partners, and supporters for their unwavering trust and collaboration, which enable us to fulfil our mission and create positive change in communities across Ireland and beyond.



Lorraine Gilligan

Teachtaireacht ón Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin, Lorraine Gilligan



Is cúis mhór áthais dom an deis seo a thapú chun mo mhachnamh a dhéanamh ar éachtaí agus ar gharspriocanna Léargas in 2023, agus sinne ag leanúint ar aghaidh lenár misean maidir le malartú idirnáisiúnta agus cultúrtha a éascú agus oideachas agus forbairt óige a chur chun cinn.

Buaicphointe do Léargas i mbliana ab ea a bheith rannpháirteach i 'mBliain Eorpach na Scileanna'. Feachtas feasachta de chuid an Coimisiúin Eorpaigh é seo a chuireann béim ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le forbairt scileanna maidir le cuimsiú sóisialta a chothú agus daoine a chumasú chun rath a bhaint amach i ndomhan atá ag síorathrú. Agus í á ceiliúradh ar fud na hEorpa, bhí sé mar aidhm ag Bliain Eorpach na Scileanna díriú as an nua ar fhoghlaím ar feadh an tsaoil, agus meon na forbartha scileanna, na hathoiliúna agus na huasoiliúna á chur chun cinn ag an am céanna. Rinne Léargas an téama seo a leabú ar fud ár gcuid oibre i gcaitheamh na bliana agus chuidigh sé trí fhorbairt scileanna agus deiseanna foghlama ar feadh an tsaoil a chur chun cinn trínár dtionscnaimh agus comhpháirtíochtaí éagsúla. Feicimid gach lá conas a chothaíonn cláir Eorpacha cosúil le Erasmus+, Cór Dlúthpháirtíochta na hEorpa, eTwinning, EPAL agus Youth Wiki forbairt scileanna. Ba dheis í an bhliain seo machnamh breise a dhéanamh ar na forbairtí sin agus iad a fheabhsú.

Le roinnt blianta anuas, léiríonn ár dtaighde féin go gcuimsíonn an fhorbairt scileanna a fuarthas trínár dtairiscintí Eorpacha gach earnáil (scoileanna, an óige, oideachas aosach agus gairmoideachas agus gairmoiliúint) agus go bhfuil tionchar suntasach acu ar na rannpháirtithe. Mar shampla, léiríonn ár [dTuarascáil ar Thionchar Oideachais Scoile Erasmus+ 2022](#), go bhfuair 95% d'fhoireann scoile a ghlac páirt i soghluaisteachtaí Erasmus+ scileanna a bhaineann lena ról agus lena bhforbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach. Agus, i staidéar ar [Shocrúcháin Oibre Idirnáisiúnta Erasmus+ d'Fhoghlaimoírí Gairmoideachais](#), chuir 93% de na rannpháirtithe in iúl gur mhéadaigh Erasmus+ a seans post nua nó post níos fearr a fháil.

Cé go bhfuil scileanna infhostaitheachta tábhachtach gan amhras, éascaíonn Erasmus+ agus an Cór Dlúthpháirtíochta Eorpach forbairt scileanna níos leithne thar gach gné den saol, amhail taitneamh agus saibhriú. Rinne an líonra RAY (Research-based analysis of European youth programmes (Anailís bunaithe ar thaighde ar chlár óige Eorpacha)) staidéar ar 23,571 rannpháirtí in Erasmus+ don Óige, agus fuarthas amach gur chreid formhór na rannpháirtithe gur fheabhsaigh siad a gcuid scileanna i roinnt réimsí, lena n - áirítear:



cumarsáid a dhéanamh le daoine a labhraíonn teanga eile

93%



smaoineamh go loighciúil agus teacht ar chonclúidí

79%



comhoibriú i **bhfoireann**

94%



teacht ar chomhréitigh trí idirbheartaíocht nuair a bhíonn tuairimí éagsúla ann

90%



réiteach le daoine a bhfuil cúlra cultúrtha eile acu

94%

Léiríonn na staidéir seo an tionchar dearfach atá ag ár gcláir agus na deiseanna atá ar fáil iontu. Léiríonn siad go bhfuil na cláir ag baint amach a gcuspóirí chun sochaithe níos láidre, níos cuimsithí a chruthú trí mhalartú agus trí chomhoibriú.

Garsprioc lárnach do Léargas in 2023 ab ea ár dTionscadal sé bliana CASE PEACE IV a thabhairt chun críche go rathúil, clár a chuir tábhacht an chomhair agus an chomhoibrithe idir scoileanna i dTuaisceart Éireann agus sé chontae teorann na hÉireann chun cinn. Agus é mar aidhm aige bunscoileanna agus iar - bhunscoileanna a mhealladh i gcaidreamh dearfach agus in oideachas comhroinnte, thacaigh CASE le 386 bunscoil agus iar - bhunscoil, chuir sé oiliúint ar bhreis is 2,000 múinteoir chun ceachtanna Oideachais Chomhroinnte a sheachadadh i gcomhar, go pearsanta agus ar líne ar aon, agus, rud a chuaigh go mór i bhfeidhm orainn, bhí breis is 140,000 dalta rannpháirteach i gceachtanna agus i ngníomhaíochtaí trí chomhpháirtíochtaí áitiúla ar bhonn trasearnála agus trasteorann.

Léiríonn torthaí na [Meastóireachta ar Thionchar Oideachais Chomhroinnte PEACE IV](#) (Tuarascáil CASE) comhthuisceant agus caoinfhulaingt fheabhsaithe i measc leanaí, cruthú cairdeas trasphobail idir daltaí agus tuismitheoirí, agus go ríthábhachtach, cumas ag leanaí aitheantas a thabhairt do dhifríochtaí idir iad féin agus a gcomhghleacaithe ó phobail nó ó chúilraí éagsúla, glacadh leo agus iad a cheiliúradh (bíodh siad reiligiúnach nó eile). Léirigh na múinteoirí a bhí páirteach i CASE a gcuid tuairimí ar na torthaí oideachais forleithne agus ar na torthaí dearfacha ar mhuinín na múinteoirí agus ar fhorbairt ghairmiúil: thuairiscigh 94% díobh go raibh feabhas tagtha ar a gcuid scileanna agus eolas teagaisc.

Nuair a dúndadh doras amháin in 2023, ghlacamar le hoscailt dorais eile freisin. D'fháiltigh Léargas roimh earnáil nua sa teaghlach Erasmus+, is é sin, Erasmus+ Sport. Tacaíonn an gníomh Spóirt le forbairt ghairmiúil cóitseálaithe, foireann íochta, agus oibrithe deonacha i spórt an phobail, chomh maith le soghluaisteachtaí foghlama don bhfoireann i spórt eile seachas spórt an phobail. Agus a chéad spriocdháta á sheoladh aige i mí Feabhra 2023, bhronn Erasmus+ Sport trí cinn déag de thionscadail shoghluaisteachta spóirt pobail agus dá réir sin dheonaigh sé maoiniú os cionn 200,000 euro.

Inár dtuarascáil bhliantúil, tugaimid léargais mhionsonraithe ar ghnóthachtálacha agus ar thionchar ár ngníomhaíochtaí ar fud na n - earnálacha a bhfreastalaímid orthu. Idir mhalartuithe Erasmus+ san Oideachas Aosach, in Oideachas Scoile, i nGairmoideachas agus i nGairmoiliúint, san Óige

agus sa Spórt a éascú, agus tionscnaimh teanga amhail an Séala Eorpach Teanga agus Lá Eorpach na dTeangacha a chur chun cinn, leanamar orainn ag cur le heispéiris oideachais agus ag cur éagsúlacht chultúrtha agus teanga chun cinn. Léiríonn an tuarascáil seo freisin an chaoi a bhfuil Léargas tiomanta i gcónaí dár [bhfís straitéiseach](#), agus é ag iarraidh tacú le 'Éire uilechuimsitheach inar féidir linn go léir páirt a ghlacadh in eispéiris foghlama náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta agus taitneamh a bhaint astu agus tacaíocht a fháil chun ár n - acmhainneacht a bhaint amach'.

Tá ár n - éiteas maidir le treoir chairdiúil thacúil a sholáthar d'iaratasóirí agus do thairbhíthe cláir fós ar thús cadhnaíochta inár gcuid oibríochtaí. Táimid bródúil as ár dtiomantas maidir lena chinntiú go bhfaigheann gach rannpháirtí an tacaíocht riachtanach chun dul i ngleic go hiomlán lenár gcláir agus a n - acmhainneacht a bhaint amach. Ní bheifí in ann é seo a bhaint amach gan an tiomantas, an dúthracht agus an saineolas atá ag ár bhfoireann. Geallaimid an oiliúint agus na scileanna riachtanacha a thabhairt dár bhfoireann chun barr feabhais a bhaint amach ina ról. Áirítear leis seo oiliúint éigeantach a chur ar fáil don bhfoireann i rith na bliana, amhail Oiliúint um Chosaint Slándála TF, Láimhseáil Shábháilte agus Measúnú Eirgeanamaíochta, chomh maith le cúrsaí agus oiliúint le haghaidh athoiliúint, uasoiliúint agus fás gairmiúil. I measc roinnt deiseanna forbartha gairmiúla a dtugann ár bhfoireann fúthu agus a dtacaíonn Léargas leo tá cúrsaí ar Rialachas, Dlí Carthanais, RGCS, Bainistíocht Tionscadail, Párolla, Ceannaireacht agus Bainistíocht, agus Cearta an Duine. Tá an infheistíocht seo inár bhfoireann ríthábhachtach dár misean agus cuireann sé lenár gcumas tacaíocht as an ngnách a thabhairt dár bpobail.

Agus sinne ag féachaint ar an am atá romhainn, neartaítear Léargas inár dtiomantas do nuálaíocht a chur chun cinn, comhoibriú a chothú, agus seasamh le sármhaitheas i ngach gné dár gcuid oibre. Gabhaimid buíochas ó chroí lenár bpáirtithe leasmhara, lenár gcomhpháirtithe, agus lenár lucht tacaíochta as a muinín agus a gcomhoibriú gan staonadh, rud a chuireann ar ár gcumas ár misean a chomhlíonadh agus athrú dearfach a chruthú i bpobail ar fud na hÉireann agus níos faide i gcéin.

Lorraine Gilligan

Message from the Board of Management, Chairperson, Dr. John Gilmore



As Chair of the Board of Léargas, I am proud to present the Annual Report for 2023. This year we reached a significant milestone as we approached the midway point of our two flagship programmes, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. This juncture not only marks a moment for reflection on the progress made thus far but also signals a pivotal opportunity to assess and plan for the road ahead.

With this milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to excellence and innovation, ensuring that the remainder of these programmes continues to deliver meaningful outcomes and lasting change. It is also a time to evaluate the effectiveness of our programmes, which continue to serve as catalysts for positive change and innovation in the sectors we serve. Looking ahead, Léargas' work remains as vital and impactful as ever, touching the lives of individuals, organisations, and communities across Ireland and beyond.

In 2023, we welcomed two new board members, enhancing the diversity and expertise of our Board. This year was also pivotal in strengthening our governance, with renewed commitments to excellence as outlined in the updated [Léargas Code of Conduct](#).

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each Board member and every member of the Léargas staff for their dedication and professionalism. Their efforts are fundamental to our success, and I am grateful for their passion in advancing our mission.

In closing, I'd like to share some compelling findings from a national poll Léargas conducted with Amárach Research in 2023, which indicates significant appreciation for European programmes and the opportunities they provide to work and live abroad. The poll revealed that two thirds of Irish adults believe gaining work experience in their field of work in another European country would be beneficial. Additionally, the research underscored a broad recognition of the benefits of intercultural exchanges beyond Léargas and EU programmes.

- **81%** of respondents agreed that these experiences provide greater awareness of other cultures and customs and therefore those who benefit are better able to understand different perspectives.
- **8 in 10** Irish adults agreed that people who engage in volunteering, short-term working or other opportunities in Europe are aware of other cultures/ customs and better able to understand different perspectives.
- **79%** felt these experiences lead to a broadening of outlooks and perspectives and
- **74%** felt it supports development of life skills and collaboration.

