

Galway Community Circus

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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About Us

Galway Community Circus is Ireland's flagship organisation for youth and social circus, located in the heart of Galway City with a local, national, and international remit. Our aim is to advance the artistic, personal, and social development of young people through circus arts. We are committed to creating an innovative and imaginative learning experience where all young people can realise their full potential.

We are home to a year-round youth circus school, working with young people from diverse backgrounds every week and deliver social circus programmes in formal and non-formal education settings. We fulfil a vital role in the development of the circus arts sector in Ireland as we work to advance the quality of the sector through professional development programmes for circus practitioners and participation in key international networks. Our vision is for a centre of excellence for youth and social circus in Ireland. Our mission is to unlock personal and creative potential and deliver social inclusion for young people through circus arts.

Our Vision

A centre of excellence for youth and social circus in Ireland.

Our Mission

To unlock personal and creative potential and deliver social inclusion for young people through circus arts.

Our Values

Circus is the art of possibility. Not just an art-form, circus fosters a unique community where everyone is welcome, where diversity and difference are actively embraced, and where everyone is encouraged to dream. At Galway Community Circus we don't just teach circus techniques, we impart the unique values of circus which guide and motivate the attitudes, behaviour and decision-making of members and artists, staff and volunteers alike.

At Galway Community Circus we...

- Provide high **QUALITY** arts experience in circus for all
- Foster a sense of **BELONGING** so that everyone feels welcome, safe and valued for who they are
- Work collaboratively, **SUPPORT** each other and celebrate one another's success
- Create a culture of personal and collective **RESPONSIBILITY**, pursuit of excellence and resilience
- **DREAM** big, take risks and are not afraid to make mistakes
- Focus on positivity and **POSSIBILITY**
- **CHALLENGE** self-limiting thinking patterns and default behaviours
- Value individual and collective **CREATIVITY**
- Play, have **FUN** and remain curious

Artistic Policy

Galway Community Circus aims to create work that is of equal social and artistic excellence. We believe it is important to involve our performers in projects which are entirely inclusive and where the process is safe and nurturing but also where the final product is of high artistic quality. For us, artistic ambition translates to participatory processes, that allow each person to reach their potential, as well as innovative, artistically excellent work that engages with diverse audiences and a wide range of creative collaborators and showcases circus as an exciting, accessible and meaningful artform.

Chairperson's Address

Another year and another set of challenges for Galway Community Circus! Throughout 2020, Covid-19 continued to disrupt our members and tutors, forcing us to all work and teach remotely. As we have come to expect, our team chose to see these challenges as speed bumps rather than cul-de-sacs on our journey and pulled together to create an entire youth circus programme online all the time putting our members first. In addition, we also managed to create our first Youth Circus Festival called Mayhem that took place online over three days in May which was a massive success. Not only did we maintain our momentum and retain our team, we also expanded by hiring our first full time Company Artist/Education employee – welcome, Davi Hora!

On a personal note, I am stepping down from the board this year and I would just like to commend everyone involved in the Circus for the fortitude and commitment they have shown over my time here, in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic.

No one could have predicted the seismic changes we experienced in these last 18 months and the added mental pressure that this put on all of our team. If we can take one positive from all this, it is the knowledge that we have a management group and a team that will always work together not only to make the Circus work, but to actually make it better for each other and the members.

I am proud to have been a part of the Circus these last six years and wish everyone success and happiness going forward.



2020: Our Year in Numbers

4313

PEOPLE ENGAGED
WITH OUR CIRCUS

107

ARTS WORKER
ENGAGEMENTS

25

WEEKS OF
YOUTH CIRCUS

8

FULL TIME EUROPEAN
VOLUNTEERS

1ST

ARTIST EMPLOYED
FULL TIME

524

YOUTH CIRCUS
CLASSES

111

ARTIST
ENGAGEMENTS

20

FUNAMBULISM
WORKSHOPS

3

SCRATCH
NIGHT SHOWS

1

CURRENT YOUTH
CIRCUS MEMBER ON THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

