

galway community circus



Galway Community Circus



Creating Magic Together

Hello friend!

We are thrilled to share our new strategic plan with you. It's a map to guide our organisation for the next five years so that our participants, audiences, partners, team and supporters can join us on the next phase of our journey.

The plan was developed over the course of 2021 - 2022, involving our membership, the wider community, board, staff and key stakeholders. The starting point for this work was an in-depth consultation with the children and young people who take part in the Circus and their communities as well as individuals from communities currently not accessing our programmes. The consultation aimed to gather as much information as possible of the needs, wishes and ideas that our young people had for the future of the Circus and to plan our next steps around this feedback.

Creating this plan was an opportunity to reaffirm our vision, mission and values and to decide on the steps we will take towards realising our vision over the next five years. The goals set in this plan have been developed in the context of the current ever-changing external environment and an analysis of our internal resources. Annual operational plans include detailed actions towards delivering these goals. Our impact and success will be measured against the outcomes set in our Outcomes Model using our Evaluation Toolkit developed by The Audience Agency.

As a strategically funded organisation by the Arts Council of Ireland, we work towards the objectives set in their ten-year strategy Making Great Art Work (2016 -2025) which aims to support artists 'to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued' and to enable more people to 'enjoy high-quality arts experiences'. We place particular emphasis on advancing the objectives of the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights and Diversity policy which seeks to 'respect, support and ensure representation of all voices and cultures that make up Ireland today, from all sections of society, from existing and new communities, inclusive of people of all abilities, backgrounds and traditions.'

Our strategy is also aligned with several local, national and international policy frameworks, most importantly the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, Government of Ireland's Culture 2025 and Healthy Ireland, Creative Ireland's Creative Youth, Galway City Council's New Directions: Strategic Plan for the Arts 2021-2026 and Everybody Matters and Hub na nÓg's National Participation Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making. We also always refer back to the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child which states clearly the right of every child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and be involved in decisions around the actions that affect them.

We are grateful to our participants, partners, artists, staff team, board members and volunteers whose input and work in shaping this plan has been invaluable. We hope that you recognise your dreams, needs and wishes on these pages. We would like to thank consultant Noeleen Hartigan who guided our team during the strategic planning process and artist Virpi Oinonen who created the visual strategy. Finally, we would like to thank the Arts Council for their financial support that enabled all of this.

We encourage you all to join us in the next leg of our journey as we create magic together!

Ulla Hokkanen
Executive Creative Director
Dr Ian R. Walsh
Chairperson, Board of Directors

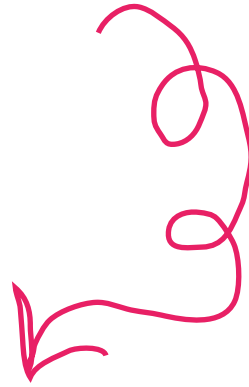
- 1. Our Vision, Mission, Purpose**
- 2. Our Values**
- 3. Our Outcomes Model**
- 4. Coming of Age!**
- 5. Our Goals 2023-2027**

connections



About us!

WE ARE GALWAY,
WE ARE COMMUNITY
WE ARE CIRCUS!



