



Building Stronger

Women

Children

Families

Communities

An Cosán – building better and stronger communities across Ireland

OUR VISION

A world where everyone can access education to achieve their full potential

OUR MISSION

To empower women and children left furthest behind through learning, leadership and enterprise

OUR VALUES

Connected:
Meeting the needs of our community in an inclusive way

Compassionate:
Being kind, supportive and loving

Courageous:
Being ambitious and resilient

OUR 10 YEAR GOAL

To become the education voice for those left furthest behind and a leader in enhancing the education system in Ireland



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Chairperson's Foreword

Looking back on this past year brings such a sense of pride in the determination and drive that characterises the learners, the staff, the supporters and the vibrant community of An Cosán.



This time last year when I was putting pen to paper to write the 2022 report, we were fresh from the creation of our new strategy 'Vision 2026: Transforming Lives Together'. A strategy must be more than pretty words on a page and big

ambitions. It must be met by action, and since then I have been wowed by all those in An Cosán rallying together to deliver on our bold and big vision for the future of community education in our country.

Our team has been working hard to deliver on our key goals of strengthening our core services, promoting inclusivity, and influencing systemic change.

Demand for our community education courses is stronger than ever, and we have seen record numbers of applications for our BA degree programmes, and our Access and Further Education courses. These learners, and our little ones and parents, have been supported to engage with the education and the path of lifelong learning by the staff, tutors, counsellors, hospitality team, and all the others who ensure their needs are met so that they can succeed on their journey. I want to thank each and every one of our community for the role they play in delivering on these brighter futures.

We continue our outreach to new members of our communities - those who have often come to Ireland escaping conflict and hoping for better lives - so that we can welcome them and ensure they have access to the opportunities they deserve. Delivering on true inclusivity is something we live day to day, and it was with great pride that our WorkAbility programme was recognised by the AONTAS Social Inclusion Award.

We continue to work closely with our partners in state agencies and in government to ensure that our innovative approaches become part of the mainstream. We strive to showcase the impact of these approaches so that we influence change, and this year past has given so many opportunities to tell the story of our work through speeches, articles, exhibitions and expanding our online presence.

The work we do requires vital partnerships to ensure the funding and resources are available to deliver. We are so lucky to be joined on our journey by a wide range of supporters, who in 2023 have seen our ambition and stepped up to back us as we move forward. This has included increased funding for our Community Services Programme from the Department of Rural and Community Development, the backing of the digital transformation of our Adult Community Education work through SOLAS, and the support of our Lifestart home-visiting programme through the Community Foundation for Ireland. These are just a few of the enlightened funders who are enabling us to advance our mission.

Every year, we are seeing our impact scale, rippling out as our learners become leaders in their communities and shaping futures as they do. I believe that even brighter days are ahead of us as our work matures and our impact grows.

I want to thank and celebrate our CEO, Deputy CEO, management team, and all of our determined staff who are helping turn the dreams of our founders into realities for communities and learners across the country. To all of our supporters, from those who volunteer their time to assist us in this work to those who fund us to make this work possible, thank you for walking this path with us. Together, we can achieve a brighter better future, and break the cycles of intergenerational poverty and disadvantage.

- Anna Durkan,
Chair of the Board of Directors

Message from our CEO

Our learners are the emerging leaders that our society needs in order to become more just, more equal and more responsive to those who have been marginalised for so long.



As I reflect on the year gone, it represents another turbulent year, locally and globally: ever emerging crises, concerns and troubles that face us all. And while we hope for peace and calm and a more settled time, the truth is that

this uncertainty may be the shape of things to come. That is why we must ensure that the most marginalised in our communities, and those who serve their needs, like An Cosán, are equipped with all the tools needed to forge a path to a brighter future.

Each successive year at the helm of An Cosán I see our organisation grow stronger, deepening our impact, learning with and from our communities, shaping our response to ensure that ever emerging needs are met. And, as we evolve, so does my pride in our work and in the learners, staff and everyone who makes it happen.

In the past year we have been recognised many times over for our work to expand the reach and quality of our programmes, so that more and more people can follow the path of lifelong learning and be equipped so they can have greater agency in their own lives.

I was so privileged to receive the Excellence in Charity Leadership Award from the Charities Institute Ireland in 2023, a reflection on the collective leadership, which is at the heart of the success of An Cosán. Leadership is fundamental in shaping the future of our communities and our world. Our learners are the emerging leaders that our society needs in order to become more just, more equal and more responsive to those who have been marginalised for so long.

The recognition of our funders, state agencies and networks allows us to amplify our message so that we see shifts in policy and practice.

The launch of our Get Yourself Online platform, and our broader digital inclusion work, including the training of 76 Digital Champions across the country, allows us to have greater national impact. Leveraging our skills at the forefront of digital learning, we are reaching thousands of individuals across communities who can find their path in their digital learning journey.

We expanded our WorkAbility programme with three hubs in Jobstown, Ballyfermot and the Liberties, to develop the personal and professional skills of participants so that they can have greater opportunities. We will work to bring this programme, and our other innovative learning opportunities, to more and more communities. The demand for our courses is so great that we have been fully subscribed this past year (in fact, most courses have been over-subscribed with substantial waiting lists). So we must continue to work to ensure the resources are there to provide a place for each of those who wish to pursue their journey with us.

We know how to ensure success for our learners across these programmes, by supporting them with holistic wraparound supports that are responsive to where they are and what they need. With these supports in place, we are creating a system in which people succeed, where they can pursue their goals, provide for themselves and their families and, once they have built themselves up, they can provide the leadership their communities need and deserve.

Our learners and all at An Cosán know how to navigate uncertainty, how to respond to a changed world, and how to fight for a better tomorrow. We will continue to ensure they are equipped to do so, and to demonstrate how to equip others in communities across Ireland to do so. This is how we will turn the dream of a fairer and more peaceful future into a reality.

- Heydi Foster,
CEO of An Cosán

2023 - a year of building stronger



1,476 Adult Community Education places

women
children
families
communities



About An Cosán

(‘the pathway’)



The name of the company is The Shanty Educational Project Limited by guarantee trading as An Cosán. The company is established for charitable purposes only.

Our Objectives

- To provide for the relief of poverty, deprivations and disadvantage in marginalised areas across Ireland through the provision of adult community education, training, employment, enterprise, family and mental health support, and early years’ education and care
- To empower local people through education and enable them to fully participate with local authorities and state agencies
- To promote sustainable development by the development of people’s leadership, strategic and entrepreneurial capacities
- To provide education, training, enterprise and early years’ education and care by establishing, building, maintaining and conducting appropriate centres or facilities.

Our Values

- Connected – meeting the needs of our community in an inclusive way
- Compassionate – being kind, supportive and loving
- Courageous – ambitious and resilient

Providing pathways to learning, leadership and enterprise

The work of An Cosán is based on our unique [One Generation Solution](#) - the premise that inter-generational education can disrupt the cycle of poverty by raising up women and their families through community education.

Our focus is primarily on women and children as we believe that supporting them is the most effective way to end poverty: if you educate a mother, you empower her whole family to value and appreciate the benefits of education, and her family can look forward to a brighter future. We have a special focus on promoting skills - not just for adult learners, but for those women and young mothers who have been left furthest behind.

An Cosán is responsive to contemporary community needs and is constantly evolving, as depicted in our current four-year strategy [Vision 2026: Transforming Lives Together](#). Strategically, the organisation is placing an increasing emphasis on promoting inclusivity and influencing systemic change.

An Cosán began in 1986 in The Shanty, the home of Ann Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone in the Dublin mountains. Working with a small group of women, living mostly in West Tallaght, they had a vision that education was the key towards transformation and the eradication of poverty. Initial efforts exceeded expectations with courses growing in popularity.

In 1999 An Cosán – a centre for learning, leadership, and enterprise in Jobstown, Tallaght – opened its doors to adult learners and children, in order to enable, equip and empower them to reach their full potential. Of equal significance to the dream was that the inequalities of achievement outcomes between social groups and geographic regions would be reduced. This is still the dream of our feminist organisation that holds equality and empowerment at our core.



Vision 2026: Transforming Lives Together

An Cosán's Strategy 2022-2026



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OUR CORE SERVICES

Early Years Education & Care



Counselling & Family Support



Adult Community Education

We provide a pathway to learning, leadership and enterprise for those who are most marginalised in our society. While we welcome all, our focus is primarily on women and children as we believe this is the most effective way to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.



We are a feminist organisation that holds empowerment and equality at our core. We strongly believe in inclusivity, diversity, and respect. The communities we work in are important to us and we are constantly striving to find new ways to break down barriers for people to access education in these communities to achieve their full potential.

OUR ENABLING GOALS TO BECOME A MORE SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

- * Nurture our team and culture
- * Diversify and increase our funding
- * Strengthen our systems and processes
- * Improve our internal and external communications

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1 STRENGTHEN OUR CORE SERVICES

To meet this goal, we will continue to provide our leading-edge services in:

- Early Years Education and Care
- Counselling and Family Support
- Adult Community Education

2 PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY

To meet this goal, we will:

- Exemplify how to work with marginalised communities inclusively
- Continue to be pioneers in the area of digital inclusion
- Create accessible community spaces

3 INFLUENCE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

To meet this goal, we will:

- Influence public policy
- Evidence our impact on people's lives
- Become an influential voice in the education sector

Building Better & Stronger Through Our Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

STRENGTHEN OUR CORE SERVICES

To meet this goal, we will continue to provide our leading edge services in:

- Early Years Education and Care
- Counselling and Family Support
- Adult Community Education

Early Years Education and Care



We supported 180 pre-school children

During 2023 there were seven early years' services operating under An Cosán – three in Tallaght, three in Cabra, and one in Whitehall. Up to 180 children attended our early years' services, along with an additional 26 children up to the age of 12 in our after-school service in Jobstown.

Our focus on development and learning

The importance of giving children an excellent experience while attending our services is evident in all our centres. We used the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, Aistear The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Síolta the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education to enhance children's development through rich, educational, and fun activities. All our services participated in several national events during the year, including World Book Day and Science Week.

Building trusting relationships with parents

Our highly qualified, experienced early childhood professionals also supported parents while providing early learning opportunities for their children. It is of vital importance to us that we build trusting relationships with parents while working with the children as they are the primary educators of their children. Parents were also supported to engage in further education and training opportunities to develop their skills, or counselling and other family supports.

Parents and caregivers were invited into the centres throughout the year for family mornings, diversity celebrations, summer and Christmas events, graduations and other celebrations. We were delighted that all children across our services reached their individual goals through the care and education provided to them by our professional and dedicated early years' staff.

A number of child places were allocated through referrals from Tusla for families who were



experiencing different challenges. The early years' teams continued to support parents with referrals to the Health Service Executive or other professionals and agencies, when necessary. Support and guidance were also provided for families where there were child safeguarding or other welfare issues.

Continuous Professional Development

To ensure we continued to deliver quality early years' education and care, we placed an emphasis on the provision of upskilling and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) throughout the year, though this was difficult at times because of time constraints. Along with completing required training, such as Child Safeguarding, First Aid, and Health and Safety training, staff availed of CPD when opportunities arose. Five of our early years' professionals entered year two of a BA in Early Years' Education and Care, and one into year four.

Access and Inclusion Model

All our services had Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support in 2023. The AIM programme supports children with disabilities to access and fully participate in the Early Childhood Care

and Education (ECCE) universal free early years' programme. The range of supports respond to the needs of the child and to the needs of the early years' setting in which the child is participating.

An Cosán services received visits from AIM specialists to assess children, and then further visits to support staff to ensure positive outcomes for children with additional needs who were attending our services. In some situations, the specialist recommended additional equipment and practices to ensure the child was enabled to participate to the best of their ability.

Three of our centres also ran Parent and Toddler Groups on a weekly basis, and these groups were open to any parent in the locality.

Challenges

We were extremely disappointed when our service in Youthreach in Cabra was closed by the Dublin City Education and Training Board in October, due to issues with the building. Seventy per cent of the children attending the centre were accommodated by our other Cabra centres, and we were also in a position to keep all our staff and re-deploy them in our other services. We remain hopeful that the service will re-open when the necessary repairs are complete.

Recruitment continued to be a challenge in 2023. However, we were fortunate in our recruitment drives and managed to add to our strong team of dedicated early years' professionals.



What is HighScope?

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum, which is used across our seven Early Years' centres, is based on a 'Plan, Do, Review' model that enhances the development of children through a variety of experiences. It aims to ignite children's interest in learning by creating a fun and educational environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. Children are given the opportunity and skills to develop confidence, resilience and independence. The focus is on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

Early Years Education and Care





Early Years Parents' Voices



'Caring, compassionate and fun'

'Grace loves attending An Cosán Early Years in St Anne's, Fettercairn. She looks forward to going every day. The service has been an incredible benefit to both myself and Grace. When I pick her up, she is excited to tell me about her day.'

'She has a great bond with all of the staff who are all caring, compassionate and fun. Grace loves spending time in the sensory room and learning through play. There is excellent communication between her teachers and myself, and I am safe in the knowledge when I leave her each day that she will have fun and be well looked after.'

- June



'A very inclusive environment'

'It's been really an amazing year. My son has been feeling very safe and has learnt many new things. He's always keen to come to St Catherine's Early Years. The teachers are really kind, co-operative and understanding. It is a very inclusive environment for children coming from diverse cultures.'