235

ARTFORM DEVELOPMENT
ACTIONS

37

SOCIAL CIRCUS
WORKSHOPS

9

EUROPEAN
PROJECTS

2

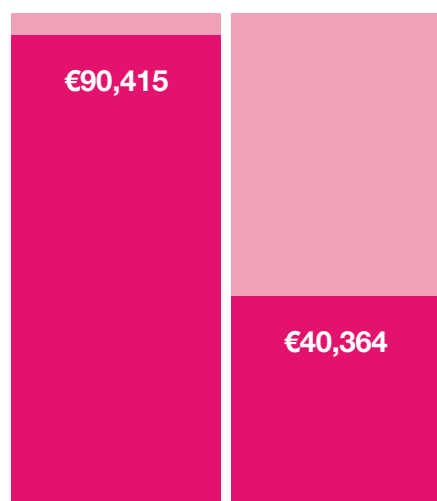
ARTISTS IN
RESIDENCE

1

YOUTH CIRCUS
FESTIVAL

COVID-19 Impact

Youth Circus Income

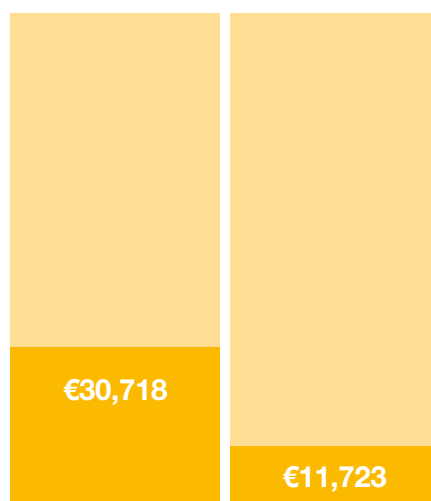


2019

2020

55%
loss of income

Social Circus Income

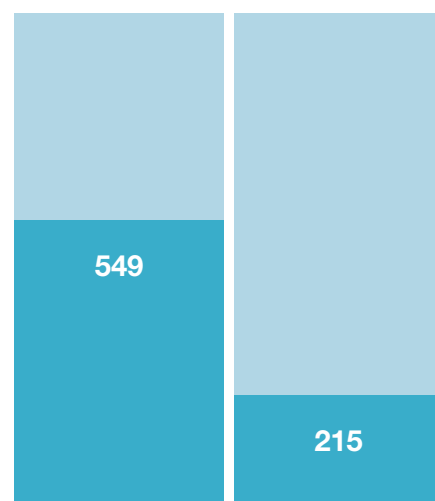


2019

2020

62%
loss of income

Registered Participants



2019

2020

61%
loss of participants

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Galway Community Circus had to close its physical doors in March. With the intention of keeping community, fun, friendship and connection alive, we offered free online classes called Circus @ Home and produced our first Mayhem Youth Circus Festival fully online in May.

Our membership base was reimbursed for spring term since no in-person classes could take place, and the Circus came back with six weeks of indoor classes followed by a re-imagined online youth circus programme called Circus Connects for Autumn term. Our Social Circus programme for Arts Alive went online for the duration of the year.

Circus Online: How Did It Go?

"It was lovely to see the effort and time put in to keep children engaged and to keep the community feel of the circus. And also to see the dedication of staff to come up with new ideas."

- Circus member parent

"It was great to have the online class as it was flexible in terms of time, was a good reminder of fitness goals and was a great way to maintain a connection to the Circus."

- Circus member

"I loved the input and effort from the trainers. There were a couple of issues with the internet connection (freezing or staggering) but couldn't have expected more from the class."

- Circus member

"For me the circus is about connecting, socializing, and being in a group, and I didn't feel it through a screen. Not because of the effort the Circus team put in, but because what I like most is being there face-to-face. I already spend too much time in front of screens and circus for me is about the amazing time I get out of it."

- Circus member

"My favourite activity during the online classes was when we would have to find objects and create something, like a Halloween costume or an obstacle course."

- Circus member



Youth Circus

Youth Circus offers a non-competitive arts education which enhances physical and social abilities in participants. At Galway Community Circus, 'Youth Circus' refers to our membership-based circus arts education programmes for children and young people which focus on the artistic, social and personal development of participants.