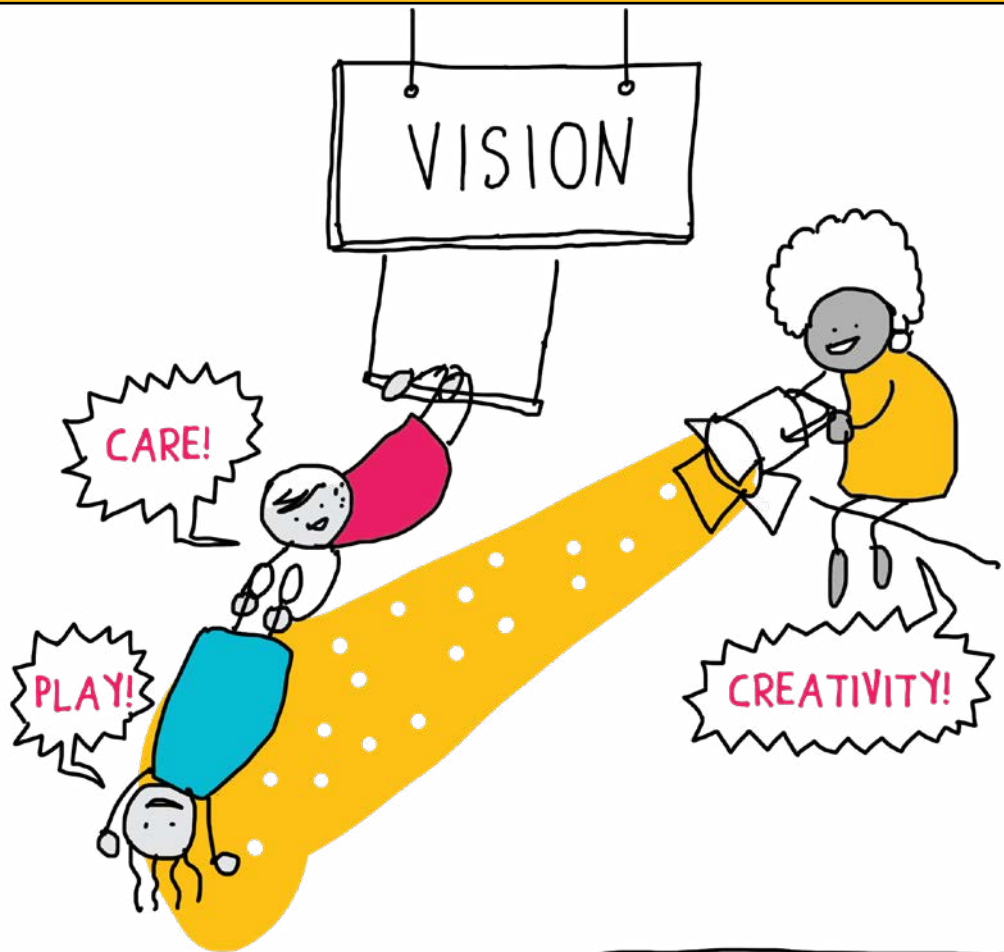
We are Galway Community Circus. We are a circus family where everyone can belong, rooted in the city of the tribes, balanced on the edge of Europe. We reach from São Paulo to Ramallah, with arms wide open welcoming to all. We are a community of many languages where all voices are heard - in an artform that needs no words. We are made strong together, standing on each other's shoulders. We are daring, throwing ourselves in the sky but our practices are all grounded in the protection of our precious earth. We are brave, we take risks, we soar, and we fall. We get back up again. We learn. We care for each other.

We are creators of magic, made together. We are circus.

We provide access to high-quality subsidised circus arts education through our circus school offering youth and adult programmes and professional training. We also create community programmes in partnership with those who have specific social or developmental needs. We provide artist supports, training and mentoring and lead the development of youth circus in Ireland through our academic, national and international partnerships.