- Rafia



'He loves his teachers'

'I have nothing but good things to say about Ollie's time at An Cosán Early Years Coláiste Éanna. He's come on so well in speech, manners and socially. He settled so well and bounces out the door to school every morning. He's made great friends and he loves his teachers.'

- Sarah



'A brilliant support for us both'

'An Cosán Early Years Jobstown has provided Andrew with a brilliant stepping stone to achieving his developmental milestones. Since joining, Andrew has become a socially confident kid, and he has formed great relationships with other children and staff members. One of his favourites is Marcella, the receptionist, who greets us with a welcoming smile each day.'

'While Andrew attends An Cosán Early Years, I can attend courses. Overall, the services provided by An Cosán have improved our quality of life with educational, health, and social support. I've been given access to support services within An Cosán, which are in high demand in the area. Also, Andrew and I have gotten to know lovely people at An Cosán and formed a social network, which is a brilliant support for us both.'

- Róisín



'A huge lifeline for us'

'Starting our daughter, Arabella, in An Cosán Early Years was a huge lifeline for us. Like many babies growing up in pandemic times, she found it hard to socialise with children and adults outside of the immediate family, but the staff were great dealing with this. They quickly made her and her new classmates relax and they continue to do so, no matter what challenges the day provides!

'Arabella loves learning through play with her teachers, be it with books or with messy play in the garden. We'll be very sad to leave them at the end of term, but are confident they've prepared Arabella for big school.'

- Sarah



'Nothing but love'

'Gary has attended An Cosán Early Years Coláiste Éanna since he was 18 months old. He is now in his final year before he goes into Junior Infants. We have absolutely loved our time here. Gary has found friendships with all the staff; he talks regularly about them at home and loves his teachers. Likewise, I found everyone who crossed Gary's path has given him nothing but love. He has learned so much and has also gained an amazing imagination due to the role play in class.

'On the days Gary might be needing a bit more attention, it was always there. I can't fault any of my experiences in this childcare. I highly recommend it to anyone with small kids. How they mix with children their own age, learn and experiment has been amazing.'

- Shannen



'This place is amazing!'

'I have been coming to An Cosán Early Years Kiltipper on and off over the past 10+ years. Harrison is my third child to come here. My eldest daughter came here and she is now 15. We were anxious to get her in somewhere and we happened to find that Kiltipper had a link with a speech and language therapist. She had no speech when she started here but she was speaking fluently before she finished here, which meant she started primary school on a level playing field with her peers.

'This place is amazing for us. It has been a massive support. We love it up here. This isn't our local area, but I wouldn't put them in anywhere else. We drive here especially. They really promote the kids to be independent and responsible, like the way we do at home.

'I have done a number of courses with An Cosán, including parenting courses and Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education. Seeing the way Kiltipper Early Years is run, I saw I wanted to work somewhere like this. It inspired me. It's a lovely place to come every morning. The staff are warm, friendly, and supportive. They always have a nice smile for everyone in the morning.'

- Laura

After School programme

We supported 26 children outside school hours

In 2023 26 children participated in the After School programme we run in our Jobstown centre.

They attended five days a week in term-time as well as during mid-term breaks and the month of July.

A range of fun, educational activities were put in place for the children, taking into consideration their interests and likes. They engaged in a full programme of events, which included visits to the

library, guitar lessons, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities, dancing, yoga, and mindfulness sessions. They also enjoyed baking, arts and crafts, outdoor activities, day trips, and picnics in the park.

The programme allowed the children to be active, engaged, and to take initiative in helping to identify and plan the activities. The programme facilitated each child's imaginative, emotional,



and physical development in a holistic way, and provided opportunities for each child to develop language and listening skills, social skills, and independence.

There is always a waiting list for this popular scheme.

Here's what some of our 2023 After School participants had to say:

It's fun and cool in An Cosán, and my friends are here

I like to play chess. I like winning, and I show some of the staff how to play too. I also like to play tennis at An Cosán.

I like using the computers at An Cosán, and I like to see my friends



Mother and Baby Health and Development Programme

We supported 8 mams and their babies

Our Mother and Baby Health and Development Programme continued in our Jobstown centre throughout 2023, thanks to funding from Community Foundation Ireland. This weekly programme, which is open to all mothers of new babies in the area, continued to work well with adult participants identifying their own and their babies' needs for the group.

Participants reported the fact that they were linking in with other mothers and forming new friendships and networks as greatly beneficial. They enjoyed listening to guest speakers, which our Early Years Manager Lorraine Quinn arranged, according to the mothers' requests. As well as baby massage, yoga and paediatric first aid sessions, there were wellness talks and music and rhyme workshops.



They also had a visit from a Tallaght Library representative and two local public health nurses. We also promoted literacy and reading by providing books for all the children in the programme.

Most importantly, mothers and babies alike had fun along the way!

While it is a universal programme, we sometimes received referrals from health professionals who felt a particular mother would especially benefit from the group. Onward referrals were also made, including into our other programmes and supports in An Cosán.



Mothers' Voices

Hugo loves the group and I love it too. You get advice and relate to other people. Sometimes we vent to each other. You don't feel like you're on your own.

The staff are really supportive and non-judgemental. You can talk to them about anything. They are very kind and the kids really like them. It's nice to have a hot cup of tea and a scone too!

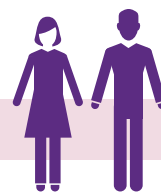
We've had visits from a public health nurse, and a life coach who told us not to think of ourselves as just mothers, but as people in our own right.

It's a very supportive space. We have learned baby first aid, baby yoga, and mental health. We can ask questions of the speakers and they give us information.

It gets me out of the house and to meet other mothers. The children enjoy the sensory toys and climbing.

My baby finds it very fun and enjoys being here. I see on his face that he is very happy. I am very grateful to have this programme, and that it's free!





We supported 76 counselling clients

Counselling

There was great demand for our Jobstown-based counselling service in 2023.

Our team of eight counsellors provided support to 76

counselling clients with 1,114 counselling sessions taking place over the course of the year. Most were learners participating in one,

or more, of our courses, although

we also supported other members of

the wider Tallaght / City West community too.

The high demand was in response to extensive needs in the community, such as relationship issues, grief, unemployment, homelessness, isolation, poverty, addiction, anxiety and depression. Thirty-one clients reported having experienced crime at some point in their lives. Some of these were incidents of domestic violence, sexual abuse or coercive control. Eleven had experienced suicidal ideation.

Our caring counsellors provide support and a listening ear to people when they need to talk something through. Sometimes all a person may need is to talk over a problem and explore possible ways forward. Other times, more may be required. The Counselling service provides a safe space where people can talk over whatever they feel may be holding them back.

Thanks to a grant from the Department of Justice through its Victims of Crime Funding, the Counselling team was able to continue to run its Peer Support Group. This has proved a valuable



resource for victims of domestic violence and coercive control since the group was set up in 2022. The six women who have been taking part in the group say they are hugely grateful for the safe space, which has proven a sanctuary for them.

An Cosán's Counselling service is a member of Community Therapy Ireland (formerly known as the Association for Agency-Based Counselling and Psychotherapy in Ireland) – an independent membership organisation representing non-profit community therapeutic service providers nationwide.

The biggest challenge for our Counselling team in 2023 was meeting demand. A number of counsellors were only in a position to work part-time, and it proved difficult to recruit more counsellors.

Members of the team availed of a number of opportunities to upskill in 2023. Six took part in a two-day Continuing Professional Development training on Narrative Therapy with Therese Hegarty, Family Therapist with the Community Addiction Response Programme Killinarden. A number of counsellors and other members of staff also attended a workshop on Trauma Informed Practice delivered by Leslie-Ann Webster.

'I am standing in my own power for the first time in years'

I didn't know what to expect when I came through the doors of An Cosán. I was aware of other organisations that provided support for women experiencing domestic violence and coercive control, but I wasn't in a good place and felt I wouldn't be believed because my partner was a woman. I was 16 years in the relationship, and it was always bad. I think if I was in a relationship with a man, I would not have been so afraid to look for help.

Coercive control was such a huge thing in my relationship. The abuse from my partner began with physical violence, and I was even attacked

in public places. She intimidated my children and friends, and because of this, I began to stay away from my family and friends. And I lost my children. Before I met her, I was trying to progress into education, but that all stopped.



I would try to break away from her, but then she did things like stalk me, and I would go back. I had no-one else because of her. She would get into a rage and wreck my home and, on one occasion, I got home and found she had wrecked my car. I did stay away from her for a couple of months but again she wore me down.

Eventually, the physical abuse stopped because I started to fight back, but the coercive control and verbal abuse got so much worse. I lost so many relationships because she told me no-one cared about me, and I believed her. She controlled me so much I couldn't function without her. I couldn't read a book as she would say I was ignoring her. She even said I chose my dogs over her.

Peer Support Group

After another terrible Christmas, I told her to leave and I went to the Peer Support Group in An Cosán. That first night I cried in the group for 40 minutes. I knew the facilitator, Bernie, cared about me – she told me she was sorry about what was happening to me. This touched something in me; I had not felt such care for a long time.

I really needed that group. It became important to me, and it still is. As a result of coming to the group, my anxiety started to get less and less. In January I went back to the Personal Development class. I still feel scared at times, but now I feel I am standing in my own power for the first time in years.

Now I know I'm an intelligent person, I'm not just a doorstop. The Peer Support Group and Personal Development course have opened my



eyes. I get so much from the groups, and I am starting to remember things I did and who I was before I met my ex-partner.

Looking forward to the future

Now I am doing things for myself and I have plans for the future. I signed up for a yoga class, and I love it. I am going to do a taster course in Community Development with An Cosán and start the official course in September. I am so excited about that.

The love and support that came from the Peer Support Group made me feel I could conquer the world. I have now reclaimed my home. I could never have done that before. I couldn't have done any course; I couldn't even have a friend. My daughter is back in my life now, and I'm going to be a grandmother.

I would never give all this up to go back to that relationship. I now have something to live for; great things are coming back into my life.

The best decision I made for myself in years was coming back in through the doors of An Cosán.

**We are grateful to Anne (not her real name) for sharing her experience of An Cosán*

Family Support – Lifestart

We supported
42 Lifestart
families

In 2023 our Lifestart team reached out to 53 families in Tallaght and City West, 42 families chose to participate, 23 of whom were new families to the programme.

Six of the mothers our Lifestart staff engaged with were under 20 years' old while the children involved in the programme ranged in age from five months to 18 months.

Lifestart offers families a child and parent development programme, which is delivered to parents in their own homes by family visitors. The aim is to support and

guide parents in their homes with the focus on all areas of a child's development.

On each visit, the family visitor brings age-appropriate information about the development of the child to the home, including checklists that





allow parents to see how their child's development compares to the average or typical child. The visitor answers any questions the parents may have and suggests activities that will help the child to fully develop her/his potential. Visits usually take place on a monthly basis but,

given the level of need in many of the families, visits were often made weekly or bi-weekly.

Over the course of the year, our Lifestart home visitors paid 256 visits to family homes. They also completed 64 'visits' in An Cosán Jobstown (in situations where visiting the family at home was not possible), and made 57 support calls via phone or Zoom.

The home visitors found that the kinds of issues families were dealing with included isolation, lack of family support, homelessness, overcrowded housing and unsuitable accommodation. Also, chronic health issues, poverty, addiction, mental health challenges, domestic violence and coercive control. Many of those engaging in the programme were lone parents, and many mothers had little support from the fathers of their children.

The Lifestart team made a number of referrals to An Cosán's other services, including referring five parents to Counselling and five children to our Early Years Jobstown service.



For many young mothers, having a home visitor come to their home and listen to them means the world.

Challenges

In 2023 the Lifestart team worked with several families living in sub-standard accommodation.

Many parents had to leave the home they were renting from a private landlord because the landlord had decided to sell the property. Four

parents had to leave a homeless hub and move into other temporary accommodation while renovation work was carried out. They received ongoing support from the Lifestart team.

Parents were very concerned about the effects Covid had had on their children. As a result of Covid, the team met more and more children with delayed speech and language as well as a delay in social skills.

These parents didn't have the skills to deal with children and the parents needed professional help. The challenge for home visitors was finding services for these vulnerable families. This proved a huge challenge with many services having a waiting list of up to two years. With some families, home visitors made follow-up calls to services because parents didn't have the capacity or energy to do this.

Highlights

One of the highlights for the Lifestart team and families was the Family Fun Day that was held in An Cosán Jobstown in August. The weather wasn't kind, but that didn't stop the children from having fun and the parents from enjoying time together in a supportive atmosphere.

Other highlights included two visits from Dr Pauline McClenaghan, Executive Director of the Lifestart Foundation. During her second visit, Dr McClenaghan carried out a quality assurance assessment on An Cosán's delivery of the Lifestart Programme, which included accompanying two members of the Lifestart team on a visit to a family home (with prior consent from the parents). The assessment reports offered very positive feedback and both home visitors received their certificates of accreditation.

Another highlight was the infant massage classes the Lifestart team started in 2022 continued to be popular with mothers, fathers and babies alike, promoting bonding and attachment between mothers and their offspring.



Lifestart – Feedback from parents

Alina*

I am a single mother with triplets and a nine-year-old son with a diagnosis of autism. The Lifestart team at An Cosán has been helping me since the public health nurse referred me to the programme in 2022.