Key Aim

To provide pathways for young people to participate in circus arts at all levels in a way that is inclusive, artistically stimulating and enhances participants' sense of well-being.

Our circus training programme for young people aged 5 to 20 years provides rich opportunities for artistic, personal and social growth in a non-competitive atmosphere. The programme runs year-round in our circus space in Galway City, offering pathways for our members to engage at all levels. Delivered in an out of school setting, it consists of weekly youth circus classes running for 30 weeks per year, masterclasses and intensive training courses, international exchanges, cross-art-form creative labs, camps and outings.

2020 saw Galway Community Circus deliver....

- 25 weeks of Youth Circus, delivering 524 classes to 2586 participants, through 14 weeks of indoor programme, the 'Circus Connects' online programme and our Outside Circus programme;
- Our 1st annual Mayhem Youth Circus Festival reaching a digital audience of 850 over 3 days of free workshops, circus talks and artistic presentations;
- 3 youth-led online Scratch Night shows, engaging young people and artists from all over the world.

Feedback from Members

"I really like circus because I like trying new stuff, getting creative, doing new things and having fun with other people who like the same stuff."

- Circus member

"Thank you for bringing some joy to my child. She developed new skills and gained lots of confidence by going to the Circus."

- Circus member parent

"Circus is my favourite place, I love the atmosphere, the classes and everyone at GCC."

- Circus member

Social Circus

Social Circus can be thought of as an umbrella term for the use of circus arts in any caring, supportive or therapeutic setting. It uses circus as a tool to work with youth who are marginalised or at social or personal risk, to contribute to the personal and social development of the participants. At Galway Community Circus, our Social Circus programmes are delivered through collaborative partnerships with schools and youth and community organisations, often operating for short, or defined, periods of time.

Key Aim

To develop Social Circus partnerships which bring circus to marginalised young people and complement a coherent programming ecosystem.

Our Social Circus programmes operate under the 'Circus for All' philosophy which aims to help disadvantaged, at-risk and vulnerable people develop self-confidence and social skills, using circus arts as a vehicle to tap into their strengths and hidden talents. With a diverse array of circus skills on offer delivered by our highly skilled and professional tutors, our programmes are widely accessible and inclusive, allowing participants to realise their potential in accordance with their own abilities.

2020 saw Galway Community Circus...

- Deliver a blended programme (online and in-person) of 37 Social Circus workshops to 343 participants partnering with Arts Alive, Foróige and Galway Traveller Movement;
- Review and develop our Social Circus programme with new and existing partners. This review further demonstrated and complemented the ethos that Galway Community Circus lives by which is that circus is for all.



Artform Development

Key Aim

To pursue excellence in youth and social circus in an Irish context, learning from international best practice models.

Galway Community Circus supports the growing circus sector in Ireland through strong partnerships and relationships with key international youth circus networks and organisations across the continent. We are a board member of the International Youth and Social Circus Network Caravan and are involved in several European projects to develop youth and social circus locally, nationally and internationally.

All our international projects aim to build our capacity and to give opportunities to our members and Irish circus practitioners to access these networks and learn from them. As much as Galway Community Circus is youth-centred, we are also an artist-centred organisation. In addition to providing employment for circus practitioners, we also provide a rich environment for Irish and international artists to grow and develop.

2020 saw Galway Community Circus...

- Continue our work in partnership with NUI Galway and 10 international university and circus school partners to build a degree course for circus teachers via Erasmus+ funded 'Circus++' project;
- Seen our Executive Creative Director voted in as president of the International Youth and Social Circus Network Caravan, representing Galway internationally;
- Partner in 7 Erasmus+ funded projects creating life-changing opportunities for artists and young people;
- Continue our 1st Creative Europe co-operation project 'Wires Crossed' – Head, Heart, Balance – our highwire walking project as part of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture;
- Host 8 young artists, teachers and producers from Palestine, Italy, France, Belgium, Spain and Turkey on 11-month European Solidarity Corps projects;
- Host 2 Brazilian artists in residence;
- Take part in Erasmus+ funded Circus TransFormation in Action (CTF) training program with our Caravan Network partners to develop a new generation of social circus trainers. In February 2020, the third session of CTF was held in Luxemburg and attended by two of our artists;
- Disseminate our learning to individuals and organisations across Ireland to develop a thriving Irish Youth and Social Circus sector.