Our vision

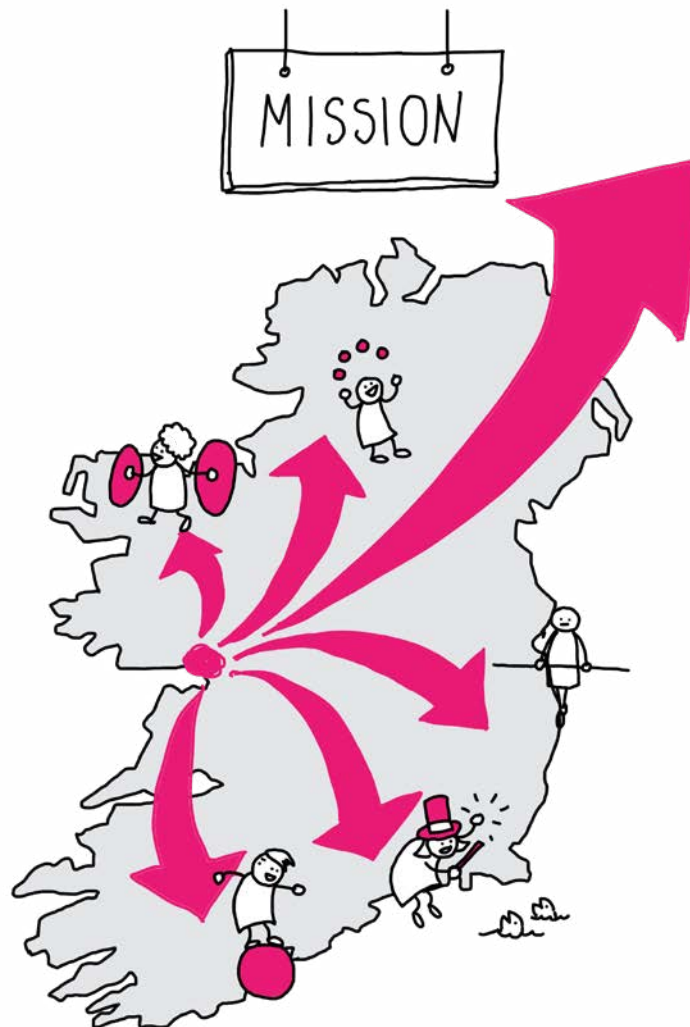


A future in which **play**, **care** and **creativity** are nurtured through circus education **accessible** to **every child** in Ireland.

THE IDEA THAT MOTIVATES US

our Mission

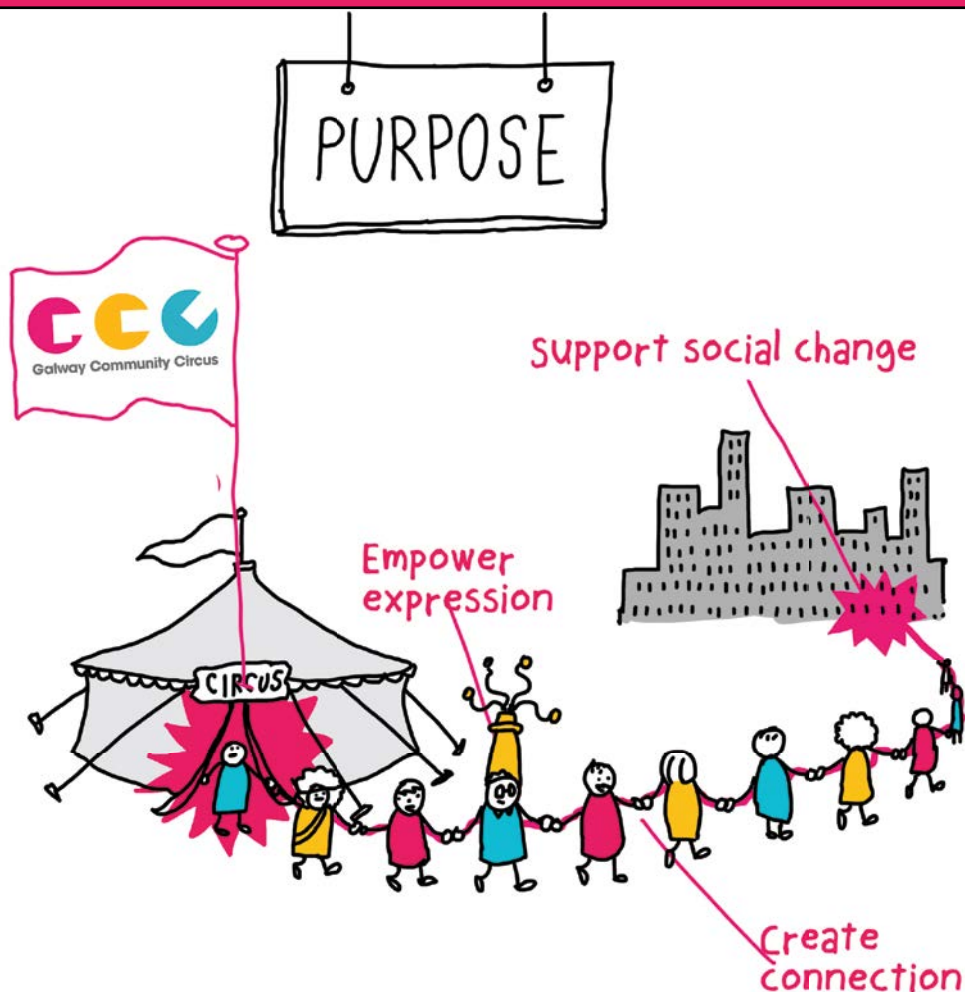
WHAT WE DO!



We foster the **growth** of youth circus in **Ireland** and **internationally** through our dynamic Circus School.



our purpose



We are striving to create **connection**,
empower **expression** and support **social change**.