In 2023 I was told I had to leave the apartment I had been renting for more than a year. After months of searching and, in desperation, I had to settle for the only accommodation I was offered: a one-bedroom hotel room in Ashbourne.

I had no choice but to go there as I could not have my babies on the streets and I have no family in Ireland. But this was miles away from my son's school in Tallaght - a school that was meeting his needs. I could only cope with getting him to school three days a week. It was too much of a rush getting the triplets out every morning to get to Tallaght.

In February I was asked to leave the hotel I had been placed in. The manager had an issue with me because I was too slow to get the three babies down the stairs when there was a fire alarm drill. We are now living in Ashbourne further away again from my son's school.

On Mondays I bring my son to school and then I go to Bernie in An Cosán Kiltipper where the triplets play before the other children arrive. Sometimes they get to go outside - they like that. It gives them a space to play and mix with other children.

While there, I get to talk to Bernie and she guides me on the events that are happening in the area. I have put the triplets' names down for Kiltipper Early Years when they are of an age to attend.



Emma*

When I saw the public health nurse with my baby for the first time, I was very nervous because I was not sure what she would ask me. When she checked my baby, she asked me how much tummy time he gets, and about his bedtime routine. I live with my mother and brothers and the house is always full, so I only put him on his tummy on my bed. She asked was his dad involved and I got very upset. She was nice and asked what support I had. I told her I had not planned to have a baby and that, while I live in my mother's house, I don't have much support.

She asked me if I would like some support and I said I would because I didn't know what to do with my son. She told me about the Lifestart programme and how a home visitor would give me information on what I can do to help me and my baby. She said a lot of first-time mummies do it. She went through the form, which I signed, but I wasn't sure if I would go.

When I got a call from Bernie, she explained more about the programme and said she could come to my house or I could come to An Cosán. I said I would come to An Cosán because my bedroom was too small, and my Mam doesn't like strangers coming into our house.

I love going over to An Cosán; the room we go into is lovely and cosy. There's lots of space and my baby can be on the floor with the toys. I get tips on toys to help my baby focus and take notice, and Bernie has given me books to read with him. She also gives me a book each month with lots of information about the stages and age of a baby's development. Bernie reads through these with me and helps me understand what I must do to help my baby develop.

I was able to go to the infant massage class in my local community centre when my home visitor gave me the email address of a teacher who was starting one up. I loved it and I made new friends. I would have never known about it only she told me about it and explained how good infant massage was for my baby and me to bond.

Bernie tells me about classes for me and the baby to go to and meet other mothers and their babies. She gives me books with pictures, and we sit on my bed before I put him in his cot. She told me this is a great way to teach my baby routine and will help him to enjoy books when he goes to school.

Next year I want to get my baby into An Cosán Early Years so I can join a course in An Cosán. Bernie said, once I put my name down and let them know I have a baby, I will more than likely get a place. While I live in my mother's house, I am still on my own with the baby. As well as Lifestart, I go to the library for all the events my home visitor tells me about.

I was really worried at first, but I am so glad I joined the Lifestart Programme. Thank you!



**Pseudonyms have been used*



1,476
adult learner
places

An Cosán's Adult Community Education (ACE) programme offers Access, Further Education and Higher Education courses all through one organisation, constantly signposting and offering flexible and supported progression pathways to adult learners. Responding to the needs of learners with additional commitments and limited resources,

the flexible supports we offer include the provision of part-time courses and blended learning options.

Accredited by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and through linked provision with South East Technological University (SETU), An Cosán is constantly innovating, using a lessons learned approach.

We create value by ensuring that our ACE programmes from National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 1-7 are:

- **Relevant** – designed and delivered to meet the needs of our learners and all underpinned by Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- **Holistic** – Literacy/numeracy and digital literacy competencies are developed in tandem with other key competencies, including skills to support employability and learning progress
- **Transforming** – our ACE model is constantly evolving to meet the needs of our learners, maintaining a focus on building capacity and capability in individuals and communities to contribute to economic and social progress in a knowledge-led 21st century



- **Lifelong** – All our courses, including digital literacy, are recognised as part of our lifelong learning pathways across formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

Our learner-centred, holistic, and transformative model consistently ensures priority groups' access, participation and success, with provision of wraparound supports to help adult learners achieve their full potential. These learning support services include one-to-one mentoring and coaching, individual and assistive tutoring, and employment outreach for our adult learners seeking employment. IT moderation is also an essential service for our learners to support them in managing their online learning.

The three unique factors of An Cosán's Adult Community Education are:

- primary focus on the 'furthest behind' women in Irish society
- provision of wraparound holistic support services available in-house, including early years' education and care, counselling and digital support
- and the personalised individual support, guidance and hospitality that An Cosán provides.



Access Education



With the continued support of Dublin Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and other funders, including TUSLA, Community Foundation Ireland and the Adult Literacy for Life Collaboration and Innovation Fund, we delivered 13 Access courses in semester 1 and 17 Access courses in semester 2.

Learners engaged in building their skills in a range of subjects divided into the three categories:

- First Steps back to Education (ALL)
- Computers & Technology (ALL)
- Health & Wellbeing

I made beautiful friendships during the course. The tutor was a dream and my colleagues were the kindest people. I learned a lot about myself, things I didn't know about myself.

I hadn't had much drive or passion for a very long time. When I finished the course, hearing everyone's stories, it gave me hope. It made me think that anything is possible. I just want more now - I have this fire in the belly - I want to continue learning.

Access Courses Delivered in 2023

	Semester 1 (January – June 2023)	Semester 2 (September – December 2023)
First Steps Back to Education	Key Skills (NALA) Return to Learning Discover Your Path Cúpla Focal (introduction to Irish) ESOL* Level 1 ESOL Level 2 *ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages	Skills for Life Return to Learning Discover your Path Cúpla Focal (introduction to Irish) ESOL Level 1 ESOL for Work 1 ESOL for Work 2 Early Learning & Care preparatory Return to Learning
Computers & Technology	Computers for the Terrified D8 Surfers (digital skills for older adults)	Technology for the Terrified D8 Surfers (digital skills for older adults) Step Up to Technology Women's Tales in the Digital Age
Health & Wellbeing	Personal Development Wellbeing for Staying Well Mindful Movement University of the Third Age (U3A) Women & Wellness	Personal Development Become your Best Self Wellbeing for Staying Well University of the Third Age (U3A) Women in Wellness

We developed and delivered a number of exciting new Access courses in 2023, including:

Discover your Path

Funded under the Adult Literacy for Life Innovation and Collaboration Fund, Discover Your Path was a pilot 12-week Life Skills and Futures Literacy programme. Using reflective learning and critical thinking, 12 learners questioned and explored their needs, interests and goals, and were supported in re-imagining their future. This transformative programme used Design Thinking and Universal Design, taking a three-pronged approach:

- **Building:** confidence, capacity and social networks
- **Inspiring:** curiosity, growth mindset and future thinking
- **Growing:** transversal skills development and choosing your path.

Futures Literacy developed by UNESCO is the capability of imagining diverse and multiple futures, and using these futures as lenses through which we look at the present.

On completion of Discover Your Path, nine learners progressed on to other education programmes.

Because of Discover Your Path, I figured out the line of work I would like to work in - I really love cars, so something along those lines. More than anything, my confidence has increased.



Having done Discover Your Path, I now know I can change my mindset from negative into positive. I am still doing the techniques I learned in the course, like meditation, breathing, and changing my thoughts.

Feedback from learners included:

- an increased sense of connection and a reduction in loneliness
- an increased awareness of their strengths
- being inspired to identify skills gaps and use transferable skills
- digital literacy as being the biggest barrier to education and work
- and learning to listen to their intuition.

Learners' feedback also included how much they valued the opportunity to identify and discuss their values, and talk about what brings them joy.

The programme was delivered in collaboration with Tallaght Intreo Centre, which helped to identify and recruit learners to the programme.

Become Your Best Self combines fitness and personal development.

Skills 4 Life supports learners to engage with literacy, including health literacy, financial literacy, critical thinking and media literacy.

Women's Tales in a Digital Age invites women to use and develop their digital skills to tell their stories.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for Work is aimed at ESOL learners wanting to enter the labour market. The course includes workshops on CV preparation and interview skills.



Step Up 2 Tech is designed as a bridging programme between Access and Further Education. Learners on this programme have graduated from Technology For The Terrified, but aren't quite ready for Return To Learning. On this programme they are brought through the QQI Level 5 module in Word Processing and are given the opportunity to take the exams and gain certification.

Return to Learning – Early Learning & Care Preparatory Course was developed to prepare 18 applicants for the new Early Learning and Care course, which began in January 2024.



Further Education (QQI Accredited)



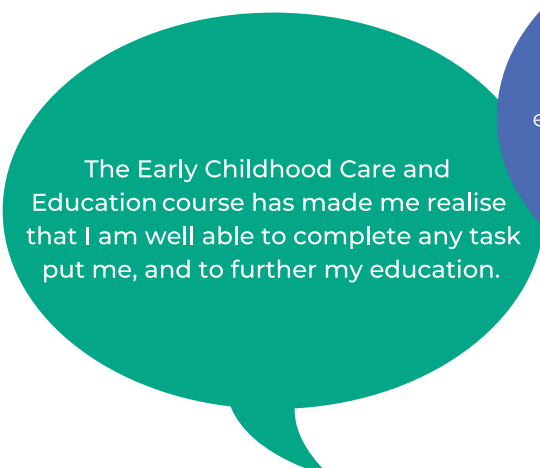
Five Further Education programmes in the areas of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Community Development, Community Care, and Business Administration with Digital Skills were delivered in the 1st semester of 2023.

The ECCE Programme did not re-commence in September due to its scheduled de-activation in

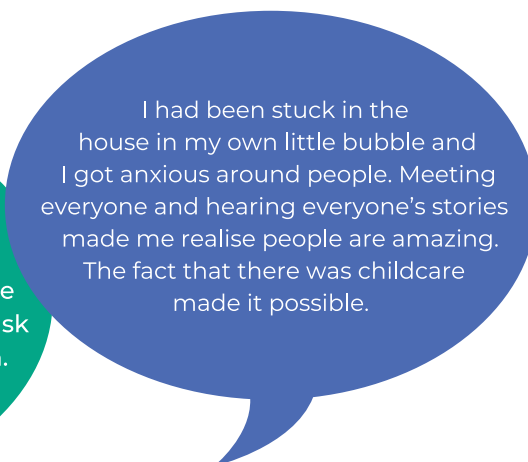
December 2023, to be replaced by the new Early Learning and Care programme due to commence in January 2024. As a result, four Further Education courses in the areas of Community Development, Community Care, and Business Administration with Digital Skills were delivered in the 2nd semester in 2023.

A total of 19 Further Education modules were delivered throughout the year.

Further Education & Training programmes	
Semester 1 (January – June 2023)	Semester 2 (September – December 2023)
ECCE Levels 5&6 Community Care (Level 5) Community Development (Level 5) Business Administration with Digital Skills (Level 5)	Community Care (Level 5) Community Development (Level 5) Business Administration with Digital Skills (Level 5)



The Early Childhood Care and Education course has made me realise that I am well able to complete any task put me, and to further my education.



I had been stuck in the house in my own little bubble and I got anxious around people. Meeting everyone and hearing everyone's stories made me realise people are amazing. The fact that there was childcare made it possible.

After doing WorkAbility, I am feeling confident in using the laptop and am good in everything else I did on the course too.

I can't even describe how much of a positive force the WorkAbility course has been in my life. Not only have I learnt so much about technology, but I feel a lot more confident in my life in general. So thank you so much everyone.



WorkAbility

With the support of Rethink Ireland, we launched our WorkAbility programme in September 2023. This unique course promotes equity of opportunity and access to employment through education (Business Administration with Digital Skills, QQI Level 5), career coaching, and employment outreach.

Collaborating with two community organisations, we successfully replicated An Cosán's flexible blended learning approach in hubs in Cherry Orchard/Ballyfermot and Dublin's south inner city. Learners in each hub are supported by a facilitator, with employability workshops running throughout the programme and work placements secured with the support of our Employer Outreach Officer.

In recognition of our WorkAbility programme, An Cosán WON the Social Inclusion category (large organisations) at the 2023 AONTAS Star Awards!



Community development

In response to community and learners' requests, a four-week introductory course in Community Development was delivered in June 2023. Six of the learners who attended this taster course went on to enrol in our Community Development, QQI Level 5 course.

Programme development (QQI)

With continuous high demand from learners to gain qualifications in Early Years' care and education, An Cosán applied to Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board for access to the new Early Learning and Care (ELC) programme and, working collaboratively with Longford Women's Link and Killucan Services,

we successfully applied for validation of the ELC programme in April 2023.

ELC Stage 1 commenced in January 2024.

Validation was also agreed with QQI to deliver the following:

- Women in Leadership (Certificate, Level 5)
- Care Skills (module, Level 5)

External evaluation

Further Education submissions were reviewed by three external authenticators. All gave glowing reports highlighting excellent teaching standards, submissions, feedback, and internal verification processes.

Sample feedback from our external authenticators:

<p>Describe examples of good practice observed/</p> <p>Identify concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an excellent Centre-of-Excellence with best practice teaching & learning and assessment processes evident throughout all modules. • There were also exemplary administrative procedures demonstrated throughout, with commendable presentation of all evidence and documentation. • The highest standards, as recommended by national QQI and ETBI criteria and standards, were clearly achieved. • All the designated Student Learning Outcomes in all the relevant Module Descriptions were comprehensively and clearly addressed. • An excellent and comprehensive IV process was also carried out.
<p>Outline areas for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvement is required in these teaching & learning and assessment processes and administrative standards – as they are already of the highest quality.