Feedback from Staff and Volunteers

"What I like the most about my job as an educator at GCC is seeing how children are the future. We have a saying in Portuguese: 'Faith in the Children'. I'm amazed by their wisdom, their capacity to change, improve, think, rethink... To have empathy for others, to the world, and to be critical and resilient."

- Isabela Mello, GCC Company Artist/Educator

"As part of my European Solidarity Corps project at GCC, I learned how a youth circus works and about the youth theatre network in Ireland. I feel more confident in the different tasks that I would have to do in my professional life and I'm more aware of all the different steps involved in big projects."

- ESC volunteer

"I loved working with my colleagues at GCC! Even though I saw them more online than in real life because of the Covid-19 pandemic, they are all interesting people and because of them I've been able to discover what circus and youth work is like in other countries. I like all the different projects the Circus is involved in, especially Wires Crossed, because it's nice to see a not-so-popular circus technique be promoted."

- ESC volunteer

"When I say I have a new family because of my time with GCC, I truly mean it. I learned a lot from everyone I met, including the other ESCs who were my housemates, and also my colleagues at GCC - everyone is so special and has taught me something unique."

- ESC volunteer

Wires Crossed

Key Aim

To inspire and advocate for the potential of youth and social circus locally, nationally, and internationally using the high-visibility platform of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture.

'Wires Crossed – A Balancing Act for Europe' is an international participatory project that promotes physical and mental wellbeing, safe risk-taking and social inclusion through funambulism – wirewalking using a balancing pole. Over the course of 2017 –2021, Galway Community Circus, in partnership with 15 youth and social circus Schools across 13 different countries have been training people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and cultures in the art of funambulism.

The project had five main strands supported by Galway 2020, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe:

1. Professional development for circus artists and practitioners
2. Public engagement programme
3. Development of European partnerships and the European Funambulism Network
4. Capacity building for Galway Community Circus
5. Legacy: Irish Centre of Funambulism

The key event of the project was planned to be a four-day festival and a 33-hour long public highwire spectacle over the River Corrib and Claddagh Basin in Galway City in August 2020. Due to Covid-19 this event had to be cancelled and instead the project delivered digital outputs including a short film and a virtual conference. The other project objectives (professional development and public engagement programme, European partnership development, capacity building and the creation of the Irish Centre of Funambulism) were all realised.

In 2020 Galway Community Circus delivered 20 funambulism workshops to 220 participants. The project has received funding from Erasmus+, Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture and Creative Europe.



Galway Community Circus Around the World

In 2020, Galway Community Circus continued to work on a variety of long-term projects with partner organisations around Ireland and the world.