Our commitment to fostering international cooperation and promoting education and cultural exchange is stronger than ever. Together, we will keep making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and communities, driving positive change and fostering international connections.

John Gilmore

Teachtaireacht ón mBord Bainistíochta Cathaoirleach, An Dr. John Gilmore



Mar Chathaoirleach ar Bhord Léargas, is ábhar bróid dom Tuarascáil Bhliantúil na bliana 2023 a chur i láthair. Shroicheamar garspíoc shuntasach i mbliana agus sinne ag druidim le lárphointe ár ndá chlár shuaitheanta, Erasmus+ agus an Cór Dlúthpháirtíochta Eorpach. Ní hamháin gurb ionann an pointe seo agus nóiméad chun ár machnamh a dhéanamh ar an dul chun cinn atá déanta go dtí seo ach lena chois sin léiríonn sé deis rithábhachtach chun measúnú agus pleanáil a dhéanamh don bhóthar atá romhainn.

Leis an ngarspíoc seo, athdhearbháimid ár dtiomantas do shármhaitheas agus do nuálaíocht, ag cinntiú go leanann an chuid eile de na cláir seo de thorthaí fiúntacha agus d'athrú buan a bhaint amach. Is am é freisin chun éifeachtacht ár gclár a mheas, clár a leanann ar aghaidh ag spreagadh athrú dearfach agus nuálaíocht sna hearnálacha a bhfreastalaímid orthu. Ag féachaint chun cinn dúinn, tá obair Léargas fós chomh rithábhachtach agus lán de thionchar agus a bhí riamh, ag baint le saol daoine aonair, eagraíochtaí, agus pobail ar fud na hÉireann agus níos faide i gcéin.

In 2023, chuireamar fáilte roimh bheirt chomhaltaí boird nua, rud a chuir le héagsúlacht agus le saineolas ár mBoird. Bhí an bhliain seo rithábhachtach freisin maidir lenár rialachas a threisiú, le gealltanais athnuaithe i leith barr feabhais mar a leagtar amach i [gCód Iompair Nuashonraithe Léargas](#).

Gabhaim mo bhuíochas ó chroí le gach ball den Bhord agus le gach ball d'fhoireann Léargas as a ndúthracht agus a ngairmiúlacht. Is bun agus barr ár ratha iad a gcuid iarrachtaí, agus táim buíoch as a ndúthracht maidir lenár misean a chur chun cinn.

Mar fhocal scoir, ba mhaith liom roinnt torthaí láidre ó phobalbhreith náisiúnta a rinne Léargas le Amárach Research in 2023 a roinnt, rud a léiríonn meas suntasach ar chlár Eorpacha agus ar na deiseanna a chuireann siad ar fáil chun oibriú agus cónaí thar lear. Léirigh an phobalbhreith go gcreideann dhá thrían de dhaoine fásta na hÉireann go mbeadh sé tairbheach taithí oibre a fháil ina réimse oibre i dtír Eorpach eile. Ina theannta sin, léirigh an taighde go láidir an t-aitheantas leathan a thugtar do na buntáistí a bhaineann le malartuithe idirchultúrtha lasmuigh de Léargas agus de chlár AE.

- D'aontaigh → **81%** de na freagróirí go dtugann na heispéiris seo feacht níos fearr ar chultúr agus ar nósanna eile agus dá bhrí sin go bhfuil siad siúd a bhaineann tairbhe as ábalta tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar dhearccháí éagsúla.
- D'aontaigh → **8 as gach 10** nduine fásta in Éirinn go bhfuil daoine a théann i mbun oibre deonaí, oibre gearrthearmaí nó deiseanna eile san Eoraip ar an eolas faoi chultúr/ nósanna eile agus go bhfuil siad in ann tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar dhearccháí éagsúla.
- Bhraith → **79%** go bhfuil dearcadh agus peirspictíochtaí níos leithne mar thoradh ar na heispéiris seo agus
- Bhraith → **74%** go dtacaíonn sé le scileanna saoil agus comhoibrithe a fhorbairt.

Tá ár dtiomantas do chomhar idirnáisiúnta a chothú agus oideachas agus malartú cultúrtha a chur chun cinn níos láidre ná riamh. Coinneoimid orainn le chéile ag déanamh difríochta fóna i saol daoine aonair agus pobail, ag spreagadh athrú dearfach agus ag cothú nasc idirnáisiúnta.

John Gilmore

Léargas - The Organisation



Our Work

Léargas manage international and national exchange programmes in education, youth and community work. These exchanges connect people in different communities and countries and bring an international dimension to the work of organisations across Ireland. We are the National Agency for Erasmus+ in Adult Education, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Youth and Sport. Other European programmes and initiatives administered by Léargas include: the European Solidarity Corps, eTwinning, EPALE, Eurodesk, Youth Wiki, CASE, and VET team.

In addition to programmes and initiatives, Léargas supports and contributes to annual EU wide campaigns such as DiscoverEU, the European Year of, and Erasmus+Days. We also undertake research and contribute to the implementation of policy and practice both nationally and internationally across education, volunteering, and youth work fields.

All of our work serves to make international cooperation and learning accessible to a wide range of people and organisations.

Our Governance

Léargas is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It was first established under a Memorandum and Articles of Association, and it has a board appointed by the Minister of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). As Léargas receives funding from the Exchequer, it is an organisation of public interest and not a public body.

Léargas also works in close partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, as well as the Department for Arts, Tourism and Sports.

Registered Charity Number	20020330
CHY (Revenue) Number	8317
Company Number	208725

Our governance and transparency commitments can be found on the [‘Governance’ section](#) of the Léargas website. Some examples include our:

- [Code of Conduct \(2023\)](#)
- [Code of Best Practice \(2023\)](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Statement \(2023\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Sustainability Statement \(2023\)](#)
- [Quality Customer Charter \(2023-2027\)](#)

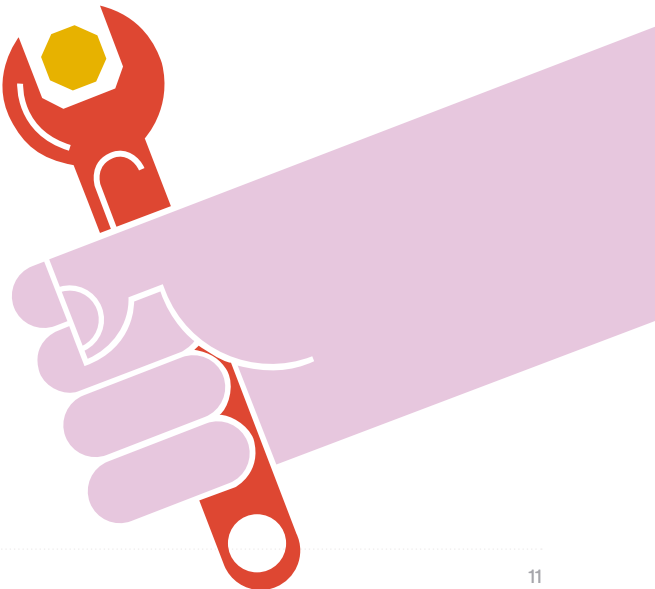
Sustainability is a core focus at Léargas, both organisationally and within our programmes. Echoing the European Commission’s view of climate and environmental challenges as “this generation’s defining task”, we align our efforts with the European Green Deal and Ireland’s commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Léargas strives to act in an environmentally responsible way in our operations and practices.

In addition to our Sustainability Statement (linked above), we have developed a [Climate Action Road Map](#) for 2023. This outlines our dedication to practices, including annual energy audits, raising staff awareness, and ensuring compliance with national environmental guidelines. As part of this commitment, we have formed a ‘Green Team’ of staff representatives and appointed a dedicated Green Contact Point to facilitate international collaboration and networking on sustainability issues with other National Agencies.

Within all of our programmes, Léargas actively supports international projects that focus on environmental and sustainability themes. A key initiative in 2023 has been promoting Green Travel for programme beneficiaries, reinforcing our commitment to sustainable practices.

In 2022, Léargas conducted an extensive accessibility audit of our website, [www.leargas.ie](#), led by Accessibility and Inclusion Labs. The audit aimed to address barriers that could hinder users with additional needs from navigating the site. The outcomes of this significant undertaking were delivered in early 2023 and identified issues such as images lacking alternative text, insufficient colour contrast, and videos requiring audio/text descriptions. In 2023, we resolved 220 high priority issues, and 149 medium-level issues are scheduled for correction in 2024. Moving forward, the organisation will continue to take steps to enhance website accessibility.

Read more on governance in our Governance and Finance section of the report (page 48).



Our Board of Management

Léargas works under the remit of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Our Executive Director reports to a Board appointed by the Minister. Below are our Board members and their qualifications..

Our Board members are:



Dr. John Gilmore
Chairperson

Dr John Gilmore is a Fulbright scholar and Assistant Professor in Nursing and Health Systems at UCD, where his work focuses on the intersections of social justice and health. Having previously served as a board member of Léargas from 2012-2017, John rejoined the board in 2024 as Chair. With many years experience in leadership and governance roles in the youth and community sectors, nationally and internationally, John is generous in sharing this knowledge and expertise in support of Léargas strategic objectives and commitment to good governance.



Dr. Theresa Reidy
Ordinary Member

Dr Theresa Reidy is a senior lecturer in the Department of Government and Politics in UCC where she teaches Irish politics and political economy. Her research is focused on elections and referendums as well as democratic reform and election integrity.



Dipti Pandya
Ordinary Member

Dipti Pandya is Senior Manager for Research programmes with UCD Research and Innovation Centre. Dipti has expertise and insights in supporting research specialist support in securing external funding.



Margie Waters
Ordinary Member

Margie Waters is former Deputy Head of Unit with the European Commission leading many high level groups and establishing policy objectives for EU programmes including Erasmus+. Margie is elected Deputy Chair by members.



Jean-Marie Cullen
Ordinary Member

Jean Marie Cullen is the International Affairs Manager in the National Youth Council of Ireland and represents NYCI on the National Working Group on the EU Youth Dialogue process. She has many years experience of EU programmes and policy for youth, leading the Young Voices programme to ensure youth participation and actively supporting the participation of young people and youth organisations in decision making.



Nuala Keher
Ordinary Member

Nuala Keher is Academic and Research Director and co-founder of Equal Ireland, a Social Enterprise dedicated to providing access programmes to education for adults who missed out on earlier opportunities. With particular interest in providing support for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the purpose of advanced entry into degree and higher education programme, Nuala has significant past experience on Boards.



Frank Crummey
Ordinary Member

Frank Crummey is a Risk and Compliance Officer with Payzone. In addition to his professional background in IT and Governance, he has a long history of voluntary participation and leadership in youth work and community development. Frank is the Chair of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee, a sub-committee of the Board, and is generous with this knowledge and experience in support of Léargas strategic objectives and commitment to good governance.

Our Mission

Léargas' mission is to enable international collaboration and exchange. We promote and fund intercultural, collaborative projects between Ireland and other countries. All our work serves to advance national and European policy.

- We facilitate good working relationships that spark awareness and appreciation of inclusion, diversity, digital transformation and environmental sustainability across social, cultural and educational domains.
- We promote the value of international collaboration and exchange in education, training, and youth work.
- We make international cooperation and learning accessible to a wide range of people and organisations.
- We contribute to the implementation of policy and practice in education, training, adult education, volunteering and youth work.
- We provide opportunities for the development of new skills for active participation in society and education.

- We support the strategic development of organisations and the personal skill development of individual.