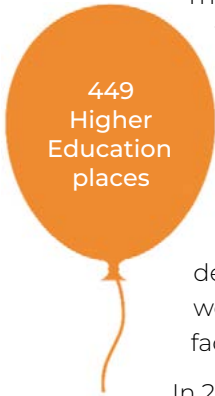
Learner feedback was very positive across all our Access and Further Education programmes in 2023, with the average satisfaction rating for both sitting at 96%.



Learner satisfaction across wraparound supports was 100%, with 100% also reporting an increased confidence around digital skills, learning opportunities and the labour market.



Higher Education

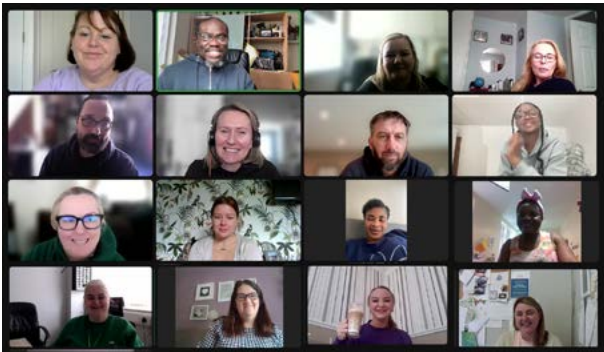


The transformative learning on the BA Degree and Certificate programmes delivered by An Cosán as a linked provider of South East Technological University (SETU) continued with 30 modules delivered in 2023. These part-time courses are delivered mostly online, with one workshop per module taking place face-to-face in our Jobstown centre.

In 2023 we offered Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the following BA programmes:

- Leadership and Community Development
- Applied Addiction Studies and Community Development.

The high level of demand for our Higher Education programmes continued in 2023. We received a total of 57 applications for Stage 1, and 24 learners were offered a place on their chosen programme starting in September 2023.



Higher Education Pathway for Non-Traditional Learners

As part of our *Higher Education Pathway for Non-Traditional Learners Project* supported by the Higher Education Authority under its Higher Education System Innovation and Transformation Call 2018, Higher Education learners on our Level 6 Personal and Professional Development Certificate programme were invited to participate in a photovoice research project to explore the role that adult community education had had in their lives.

This led to *The Whirlwind and The Path* exhibition, which was launched in Tallaght on 30th June by Senator Lynn Ruane. In the exhibition learners from communities across Ireland showcased photos and narratives they had produced capturing their unique experiences of lifelong learning pathways. This included the challenges they experienced as well as the influences in learners' lives that helped them along the way.

Higher Education Learner Voice

“My experience on the Personal and Professional Development course was an absolute whirlwind of emotions and experiences. Getting back to learning, the highs and lows of dealing with wi-fi connection, coursework, getting to know others, and completing assignments, all while struggling with recovery from a medical event in 2020. It was exhausting and exhilarating all at once.

“The course has really given me so much self-awareness and has improved my communication skills, which is really helpful with my role at work and in general. The brilliant supports provided by An Cosán in a fantastic learning environment is what makes the difference. They want you to do well and will do anything they can to advise, assist and support you.”

- Amy Hanley, *NFQ Level 6 Personal and Professional Development graduate*





The Whirlwind and The Path exhibition acknowledged and celebrated An Cosán's lifelong learning community and encouraged participation in adult community education. The exhibition, which was hosted in Tallaght Library for six weeks in the autumn as well as in our Jobstown centre for several weeks in July, resulted in many positive comments and feedback from local public representatives and members of the community.

Quality of Higher Education provision

Following the retirement of Dr Bríd Connolly, Dr Jerry O'Neill was appointed as external examiner. In his report he highlighted excellent teaching and learning practice in An Cosán:

"There is no doubt that the students of An Cosán are benefiting from an excellent educational experience, which attends to their academic, personal, community and vocational needs. Furthermore, the teaching team have clearly developed practices and cultures which allow them to constantly reflect upon, and enhance, learning and assessment experiences for students."

Higher Education Authority Performance Funding

As clear recognition of the power of Community Education to create transformative Higher Education pathways for social inclusion and sustainable development, the linked provision between South East Technological University (SETU) and An Cosán was awarded €1 million in the Higher Education Authority Performance Funding in October 2023.

Higher Education Learner Voice

"I totally enjoyed the Personal and Professional Development course; it was something new and out of my comfort zone. Coming from direct provision, it helped me improve my confidence. Working in a group boosted my self-esteem and I have since secured a job as a healthcare assistant in a local nursing home.

"Taking part in the photovoice research project was a great way to express myself. I could take any picture and write a story about what it meant to me. It made me think outside the box. It was a really mind-blowing experience and a lot of fun. It made me think outside the box."

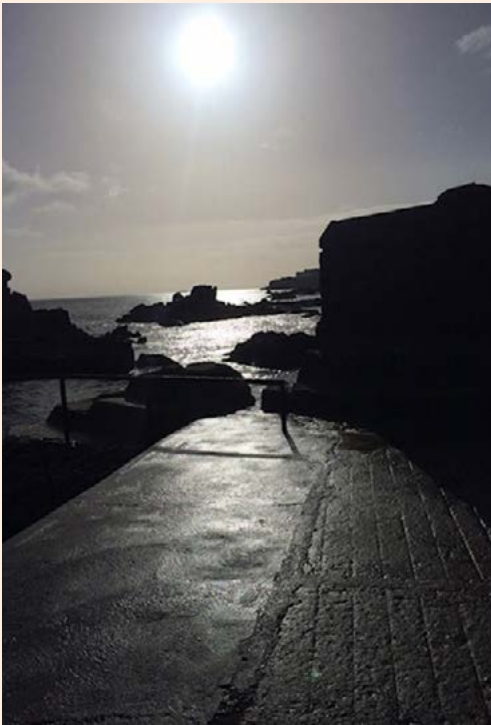
- Chantel Trytsman, NFQ Level 6 Personal and Professional Development graduate



The Whirlwind and The Path Learner Photovoice Exhibition



'If I can say anything to help one person, that is 'education' - it has a ripple effect.' - **Carol**



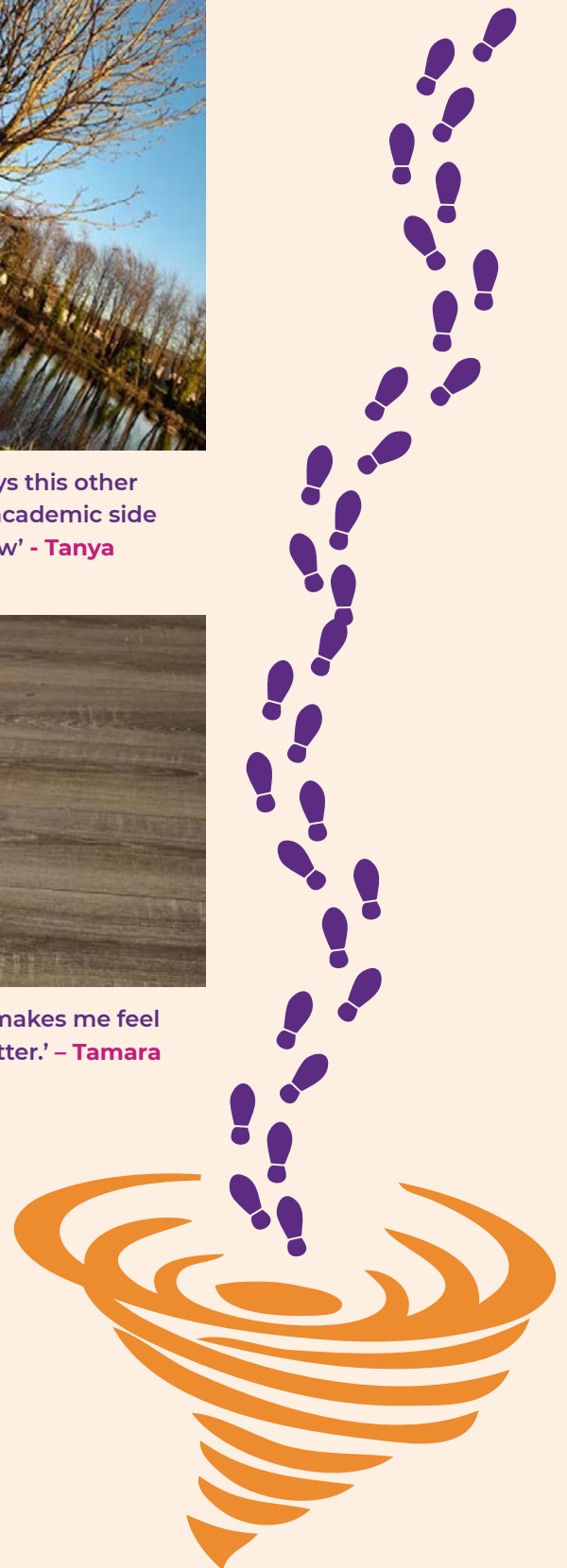
'There was always this other little branch, the academic side that never grew' - **Tanya**



'Baby steps lead to bigger steps. Working as part of a group makes me feel under pressure and I procrastinate. However, I am getting better.' - **Tamara**



'There is the beautiful blue sky that signifies that the destination, if reached, will be beautiful' - **Buki**



Based upon our successful collaboration, An Cosán and SETU now share an evidence-based model that demonstrates how learners experiencing diverse inequalities can be supported and motivated to access, participate, and succeed in third-level education in line with the objectives of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. The model also exemplifies the important role that Community Education can play in the provision of an accessible, unified tertiary system.

Graduations and Awards

We held two awards ceremonies in 2023. These were both joyful occasions – not only for the awardees and their families, but also for An Cosán staff who had greatly enjoyed seeing the learners progress in their education and grow in confidence while on An Cosán’s programmes.

Our first awards ceremony took place on 30th June in the Russell Centre, Tallaght. Eleven Higher Education learners graduated with our Personal and Professional Development NFQ Level 6 Certificate accredited by South East Technological University. A number of these learners had also taken part in *The Whirlwind and The Path* exhibition. A further 11 learners, who had completed a 12-week Return To Learning course in preparation for continuing on to further education, were also presented with their certificates.

‘My fear became courage and my education became knowledge’

Natasha Jordan, who received her NFQ Level 6 Personal and Personal and Professional Development graduate and who is now on our BA in Applied Addiction Studies and Community



Development programme, spoke during the ceremony about her experience of adult community education. She said: “When I found An Cosán, I found a whole new chapter of my life. My fear became courage and my education became knowledge. The Personal and Professional Development course has been the foundation of my career as it allowed me to learn new skills and improve academically.

“I am now working as a manager of Belgard Community Centre in Tallaght,” she continued. “This position would not have been possible without all

Higher Education Learner Voice

“If you’d told me a year ago I would be doing a degree, I would have laughed. But I’m much more positive in myself and about my future since doing the Personal and Professional Development course. It has changed my life so much for the better. I’ve met so many great people and had so many opportunities that I would never have had without An Cosán. I never would have been able to afford it, or to attend the classes in any other way, and I’m so appreciative of the opportunity.

“When I initially heard about the photovoice project, my heart sank as I am not in any way arty or imaginative but, looking around for inspiration actually made me think about everyday things in a different light, and I ended up enjoying the project and the change in perspective it gave me.”

- **Barbara Flood**, NFQ Level 6 Personal and Professional Development graduate who is now pursuing An Cosán’s BA in Leadership and Community Development programme



of the time I put into re-educating myself. I feel very proud of myself for having moved out of my comfort zone and gone back to education."

At our Further Education awards ceremony held in the Russell Centre on 2nd December 15 learners graduated from QQI Level 5 and 6 programmes. These included Community Development, Community Care, Business Administration with Digital Skills, and Early Childhood Care and Education.



We were pleased to be joined on this occasion by Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland, who as well as representing one of our key funders, came to witness her PA, **Korina Koler**, graduating with her Level 5 Business Administration with Digital Skills certificate. Korina, who was one of the keynote speakers, highlighted the transformative power of education to shape a better society and better tomorrow.

'An Cosán's work ripples through communities, and that work creates a more equitable and just society'

"An Cosán stands as a beacon of empowerment as it welcomes and employs remarkable women and like-minded men who are all dedicated to making a difference," Korina said. "The impact of their work extends beyond just you and me. Their work ripples through communities, creating a more equitable and just society."



Addressing the graduates, Korina said, "You are not just recipients of academic knowledge; you are all now agents of change. Please remember the responsibility that comes with this. Be active citizens, and pay forward the opportunities that you have received, and contribute to the creation of a society where everyone can flourish and prosper. Each one of you is a significant part of this transformative process, and together we can build a future not just for us, but for others too."

'This has changed so much for my family'

Virginia Kinsella, who graduated with a Level 6 Award in Early Childhood Care and Education, spoke during the ceremony about how An Cosán had impacted not only her life, but that of her siblings and of her mother, Lily Ward, who was one of An Cosán's first learners over 30 years ago and is now our Senior Administrator.



Virginia, who has secured a job as a Special Needs Assistant since completing her course, said, "I am so thankful to An Cosán for giving me this opportunity, which has given me back my identity, my confidence in myself and in what I can achieve, if I work hard for it. I love being able to contribute to the family finances again and this has changed so much for our family. I really got so much out of the course, but so did my family."