Erasmus+

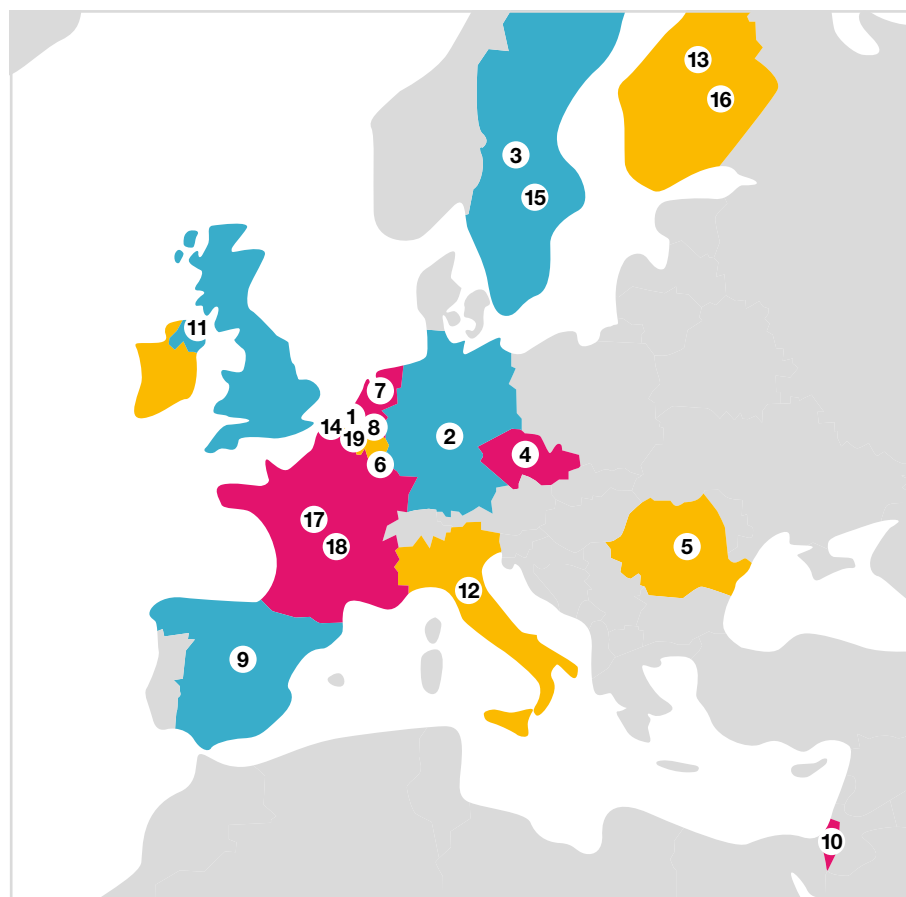
The European Union's Erasmus+ programme has supported Galway Community Circus since 2013 and continues to be one of our key funding partners. In 2020, our Erasmus+ projects included the 'ABCirk' cultural leadership programme for young people, 'Circus Transformation' training for social circus teachers and 'Circus++' one of our long-term research projects in collaboration with five European circus schools and four universities to develop third level education for circus teachers in Ireland and Europe. Erasmus+ has also funded Wires Crossed since 2017, allowing professional development for 36 European circus artists/teachers.

European Solidarity Corps

Galway Community Circus has hosted European volunteers since 2013, first through the European Voluntary Service and now through the European Solidarity Corps, a European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. Each year we host four ESC volunteers who become an integral part of our circus team.

Creative Europe

Creative Europe has supported Wires Crossed: Head, Heart, Balance, a small-scale co-operation project, running from October 2019 – September 2022. The programme has focused on the creation of a new professional Funambulism Ensemble 'Bassalto', the creation of a new funambulism performance and scientific research into the neurological effects of funambulism on the brain.



Key International Partners in 2020

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ecole De Cirque De Bruxelles | Belgium |
| 2. Cabuwazi | Germany |
| 3. Cirkus Cirkor | Sweden |
| 4. Cirqueon | Czech Republic |
| 5. The Serious Road Trip Romania | Romania |
| 6. Zaltimbanq Zircus | Luxembourg |
| 7. Circus Amersfoort | The Netherlands |
| 8. Circus Beweging | Belgium |
| 9. Assoc. Valenciana de Circ | Spain |
| 10. Palestinian Circus School | Palestine |
| 11. Belfast Circus School | UK/Northern Ireland |
| 12. FLIC Scuola De Circo | Italy |
| 13. Sorin Sirkus | Finland |
| 14. Universite De Libre Bruxelles | Belgium |
| 15. Stockholm University of the Arts | Sweden |
| 16. University of Tampere | Finland |
| 17. Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde | France |
| 18. University of Paris Sud | France |
| 19. Caravan Circus Network | Belgium |