Our Values

Léargas values are European values; those of all EU countries in a society in which inclusion, tolerance, justice, rule of law, solidarity and diversity prevail. These values are integral to the vision for a peaceful and harmonious European way of life which is inclusive of all, and particularly, those with fewer opportunities. We bring the following values to life in our way of working together as a team:

Inclusion & Respect -

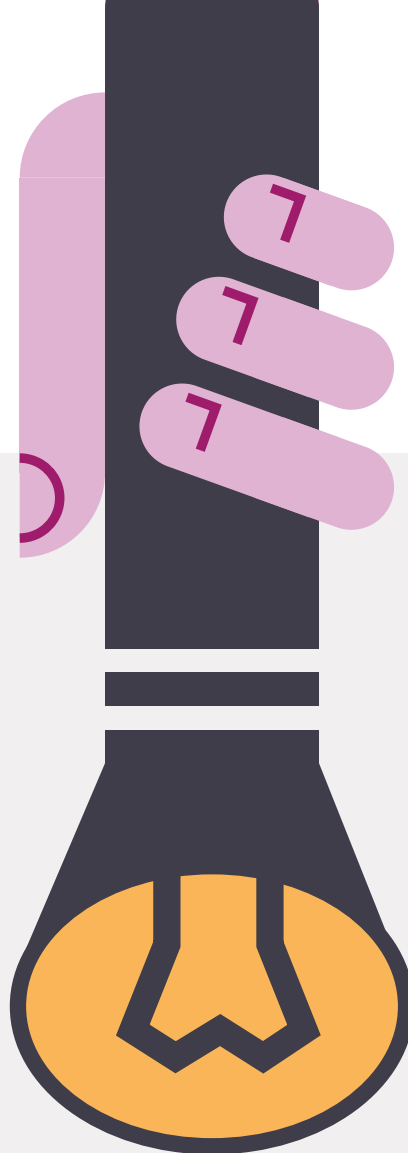
Honouring diversity is central to all that we do. We respect and celebrate the diversity of people and organisations that we engage with. We strive to enhance their experience of inclusion, equity, equality and solidarity through the programmes that we manage.

Empowerment & Support -

We believe in encouraging and supporting the people and organisations that we engage with. This spirit of encouragement, underpinned by practical support and competency development, vitalises people's sense of personal agency and empowerment by their learning from international collaboration.

Collaboration & Partnership -

The programmes that we manage can be transformative at individual, organisational and community levels. We believe in working in partnership, based on trust and reciprocity, to inspire and empower personal growth and development, through lifelong learning.



Our People

At Léargas, we take pride in our work and are committed to cultivating an environment that emphasises quality collaboration, and inclusivity. We hire individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership and organisational skills, and who are analytical and conceptual thinkers capable of networking and influencing others. Additionally, we seek outstanding digital, interpersonal and communication skills, essential for effectively contributing to a team dedicated to advancing the vision and mission of Léargas.

These values and strengths are exhibited in our diverse staff who are highly qualified in varied disciplines such as languages, education, communication, finance, and project management. Our voluntary Board also hold senior positions in organisations and disciplines such as nursing, education, and finance.

In terms of recruitment, Léargas is committed to an inclusive hiring process, ensuring standardised job descriptions, structured interviews, and promotion of roles through channels such as the Léargas website, social media, and external recruitment sites to reach a variety of individuals.

As part of assessing performance, Léargas operates a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). This is the formal mechanism by which Léargas monitors and nurtures employee performance and development. Upon joining Léargas, all employees will participate in the PMDS. The PMDS operates on an annual cycle and includes three key components:

- Goal setting: commencing in January and together the employee and their manager will set performance goals and agree a training plan to support the achievement of those goals.
- Progress check: approximately six months after the employee's initial goal-setting meeting, they meet with their manager to check progress towards the achievement of goals and performance targets and to identify any areas where further support may be required.

- Annual appraisal: at the end of the PMDS cycle, the employee and manager will have a complete review of the employee's performance for the past year considering performance goals, targets and an agreed training plan.

Notable results from Léargas 2023 staff survey show:



Over **80%**
of staff like working in Léargas.

90%

have confidence in own skills, knowledge, accountability, and freedom/ authority to do what is required.



87%
say they feel 'appreciated for the work I do'.

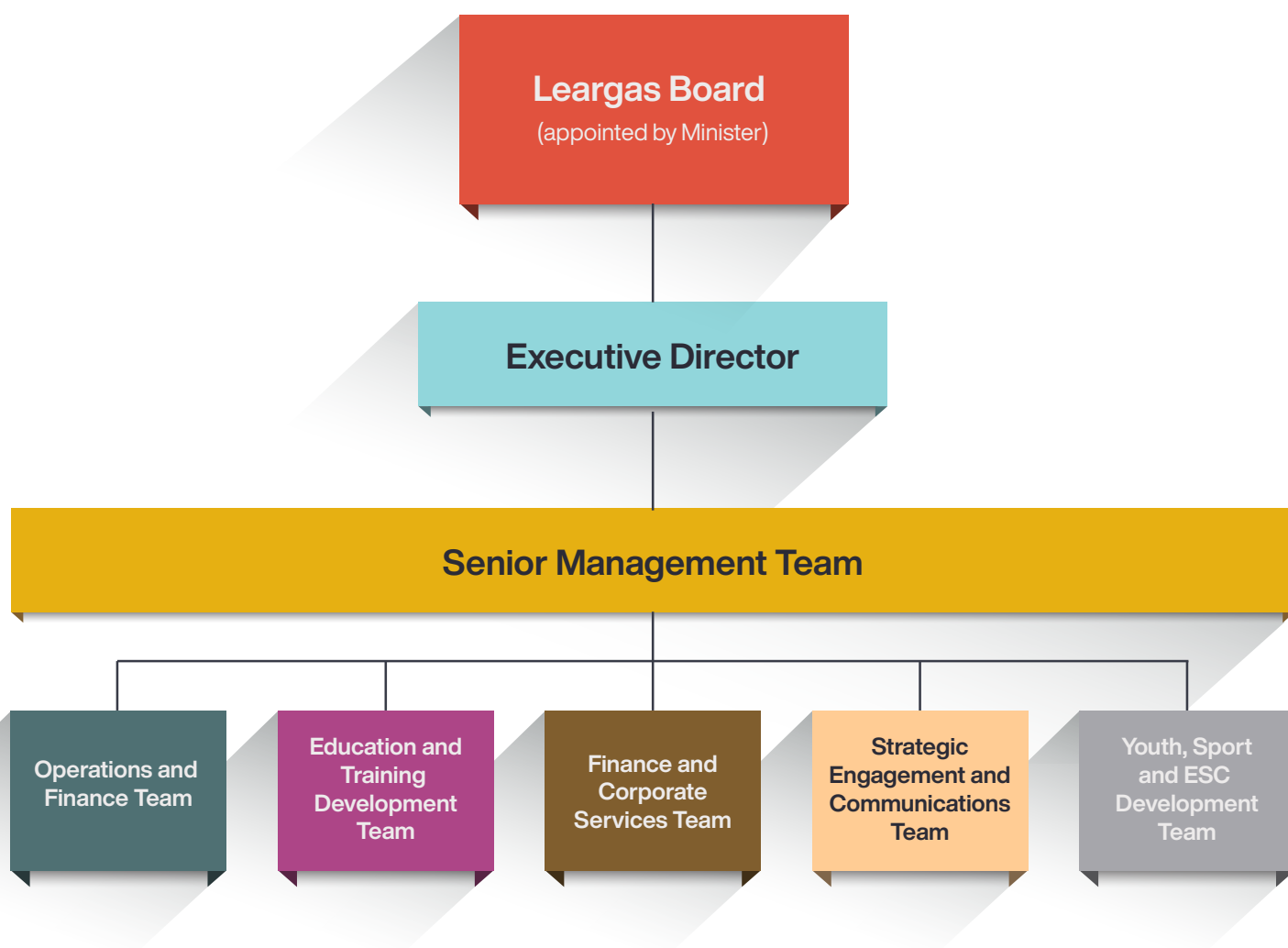
90%

believe their manager leads team effectively and feel their opinions are valued by their Manager.



Our Structure

Léargas has five departments with distinct functions. Teams and individual roles can be found on the [Meet the Team](#) page of our website.



Senior Management Team

The Heads of Teams form the Senior Management team which plays a strategic and operational role in guiding and delivering the objectives of Léargas. In addition to overseeing the work and members of specific teams, the senior management team oversees managing risks, hiring, and reviewing the performance of employees, ensuring excellent communication and collaboration within and across teams, managing complex challenges, meeting targets, and setting clear goals.

Operations & Finance

Manages all financial matters, including payments, beneficiary contracts and the financial management of projects.

Education and Training Development

Supports potential and actual beneficiaries of Erasmus+. The promotion and management of Schools, Vocational Education, Adult Education sectors of Erasmus+ as well as sectorial relevant initiatives of eTwinning, EPALE and VET Team. The cross-border initiatives under the PEACE programme are implemented within the E&T Development Team.

Youth, Sport and ESC Development Team

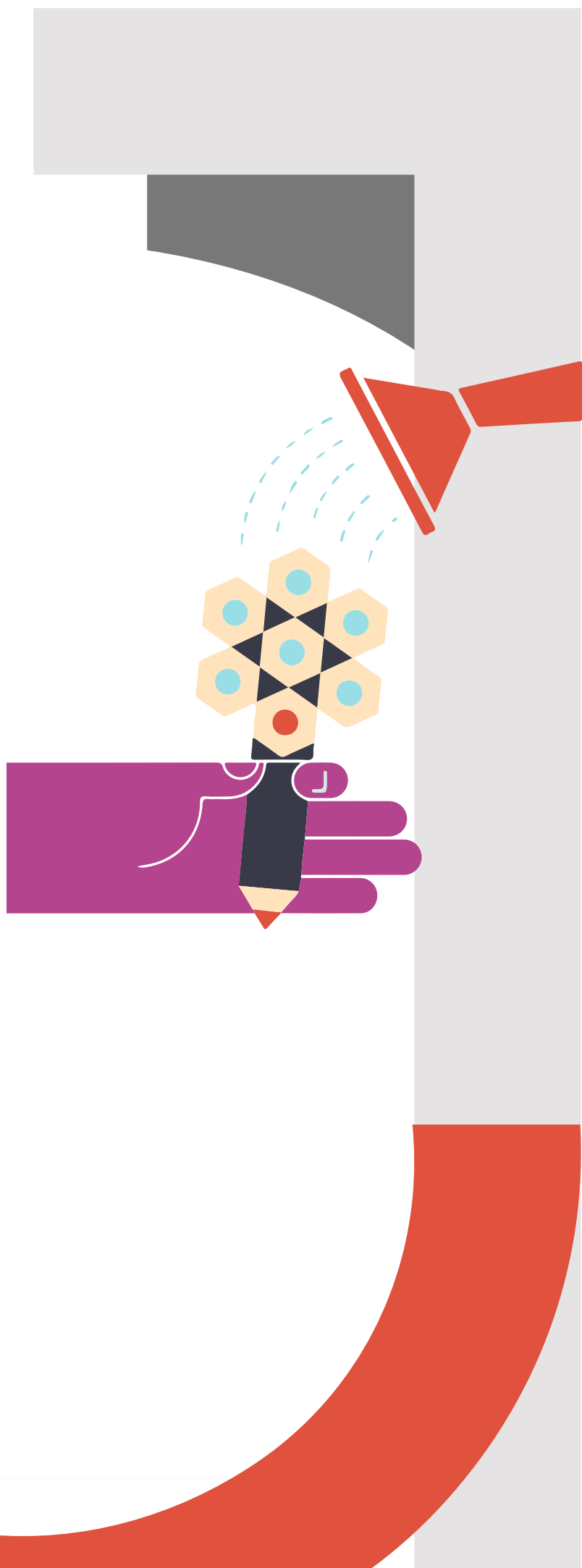
Supports potential and actual beneficiaries of Erasmus+. The promotion and management of Youth Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, Discover EU and Erasmus+ Sport. All Training and Cooperation Activities are coordinated under this team, as well as sectorial relevant initiative of Eurodesk.

Strategic Engagement and Communications Team

Drives awareness of Léargas - its vision, branding and EU programme offerings. Achieved through management of strategic activities, including Languages initiatives, Youth Wiki, the Léargas annual flagship event and European campaigns. Responsible for implementing Inclusion and Diversity practices across teams and programmes, and for the planning and execution of external communications.

Finance and Corporate Services

Ensures efficient financial management and control necessary to support all business activities. Offers support internally regarding matters of Governance, Human Resources, Internal communications, IT, Health & Safety as well as general office management oversight.