Graduations and Awards





Open days

Over 200 people attended our Open Day in early September to register for our Access Education autumn courses. Higher Education and Further Education places had already been offered over the course of the summer months.

Online information sessions were also held regularly throughout the year. These were attended by a total of 226 potential learners.



Scholarships and bursaries

Recognising that the pursuit of education can be prohibitively expensive for some, we operate a small bursary fund for eligible learners. Sixty-five out of 71 applications for financial support were successful in 2023, amounting to the awarding of €40,600.

Removing this barrier to accessing education was made possible by the continued support from Community Foundation Ireland and the many generous donors to the Marian Finucane Fund among others. In our commitment to making education accessible to all, we also offered phased payment options for learners self-funding their courses.

Learning support

Learning support services were provided to 103 learners in 2023, with a significant increase in learners requesting support from September to December. These services included one-to-one mentoring and coaching to support the development of learners' academic and digital skills. Learning support also included monthly tutor engagement workshops and QQI submission standardisation training for tutors.



Employment outreach

To gain a better understanding of our learners' needs in the context of learning and employability and how employers can address these needs, we developed a clear and meaningful Employability Programme for both learners and employers using Design Thinking.

A total of 21 work placements were secured for Access, Further and Higher Education learners, with a particular focus on QQI Level 5 Business Administration with Digital Skills learners.

We are grateful to have established relationships with the following employers in order to provide work placements: A&L Goodbody, Grouper, Contracting Plus, Dillon Solicitors, Distilled Media, The Echo, Citywise Education, CDI Citizens Information, St Thomas' School, EmployFlex, WorkEqual, Accenture, Indeed, Sherry FitzGerald, BBA Architects, Edufit, and Network Ireland.

ACE team development

Members of our Adult Community Education team completed courses in the following:

- 4 AHEAD Universal Design for Learning badge
- 2 Certificate in Recognition of Prior Learning with University College Cork
- 1 Design Thinking

Our Higher Education Lead Thomas Murray, moved on from An Cosán during the year after being with us for six years. We wish Thomas every success and thank him for his leadership in developing our Higher Education provision.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY

To meet this goal, we will:

- Exemplify how to work with marginalised communities inclusively
- Continue to be pioneers in the area of digital inclusion
- Create accessible community spaces

Working with marginalised communities inclusively



The Government's [Adult Literacy for Life – 10 Year Strategy](#), which our CEO Heydi Foster helped launch in September 2021, is underpinned by one simple vision: "An Ireland where every adult has the necessary

literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to fully engage in society and realise their full potential." The strategy also confirms the links between literacy, equality and disadvantage, citing that the groups most at risk of social exclusion are often those with unmet literacy needs.

With more than 36 years' experience in the field of adult community education, An Cosán understands the essential foundations required to build literacy among the targeted vulnerable

groups defined in the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy. These groups include early school leavers with a negative experience of education, people with a disability, people seeking international protection or other migrants needing language support, or minority ethnic groups who have struggled due to inequality and racism.

Basic digital literacy requiring access to broadband and devices is something many people take for granted, but this is not the case in many disadvantaged communities. An Cosán's holistic model provides a unique offering to empower the provision of new person-centred pathways towards achieving digital competence for the 21st century. This is done through the provision of digital supports, including our [Get Yourself Online](#) learning platform, assistive technology, and a laptop loan scheme.



Our community education provision supports and aligns with the Framework for Action on ALL Strategy in the following ways:

Pillar 1 – Understand

One-stop-shop

'Get Yourself Online' is a learning platform which combines Digital Stepping Stones (DSS) to assess digital skills competencies and 21 micro e-learning digital competence modules to support the acquisition of basic digital skills. The modules are based on DigComp, the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens.



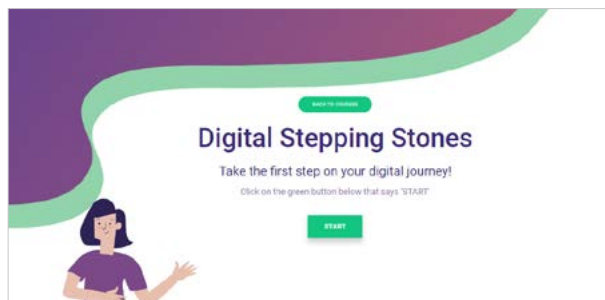
Proactive local services

With a strong presence in Tallaght West, community outreach and in-person outreach is core to attracting our targeted learners. Collaborating with community service providers and local public services, such as Intreo employment offices, we promote our courses on social media and local radio using plain language.



Common assessment approach

Using DSS, which is available on our Get Yourself Online learning platform, allows us to assess levels of digital confidence and digital competences, helping to identify and understand learners' needs.



Pillar 2 – Access

Plain and accessible content

All our course content and communications are designed to be accessible and use plain language.

Accessible technology

We support the use of accessible technology through one-to-one consultations and group workshops. We also promote and offer accessible technology training to our community partner network to enable them to meet the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised learner groups.

Universal Design for Learning

Teaching and learning guidelines using Universal Design for Learning are applied across all our adult community education programmes.



Pillar 3 – Expand

Drive digital competency

The use of digital technologies is an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment across our programmes. Learners are supported in their digital learning through the provision of induction and digital skills workshops, moderation, and assistive technology.

Support skilled practitioners

Through our national community partner network, we have built a network of 76 Digital Champions to give guidance, support and encouragement for people of all ages to address their digital skills.

A Community of Practice is currently being developed on the Get Yourself Online platform to address the significant challenges in addressing a lack of basic digital skills for those in teaching, learning, and development roles in the community sector. We believe creating a community of practice where practitioners can connect and exchange with like-minded community educators will ultimately help improve the digital skills needs of marginalised learners.



Innovate and enhance provision

The development of DSS and the Get Yourself Online platform combined with the development of gateway courses such as Return to Learning, Discover Your Path and our Level 6 Personal and Professional Development Certificate demonstrate innovation using a lesson learned approach to meet the needs of our learners.

The flexibility of accredited learning offered is also an important innovation. Use of minor and special purpose awards opens low cost and low risk entry options to learners. This enables priority groups to access, engage, and succeed in Further and Higher levels of education.



Pillar 4 – Empower

Person-centred pathways

An Cosán's approach has always been learner-centred and holistic to meet the needs of each individual learner. The introduction of gateway courses to prepare learners undertaking accredited courses has resulted in higher retention rates in Further Education. Feedback from learners also consistently confirms the importance of the provision of wraparound services, such as counselling, early years' provision, and one-to-one learning support.



Link to health and well-being

Mindfulness and well-being courses provided at Access level are extremely popular with our learners. Non-accredited modules on self-development and building confidence are also incorporated into accredited QQI courses. Non-accredited courses in financial literacy, health literacy and Futures Literacy are open to all.





Supporting refugees

In 2023 we continued to support refugees and other migrants through our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and through a weekly English Language Café. In September we introduced two new ESOL for Work courses, which we established with the purpose of preparing refugees for the workplace. We also organised a trip for ESOL learners to the EPIC Museum in Dublin, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

These initiatives have not only helped asylum seekers and migrants improve their English, but also helped them integrate into the local community.

Our Jobstown staff were honoured to be invited by some of the Ukrainian refugees who were attending our ESOL classes to join them on Pancake Tuesday for what turned out to be a pancake feast! This was a wonderfully enriching and enjoyable occasion for all.



Promoting community health in partnership with Trinity College Dublin

As part of the Academic Primary Care Collaborative Tallaght, we continued to host the popular Innovating Community Health series of talks in partnership with Trinity College Dublin. These were well attended by people joining in-person in the Russell Centre, Tallaght, as well as online.

Topics covered included:

- Exercise and Healthy Ageing – Dr Noel McCaffrey
- Inequalities and Inclusion in Healthcare; Understanding and Meeting the Needs of LGBT+ Communities – Dr Duncan Shrewsbury
- Menopause – What Can We Do To Optimise Our Health? – Dr Sumi Dunne
- Addiction Recovery – Building Recovery Capital – Prof Jo-Hanna Ivers



Feedback from English for Speakers of Other Languages learners

I am glad English-speaking people understand me now. I've stopped being embarrassed to speak English. I know how to express my thoughts, emotions and feelings. Of course, my English is not yet so perfect, but I feel real progress while studying at An Cosán. And my career prospects have really improved.

My son has noticed significant improvements in my conversational skills, and we don't feel uncomfortable in cafés, during walks or excursions, in public transport. We can engage in conversations with Irish people.

My English has become much better. I can talk in the store, in the hospital and in other public places. I can talk to native speakers and they understand me. I can read light books and I can watch movies in English.

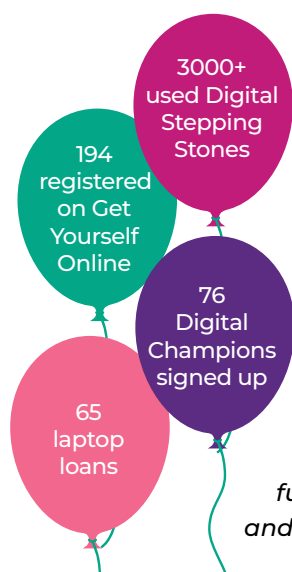
The English for Work classes are enhancing my communication and language skills, and my employability. I'm sure I could apply my English skills in work presentations now and demonstrate the results of my learning in future work.

After a forced move to a new country, I felt insecure in a foreign conversational environment, fearing to initiate a conversation, ask questions, or make mistakes. Just a month on the ESOL for Work programme, I began to feel more confident conversing with native speakers.

It is a very friendly and multi-cultural group. We discuss a wide range of topics in class, engage in debates, and everyone actively participates. Our teacher, Stephen, creates a very supportive atmosphere and helps each student express themselves. I always look forward to the next lesson. There's still a lot to learn, but I'm sure that, with the help of An Cosán, both I and my classmates will succeed.

The English for Work programme has prepared me for real-life work situations and positively changed me, equipping me with the skills needed for personal and professional growth. In the classes we learned how to write business emails, create a CV, and received advice on job interview skills. Currently, After five months at An Cosán, I can say that I feel more confident and skilled.

Continuing to be digital inclusion pioneers



The Government's [Adult Literacy for Life 10-Year Strategy \(ALL Strategy\)](#) revealed that one in two Irish adults struggle with digital literacy. Whether it is access to technology or to the skills needed to navigate the digital world, An Cosán has long been a pioneer in advocating that digital inclusion is essential for everyone to fully participate in life, work, and learning.



In 2023 An Cosán continued to actively support the ALL Strategy. In May we hosted a webinar for our community partners and digital champions to introduce our new Get Yourself Online platform www.getyourselfonline.ie, which includes:

- a one-stop-shop for assessing a person's level of digital competence –Digital Stepping Stones is an assessment tool that provides direction and next steps on how to address skills gaps
- 21 e-learning modules based on each DigComp 2.1 competence. Each module takes about 15 minutes to complete. Aimed at adult community learners, the modules are interactive, engaging and have clear learning outcomes based on Blooms Taxonomy.
- a community space where community educators and Digital Champions can connect, collaborate, share resources, and promote their digital literacy activities.

Networking across Ireland and internationally

Members of our Digital Inclusion Team presented on Get Yourself Online on a number of other occasions too, including a presentation to Adult Literacy for Life regional literacy coordinators and at events, including an Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed event, AONTAS's *Later Life Online* event and CHAT's ChildVision TechFest.



They also supported other organisations on their use of the Get Yourself Online platform and Digital Stepping Stones, including IT staff in St Michael's House, the National Council for the Blind, YMCA, Age Action, Moate Library, and Community Employment supervisors.

The Digital Inclusion Lead presented to RESISTIRÉ – a pan-European project - on the Ongoing Digital Transition and How It Can Be Made More Inclusive. A 30-month research project, its objectives are to find sustainable solutions to gendered inequalities and to strengthen societal resilience to outbreaks.

Digital Champions

The Digital Inclusion Team provided training, support and guidance to community partners and Digital Champions to embed our digital literacy resources into their practice. This was done face-to-face and online, in group and one-to-one train-the-trainer sessions, with the aim of cascading to result in improved services in their wider communities.

By the end of 2023 we had 76 Digital Champions signed up. They all work in community education or community development roles in organisations around Ireland and represent organisations as diverse as the National Learning Network, National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Irish Wheelchair

Association, Pavee Point, Age Action Ireland, South Dublin County Partnership, Louth Leader Partnership, Clogher Road Community College, and a number of Education and Training Boards and libraries.

The Digital Inclusion Team also supported An Cosán's University of the Third Age (U3A) programme for people aged 55+, encouraging them to engage with digital upskilling. The focus was on supporting older people to be able to stay connected, make new friends, share life skills, and learn about being active online and in the community. Topics delivered by the team included digital skills, using computers and smart phones, digital confidence building and active citizenship.



Over 3,000 people used our Digital Stepping Stones assessment tool in 2023 to understand their level of digital competence and confidence with 1,177 completing it.



194 people registered on our Get Yourself Online platform in 2023 with 271 modules enrolled and commenced.

Supporting our learners' and tutors' digital skills

Our IT staff were kept busy throughout the year with digital induction trainings for all our new adult learners as well as 1:1 coaching, training and other digital skills support (both face-to-face and online). They also provided digital skills training for tutors to enhance their teaching practice, maintained and updated 20 courses on Moodle, provided technology moderation support for programme delivery across 29 blended learning courses across Further and Higher Education, and responded to hundreds of requests for support from learners and staff.