WHY WE DO IT

Our Values



WHAT GUIDES US

play

We value creativity and self-expression and bring a sense of fun, play and curiosity to everything we do.

care

We create a safe space of care for everyone within our circus community, put our participants at the centre of our practice, and always strive for diversity, inclusion and equality.

perseverance

We value perseverance and embrace failure as an opportunity to learn and grow.

generosity

We are committed to active learning and sharing our knowledge with others and strive to build lasting relationships.

responsibility

We are a responsible organisation, clear in our duties to each other and to those who support our work and actively conscious of our environmental impact.

EVERYONE IS WANTED, EVERYONE IS NEEDED,
EVERYONE IS SUPPORTED

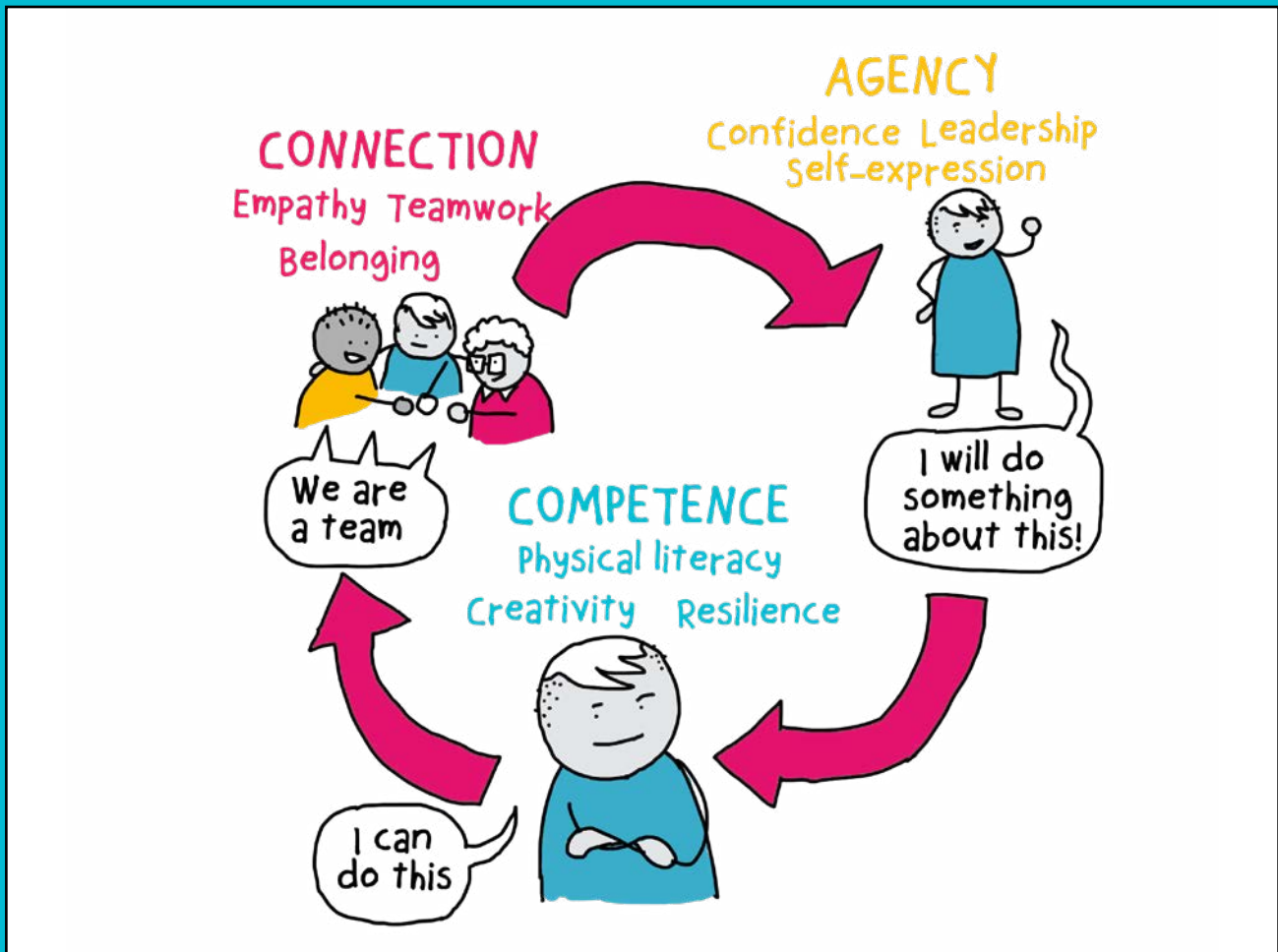


Circus is the art of possibility. Not just an art form, circus is a unique, hard-working, creative community where everyone is welcome, diversity and difference are actively embraced, and everyone is encouraged to dream. At Galway Community Circus we don't just teach circus techniques, we impart the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