Our Strategic Priorities

The [Léargas Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#) underwent an addendum to extend into 2024. This decision was based on the 2024 mid-term evaluation of our two flagship programmes – Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. The evaluations' outcomes will assist us in the direction of a new five-year Strategic Plan which will be implemented from 2025 – 2030. We are confident that awaiting the outcome of the mid-term evaluation will ensure the continued success and impact of our programmes and our organisation.

The 2021-2023 Strategic Plan has served as a guiding document for our organisation's activities, objectives, and goals. This year we saw many achievements aligned with our three strategic priorities and these are demonstrated below.



Strategic Priority One: People Matter

Léargas continues to raise awareness of the opportunities that international programmes offer to enhance inclusion and solidarity. This strategic priority aims to increase participation by promoting Léargas and conveying the power, for individuals and organisations of national and international learning experiences and their wider societal impact. It involves reaching out in targeted ways to engage people, especially those who are less advantaged, and organisations that work with them, and celebrating and sharing the positivity of Erasmus+ and all our programmes.

Driving Participation through an Inclusion and Support Approach

A key aspect of advancing our People Matter strategic priority is targeted outreach to engage individuals and organisations in our programmes and initiatives. All of Léargas' programme officers employ a wide range of activities to reach and support beneficiaries and potential applicants - from online and in-person information sessions, to application, project development, and project management workshops. A notable achievement this year was the supportive approach led by our Inclusion Officer who conducted extensive outreach to potential applicants and beneficiaries facing barriers to participation.



Working closely with Léargas programme officers across sectors, the Inclusion Officer facilitated information sessions and webinars, reaching close to 150 individuals and organisations across Ireland. These activities aimed to raise awareness of the opportunities available, provide coaching and support, and offer comprehensive feedback on unsuccessful applications.

This supportive approach was inspired by our Inclusion Officer's participation in the 'Harvesting Conference', an annual international conference organised by SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion Officers from Erasmus+ National Agencies. This event brought together National Agency staff, youth workers and young people to attend workshops and facilitate conversations about good practices in the field of inclusion and diversity, specific to youth work. At this event, our Inclusion Officer engaged with four youth workers from three organisations – Social Space Ireland (Dublin), Kilmacrennan Foróige Club (Donegal), and Youth Work Ireland (Cavan/Monaghan). These professionals participated in workshops, presented project ideas, and networked with peers across Europe.

Following the conference, the insights and methods to Inclusion were integrated and adapted to the needs of our organisation and audience. The Inclusion Officer continued to engage with the youth workers from the conference, holding individual meetings to reflect on their experiences and explore potential Erasmus+ funding opportunities, while providing relevant materials to aid youth workers project development.

A similar approach was taken at the regional event 'Starting with International Youth Work' in Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim in early November 2023. The event saw significant participation from local organisations such as Ballinamore Youth Action Project and Foróige Regional office, among others. Feedback highlighted the event's accessibility and the valuable learning experience it provided.

Our aim with these supportive measures is to encourage the submission of applications from individuals and organisations with fewer opportunities. While the outcomes and impacts of such an approach are gradual, already we've seen a boost in confidence, strengthened relationships and organisations feeling empowered with the skills to initiate their own projects. We intend to continue with this approach and measure its impact in 2024.



What I love about these conferences is the opportunity to learn directly alongside the groups [youth workers] that I'm striving to support. It's helpful for me to gain an understanding – directly from them – about needs and challenges. I also really appreciate that I got the chance to see what inclusion means to my colleagues from across Europe, how they address barriers, what research they're reading, and what methods they're using. Spending a few days with my international colleagues and the youth workers was so beneficial and allowed to build strong relationships. I returned to Ireland feeling incredibly motivated and well-equipped to embed a support approach into my work.

– Vasiliki Psarra



COMPETITION TIME!

ÉLECTRIC PIGNIG

- Like this post and follow us
- Share a story of you visiting European Solidarity Corps at Global Green
- Tag us in the stories

léargas



Celebrating Programmes and Participants through the Erasmus Days Campaign

2023 was Léargas first year launching a campaign during Erasmus Days, the European Commission's annual celebration of the Erasmus+ programme, which took place from October 9th – 14th this year. The theme, '6 days to make Europe shine!' aimed to recognise the importance of Europe's cultural diversity and celebrate the learning opportunities the EU provides.

Aligned with the European Year of Skills, Léargas focused on skills development and participant experiences to celebrate Erasmus Days. We conducted seven in-person visits across Ireland to capture the voices and experiences of Erasmus+ beneficiaries, showcasing the impact of Erasmus+ on both their professional and personal growth.

We interviewed beneficiaries from Sail Training Ireland (Dublin), Ballymun Job Centre (Dublin) and Meath Partnership (Meath), St. Sylvester Infant's School (Dublin), Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary (Limerick) and Mount Sion CBS Secondary (Waterford) and Mallow College of Further Education (Cork). Their interviews were turned into project case studies, video reels and testimonials. Additional content was created to ensure all sectors were represented and to demonstrate how smaller initiatives, like eTwinning and EPALE, can serve as pathways to Erasmus+ participation. In total, over 30 pieces of content were generated, and 85 social media posts shared over the six-day campaign, with each day dedicated to specific sector. All content was promoted across Léargas social media channels to encourage newcomers to learn more about Erasmus+ and to drive other beneficiaries to share their experiences.

"It wasn't just about individual achievements but a collective realisation that **their vocational training wasn't confined to the walls of a classroom or the borders of a country.** They didn't just see themselves as students from Ireland but as global citizens, ready to use their skills anywhere in the world."

– John Healy, Principle of Mallow College of Further Education speaking about their Erasmus+ short-term and long-term mobility project

"I love doing Erasmus+ projects because I get to learn a variety of things. When we were doing the EcoWarriors Youth Exchange, I learned a lot about the environment [and] how to preserve the world for future generations. With Inclusive Sports, I learned a lot about new sports I wouldn't normally have focused on. **Youth exchange is so important, doing Erasmus+ is so important, because you can learn so much - you can learn about new people [and] the cultures of new people.**"

– Victoria Ogumefu speaking in a [video reel](#) submitted to Léargas about what it's like to take part in Erasmus projects as a young person.

"Teachers developed many **organisational, communication and digital skills.** Through the digital literacy course, they gained **technical knowledge** and resources that they were able to **directly apply** in the classroom."

– Sarah Kennedy, Teacher at Mount Sion Secondary School Waterford speaking about their Erasmus+ staff mobility project "[Meeting the Needs of All](#)"

Engaging Youth in Familiar Spaces with the European Solidarity Corps

In September 2023, Léargas participated in a three-day collaborative event at Electric Picnic's 'Global Green' Arena: the festival's hub for activists, artists, and innovators. This year's theme, 'Solidarity,' aligned naturally with our European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme, which supports young people to volunteer or self-organise projects that benefit communities.

Celebrating the EU's 50th anniversary, Léargas co-hosted information sessions and workshops in partnership with Ireland's European Commission Representative and the organisation Creativity and Change. The [event](#) featured 10 workshops on volunteer opportunities and programme priorities. We also invited former ESC participants to lead creative exercises and performances.

Throughout the festival, our [packed programme](#) included engaging discussions, such as 'Roots and Borders' and 'Funding Opportunities to Engage Volunteers in Citizen Science,' all led by former ESC volunteers. Additional information sessions covered accessing funding for volunteer projects and community initiatives. All of this was built into a programme that contained creative workshops on songwriting, open mics, yoga, and dance to appeal to a youth audience.

To promote attendance and engagement, Léargas ran a mini-social media campaign and [contest](#), encouraging young attendees to share their experiences at the ESC tent on Instagram and tag Léargas.

Our attendance at Electric Picnic was a valuable opportunity for Léargas to connect directly with young people, showcasing how we integrate our strategic priorities into active, engaging formats. Described as 'fun with a global justice twist', our presence at the festival not only highlighted the central role of people in our initiatives but also underscored the importance of understanding and meeting their needs. It was a creative space to build connections with potential volunteers, place participant voices front and centre, and collaborate with organisations that work every day to make a change both locally and globally.

Importantly, the event was also a chance to network with organisations in the youth sector; that networking drives how we develop partnerships and strengthen our programmes as you will see in the following sections.

"If I could take part in the European Solidarity Corps every year for the next ten years, I'd be on it."

– Saulti Studios former ESC participant





Strategic Priority Two: Partnerships Work

The main objective of this priority is to continue to nurture and strengthen our relationships at EU, national and local levels to increase participation in international exchange and collaboration. Our aim to work in various forms of meaningful partnership, with a diverse range of people and organisations in Ireland and across Europe to meet policy and programme objectives. This includes working in cooperation with government and the European Commission, colleagues in educational and youth organisations and people seeking to embrace international experiences.

Leading International Collaboration and Best-Practice Exchanges in Mental Health Education at the 'International Tool Fair'

The International Tool Fair (ITF) is a bi-annual Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps community-of-practice event coordinated by National Agencies that brings together diverse organisations and project leaders across Youth, Sports, School Education, Adult Education and Vocational Education and Training sectors within Europe and beyond borders.



As part of our Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA's), Léargas elected to host the 17th International Tool Fair "Mental Health, Minds in Motion" from 14th -16th November at Dunboyne Castle, Co. Meath. In cooperation with our colleagues from French, Polish, Finnish and Icelandic National Agencies, as well as in collaboration with Jigsaw, Ireland's leading youth mental health charity, we gathered 135 experts, practitioners, and participants from across Europe and Ireland at this five-day event.

The conference focused on mental health practices, engaging a diverse group of participants and experts in conversations and workshops around non-formal mental health education methods. With a strong emphasis on including youth perspectives, the event featured speakers and panellists from Jigsaw's youth advisory panel and other key figures who represented marginalised youth voices.

5
days

135
participants

25
workshops

2
field days



Our first key speaker on day 1 of the conference was Dr. Sharon Lambert, Senior Lecturer in the School of Applied Psychology at University College Cork, who spoke about the importance of leading and disrupting to enhance young people's wellbeing. Day 2 welcomed Amir Abualrob, a Dublin-based Palestinian Theatre Maker who shared an inspiring story about the power of art and theatre in rebuilding one's identity and overcoming trauma as a displaced individual living in Ireland. Day 3 saw Patrick McDonagh, a 22-year-old Traveller and youth and Community Development Worker at Involve Youth and Community Services, speak about mental health within the Irish Traveller community the impact of the 'No Shame' project with Involve.

International Tool Fair provided a platform for sharing innovative approaches and best practices in mental health. Highlights included presentations on mental health challenges and substance use, the role of sports in well-being, and the impact of online communities in providing support.



Local visits to Sonairte Visitor Eco Centre (engaged in an Erasmus+ project) and the Cavan Centre (interested in Erasmus+) allowed participants the opportunity to take part in wild tea making, yoga, nature walks, mindfulness exercises, bow and arrow shooting and wall climbing. These visits bridged a significant, sometimes challenging topic for many with light activity, reflection and tranquillity - demonstrating the connection between sport, nature, mindfulness, and mental health.

A standard practice with all International Tool Fair events is to embed a 'train the trainer' practice and Léargas followed suit. Twenty-five facilitators and three presenters were assigned a coach, and all coaches were assigned mentors.

The International Tool Fair was the highpoint of our year, highlighting the power of partnership and community engagement in addressing mental health challenges. While Léargas was delighted to partner with so many of our colleagues across Europe as well as organisations in Ireland, the greatest outcome was seeing the relationships unfold on an individual level - people finding potential Erasmus+ partners for their project and making lifelong connections.



Our role has been to support some of the International Tool Fair planning, particularly around the theme of mental health and the application process, and to MC the event with a young member of Jigsaw's Board ensuring a youth voice was at the centre of the fair. This event has supported us in meeting various international groups and seeing how they're using Erasmus+. It also gave us the chance to connect with national partners like Involve and other organisations and local community groups that we already know and met for the first time at the tool fair. It's great to see how these organisations are doing things and what outcomes they're having, so we've learned a lot through that. For us, what's interesting at Jigsaw, is to look at who and how we might partner with both nationally and internationally on another Erasmus+ project.