Assistive Technology support was also provided to support learners who benefit from up-to-date methods of using assistive technology tools.

Our laptop loan scheme once again proved critical in ensuring learners had the devices they needed to progress on their chosen course. A total of 59 laptops were loaned during the year. Enhancements to the scheme, including new policies and procedures, improved efficiency and turnover, and made it more accessible to learners.

All learners had access to our virtual learning environments (Moodle or Blackboard) along with the supports needed to effectively utilise them.



Creating accessible community spaces

We continued to create accessible and inclusive educational community spaces throughout 2023 by continuing to offer online and blended learning opportunities, by hosting a number of one-off talks and short courses open to members of the public, through our Community Employment scheme, and through our expanding community partner network.

Examples of talks we hosted during 2023:

- Introduction to Women in Politics - Sinéad McCool
- Menopause - Dr Mary Ryan
- Looking After Your Health - Dr Kate McCann
- Truer Than True Crime - Ian Marder
- Supporting Your Body and Mind - Sheena Matthews
- Mental Health Literacy - Maxine Walsh
- Let's Talk Menopause - Catherine O'Keeffe

Community Partners

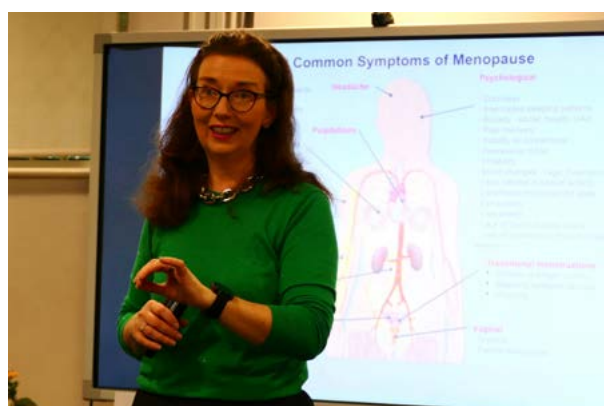
248
community
partners in
26 counties

With a strong community and public body outreach network in Tallaght and a national community partner network of community organisations, our online programmes offer accessible learning opportunities to a wide range of individuals and communities, including those living in isolated rural areas with limited access to education or transport.

In 2023 we continued to work collaboratively with other community organisations to identify, target, and recruit learners from these vulnerable groups and develop programmes to meet their needs, and the needs of their communities. We also



delivered Continuing Professional Development to our community partner network. By the end of year our community partner network had grown to a total of 248 organisations.



An early adopter of online education, our Adult Community Education programme fosters and develops relationships and collaborations through our national community organisation network to promote and ensure our courses remain affordable and accessible, and are designed to meet the needs of the under-resourced communities that we serve.

Fatherhood Project

In March 2023 we launched the Erasmus+ Fatherhood Project in our Jobstown centre - www.fatherhoodproject.eu

A collaborative pan-European initiative funded under Erasmus+, the Fatherhood Project developed tools, resources and networking opportunities to equip young fathers (18-30 years old) to actively engage in their parenting role. The training programme was designed to be inclusive, free, open source and accessible in four languages: English, Spanish, Greek and Icelandic.



Community Employment

27
Community
Employment
trainees

Twenty-seven people participated in An Cosán's Community Employment (CE) scheme in 2023. This was a slight drop on the previous year, reflecting the level of high employment in Ireland.

Each CE trainee made the most of the opportunity provided by the scheme to develop their skills and learning via on-the-job training, accredited internal and external courses, and work placements. Training included Comp TIA A+, Excel, Special Needs Assisting, book-keeping, digital skills, community

care, hospitality and childcare. Several were also involved in administration and reception duties, IT support, classroom assistance, and general maintenance. Five trainees participated in An Cosán's QQI Level 5 Business Administration with Digital Skills for Work course.

In order to raise the profile of our CE scheme, we set up a stall in the Tallaght Intreo office on several occasions, giving job-seekers the opportunity to find out about our CE vacancies and courses.

The CE team decided they would like to engage in an environmental awareness programme across the organisation to promote a change in people's behaviours around recycling and energy efficiency. They started undertaking research in order to roll out the programme in 2024.



CE – a pathway to employment

I started on the Community Education (CE) scheme in An Cosán in May 2022. It wasn't long after the Covid pandemic and my confidence level was so low. I was worried about my future and what path I would take. I had very few IT skills and time was moving fast.

Starting CE was one of the best things I have ever done! Ingrid set me up with so many online courses. It was all part of my learning process. I then did a personal development course, which helped me gain some self-confidence.

I then enrolled on the Return To Learning course and I started helping out on reception, which was very interesting. A Level 5 QQI course in Business Administration with Digital Skills started in September 2022 and I was encouraged to enrol, which I did.

After my first year on the CE scheme, I landed myself a job as full-time receptionist with An Cosán.

My CE manager, Ingrid Shannon, was really inspiring.

I would highly recommend the CE scheme within An Cosán. My journey was great! I'm now working within the organisation in a job I really love!

- Marcella Gregg *(pictured on the left with CE Supervisor Ingrid Shannon)*



I initially went to An Cosán to sign up for the two-year QQI Level 5 Business Administration with Digital Skills course, which I will complete in June 2024. In November 2022 I decided to sign up for the CE scheme as well. The reason I did this was because I wanted to get back into the workforce, but was unsure what I wanted to do and was feeling a little bit lost.

I wanted to continue to do my course and the CE scheme allowed me to do this, but to also gain more skills, knowledge and experience outside of the course.

My role was in administration where I gained so much experience but, most of all, confidence too. I felt like I got back to myself after being out of the work setting for a period of time. During my time on the CE scheme I worked in administration. I also worked at events, like the staff team days, which was a great opportunity to hear how different departments worked, but to also speak to the wider An Cosán community.

The support from Ingrid, the CE supervisor, was valuable to me. Any questions I had she would answer. She encouraged me and offered me support and advice, when needed. Also, the other CE members were a great support.

I recently finished up on the CE scheme and have now become an employee within An Cosán in administration in the Adult Community Education department. I really believe if I had not taken part in CE I would not have had this opportunity: it gave me the skills and knowledge of community education to get this role. I look forward to my journey in An Cosán.

- Lisa Byrne



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

INFLUENCE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

To meet this goal, we will:

- Influence public policy
- Evidence our impact on people's lives
- Become an influential voice in the education sector

Influencing public policy



As Ireland's largest community education organisation, An Cosán continued to find ways to influence systemic change in 2023 with our CEO Heydi Foster continuing to drive our community education and digital

inclusion advocacy, ensuring that the voices of disadvantaged learners and our community partners were heard on the national stage.

In the run up to International Women's Day, *The Irish Times* published an op-ed by Heydi under the headline '[No pay rises for invisible women working in an invisible sector](#)'. In this piece, Heydi wrote:

"Why is the escalating cost of living being experienced by everyone not recognised for our staff and pay increases funded? Could it be that it is an invisible sector, made up of invisible women? We are a sector serving clients many of which live in poverty and are often women. In An Cosán over 80 per cent of our learners are women from some of the most excluded communities in Ireland. The wider community education sector engages with 33,000 learners annually, of which 77 per cent are female. And 79 per cent of parents accessing our early years' education and care services are women. If our staff are invisible to those allocating resources,

what does it say about the value decision makers attach to meeting the needs of our learners and parents?"

Our fundraisers, which received good coverage in local media, provided opportunities to champion our [One Generation Solution](#) message: by educating a woman, you will help her and her children escape poverty, and they will go on to lead their communities out of poverty too.

Speaking at our International Women's Day celebration in the Intercontinental Dublin on 10th March, Heydi said: "This year's United Nations theme for International Women's Day – *DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality* - could not be more aligned to our work. An Cosán is leading the way in Ireland in developing digital skills and amongst those with greatest needs. This is important to our feminist cause because digital access has the potential to empower women and break down barriers. There can be no equality without digital equality."



We always enjoy welcoming visitors to our Tallaght centre and showing them our adult education, early years' education, and counselling and family support facilities. In April Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland, visited our Jobstown centre ahead of Rethink's announcement that An Cosán would be one of four recipients of its Urban Uplift Fund, enabling us to deliver our award-winning Workability programme in three hubs.



In December the South Africa Ambassador to Ireland, Yolisa Maya, visited prior to finishing her time in Ireland. A keen supporter of our work during her time in this country, she exchanged experiences of education with members of the staff team as well as some of our adult learners.

Active Citizenship

All of An Cosán's education provision – from Early Years through to Adult Community Education and University of the Third Age – enables and encourages learners towards more active citizenship. As our learners grow in confidence, they learn to speak out and to speak up about issues that are important to them, and to their families and communities.

Many of our learners were active in their local communities over the course of the year. As well as completing work placements in An Cosán, local schools and an addiction support centre, our Level 5 Community Development learners participated in a number of initiatives, including:

- facilitating an open Narcotics Anonymous meeting
- facilitating a cooking class for young people with addiction (empowering one of the young people to teach the group their favourite dish)
- planting a Tree of Hope to tie in with Suicide Awareness Month
- working with a National College of Art and Design (NCAD) final year student on a community education project, which involved a workshop in Rua Red, South Dublin Arts Centre



A number of our learners took the initiative of wearing green ribbons on 10th October to mark World Mental Health Day and to promote the message that 'It is OK not to be OK and to seek help'.

Brenda Ballesty, who completed our Discover Your Path course, wrote an excellent article about her experience of adult community education, which was published in *The Tallaght Echo* newspaper. In the article she said: "An Cosán is all about people with respect, equality and empowerment at its very core, building confidence and enabling people through education to find their own particular path. Upon entering the building, you are immediately enveloped by a feeling of calmness and positivity. From the friendly receptionists to the ladies in the café, you are met with a warm welcome plus the fabulous smell of freshly baked scones. There really is something in the air!"



Evidencing our impact on people's lives

We continued to build our national reach and strengthen connections in 2023, including with our 248 community partners, leading to greater awareness of An Cosán's unique, holistic model of education and our One Generation Solution approach.

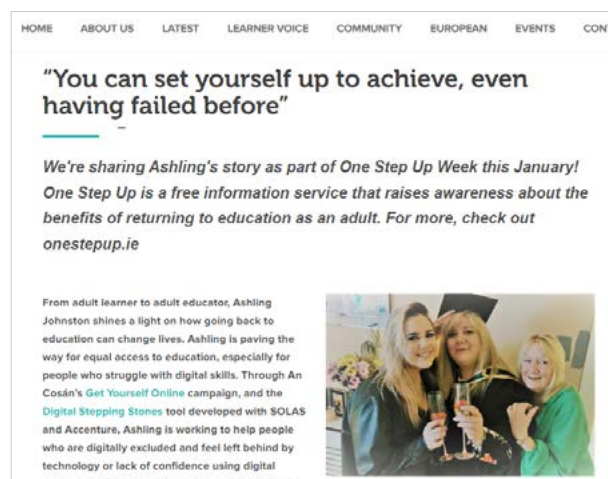
As featured in our Adult Community Education section, some of our Level 6 Personal and Professional Development learners participated in an innovative photovoice project in which they took photographs and wrote narratives demonstrating the impact Community Education had had on their lives. The resultant *The Whirlwind and The Path* exhibition ran in our Jobstown centre in July and in Tallaght Library for six weeks in the autumn. Four participants spoke at the launch.



Our Higher Education Lead and two of our Personal and Professional Development graduates, Natasha Jordan and Amy Hanley, did an excellent interview on Near FM about the transformative power of Community Education and about the photovoice research project.

An Cosán also featured in national and local newspapers and on a number of high-profile websites, including www.independent.ie, Women Mean Business and www.businessandfinance.com. *Changing Ireland* magazine carried a two-page spread about our approach to Community Education, including interviews with our Community Partner Lead and two adult learners, Njabuliso Moyo and Dolores O'Sullivan.

Our Digital Skills Tutor, Ashling Johnston, was featured on the AONTAS website to mark One Step Up Week. In the article Ashling says about her own experience of adult community education: "It was very empowering to feel you had ownership over your own learning, and you were involved in how you wanted to progress I tell my kids now, you can set yourself up to achieve, even having failed before. Where there's a will, there's a way."



We also showcased the impact of our work by including learner and parent voices across our communications. Adult learners shared their stories at graduations and award ceremonies, fundraisers, and in videos and in media interviews. By sharing their personal stories, they effectively demonstrated the very real impact An Cosán has had on their lives, and amplified our key messages.

One of our learner ambassadors, Selina McClean, spoke in this Tuath Housing Association video about the impact An Cosán had had on her life, and encouraged other adults to consider returning to education too.

It is always encouraging to hear graduates advocating for community education and talking about the positive experience they had with us. Senator Lynn Ruane describes An Cosán as "a

pioneering education programme” in this [Irish Times article](#). An Cosán was also mentioned in International Women’s Day articles featuring Lynn Ruane in The Irish Star and [The Mirror](#).

Awards

We were thrilled to win two national awards in 2023!

In March we won the Social Inclusion category (large organisations) of the AONTAS Star Awards in recognition of our ground-breaking WorkAbility programme, which promotes equity of opportunity and access to employment using a three-pronged approach that combines education, career coaching, and employment outreach. The award was presented to our Adult Community Education Manager, Adelaide Nic Chárthaigh, and our Community Education Lead, Debra Crawley.