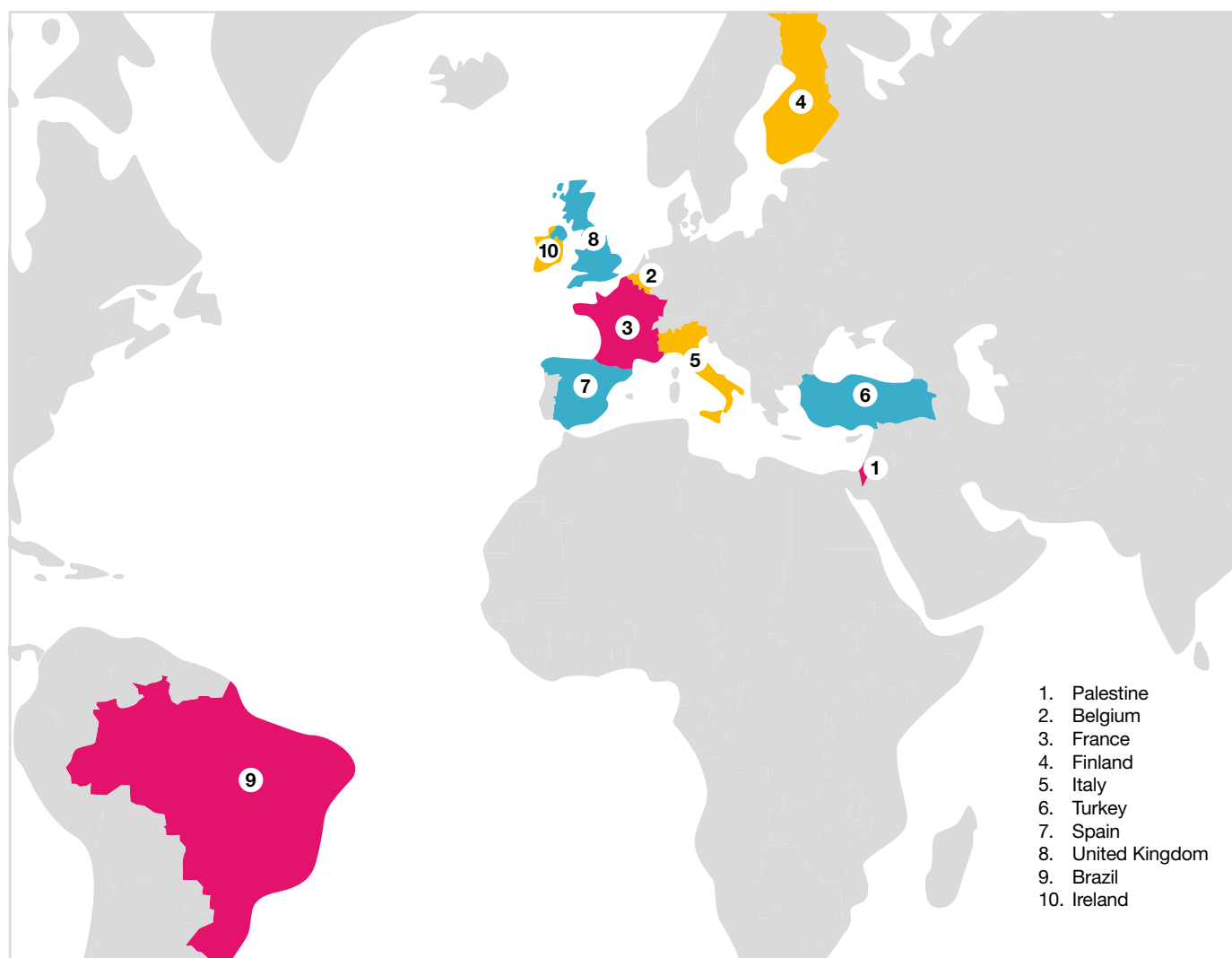
Organisational Capacity

Each of our four programme areas form a vital part of an integrated organisational model – an ecosystem where the different elements are deeply interdependent. To maximise our impact, we need to continue to invest in the organisation's capacity and ongoing development as both are essential to the future success and long-term sustainability of Galway Community Circus.

2020 saw Galway Community Circus...

- Continue our commitment to our strategic plan 2018-2020 'Fuelling Creativity, Confidence and Change', which outlined the steps in which we are taking to develop and grow Galway Community Circus;
- Hire a full time Artist and Educator;
- Seat a current Youth Circus member on our Board of Directors;
- Completed 22 days of professional development for our administrative team;
- Continue the 'Upsource – Leadership Development and Capacity Building in the Arts' programme funded by The Wheel.