– David Kavanagh, Youth Voice and Engagement Manager at Jigsaw

Raising awareness of Erasmus+ opportunities in Early Years and School Age Care settings with Early Childhood Ireland

In November 2023, Léargas initiated a collaboration with Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) to promote Erasmus+ opportunities tailored specifically for Early Years and School Age Care sectors. As Early Childhood Ireland's target audience is early years and school age care individuals/organisations, they were well placed to contribute to our communication and outreach into this sector.

The messaging and outreach were designed to introduce the benefits of Erasmus+ to a sector that has seen less engagement in such programmes. The campaign's objectives were straightforward yet impactful:

- Increase awareness within the Early Years and School Age Care communities about the availability of Erasmus+ funding.
- Encourage active participation in Léargas and Early Childhood Ireland joint learning events to prepare providers for future funding opportunities.
- Boost the number of applications submitted for the upcoming February 2024 Erasmus+ funding round.

A critical component of this campaign was the communications conducted by Early Childhood Ireland through direct emails, articles in their e-zine, social media promotions and dissemination of a survey to gauge awareness of Erasmus+ and interest in attending a 'Lunch n' Learn' information webinar. The survey received 100 responses, with high interest in attending the webinar. Early Childhood Ireland hosted two 'Lunch n' Learns' in January 2024 for the sector, with 125 individuals registering. The first webinar was notable in that it featured an Erasmus+ beneficiary from Eivers Lane Childcare, who shared insights from her own application experiences. Léargas complemented the webinar by providing expert advice on application strategies.

These sessions were well-received, as evidenced by strong registration numbers, indicating a keen interest from Ireland's ECEC community. The series aimed to demystify the application process and equip participants with the necessary tools to succeed.



As this outreach campaign concludes in March 2024, we plan to initiate a comprehensive review to assess its effectiveness and explore further potential.

Hosting the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) Summer Workshop

In collaboration with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), Léargas for the first time, hosted a residential Summer Workshop on Developing Language-Aware Schools. We were responsible for participant recruitment, application evaluation and final selection of 25 participants. Subject-matter experts from Austria and Belgium came to Ireland to deliver the training. Participants left with tangible goals to execute in primary and secondary schools across Ireland.

Driving engagement in Erasmus+ Sport through small, focused partnerships

Kicking off our new Erasmus+ Sport Action, Léargas engaged in a series of strategic partnerships that significantly enhanced our commitment to inclusion and diversity within the sector. One notable collaboration was with the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) to host the 'Keeping in the Game' National Training and Cooperation Activity. This event, expertly hosted by presenter and activist Joanne O'Riordan centered on addressing key issues within the sport community and linking participants with potential funding opportunities to support their initiatives.



Throughout the year, we intensified our outreach efforts within the sports sector through a series of informational sessions and project development workshops, attracting 95 participants, representing National Sport bodies, Local Sport Partnerships, Sport clubs and Sport Ireland. These sessions were pivotal in introducing and explaining the novel activities available through our programmes, thereby enhancing understanding and engagement among stakeholders.

A primary focus of our partnership efforts involved working closely with Sport Ireland and various Local Sport Partnerships. Together, we aimed to build their capacity to support organisations in applying for Erasmus+ Sport Mobility. This initiative proved highly successful, leading to full absorption of the grant, with 14 new entrants to Erasmus+ KA1, marking one of the highest uptakes of the Sport Action in Ireland compared to other Programme Countries.

Léargas also joined the YouSport SNAC Steering Committee in 2023, a strategic initiative led by the French National Agency. This committee, which includes partnerships with 14 National Agencies, focuses on Social Sports and exploring the connections between sport and non-formal education. Our involvement in such high-level collaborations underscores our commitment to leveraging partnerships to enhance the educational and societal impact of sports across Europe.

These partnerships not only strengthen our operational capabilities but also enrich the sports community, fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment where all participants can thrive.



Strategic Priority Three: Programmes Transform

We know that programmes of international cooperation can transform lives in positive and lasting ways. Our objective is to maximise the transformational power of programmes and our work, through vigilant funding administration and support to a diverse range of people and organisations.

Amplifying Volunteer Voices and Impact on the Big Screen with Seen and Heard

In 2023 we saw the pilot launch of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) flagship event 'Seen and Heard' which aims to amplify the voices of young people participating in ESC and showcase the transformational impact that volunteering has on participants, organisations, and communities. We asked volunteers to send us videos, images, recordings, and testimonials that demonstrate their experiences so that we can launch a video compilation – where all volunteer voices can be seen and heard.



The event was held on 5th December 2023 in Stella Cinemas (Rathmines) where selected ESC volunteers were invited to a cinematic experience, presented by renowned activist, actor and screenwriter Emmet Kirwan. Seen and Heard is an occasion that aims to recognise and honour the remarkable contributions of volunteers who have dedicated their time and efforts to various solidarity projects under the European Solidarity Corps. It will serve as a platform to showcase the incredible impact of volunteering activities while fostering connections and inspiring further engagement.

Gaining insights into how Erasmus+ supports Transversal Skills in Vocational Education and Training

In 2023, Léargas commissioned a research study "[Erasmus+ VET Mobility as a Route to the Acquisition of Transversal Skills](#)", focusing on the transformative impact of Erasmus+ on vocational education and training (VET). The report examines how participation in Erasmus+ funded mobility projects enhance critical transversal skills, essential for navigating today's complex and rapidly changing work environment.



The study reveals a significant shift towards intrapersonal skills such as resilience, self-confidence, and self-regulation, especially following the disruptions caused by COVID-19. These skills complement traditional interpersonal skills like communication and collaboration, which remain crucial. Participants reported substantial personal and professional growth, with increased confidence, self-awareness, and independent functioning cited as the most impactful outcomes.

The conclusion emphasises the necessity for VET organisations to prioritise intercultural work placements and Erasmus+ mobility as strategic elements of their programmes, enhancing their capability to equip learners and staff with the skills needed for the modern workforce.

Showcasing Skills for Life at Léargas' Annual Cross-sectoral Event

Every year Léargas hosts its annual cross-sectoral event, The Gathering. This year's theme was the European Year of Skills and we aimed to celebrate and encourage skills development through inspiring speeches, networking opportunities and a panel discussion that emphasised how EU programmes enable participants to acquire personal and professional skills that will remain with them for life.

The Gathering was a great opportunity to showcase the work of Léargas especially through our workshops, which ranged from 'Digital Storytelling for Impact and Dissemination' to 'Recognition of Non-Formal Learning', and through our interactive 'Human Library' activity, where participants could ask questions and discuss project ideas with Léargas staff.

Fostering a culture of continuous upskilling and reskilling was one of the goals of the European Year of Skills and so the importance of lifelong learning was greatly emphasised at the event through our key speakers. We first heard from Andrew Brownlee, CEO of SOLAS, who spoke about the transformation of Further Education and Training (FET) and how building international links can help with the learning journey. Dr. Nuala Whelan, Researcher and Lecturer at Maynooth University, spoke about the critical role of guidance in helping people flourish on their path of lifelong learning. This powerful concept was also echoed by Minister Seán Fleming TD.



But there was nothing more inspiring than hearing beneficiaries describe how EU programmes have improved their lives. One of our past beneficiaries, Eurobug, an Irish NGO which promotes diversity and social inclusion of ethnic minority youth, decided that words were not enough to express the spirit of the EU programmes and performed a touching song in front of the audience.

We also held a panel discussion with 6 former beneficiaries of European programmes. Each panelist brought with them an object that represented their time abroad and shared how their participation in EU programmes impacted their professional and personal lives. A highlight was hearing from Nisa Aga and Abigail Fonlari, two nursing students at Dundrum College of Further Education who participated in Erasmus+ VET. They went on a staff-mobility to Norway to work in a hospital caring for people with dementia. While showing a beautiful mug they bought during their stay, they explained that “thanks to such a unique experience like the Erasmus+, you don’t only develop new skills, but you also gain a renewed confidence about your abilities”.

You can read about more about their stories in our blog [“No matter your age, take that step”](#)

Our Programmes and Initiatives



Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. To achieve this goal, the programme identifies key 'horizontal' priorities that Erasmus+ projects and activities should connect with. These are: Inclusion and Diversity, Digital Transformation, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, and Participation in Democratic life. The Erasmus+ programme in Ireland is administered through Léargas. We manage the following actions and opportunities within the programme as outlined below.

→ **Key Action 1 (KA1): Learning Mobility:**

learning mobilities (also known as exchanges) are opportunities for groups and individuals from organisations to travel to other countries to learn, work, train, or job-shadow and provides the opportunity to develop innovative projects with partners from around the world. Learning mobilities contain a range of opportunities and subdivisions across sectors. Léargas supports include: Adult Education Mobility, School Education Mobility, VET Mobility, Youth Worker Mobility, Youth Exchanges, Youth Participation and Sport Mobility.

→ **DiscoverEU Inclusion:**

an action of Erasmus+ which funds groups of one to five young people with fewer opportunities to travel through Europe by train for a short period of time.

→ **DiscoverEU:**

an action of Erasmus+ which provides young people a chance to explore Europe through learning experiences. Travelling primarily by rail, young people get the chance to explore Europe's diversity by making friends, developing life skills, and growing in confidence. Unlike DiscoverEU Inclusion, the European Commission is directly responsible for this action and young people apply via the European Youth Portal independently. Léargas' role is to promote this opportunity on behalf of the Commission.

→ **Accreditation:**

a tool that grants organisations access to long-term funding for mobility activities throughout the duration of the seven-year Erasmus+ programme.

→ **Key Action 2 (KA2): Partnerships for Cooperation:**

under this action, organisations work with relevant groups across Europe to develop, transfer or implement innovative practices and projects. There are two types 1. Cooperation Partnerships which is for experienced organisations or large-scale projects and have a set, lump-sum amount (400,000, 250,000 or 120,000) and 2. Small-scale partnerships which is for smaller projects with a shorter duration and have a smaller set, lump-sum amount (60,000 and 30,000).

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

The European Solidarity Corps funds and supports volunteering and project-based opportunities for young people between 18-30. The goal of the European Solidarity Corps is to help young people volunteer and engage in solidarity activities that affect positive change in their community and beyond. It also supports young people's personal development and encourages their continuous engagement as active citizens.

To support this goal, ESC projects and activities should connect with building a safer, greener, more inclusive, and digitally aware society. There are two types of ESC Projects young people can apply for 1. Volunteering Projects (individual and team opportunities available) and 2. Solidarity Projects whereby a group of young people create their own project to address a community challenge. The ESC programme is open to a diverse range of organisations, and in Ireland this includes youth services, homeless services, organisations supporting families, sustainability projects and social justice organisations.

CASE IV

CASE IV is a programme funded by PEACE IV that recognises the importance of collaboration and cooperation in a society damaged by a cycle of sectarianism and intolerance. It seeks to create and cultivate positive relations among primary and post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. CASE has a specific focus on schools that have limited or no previous experience of providing shared education opportunities to their children and young people. Léargas are awaiting confirmation of details for a 2024 programme cycle.

Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) and Networking Activities (NET)

TCA and NET are events arranged by National Agencies to encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. They can be training, and support events aimed at National Agency staff and project coordinators; contact seminars for beneficiaries to find project partners; or thematic seminars addressing specific topics in education, training, and youth work.

eTwinning

eTwinning is a free online platform connecting more than 1 million teachers across Europe. It supports primary and post primary schools to find partners and work on joint projects in any curricular area, using Information and Communication Technology. eTwinning is funded by the European Union and administered in participating countries by a National Support Organisation, or NSO. Léargas is the NSO for eTwinning in Ireland. eTwinning now resides on the European School Education Platform (ESEP), a meeting point for all stakeholders in the school education sector.



EPALE

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

LANGUAGES

Through the Languages initiatives we promote plurilingualism and support organisations to raise awareness about the diversity of languages spoken in our homes, classrooms, and communities. Léargas work with colleagues across all sectors on organising events that promote language awareness and language learning. We also promote involvement in initiatives that we manage on behalf of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, including the European Language Label, European Centre for Modern Languages, and affiliated events such as the European Day of Languages.

YOUTH WIKI

Youth Wiki is an online platform presenting information on European countries' youth policies. The main objective of Youth Wiki is to support evidence-based European cooperation in the field of Youth. It does so by providing up-to-date information on national policies related to young people, in a user-friendly. The overall purpose is to help the European Commission and Member States in their decision making, by providing information on the state of play on reforms and initiatives. The collection of qualitative information also allows the exchange of information and innovative approaches and can substantiate peer learning activities.