In October our CEO, Heydi Foster, won the Charity Leadership Award at Charities Institute Ireland’s Charity Excellence Awards. The award recognised that, since taking up the CEO role in 2019, Heydi has established An Cosán as an organisation of national importance, influencing policy and government practice, while cementing its place within the heart of the communities it serves. The quality and breadth of An Cosán’s services has expanded during Heydi’s tenure, with the organisation’s leadership in digital inclusion widely noted, whilst also securing a firm organisational and financially sustainable footing.

I fell back in love with learning to the point where I’m constantly upskilling. It’s brought so much change in my life.





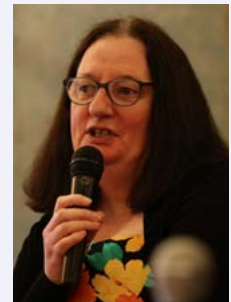
“An Cosán has given me my life back; I’m a different person now. I never had a voice before: I was always Mammy, I was wife, I was friend, I was sister. When you’re confined to school runs and the dinners and you finally find a space that you can be 100 per cent yourself, and you’re accepted for who you are, it’s life-changing.

“I thought I’d never amount to anything. But the new me sees I can do anything I put my mind to. It didn’t matter that I had been out of education for so long: I received a warm welcome from everyone and, because the classes were smaller than they would be in a bigger college, it quickly became a safe space where I could be myself. The additional supports, like financial and digital supports, made all the difference. Without them, I’d have given up for sure.”

- Tanya Shields, Level 6 Early Childhood Care and Education graduate, speaking at An Cosán’s International Women’s Day celebration

“It was scary the first day coming into a new place not knowing anybody, but I have to say I have loved every day of it, and I now consider An Cosán my second family. Without them and their support, I wouldn’t be the woman I am today.”

“I’m so much stronger now; I feel more confident in myself personally and in my work life. I had been scared I wasn’t going to get a job but, with my new skills and confidence, I know I will get something. An Cosán has changed my life and I have seen it change the lives of others too.”



- Sinéad Grogan, Return To Learning graduate who is now on our Level 5 Business Administration with Digital Skills course, speaking at our International Women’s Day fundraiser

“I absolutely love where my lifelong learning journey has brought me so far; studying has become a part of my daily life. Every opportunity I get to squeeze in some research is crucial, whether it’s listening to podcasts whilst driving, or reading aloud whilst cooking dinner. Education is a huge part of my family’s life now because when I’m learning, so are my kids.

“An Cosán is an amazing adult community education provider; the wraparound supports cover all aspects of college life because An Cosán wants its students to be able to focus on their work and to succeed. Returning to education has enhanced my CV and I’ve managed to secure a fabulous job with Northside Partnership’s health and well-being team.

“My plans for the future are to continue with my education; I think I’ve caught the bug! I would like to do a Master’s and I want to write a book. I want to see more people go back to education and I want to see communities working together.”

- Tamara Kearns, NFQ Level 6 Personal and Professional Development graduate who is now in her second year of An Cosán’s BA programme in Leadership and Community Development, speaking at our 25th Golf Classic



Building stronger media relations

An Cosán recognised at annual STAR Awards



AWARD: Accepting the award on behalf of An Cosán were Adelaide Nic Chárthaigh and Debra Crawley

AN COSÁN was among the ten initiatives recognised at the annual STAR Awards, coordinated by AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation. Hosted by Irish International

five categories including Health and Wellbeing; Third-level Access and Engagement; Social Inclusion; Global Citizenship Education; and Learner Voice. Winner of the Social Inclusion (Large)

KCLR

KCLR NEWS NEWS & SPORT

SETU partners with An Cosán to boost educational access for learners

The announcement was made by Minister Simon Harris while visiting the Carlow campus this week

Angela Doyle Stuart 30/09/2023



Visit www.newsgroup.ie

AN COSÁN PHOTOVOICE EXHIBITION WILL CELEBRATE THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A learner photovoice exhibition, which will be launched in Tallaght on 30th June by Senator Lynn Ruane, aims to celebrate the power of adult community education to transform lives. The Path comprises of adult learners and narrates their experiences. Personal and Professional Development programme. An Cosán, the community organisation.



Geraldine Harnett and Njabulo Moysa - graduates

An Cosán tells how its novel approach to education works

BY KATHY MASTERSON

From an idea born at a kitchen table, to a nationwide network that has empowered 20,000 learners, An Cosán is a powerhouse that continues to transform communities. The organisation was founded in 1986 by Katherine Zappone and her late wife Ann Louise Gilligan in The Shanty, their home in the Dublin mountains overlooking Tallaght, where its main base is located. From its humble beginnings, it has continued to grow and evolve to meet the needs of the communities it serves, and now operates seven



Graduates at an An Cosán Awards Ceremony.

THE IRISH TIMES

15°

No pay rises for invisible women working in an invisible sector

We don't even know how many women work in the not-for-profit sector, what we do know is that many have not had a pay increase in over a decade, as no funding has been provided

Heydi Foster Wed Mar 8 2023 - 14:32



The not-for-profit sector in Ireland employs an estimated 170,000 people. Unfortunately, the official national statistics are largely silent on the extent of the sector but, whatever the precise number of employees, we know that they provide a vast range of essential services.

WMB NOW

ASPIRING | INDIVIDUAL | VISIONARY | PASSIONATE

Home About WMB WMB NOW

SETU Partnership with An Cosán Awarded €1M in HEA Funding.

2ND OCTOBER 2023

POSTED IN: BE IN THE FRAME



South East Technological University (SETU) has been awarded €1M in funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for its partnership with An Cosán, Ireland's largest community education provider.

The announcement was made recently by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, at the HEA's System Performance

20,000 GRADUATES TO DATE

"The biggest barrier is the invisible one and that's confidence for a lot of people."

An Cosán's online learners are also offered the same wraparound supports as those attending in-person courses.

An Cosán's community partners also help to link learners with supports and services in their local areas.

What sets An Cosán apart from other online education providers is its wraparound supports.

able to do it, you need to have the resources," said Maria.

The objective that underpins everything at An Cosán is lifting people, women in particular, out of poverty through education.

Maria explained: "The idea is that you're supporting a mother to empower herself and her family, you lift a family out of poverty forever. It changes the trajectory of a family."

"If a mother is studying and the child sees that, the child is more likely to continue in education. With an education you can be uplifted and empowered to get better jobs, to get quality employment. And that's an important point, quality employment, because that's what you need to have the resources," said Maria.



Irish Independent News Opinion Business Sport Life Style Entertainment

Wicklow

News Sport Business Lifestyle Wicklow & District Arklow Bray West Wicklow

Wicklow adult learner credits An Cosán for 'empowering her to succeed'



#CreatingBrighterFutures

An Cosán's CEO scoops top Charity Leadership award



EXCELLENCE: Heydi Foster (CEO of An Cosán), holding her Excellence in Charity Leadership Award along with (from left) Dee Keogh (Board member, An Cosán), Mark Kelly (Charities Institute Ireland's Charity Excellence Coordinator), Dragana Soro (An Cosán Education Technologist, An Cosán Digital Inclusion Coordinator), Dragana Soro (An Cosán Education Technologist, An Cosán Digital Inclusion Coordinator), Anna Durkin (Chair of An Cosán Board of Directors) (Deputy CEO, An Cosán), and Anna Durkin (Chair of An Cosán Board of Directors)

AN COSÁN CEO Heydi Foster scooped the Excellence in Charity Leadership Award at Charities Institute Ireland's Charity Excellence Awards 2023, which were held in the Round Room of the Mansion House last Wednesday October 11, 2023.

The award is presented to an executive head of a charity who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and management skills in the effective operation of the entire organisation, whose vision permeates throughout the charity, and who has shown outstanding leadership in driving its success.

In his preamble the award was given to someone who has transformed their organisation, but also left an indelible mark on the entire sector.

They have set the standard for governance and management excellence, fostering a culture of continuous growth and collaboration," he said.

Mr Savage said that under Ms Foster's guidance, the judging panel felt that An Cosán had expanded significantly, ensuring financial stability and making a profound social impact. Specifically, she has expanded her organisation, shaping national policies and contributing to vital social conversations. Their exceptional leadership has opened doors to education and life-changing opportunities

Guatemala, in Boston and, for the last 18 years, my home that is Dublin.

"It has been my privilege to work with – and grow – our outstanding team to build on the incredible vision of An Cosán," Ms Foster continued. "I've found a wonderful second family with them."

"Leadership is core to our work. We're committed to learning, leadership and enterprise and I learn from – and inspired by – the leadership I see around me every day – my talented and determined management team and other colleagues throughout An Cosán who live our values and lead the way in their homes and families, and in their communities."

Ms Foster added: "It is this powerful everyday leadership that inspires me every single day to continue on the path to a better future that is the heart of our vision in An Cosán."

Everyone at An Cosán community education centre in Jobstown, Tallaght, was delighted to see their CEO recognised for her exceptional leadership with the awarding of the Excellence in Charity Leadership Award.

Anna Durkin, Chair of An Cosán's Board of Directors, said: "This award recognises that Heydi has proven An Cosán is an organisation of national importance."

An Cosán's Fundraiser HELD ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Photos by Robbie
You can view The Echo Photos



Meaghan and Aisling Johnstons



Taryn Shields and M



An Cosán Women's Day Lunch



Taryn Shields (left) with Board members, Anna Durkin, Maura O'Connell, Aisling Johnstons and Heydi Foster (pictured at the An Cosán International Women's Day Lunch held in the New Crossroads Hotel, Dublin, P.K. 40002, AT P.M.C. 2023)

Employment (CEO) scheme three years ago, after spending a number of years in the public sector with the web-care she received, she said her confidence quickly grew and that she had enjoyed the experience of working with a number of organisations, including administrative, strategic, legal and finance. "It was really her first day coming into a new, vibrant team," she said. "I have loved every day of it and I now consider it my second family. My home and their support, I would be the first to say, is what makes it all work."

She said she would continue to grow her confidence and to continue to support the organisation as it grows. "I'm looking forward to the next steps in my career and to the support of the organisation."

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Natasha proud of moving out of comfort zone and returning to education



PASSION: An Cosán graduate Natasha Jordan with her child Ava, Farrah and Ben Forrester

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MY FEAR BECAME COURAGE AND MY EDUCATION BECAME KNOWLEDGE

"My fear became courage and my education became knowledge". Those were the words of adult learner, Natasha Jordan, at the address to graduates and staff at the graduation ceremony in the New Crossroads Hotel, Dublin, P.K. 40002, AT P.M.C. 2023.

Ms Jordan, who is the first in her family to attend university, said she was inspired by the support of An Cosán and the staff of the New Crossroads Hotel, Dublin, P.K. 40002, AT P.M.C. 2023.

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Graduation Ceremony AND PHOTO EXHIBITION LAUNCH IN AN COSÁN

AN COSÁN graduates and staff are all smiling at the ceremony

Becoming an influential voice in the education sector

In 2023 members of the An Cosán team made the most of opportunities to speak up on behalf of our learners and to promote our unique approach to community education. As already outlined in this report, our CEO spoke at a number of events during the year about our One Generation Solution to poverty through education, and our Digital Inclusion team made the most of opportunities to showcase how our new Get Yourself Online platform supports community educators in their work with learners to stakeholders across the community education sector and further afield.

Our Higher Education Pathway for Non-traditional Learners Project with South East Technological University enhanced the standing and visibility of our community-based Access, Further and Higher Education programmes and of our wraparound service provision among relevant stakeholders in the community education sector. The research report will be published and disseminated in 2024.

Our Higher Education Lead accepted an invitation to present the research findings of An Cosán's transformative work in community-based Higher Education pathways to the 2023 Lillehammer Lifelong Learning Conference. The conference, organised by the International Council for Open and Distance Education, saw 370 delegates from more than 30 countries attending. He also spoke at South East Technological University's biennial seminar in April.



Our CEO, Adult Community Education (ACE) Manager and other members of the ACE team, as well as some of our graduates and adult learners, participated in a number of networking events organised by AONTAS and other key stakeholders. They also attended Rethink Ireland's event in April to mark the conclusion of the Mná na hÉireann



Fund. A highlight of the evening was the screening of a video of one of our graduates, Jane Ronan, sharing her experience. As a result of gaining skills and confidence with us, Jane is now working with Rehab and is positively flourishing. “Without the drive and focus of An Cosán, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” she said.

We were thrilled when our partnership with SETU was recognised with a €1m Higher Education Authority (HEA) Performance Funding grant made to SETU. The funding, which was announced by then Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, at the HEA’s System Performance Framework launch in September was awarded on the strength of a case study submitted to the HEA titled SETU and An Cosán: *Using the power of community education to create transformative higher education pathways for social inclusion and sustainable development.*



An Cosán has worked in collaboration with SETU Lifelong Learning since 2008 in the development and delivery of Higher Education courses. It was wonderful to see our collaboration recognised nationally as a model of engagement that breaks the cycle of educational disadvantage and reaches learners who would not traditionally have had access to third-level education.

Our CEO, Heydi Foster, said at the time: “We are thrilled our valuable linked partnership with SETU has been recognised in this way by the Higher Education Authority. The Performance Fund grant will ensure we continue to reach the furthest behind first through our progressive pathways to higher education. We look forward to further collaboration with SETU and to expanding our successful community-based higher education programmes so that more adult learners from marginalised communities across Ireland can achieve empowerment through education.”