WE ARE ACTIVELY INCLUSIVE



our outcomes Model



We are focused on three core drivers of human development: competence, agency and connectedness. We measure the impact of our work against this framework. We share our learning with others and contribute to the growing evidence base for the impact of circus. Our model is dynamic, we are always listening for and responding to the unique experiences of our community members.

COLLABORATION

CIRCUS IS NOT ABOUT COMPETITION,
IT'S ABOUT CREATING **MAGIC**
TOGETHER

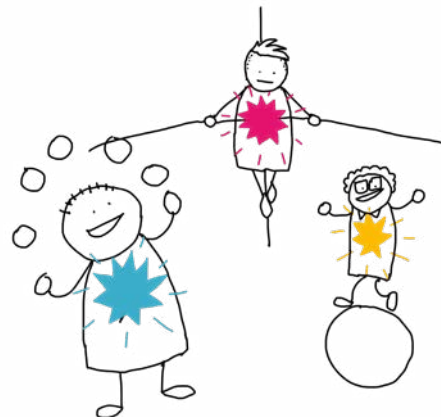


RESILIENCE

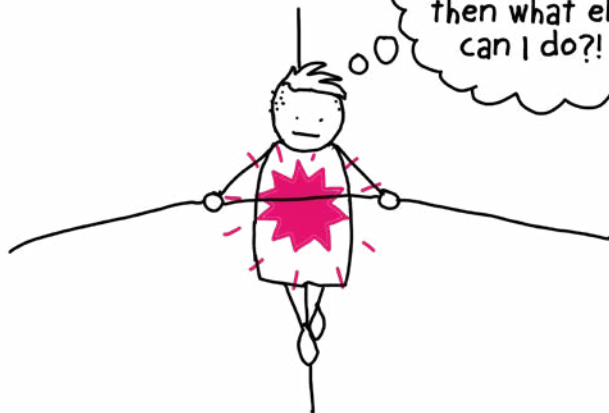


CONFIDENCE

EVERYONE CAN FIND THEIR THING, THEIR "TRICK"



If I can do this,
then what else
can I do?!



ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

I will play a role
in all of this!



COMING OF AGE!

2022 is the 20th anniversary of Galway Community Circus. We are now passed the teenage years and ready to face adulthood as a responsible, generous organisation who is curious about learning and has not forgotten how to play.

In the first 20 years of our Circus, over 50,000 participants have taken part in our programmes. We have produced 130 shows, delivered 64 European-funded projects, and provided professional development to 701 artists and circus educators.

We are very proud of some recent milestones, which include receiving the prestigious Arts Council Open Call Award for 'Lifeline' - Europe's largest highwire performance, being awarded the Erasmus+ Youth Accreditation and European Solidarity Corps Quality Label in recognition of our high-quality European programmes, and having the first home-grown generation of circus educators graduate from our Youth Circus to work with us as professionals.

We are currently 'company in residence' at the University of Galway via the Arts Council's YPCE Residency Scheme, allowing us time and support to evaluate, codify and document our methodology. The residency follows our 7-year research project Circus++ which resulted in the creation of a curriculum for the world's first degree-level course for youth and social circus teachers.

Over the next five years we will foster the growth of youth circus in Ireland and internationally by focusing on five core goals that will enable us to increase our reach in terms of the size and diversity of our audiences, continually improve the quality of our programmes, embed equity of access, experience and outcomes into all of our activities, and improve the conditions in which circus professionals can live and have sustainable careers in Ireland.

We have come a long way, and can see clearly where we want to go next. Experts at adapting and persevering, we remain just as passionate about the power of circus to build healthy and thriving communities as our founders were 20 years ago.