EURODESK

Eurodesk is a free service designed to help young people make the most of opportunities in Europe. It is a European youth information network, operating in 37 European countries, aimed at young people (13-30) and those who work with them. National and regional coordinators share information to help young people learn about and access opportunities in Europe including studying, working, and volunteering abroad, and having their say in European youth policies and matters.

VET Team

Started in 2021, VET Team aims to promote and enhance progress toward the application of EU VET Tools and principles in projects funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The Team supports the development and internationalisation of the VET sector, collaborates with other National VET Teams to share best international practices in VET, and provides advice and support to EU-funded projects under the Erasmus+ programme.

Key Highlights and Developments 2023

**Growth and engagement across
programmes, participants and with
stakeholders.**





This year, we've experienced significant growth in our programmes and enhanced engagement with stakeholders. In the Community Education and Further Education and Training (FET) sectors in Ireland, our Adult Education and VET programmes, along with the EPALE network, have notably expanded. In 2023, we approved our third consortium among accredited Adult Education organisations, collectively supporting around 70 entities participating in Erasmus+. This group includes various Community Education providers through AONTAS, all 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) through Education Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), and all 330 public libraries coordinated through the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

Outreach efforts to the FET sector in Ireland also led to widespread engagement in Erasmus+ Vocational Education and Training projects, maintaining full geographic representation for the fifth consecutive year. Short-term mobility success rates reached an impressive 94%, with accreditation applications achieving an 80% success rate. Additionally, small-scale partnership applications increased by 50% due to targeted outreach.

EPALE also witnessed substantial growth, partly driven by the return to in-person events and increased interaction with colleagues from the National Agencies for Adult Education and VET. Membership rose by 18% to 2,402, ranking EPALÉ Ireland within the top 10% for growth among all National Support Services. This year EPALÉ Ireland hosted nine events, including the European-wide EPALÉ Community Conference — a first for Ireland — where it was recognised for addressing complex issues such as research needs for transgender and non-gender conforming learners and staff in adult learning.

The School sector saw a rise in successful applications, particularly for Key Action 1 Mobilities, with thirty-one new accreditations awarded, raising the total number of accredited organisations to 87. These organisations, including ETBs and Education Centres, support numerous primary and post-primary schools, enhancing mobility opportunities for staff and students. Also under Key Action 1, short-term mobilities saw a 68% increase in participation from newcomers, a promising outlook as we hope to see these organisations apply for accreditation in future.

Additionally, Key Action 2 Partnerships for Cooperation welcomed several new funding recipients, such as Mary Immaculate College and Atlantic Technological University, among others.

In eTwinning, registrations surpassed 1 million teachers on the European School Education Platform, with 151 new Irish teachers in 2023 and 68 new projects. The annual eTwinning National Conference, held as a hybrid event, focused on digital education and innovation, featuring a keynote by Professor Deirdre Butler from DCU and discussions on digital wellbeing. Ten schools received the National Quality Label for excellence in eTwinning projects.

Our Youth sector also thrived this year, particularly in the success of the Erasmus+ Sport Action (detailed earlier) and in enhancing stakeholder engagement. Some examples include our collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in contributing to the new National Youth Policy framework, and in the collaboration with Localise (Ireland's National Youth Volunteering Programme) and the European Solidarity Corps, resulting in the development of a "National Volunteering Working Group."



Eurodesk Ireland, our youth information network, also played a key role in both engagement and partnership building in 2023. They launched a new website, in cooperation with Crosscare, that provides information about the opportunities for young people in Ireland in youth-friendly language. In October 2023, Eurodesk and its 'Multipliers,' a network of over 20 youth organisations across Ireland, organised the 'Time to Move' campaign, focusing on the European Parliament Elections. Excitingly, we re-initiated our Eurodesk Ireland Youth Ambassador panel in 2023, onboarding nine young people to promote EU opportunities among their peers.



Our Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCAs) and Networking Activities (NET) significantly contributed to our growth and funding success, with 31 activities organised by Léargas, attracting 1,168 participants. And in collaboration with SALTO, the coordination of 59 sending activities enabled 109 participants to receive funding for trainings and partnership-building opportunities abroad. Some highlight events in Ireland included the 'Youth Street Smart' event and 'Rethinking Anti-Racism Practice in Adult Education' training, each fostering exchange and skill development among our European peers.



These initiatives not only enhance our programme engagement but also facilitate significant networking opportunities with sectoral stakeholders at conferences like The Wheel Summit & Fundraising Expo, enhancing our outreach and support for EU opportunities and funding.



Maintaining a strong online presence was also essential for engagement in 2023, both through social media and direct communication with potential applications, current beneficiaries, and stakeholders. In 2023, Léargas distributed 40 sectoral newsletters and numerous promotional emails to keep our networks informed of opportunities, remind them about funding deadlines and share important updates from the European Commission and other relevant stakeholder departments. We also launched 5 public relation campaigns including the Léargas Gathering, the International Tool Fair, Seen and Heard, Eurodesk's Europe Day Photography Competition, and eTwinning's National Conference. Additionally, we initiated three targeted mini campaigns on social media during Electric Picnic, Pride, and the European Day of Languages.

A primary focus in terms of organisation communications in 2023 was enhancing our engagement on social media by better understanding and connecting with our audience. This led us to explore different content formats to see which best captured user interest. Notable content included creation of video reels that aligned our programmes with popular trends to boost interactions. We saw a combined increase of 15% in social media followers across all our channels in 2023, reflecting the positive impact of these efforts.

“Popular Bill Hader Meme ” -

This post received 1,276 views, reached 1,185 accounts and had 61 engagements.

“What if barbie participated in....” -

Using the success of the Barbie movie, we designed a post highlighting Barbie taking part in the programmes that Léargas has to offer. This is now one of our top performing posts on Instagram. It received 2,103 views, reached 1,742 accounts and had 77 engagements. At a National Agency Communication and Information conference in September, this received an award for Best Campaign.



Inclusion at the forefront

At Léargas, inclusion is a cornerstone of all of our outreach and engagement and our good governance as a charity. We are deeply committed to ensuring that the transformative experiences offered by Erasmus+ and other EU programmes are accessible to all, particularly to those from under-recognised and marginalised communities. As outlined in our Beneficiaries Support Approach section, our Inclusion and Diversity Officer has a crucial role in furthering Inclusion support at Léargas. Using informed policy directives, the ID officer identifies and supports individuals and organisations that could greatly benefit from our programs but might otherwise face barriers to participation. The supportive approach includes fostering awareness among these organisations of relevant opportunities, providing additional coaching and support, offering enhanced feedback on unsuccessful applications, and reflecting after successful applications to show how this can be built upon to engage further.

The dedicated one-on-one support guides applicants from the initial concept stage through to the completion of their application forms. This personalised approach ensured that applicants not only understood the process but were also empowered to submit proposals that truly reflected their needs and aspirations.

In addition to direct support and outreach, an Inclusion Support Working Group was established in 2023, led by our ID officer. This group aims to increase and improve practices related to Inclusion and Diversity within the programmes Léargas manages. The working group looks at ways to reflect on and review ID approaches in the organisation's culture – for example, to ensure a common understanding on what ID means in the Erasmus+ and ESC programmes and how ID objectives are being approached and implemented across teams.

Research and Policy Contributions

At Léargas, research underpins our commitment to enhancing inclusion, fostering engagement, and developing meaningful partnerships. It provides a foundation for measuring impact, tracking emerging trends, and ensuring our initiatives align with evolving policies. This section demonstrates how our 2023 research activities have been crucial in continuously improving our strategies and practices, helping us to achieve our mission and respond to the needs of our diverse stakeholders more effectively.

Establishment of Léargas' External Research Panel

2023 marked the introduction of our first external Research Panel, bringing together distinguished experts from various sectors. This initiative has already seen active contributions, and we anticipate its growing impact in 2024 which will enrich our research capabilities.

Collaboration with the RAY Network

As a research partner in the [RAY Network](#), which provides research-based analysis of European youth programmes, Léargas contributed to comprehensive studies based on feedback from 25,965 participants. Despite challenges such as COVID-19 and geopolitical tensions, findings from 2023 highlight that the majority of Erasmus+ Youth and Solidarity Corps participants reported positive and empowering experiences:

- **89.77%** of youth exchange participants were happy or very happy with their projects.
- **93.76%** of youth participation project participants were similarly satisfied.
- **83.8%** of volunteering project participants had positive experiences.
- **95.6%** of solidarity project participants were very happy with their involvement.

Additional insights include the increasing importance of addressing sociopolitical issues for young people and the role of personal referrals in encouraging new participants to join. The research also found a significant increase in participants feeling a closer connection to Europe post-project. Work is underway in 2024 to analyse these outcomes specifically for Irish participants.

Influence on Policy

Throughout 2023, Léargas actively engaged in several policy-making initiatives at both national and European levels. Our contributions included detailed surveys, interviews, and submissions on diverse topics such as youth services action plans, national strategies for migrant integration, and educational strategies for Travellers and Roma. Notable engagements include:

- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
 - ‘Drive Opportunities for Youth: An Action Plan for Youth Services’ (publication pending)
 - ‘National strategy for migrant integration’ (publication pending)
- Department of Education
 - ‘Traveller and Roma Education Strategy’ (publication pending)
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
 - [Statement of Strategy 2023-2025](#)
 - Public Consultation on a Higher Education Research Policy Engagement Framework (publication pending)
- SOLAS
 - High-level Mid-Term Review of Future FET: Transforming Learning, The National Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024 (publication pending)
- SALTO'S Participation and Information Resource Centre:
 - [Media and Information Literacy and Digital Participation within Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Projects](#)

Additionally, Léargas has also continued its ongoing work of researching and summarising information in plain English about national policy, legislation, and initiatives, for Youth Wiki.

New eTwinning Guides

2023 also saw the publication of two new eTwinning guides. The first guide explains how eTwinning aligns with the three pillars of the National Digital Strategy for Schools 2022-2027. The second guide demonstrates how eTwinning can support the seven key competencies of the new primary school curriculum. These resources are designed to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of eTwinning in schools, further bridging digital education strategies with practical classroom applications.

Our Year in Photos





Our Year in Photos



Our Year in Figures

20 23

OVER VIEW

PROJECTS CONTRACTED

353

FUNDING AWARDED

€26,668,532.80

FORECASTED

10,382

FORECASTED
WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

3,257

Breakdown of Activity Type

	Number of contracted projects in 2023	Funding contracted in 2023
Erasmus+ KA1	268	€15,737,665.80
Erasmus+ KA2	53	€9,260,000.00
ESC51	26	€1,620,173.00
ESC30	6	€50,694.00
Totals	353	€26,668,532.80

Breakdown by Sector

Sector	Number of contracted projects in 2023	Funding contracted in 2023
Adult Ed (KA1 + KA2)	30	€2,376,910.00
School Ed (KA1 + KA2)	154	€7,781,940.80
VET (KA1 + KA2)	59	€8,942,470.00
Youth (KA1 – from KA151 to KA155 + KA2)	64	€5,692,957.00
Sport (KA182)	14	€203,388.00
ESC51	26	€1,620,173.00
ESC30	6	€50,694.00
	353	€26,668,532.80

Number of Received, Awarded & Contracted Projects per key action and sector

	Number of received (submitted) projects in 2023	Number of awarded projects in 2023	Number of contracted projects in 2023
KA1 Youth	105	50	50
KA1 ADU	28	23	22
KA1 VET	49	47	47
KA1 SCH	149	135	135
KA1 Sport	20	14	14
KA2 ADU	49	8	8
KA2 SCH	91	19	19
KA2 VET	55	12	12
KA2 YOU	66	14	14
ESC51	28	27	26
ESC30	8	6	6

Breakdown by Sector

2023	ADULT ED.	SCHOOL ED.	VET	YOUTH	ESC
% of projects addressing climate objectives under Key Action 2	33.33%	8.33%	66.67%	57.14%	50.00%
% of participants with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under Key Action 1	86.96%	26.08%	41.83%	42.54%	47.47%
Number of distinct newcomer organisations and institutions taking part in the Programme under Key Actions 1 and 2	10	44	15	19	NA