Volunteers, Artists and Staff Country of Origin







Governance

Galway Community Circus is a company limited by guarantee (CLG) and a registered charity (20064747) governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

We confirm that our organisation fully complies with the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland and is committed to comply with the charity SORP and the principles of good fundraising.

Galway Community Circus Company Limited by Guarantee Financial Audit for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Senior staff salaries are as follows:

- Band: €40,000-€50,000 Number of employees: 1
- Band: €30,000-€40,000 Number of employees: 2

The organisation keeps detailed books and records of accounts and maintains strict financial controls. We comply with the Arts Council of Ireland's recommended guidelines for financial reporting. The organisation is transparent in its audited financial statements, with the most recent statements available on our website.

Board of Directors:

Reg Gordon, Chairperson - Appointed 2015
John Jordan, Treasurer - Appointed 2018
Niall Doyle, Director - Appointed 2018
Maeve Mulrennan, Director - Appointed 2019
Ailbhe Slevin, Director - Appointed 2020
Ian Walsh, Director - Appointed 2020
Darragh O'Donohoe, Director - Appointed 2020
Cathy Coote - Director - Appointed 2018 - Resigned 2020
Pauline O'Reilly - Director - Appointed 2017, Resigned 2020

Employee Team

Ulla Hokkanen, Executive Creative Director (full-time)
Fiona Hession, General Manager (full-time)
Becca Clayton, Producer (full-time)
Amélie Bal, Head of Education (part-time)
Gwen Le Guillou, Financial Officer (part-time)
Davi Hora, Company Artist and Educator (full-time)
Dani Gill, Communications Co-ordinator (part-time)
Julie Seagrave, Social Circus Producer (Part-Time)
Tony Mahon, Technical Manager (part-time)
Anet Moore (Tús, part-time)
Adam Flaherty (Tús, part-time)

Core Artists and Educators

Davi Hora
Isabela Mello
Lisa O'Farrell Mendes
Juliette O'Donnell
Caoimhe O'Dochartaigh Barr
Freddy Burrows

European Solidarity Corps Volunteers

Leana Valentini (France)
Alice Serra (Italy)
Hazar Azzeh (Palestine)
Alaa Abualrob (Palestine)
Aline Lepla (Italy)
Gemma Aragones (Italy)
Gokce Dogan (Turkey)
Louis Gosselin (Belgium)

Financial Report

Summary of Audited Accounts

Galway Community Circus Company Limited by Guarantee Financial Audit
For the year ended 31 December 2020

This is for information purposes only and does not form part of our statutory accounts. For a full set of audited accounts for 2020 please refer to the governance page on our website.

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Tangible assets | 34,719 | 25,370 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Stocks | 701 | 1,042 |
| Debtors | 93,686 | 151,209 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 262,710 | 153,317 |
| | | 305,568 |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year | (301,195) | (284,749) |
| Net Current Assets/(Liabilities) | 55,902 | 20,819 |
| Total Assets less Current Liabilities | 90,621 | 46,190 |
| Government grants | (16,585) | (1,501) |
| Net Assets | 74,036 | 44,689 |
| Reserves | 25,000 | 44,689 |
| Operating Reserves | 49,036 | |
| Income and expenditure account | | |
| Members' Funds | 74,036 | 44,689 |
| Total Income | 453,555 | 531,351 |
| Total Expenditure | 424,208 | 515,394 |
| Net surplus/(deficit) | 29,347 | 15,957 |

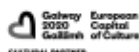
Financial Results

The surplus/(deficit) for the financial year after providing for depreciation amounted to €29,347 (2019 - €15,957). At the end of the financial year, the company has assets of €391,816 (2019 - €330,939) and liabilities of €317,780 (2019 - €286,250). The net assets of the company have increased by €29,347.

Audit by Owen McDonough & Associates Ltd, (Chartered Accountants).

Funders and Supporters

Thank you to all our funders and partners for your continued support!





GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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