SCAFFOLDING

*Masons, when they start upon a building,
Are careful to test out the scaffolding;
Make sure that planks won't slip at busy points,
Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.
And yet all this comes down when the job's done
Showing off walls of sure and solid stone.
So if, my dear, there sometimes seem to be
Old bridges breaking between you and me
Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall.*

Seamus Heaney





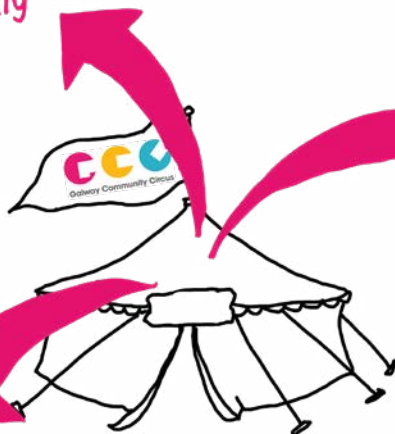
our goals 2023-2027

1. Grow the impact of our dynamic circus school in Galway
2. Share our model of inclusive circus education throughout Ireland
3. Develop and professionalise circus education with academic, national & international partners
4. Build a community of valued circus professionals
5. Create a secure sustainable future for the company



GOAL 1: GROW THE IMPACT OF OUR DYNAMIC CIRCUS SCHOOL

600 weekly students



small, medium & large-scale performances

Equity of access, experience and outcomes

GOAL 1



2025

By 2025 we aim to be meeting the circus training needs of 600 weekly students and 3000 annual outreach participants while reflecting the true diversity of Galway City and County

Over the next two years we will

- Incrementally expand our weekly student numbers from 450 to 600, including pathways that are responsive to our students needs
- Embed equity of access, experience and outcomes into all of our learning and performance activities
- Deliver small, medium and large-scale performances and participative public events

2027

By 2027 we hope that 15,000 + young people from all backgrounds will have had the opportunity to develop their voice, body, confidence, and resilience and help us continually refine what we mean by circus

2025

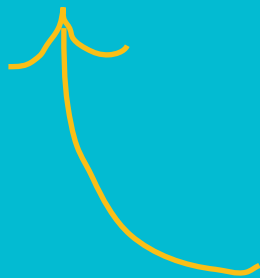
By 2025 more and more diverse young people will have access to youth circus in Ireland.

Over the next two years we will

- Codify and document our model to ensure sustainability and scalability
- Partner with 15 circus organisations across the country to foster the growth of Irish youth circus on a national level
- Include outcomes measurement in all partnership projects to support partners to sustain the projects themselves

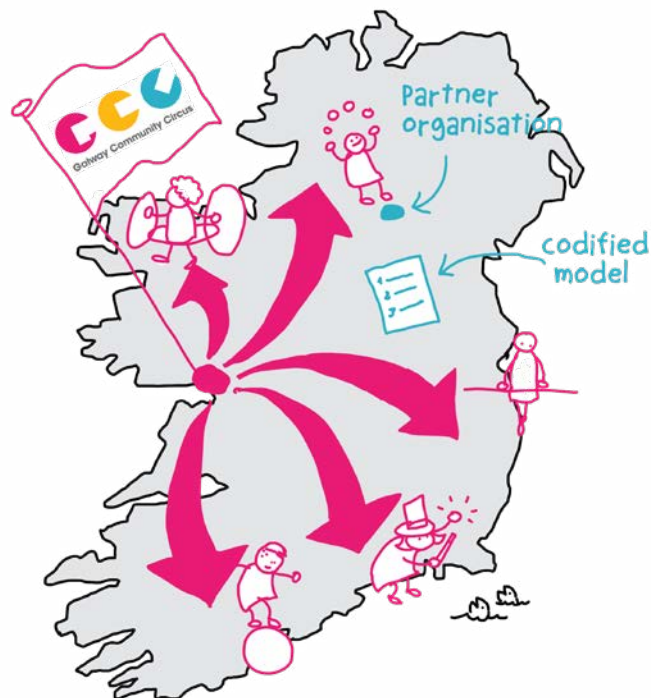
2027

By 2027 we hope that youth circus will be easily accessible for a diversity of groups and individuals all around Ireland



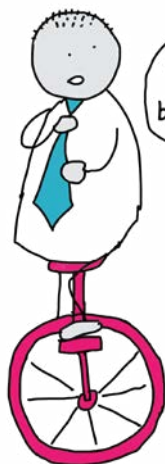
Goal 2

GOAL 2: SHARE OUR MODEL OF INCLUSIVE CIRCUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT IRELAND

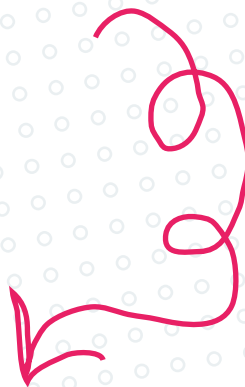




GOAL 3: DEVELOP AND PROFESSIONALISE
CIRCUS EDUCATION WITH ACADEMIC,
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNER!