Comparison of 2023 & 2022

	2023	2022
Projects Contracted	353	228
Funding Awarded	€26,668,532.80	18,141,749.95
Forecasted	1,0382	5,529
Forecasted with fewer opportunities	3,257	1,997

Breakdown of activity type 2022 & 2023

	Number of contracted projects in 2022	Number of contracted projects in 2023	Funding contracted in 2022	Funding contracted in 2023
Erasmus+ KA1	149	268	€8,482,525.00	€15,737,665.80
Erasmus+ KA2	46	53	€8,300,000.00	€9,260,000.00
ESC51	23	26	€1,272,132.95	€1,620,173.00
ESC30	10	6	€87,092.00	€50,694.00
Totals	228	353	€18,141,749.95	€26,668,532.80

Comparison of of sectors 2022 & 2023

	2023	2022
Adult Ed (KA1 + KA2)	30	16
School Ed (KA1 + KA2)	154	76
VET (KA1 + KA2)	59	49
Youth (KA1 – from KA151 to KA155 + KA2)	64	54
Sport (KA182)	14	0
ESC51	26	23
ESC30	6	10
	353	228

Comparison of 2022 to 2023 Funding Awarded to Contracted Projects

	2023	2022
Adult Ed (KA1 + KA2)	€2,376,910.00	€1,907,639.00
School Ed (KA1 + KA2)	€7,781,940.80	€3,976,197.00
VET (KA1 + KA2)	€8,942,470.00	€6,960,971.00
Youth (KA1 – from KA151 to KA155 +KA2)	€5,692,957.00	€3,937,718.00
Sport (KA182)	€203,388.00	€0.00
ESC51	€1,620,173.00	€1,272,132.95
ESC30	€50,694.00	€87,092.00
	€26,668,532.80	€18,141,749.95

Comparison of Accreditations across sectors in 2023 and 2022

	ADU (KA120-ADU)	SCH (KA120-SCH)	VET (KA120-VET)	YOU (KA150-YOU)	ESC50
Number of awarded accreditations/ Quality label in 2022	6	32	6	3	7
Number of awarded accreditations/ Quality label in 2023	4	31	8	1	8



Governance and Finance

Léargas – The Exchange Bureau

(a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

Registration Number: 208725

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For the year ended 31 December 2023

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Please see here for full financial statements,
including the below in addition to the above

- Independent auditor's report
- Income and expenditure account
- Statement of income and retained earnings
- Statement of financial position
Statement of cash flows
- Notes to the financial statements

COMPANY INFORMATION

For the year ended 31 December 2023

DIRECTORS	John Gilmore (Appointed 25/01/2023) Frank Crummey Jean-Marie Cullen Nuala Keher Dipti Pandya Margaret Waters Theresa Reidy (Appointed 25/01/2023)
SECRETARY	Lorriane Gilligan (Appointed 31/10/2023)
COMPANY NUMBER	208725
CHARITY RCN	20020330
REGISTERED OFFICE	King's Inns House Parnell Street, Dublin 1 D01 A3Y8
BUSINESS ADDRESS	Avoca House and King's Inns House Parnell Street, Dublin 1 D01 A3Y8
AUDITORS	JPA Brenson Lawlor Brenson Lawlor House Argyle Square Morehampton Road Donnybrook, Dublin 4
BANKERS	Allied Irish Bank Baggot Street , Dublin 2
SOLICITORS	Harry Mooney & Co. Solicitors 7 Orchardstown Park Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Internal Financial Controls

On behalf of the Board of Léargas I acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated. The Board of Léargas has responsibility for the organisation's system of financial controls.

The Board acknowledges that the system can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely period.

Key Control Procedures

The Board has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by:

- Clearly defining management responsibilities, in a defined organisational structure with clear segregation of duties;
- Adopting the principles of corporate governance as outlined in the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 bearing in mind the size and nature of Léargas; and
- Establishing formal procedures to monitor the activities and safeguard the assets of the organisation while ensuring compliance with European funding regulations.

The key procedures established by the Board to provide effective internal financial control are set out in an operations manual clearly defining management responsibilities and steps to be taken in the event of control failures.

The effectiveness of the control environment set out in the operations manual has been reviewed through a number of audits carried out in the past 12 months by our external auditors; additionally, internal audits have been undertaken by our own internal auditors, Grant Thornton. Audits have also been carried out on behalf of the European Commission and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science by ASM (B) Limited.

The Board has implemented a full system of risk management including:

- The identification of significant strategic, financial, operational and reputational risks;
- The assessment of the appropriateness and strength of management controls surrounding risk areas; and
- The highlighting of key risk areas for specific management attention and Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee focus.

An annual budget is compiled and approved by the Board. Monthly accounts are produced showing variances between actual and budget. These are reviewed by management and the Board on a regular basis.

A full system of internal financial control is in place covering all aspects of delegation, authorisation, segregation of duties and prevention and detection of fraud.

Léargas outsources its internal audit function to Grant Thornton, who report directly to the FAR Committee. The FAR Committee meet on a regular basis to review accounts, internal audit reports and staffing matters. Management receives and reviews accounts on a monthly basis.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The Board reviews the effectiveness of the system of internal controls on an annual basis through the work of the FAR Committee and the reports provided by Grant Thornton (Internal Auditors) and ASM (B) Limited (auditors for Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science).

No material losses have been incurred arising from weaknesses in internal financial control and therefore there has been no requirement for disclosure in the financial statements or the auditor's report on the financial statements. No fraud has been detected.

All recommendations by Grant Thornton and ASM (B) Limited have been or are in the process of being acted on.

There have been no significant commercially sensitive developments in the preceding twelve months and as a non-commercial state body, Léargas is not likely to experience any such developments in the short to medium term.

I can confirm that there are no off-balance sheet transactions to report.

I can confirm that all appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel, procurement, and asset disposal are being carried out.

I can confirm that the Board has established a Code of Business Conduct for Directors and Employees and that the policy is being adhered to.

I can confirm that Government policy on the pay of Chief Executives and all State body employees is being complied with.

I can confirm that no fees are paid to the Directors of Léargas.

I can confirm that there have been no significant post balance sheet events.

I can confirm that Léargas is in compliance with the requirements of the Public Spending code.

I can confirm that Léargas is in compliance with DPER Circular 13/2014.

I can confirm that Léargas is in compliance with its Protected Disclosures Policy and received and granted zero protected disclosures in the reporting period up to 31 December 2023.

The required Protected Disclosures Annual Report will be published on our website following the Annual General Meeting.

I can confirm that Government travel policy requirements are being complied with in all respects.

I can confirm that Léargas has no Capital Expenditure Proposals.

I can confirm that Léargas has been in compliance with its obligations under tax law.

I can confirm that Léargas is not involved in any legal disputes involving other state bodies.

I can confirm that Léargas has adopted the Charities Governance Code and is in compliance.

I can confirm that Léargas has adopted the principles of the 2016 Code of Practice and is in compliance.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

I can confirm that Léargas has no subsidiaries and it continues to remain in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the consent under which it was established. Léargas is not involved in joint ventures or share acquisitions but hosted the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), which ceased activities on August 31st of 2022 following a decision by the Department of Education to revise its model for the delivery of Guidance in Education. During 2023, there remained some administrative and reconciliation actions related to the NCGE to be completed.

For your information, a statement of expenses paid to members of the Board in 2023 including our Executive Director and also a statement of remuneration paid to key staff is set out below. We also include schedules of travel and hospitality expenses. Members of the Léargas Board do not receive fees or any remuneration.

LÉARGAS BOARD EXPENSES

John Gilmore	€0
Frank Crummey	€0
Jean-Marie Cullen	€0
Nuala Keher	€0
Theresa Reidy	€0
Dipti Pandya	€0
Margaret Waters	€0
Executive Director	Lorraine Gilligan
Salary	€ 107,755
Expenses	€ 3,167

STAFF PAY BANDS

2023 Number

€60,001 to €70,000	5
€70,001 to €80,000	1
€80,001 to €90,000	2
€90,001 to €100,000	2
€100,001 to €110,000	0
€110,001 to €120,000	1

CONSULTANCY COSTS

Legal	€ 39,612
Health and Safety	€ 23,900
Human Resources	€ 12,287

LEGAL SETTLEMENTS

There was no legal compensation paid during 2023

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE AND HOSPITALITY EXPENSES

(Including Board and Executive Director travel as set out in the attached schedules)

Foreign travel and subsistence	€ 72,011
Home travel and subsistence	€ 36,978

Signed:



DR JOHN GILMORE

Chairperson

DIRECTORS' REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements of the company for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

Directors

The names of the persons who at any time during the financial year were directors of the company are as follows:

- Frank Crummey (Chair – Resigned 31/08/2023 but remains on the Board of Directors as an ordinary member)
- John Gilmore (Chair – Appointed 31/08/2023)
- Jean-Marie Cullen
- Nuala Keher
- Dipti Pandya
- Margaret Waters
- Theresa Reidy (Appointed 25/01/2023)

Structure, Governance and Management of Léargas

Léargas is constituted as a company limited by guarantee without a share capital as set out under parts 1-15 of the Companies Act 2014. Its purpose and objects are set out in the Memorandum of Association and how it conducts its business is set out in the Articles of Association. These documents are available from the

Companies Registration Office website (www.cro.ie) and the Charities Regulator website, (www.charitiesregulator.ie).

The Board of Léargas has implemented the Charities Governance Code and also the principles of the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. As of the Annual General Meeting and the approval of this report, the organisation is in compliance with its governance requirements and in its objective of implementing best practice.

Léargas is governed by a board of directors with a maximum membership of nine people, one of whom is nominated by the National Youth Council of Ireland. All members of the board are appointed by the Minister & Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Appointments are for a period of three years.

One third of the membership of the board is rotated off the board at the AGM. However, such members may be re-elected to the board by the membership or be replaced by new appointees by the Minister, at the Minister's discretion.

As at the end of December 2023, there were seven Board members on the Board of Léargas.

The board meets a minimum of five times annually.

Board Sub-groups

Léargas has eight standing sub-groups, the FAR Committee, the Erasmus Plus Youth in Action Selection Committee, the Erasmus Plus Adult Education Selection Committee, the Erasmus Plus Vocational Education and Training Selection Committee and the Erasmus Plus Schools Selection Committee, CASE Project Board, European Solidarity Corps Selection Committee.

The FAR Committee meets a minimum of five times annually, the Erasmus + Youth in Action Committee meets three times annually, Adult Education meets twice, the VET and Schools Committees meet annually, and CASE project board quarterly. During 2022 in its capacity as National Co-ordinator of the European Year of Youth, Léargas implemented a micro-grant Scheme which convened its own selection committee to consider six selection rounds. European Year of Youth activities ended in December 2022 but the contract and financial processing for the activities were concluded in May 2023.

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The number of meetings for each selection committee may increase or decrease depending on the number of grant calls in each year.

Records of attendance at each of the committees above can be found on the Léargas website. The board of Léargas is represented on each committee.

Policies and Procedures for the Induction of New Board Members

All new board members receive a Board Induction pack when they become a board member. The induction pack contains all the information and documentation that board members require to carry out their role including the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the board Member Code of Conduct, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and a list of matters reserved to the Board. The Executive Director meets with each new board member within the first two months to brief them on the organisation's operations and to respond to any queries.

Board members are also provided with copies of the organisation's current strategic plan.

Matters Reserved for the Board of Léargas

The following are the matters reserved for the Board of Léargas:

- Significant acquisitions, disposals and retirement of assets of the State body or its subsidiaries.
- Major investment and capital projects.
- Delegated authority levels, treasury policy and risk management policies;
- Approval of terms of major contracts;

- Annual review of risk and internal control;
- Litigation;
- Compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the number, grading and condition of appointment of all staff;
- Approval of annual budgets and corporate plans;
- Productions of annual reports and accounts;
- Appointment/removal of Auditors;
- Appointment, remunerations and assessment of the performance of, and succession planning for the Executive Director;
- Appointment of Programme/Unit Managers; and
- Significant amendments to the pension benefits of the Executive Director and staff (which may require Ministerial approval).