I don't think that's
what they mean
by professionalisation



2025

By 2025 we aim to have deepened the academic knowledge of circus and engaged policy makers in the benefits of the artform

Over the next two years we will

- Embed circus pedagogy into the curriculum at University of Galway
- Further develop partnerships with University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University to deliver training in circus pedagogy for early childhood, youth and arts professionals
- Connect our work to the national policy framework for children and young people, making the case for circus as a mechanism for creativity, wellbeing and physical literacy
- Partner closely with key national and international networks to learn from international best practice, share our work and develop with the wider sector

2027

By 2027 we hope to increase the recognition and use of circus on the primary school curriculum and have circus pedagogy taught at third-level in Ireland

2025

By 2025 we aim to have 9 full time staff, of which 4 will be artist educators, and a funding model that supports a further 12 part-time employees.

Over the next two years we will

- Continue to invest in the wellbeing of our team, prioritizing competitive staff compensation
- Underpin all of our key activities with an outcomes measurement plan so that we can continually improve our practice
- Deliver high-quality professional development for our education team at all stages of their careers
- Create opportunities for artistic development and showcasing of all our artist-tutors

2027

By 2027 we hope to have created an environment in which circus professionals can have meaningful and sustainable careers in Galway

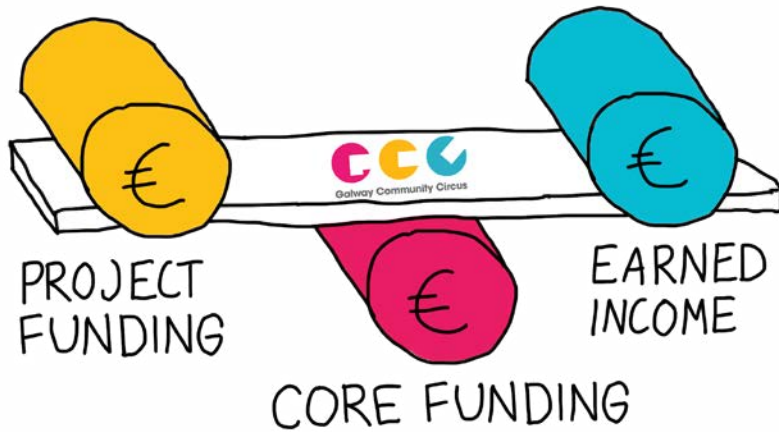


REPORT



2025

→ GOAL 5: CREATE A SECURE,
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
FOR THE COMPANY



2025

By 2025 we aim to have grown our earned income in order to have a balance of core funding, project funding and earned income

Over the next two years we will

- Continue to build our reserves towards a target of 3 months operating costs
- Operate our circus school in 3 locations: Shantalla, Tuam and Galway City East
- Use our evidence base to secure a long-term relationship with one additional statutory donor

2027

By 2027 we hope to have secured a permanent home for GCC that will be a hub for our network of activities, and help sustain our financial future



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



PROGRAMME FUNDERS

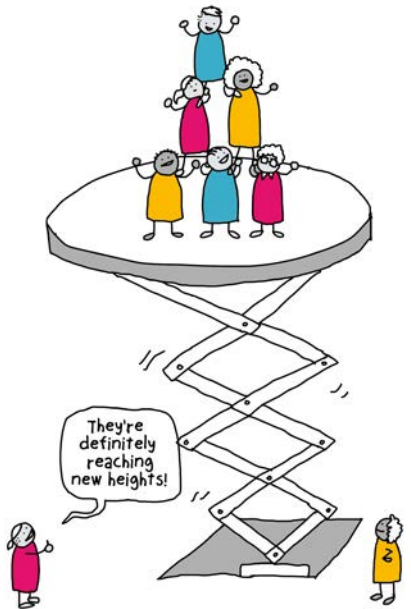


NETWORKS



PHOTOGRAPHS BY:

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Strategic Plan
2023-2027
Executive Summary

Charity number: 20064747, CHY17420
Company number: 453185

www.galwaycommunitycircus.com

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