Staff

Léargas has a staff team based in Dublin and headed by an Executive Director who reports directly to the Board through the Chairperson. A management team of five people report to the Executive Director and all other members of the staff report to members of the management team.

The Board of Directors delegates certain responsibilities and duties to the Executive Director and through them to the staff team. These include implementation of the Léargas Strategic Plan, leading, managing and developing the Léargas staff team, the implementation of the programmes managed by Léargas, finance and overall administration so that Léargas achieves its overall mission, vision and strategy in a manner consistent with its values.

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Reserves policy

The reserves policy was approved by the Board in 2020 and is subject to an annual review. The policy outlines the requirement to build up a cash flow designated reserve to provide a working capital equivalent of a minimum of 3 months and up to 6 months of on-going operational expenditure. The policy is in accordance with good practice as outlined in the Charities Governance code.

Internal Controls

The Board has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by:

- Clearly defining management responsibilities, in a defined organisational structure with clear segregation of duties;
- Adopting the Charities Governance Code and the principles of corporate governance as outlined in the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 bearing in mind the size and nature of Léargas; and
- Establishing formal procedures to monitor the activities, safeguard the assets of the organisation while ensuring compliance with European funding regulations.

The key procedures established by the Board to provide effective internal financial control are set out in an operations manual clearly defining management responsibilities and steps to be taken in the event of control failures.

The Board has implemented full system of risk management including:

- The identification of significant strategic, financial, operational and reputational risks;

- The assessment of the appropriateness and strength of management controls surrounding risk areas; and
- The highlighting of key risk areas for specific management attention and Audit and Finance Committee focus.

An annual budget is compiled and approved by the Board. Monthly accounts are produced showing variances between actual and budget. These are reviewed by management and the Board on a regular basis.

A full system of internal financial control is in place covering all aspects of delegation, authorisation, segregation of duties and prevention and detection of fraud.

Léargas outsources its internal audit function to Grant Thornton, who report directly to the FAR Committee. The FAR Committee meet on a regular basis to review accounts, internal audit reports and staffing matters.

Grant Thornton (Internal Auditors) and ASM (B) Limited (auditors for DFHERIS) review the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control on an annual basis. No material losses have been incurred arising from weaknesses in internal financial control and therefore there has been no requirement for disclosure in the financial statements or the auditor's report on the financial statements. No fraud has been detected.

All recommendations by Grant Thornton or ASM (B) Limited have been acted on.

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

During 2023, Léargas requested an internal audit of Internal Financial controls and Procurement. Corrective measures have been put in place in 2023 and continue into 2024.

Léargas conducts an annual risk review process that is assessed in detail by the Board annually, which involves identification of the major risks to which Léargas is exposed, an assessment of the likelihood of these happening, their potential impact and possible mitigating strategies. Risk is a quarterly agenda item for meetings of the Management Team, meetings of staff teams, FAR Committee and of the Board.

Health and Safety of Employees

It is the policy of the company to ensure the health and welfare of employees by maintaining a safe place and system of work.

This policy is based on the requirements of employee legislation, including the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989.

Principal activities and business review

Léargas provides management and development services to a range of European and bilateral co-operation and exchange programmes in the youth, volunteering, education, training, sport and early years sectors.

The principal activity of the company during the year was the administration and distribution of grants on behalf of the European Commission and the National Authorities i.e. the Department of Higher and Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The grants managed are funded by the Erasmus + programme, the European Solidarity Corp Programme, as well as bilateral programmes such as CASE, PEACE IV.

This means that Léargas acts as a conduit between these agencies and the final grant recipients and holds grant monies in trust for the funders and distributes it to the final recipients according to the rules and regulations of the funder concerned.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The directors have identified that the key risk and uncertainty Léargas faces is the risk of grant funding being reduced and the consequent impact that this would have on the ability of the company to act as a conduit between European Commission, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and the final grant recipients.

Léargas mitigates these risks as follows:

- The company continually monitors the level of activity, prepares and monitors its budgets, targets and projections; and
- The company closely monitors emerging changes to the rules and regulations of the funders concerned on an ongoing basis.

Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of financial policies and procedures which controls the authorisation of all transactions and projects.

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Léargas has no currency risk and no credit risk. It has no interest rate risk due to the fact that it has no borrowings.

The directors are aware of the key risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company and are satisfied that there are appropriate systems in place to mitigate these risks appropriately.

Likely future developments

The directors are not expecting to make any significant changes in the nature of the business in the near future. The organisation continues to implement the funding cycle and expecting increases in funding and required staffing to ensure distribution of this.

Dividends

During the financial year the directors have not paid any dividends or recommended payment of any dividend.

Post balance sheet events

There have been no events subsequent to the year-end which require any adjustment to, or additional disclosure in the financial statements.

Accounting records

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the requirements of sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of the company are located at the company's registered office.

Auditor

In accordance with the Companies Act 2014, Section 383(2) JPA Brenson Lawlor continue in office as auditors of the company.

Relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

On behalf of the board:

John Gilmore *Margaret Waters*

DR JOHN GILMORE

Chairperson
28 MAY 2024

MARGARET WATERS

Director
28 MAY 2024

DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the surplus or deficit of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the company financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and surplus or deficit of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors' Report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence forth taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the board:



DR JOHN GILMORE

Chairperson

28 MAY 2024



MARGARET WATERS

Director

28 MAY 2024

PROGRAMME REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Current Programmes

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the current EU programme for education, training, youth and sport and covers the period 2021-2027

The previous programmes cycle ran from 2018-2020 and legacy projects from this cycle remain actively managed.

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising education, training, and youth work.

Léargas has been appointed as a National Agency for the management of actions under the Erasmus+ programme targeted at the vocational training, schools, adult education and youth work sectors in Ireland. In 2022 Léargas was designated National Agency for Erasmus+ Sport mobility, and began preparations for implementation in 2023, which is now up and running.

The company works on a sectoral focus for the relevant programmes thus facilitating operational efficiencies and the leveraging of related experience and knowledge in these areas.

- Education and Training Development
- Operations and Finance
- Youth, Sport, and ESC Development
- Strategic Engagement and Communications
- Finance and Corporate Services

Léargas manages the following actions and activities:

KEY ACTION 1 – LEARNING MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS

This Key Action supports:

Mobility of learners and staff: opportunities for students, trainees, young people, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country. The Actions supported under this Key Action are expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participants and participating organisations involved, as well as on the policy systems in which such activities are framed.

As regards pupils, students, trainees, apprentices, adult learners and young people, the mobility activities supported under this Key Action are meant to produce one or more of the following outcomes:

- improved learning performance;
- enhanced employability and improved career prospects;
- increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increased self-empowerment and self-esteem;
- improved foreign language and digital competences;
- enhanced intercultural awareness;
- more active participation in society;
- enhanced positive interactions with people from different backgrounds;
- better awareness of the European project and the EU values;
- increased motivation for taking part in future (formal/ non-formal) education or training after the mobility period abroad.

PROGRAMME REPORT (CONTINUED)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

KEY ACTION 2 - COOPERATION AMONG ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

This Key Action supports:

Partnerships for Cooperation, including Cooperation Partnerships and Small-scale Partnerships;

Partnerships for Excellence, including Centres for Vocational Excellence and Erasmus Mundus Action;
Partnerships for Innovation, including Alliances and Forward-looking projects;

Capacity Building projects in the fields of higher education, vocational education and training, youth and sport; Not-for-profit European sport events.

The Actions supported under this Key Action are expected to contribute significantly to the priorities of the programme, to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participating organisations, on the policy systems in which such Actions are framed as well as on the organisations and persons directly or indirectly involved in the organised activities.

European Solidarity Corps Programme

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal and humanitarian challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union and beyond. ESC opens up more and better opportunities covering a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities preservation of cultural heritage, and humanitarian aid. It also supports national and local actors in their efforts to cope with societal challenges and crises.

ESC enables young people to respond to important societal needs by taking part in solidarity activities across the European Union. It creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work (in their own country or abroad) in projects that benefit communities and people - young people contribute to strengthening communities while gaining experience, skills and competences for their own personal, educational, social, civic and professional development.

Léargas manages the following activities.

Volunteering Projects offer opportunities for young people to take part in activities contributing to the daily work of participating organisations, to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out. Volunteering is a full-time unpaid activity. This type of solidarity activity is undertaken through participating organisations offering young people the opportunity to carry out a variety of activities, in a structured way.

Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas are solidarity activities that allow teams of participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps.

Solidarity Projects are a non-profit activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period from 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community.

PROGRAMME REPORT (CONTINUED)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

These programmes require engagement in a range of strategic actions and initiatives for policy innovation to stimulate innovative policy development among stakeholders and to enable public authorities to test the effectiveness of innovative policies through field trials based on sound evaluation methodologies.

Support to European policy tools to facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, as well as the transfer of credits, to foster quality assurance, support validation of non-formal and informal learning, skills management and guidance.

Cooperation with international organisations with highly recognised expertise and analytical capacity (such as the OECD and the Council of Europe), to strengthen the impact and added value of policies in the fields of education, training and youth.

Stakeholder dialogue, policy and Programme promotion with public authorities, providers and stakeholders in the fields of education, training and youth are necessary for raising awareness about European Education Agenda, European Youth Strategy and other European sector-specific policy agendas, as well as the external dimension of EU education, training and youth policies. They are essential to developing the capacity of stakeholders to concretely support the implementation of policies by stimulating the effective exploitation of the Programme results and generating tangible impact.

Other Programmes

Léargas also manages additional programme activities including:

Peace IV

The Education Authority in Northern Ireland and Léargas work in partnership to implement the Peace IV Collaboration through Sharing in Education (CASE) programme.

CASE is for primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Its focus is on schools with no or limited previous experience of providing shared education opportunities to their children and young people. CASE aims to build a culture of good relations among school children and to equip them with the skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a society where the cycle of sectarianism and intolerance is broken, and a culture of collaboration and cooperation is the norm. In 2023, the Case programme completed its activity having exceeded its targets for participation.

The key aim of CASE is to provide direct, sustained, curriculum-based contact between children and teachers from all backgrounds, through collaboration between schools from different sectors and diverse backgrounds in order to promote good relations and enhance children's skills and attitudes to contribute to a cohesive society.

CASE is open to all schools in the six border counties of Ireland and schools in Northern Ireland which are not currently involved in the DSC Signature Project for Shared Education.

Languages

Promoting languages and language learning through the European Day of Languages, European Centre for Modern Languages and The European Award for Languages - the Language Label.

PROGRAMME REPORT (CONTINUED)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

eTwinning

The Community for Schools in Europe.

eTwinning is a free online platform linking a community of more than 500,000 teachers across Europe. It supports primary and post-primary schools to find partners and work on joint projects in any curricular area, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Eurodesk

Eurodesk is a free information service on EU funding and opportunities to work, study, volunteer and travel in Europe for young people

Eurodesk supports and contributes to the European Youth Portal, a European Commission website which publishes articles, news and events for young people. The site gives information around nine main themes, covers 33 countries and is available in 27 languages.

Youth Wiki

Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia for national youth policies. Its overall purpose is to help the European Commission and Member States in their decision making, by providing information on state of play on reforms and initiatives. The collection of qualitative information also allows the exchange of information and innovative approaches and can substantiate peer learning activities.

Youth Wiki offers a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. The information can be explored using interactive maps, researching one of the 29 countries represented, or by reading 'Chapters' about specific aspects of youth policy.

EPALE

The Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) is a multilingual open membership community for professionals involved in Adult Learning in Europe. It was designed with input from practitioners and is intended for all those active in the field, including teachers, trainers, researchers, academics, and policymakers.

EPALE is operated by the European Commission and supported by the governments of member states. In Ireland, Léargas is the National Support Service for EPALE in Ireland, receiving support via co-finance from SOLAS, the state agency for Further Education and Training in Ireland.

VET Teams

VET Teams is the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. It is a framework for the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes across VET learning environments. It allows learners to accumulate their vocational experience with a view to achieving a qualification. VET Teams is particularly useful to VET professionals who send their learners on mobility placements.



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