“Based upon our successful collaboration, SETU and An Cosán now share an evidence-based model that demonstrates how adult learners experiencing diverse inequalities can be supported and motivated to access, participate, and succeed in third-level education in line with the objectives of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. There can be no doubt that this model demonstrates the important role that Community Education can play in the provision of an accessible, unified tertiary education system.”

I've never felt so free;
I made loads of new friends.
Mary helped us do our vision boards
and it motivated me to achieve
the goals I want in my life. I'm
not afraid to try new
things anymore.

I have a more positive mindset
now after doing Discover Your Path. I am
able to put things in a more positive light.
There's always something good in everything
and, even if I am having a bad day, I think
about what I've learned on the course,
and I get through it.

I now know what's
important to me, what my values are.
I know how to ask for what I want and,
if I want to know something, I have the
confidence to ask. Because we discussed
comfort zones, I have been able to
go on to do another course.

I went in broken, and I came
out better. The course opened my eyes.
I was never into courses, but now I want
to do more courses. It's made me more
confident; I want to return to work. I feel
more prepared for interviews. I am
much more confident to
speak in public.

Before Discover Your Path
I was depressed, lonely and had a
negative mindset. Now I'm more positive,
I want to go out more and meet new
people. I've more confidence. It has
really changed me personally, it has
really helped me. It was an
amazing course!



Building a bigger & stronger **ONLINE PRESENCE**

Facebook reach
111,832  23%

2,448
LinkedIn followers  24%



We joined
TikTok!



219,400
impressions
on X



835
Instagram
followers

 24%



2,256
newsletter
subscribers



14,765
website
users

Online networking and advocacy

An Cosán @an_cosan

It's exciting to hear our CEO @HeydiFoster talking about our 2022 achievements and outlining this year's priorities for our #AdultEducation, #EarlyYearsEducation, #counselling & #parentingsupport services.

#LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation #OneGenerationSolution

An Cosán @an_cosan

Our team were honoured to be invited to experience this blending of traditions with our Ukrainian learners for #PancakeDay. There was so much love in the room ❤️ #IrelandForAll #CommunityDevelopment

An Cosán @an_cosan

The lives of women & families have been transformed through our tailored education programmes, which have enabled women gain meaningful employment.

All thanks to @RethinkIreland, @BankAmerica & @DeptRCD & @AnGrathEveann Fund!

#EmpowermentThroughEducation

An Cosán @an_cosan

Our #EarlyYears educators in #Jobstown enjoyed getting into the spirit of #WorldBookDay today!

#WorldBookDay2023 #LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation@dublcityb @KidsBooksIrel

An Cosán @an_cosan

Great article from our CEO @HeydiFoster in today's #IrishTimes! We need to ensure equal pay for the women of the not-for-profit sector, as they support people to live better lives across the country!

'Is the not-for-profit sector an invisible sector made up of invisible women?'

~ Heydi Foster, CEO, An Cosán

Heydi Foster @HeydiFoster - Mar 8, 2023

As we celebrate #WWD2023 and recognise the incredible work done by women in the not-for-profit sector, we need to ask what is stopping fair & equal pay in a sector fighting for the rights & equality of others >> irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/0...

AONTAS @aontas

1/2 The winner in the large initiative Social Inclusion category at the #STAR Awards is Workability @an_cosan, presented by sponsor @ocnni

Congratulations!

#aif23 #CreateYourWorld

An Cosán @an_cosan

Super to hear our inspirational #adultlearners share how An Cosán's caring approach to #CommunityEducation provision has transformed their lives

#OneGenerationSolution #IWD2023 #TransformingLives #LifelongLearning #EmpoweringWomen

Rethink Ireland @RethinkIreland - May 4, 2023

We're thrilled to announce the four Awardees of our €762,000 Urban Uplift Fund today - @an_cosan, @ECDUNESCO, @generationjr & @NOWGroup!

Rethink Ireland @RethinkIreland

WATCH: We speak to some of the women supported through our #AnGrathEveann Fund in p/ship with @BoFA_Business & @DeptRCD. First up, Jane, a learner with @an_cosan, shares how her experiences of returning to education have allowed her to fulfill her full potential 🌟

#MnInIt

An Cosán @an_cosan

We're grateful to Dr Duncan Shrewsbury of @BSMSMedSchool for his insight into the specific healthcare needs of #LGBTQIA people and his reminder to always use the pronoun a person chooses

#LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation #LGBTQIAkindsness #respect #Health

Pronouns

I (and several others) use masc, fem, neuter & other ways of referring to ourselves. I often speak of us in the plural. This shows respect and is used repeatedly, or if of aggression.

OPEN

- He / Him / His
- She / Her / Hers
- They / Them / Their
- Ze / Zir, and the pronouns
- Zy/Hir = respectful
- Pre/ra / S/he: Mr
- No pronouns = use

INTERNATIONAL PRONOUNS DAY

An Cosán @an_cosan

"You empower your lives!"

Congratulations our awardees, our CEO @HeydiFoster says that, while An Cosán's mission is #EmpowermentThroughEducation, each learner has the power within themselves that #Education can enable them to tap into.

#LifelongLearning #CommunityEducation

Heydi Foster @HeydiFoster - Jun 20

We're so happy to celebrate our awardees & thank our staff & learners who inspire us to continue our #AdultEducation and #CommunityDevelopment work. We're so proud to see how #LifelongLearning helps dreams come true for #AdultLearners & their families! #EmpowermentThroughEducation #LifelongLearning

AONTAS @aontas - Apr 27, 2023

1/2 "When I found something hard to understand, I would watch videos explaining it in different ways until I was confident I understood" - @JohnstonAshling @an_cosan spoke to us about her experience of the #DigitalDivide & returning to learning. Read more: bit.ly/3NnN5CS

Empowering adults and communities across Ireland

An Cosán
@an_cosan

Our **#USA** crew greatly enjoyed their recent trip to the **@tudunthousing**! Their guided tour was a perfect follow on from their recent history session with **Naal Doherty** who told them about some of Dublin's famous statues and monuments.

#LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation



#LifelongLearning

An Cosán
@an_cosan

Powerful testimonies from 4 of our **#adultlearners** sharing how our **Personal & Professional Development Cert & photovoice project with @setuill** has enabled them navigate a changing world of work & **#LifelongLearning** & given them hope for a brighter future.

#AdultEducation



An Cosán
@an_cosan

The mission of An Cosán is to empower through education. But to be clear... An Cosán does not empower you. You empower yourselves!

-- our Deputy CEO **@AnneGenockey** congratulating today's graduates

#EmpowermentThroughEducation #LifelongLearning #LearningLeadershipEnterprise




An Cosán
@an_cosan

Fantastic buzz in **Tallaigh** today as we prepare to celebrate our learners' **#AdultEducation** achievements! It's wonderful to see how **#LifelongLearning** helps dreams come true for **#adultlearners** & their families & communities.

#EmpowermentThroughEducation



An Cosán
@an_cosan

Today our CEO **@HeydiFoster** & Dep CEO **@AnneGenockey** joined **@PresidentRi** for the Garden Party in the Áras celebrating the work of organisations like An Cosán advocating for the rights of women. Thank you for having us and hearing about our work!

#OneGenerationSolution @NWCi



An Cosán
@an_cosan

It's all action at **@powerscourtgolf** today for our 25th **#GolfClassic**! Huge thanks to our 110+ supporters, title sponsor **@resproperties** & other generous sponsors & donors for supporting our work of **#EmpowermentThroughEducation**.

#LearningLeadershipEnterprise #TransformingLives



Heydi Foster @heydifoster · Sep 1, 2023

We're looking forward to welcoming our golfing supporters to our 25th **#GolfClassic** fundraiser in **@powerscourtgolf** today! It's going to be a great day!

#LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation ...

View more



An Cosán
@an_cosan

Our CEO **@HeydiFoster** & members of our **#AdultEducation** team appreciate the collaborative & innovative approach of **@hea_ri** CEO Alan Wall & **#SETU President Veronica Campbell** at today's **HEA System Performance Framework** launch.

#EmpowermentThroughEducation #LifelongLearning



HEA @hea_ri · Sep 28

"The System Performance Framework 2023-26 initiated a step-change in our engagement with higher education institutions." CEO of the HEA, Dr Alan Wall, makes opening address at the HEA System Performance Framework Launch and Performance Funding 2023 awards held at **@GolfTullow**.



An Cosán
@an_cosan

Super to hear local legend Senator Lynn Ruane reflecting on her time with An Cosán as she launches our **Learner Photovoice Exhibition**! An Cosán set her on the path of **#LifelongLearning**.



An Cosán
@an_cosan

Super testimony from **#adultlearner** **Blitt Tinkler** sharing how **#CommunityEducation** with An Cosán has transformed her life, boosting her confidence & skills for the workplace & beyond.

#LifelongLearning #EmpowermentThroughEducation #AdultEducation #LearnerVoice



An Cosán
@an_cosan


Members of our **#DigitalInclusion** team were delighted to share insights and an overview of our **#DigitalSteppingStones** tool, **#GetYourselfOnline** campaign and an exciting new learning resource to help tackle Ireland's **#DigitalDivide** at today's **@AONTAS** 'Later Life Online' event >>



An Cosán @an_cosan · Oct 11

Woohoo! Congratulations to our powerhouse CEO **@HeydiFoster** on winning the **Excellence in Charity Leadership Award** at **@GCIEvents'** **Charity Excellence Awards**! Super recognition of our work **#CreatingBrighterFutures** for women, families & communities!

#CEA2023 #ExcellenceInCharity



SCLAG and others

An Cosán @an_cosan · Oct 11

And we're off! **Excellence** is mounting at **@GCIEvents'** **Charity Excellence Awards**! We're honoured to be here with our friends across the charity sector.

Best of luck everyone!...

Our #OneGenerationSolution builds stronger women, children, families and communities



#EmpowermentThroughEducation

#LifelongLearning

#LearningLeadershipEnterprise

An Cosán Management Team



Heydi Foster, Chief Executive Officer, has extensive senior leadership experience in education, human rights, community development and delivery of social services in marginalised and vulnerable communities in Ireland, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the USA. She was previously CEO of the international development agency, Misean Cara, and of Exchange House Ireland National Travellers Service. She served for 10 years as Commissioner with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. Heydi has a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.



Anne Genockey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, has special responsibility for An Cosán's Early Years, Counselling and Family Support services. She joined An Cosán in 1993 and has been closely involved with the provision of Early Years' Education and Care ever since. Anne has an MA in Family Support Studies from NUI Galway, a Diploma in Montessori Education 0-6 years and certificates in Creche Management and Afterschool Care.



Carole Byrne, Finance Manager, is responsible for financial management and oversight of all financial policies, procedures and systems within An Cosán. Carole first joined An Cosán in 2010, having gained a wealth of knowledge of the community and not-for-profit sectors from her time in Pobal. Carole studied a Bachelor of Commerce International with French at UCD and qualified as an ACA accountant during her years at KPMG. Carole also studied Montessori teaching, which afforded her great hands-on experience of the Early Years Education and Care sector. The balance of all these experiences gives her great insight and perspective as well as the technical knowledge required in her role.



Karen Smith, Operations Manager, has many years of operational and administrative management experience gained in the higher education and professional services sectors. Karen has a BA in International Marketing and Languages from Dublin City University.



Adelaide Nic Chárthaigh, Adult Community Education Manager, heads our Adult Community Education service. She has over 25 years' management and business development experience in the not-for-profit and public education sectors. Adelaide has an MBA from Henley Management College, and qualifications in project management and public relations.

Building a bigger and better An Cosán staff team

We continued to weave our values of connectivity, compassion and courage into our culture by celebrating our achievements and building on each others' strengths, with our staff team days generating a great buzz of team-building positivity, as well as providing important steps in our strategy implementation journey.





Finance and Governance

The Board was yet again delighted to approve that An Cosán is fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code (as submitted in the Annual Report to the Charities Regulator in October 2023). Adherence to each of the core principles takes tremendous effort, determination and high standards across the entire An Cosán family: Board, Management and the An Cosán staff team.

Board of Directors



Anna Durkan, Chair of the Board of Directors, has been involved with An Cosán since secondary school when she first began fundraising for The Shanty, after being encouraged to do so by her mother Eileen, a former director and long-time supporter of An Cosán. Anna joined the Board of Directors in 2010 and was elected as Chair of the Board in 2015. Anna's professional background is in hospitality management and property sales; she currently holds a senior marketing role in an international hotel group.



Bill Roche, Secretary, has been closely involved with An Cosán since 1989. He has held various officer positions on the Board of Directors, including Chair from 2010 to 2016.

Bill is a retired accountant and has been closely involved in the running of his family furniture business for the past four decades. He brings his valuable accounting and business experience to An Cosán.



Geraldine French is an Associate Professor specialising in early childhood education. She is Head of School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education and researcher at Dublin City University. Geraldine has worked for a variety of governmental and voluntary organisations, conducting continued professional development, research, needs analysis, evaluations, and consultancy for strategic planning.



Dee Kehoe is a senior HR Professional with over 30 years' experience in Human Resource Management and Learning and Development at operational and strategic level. She holds a BA degree in English and History from University College Dublin, a post-graduate diploma in Advertising Management and an accredited diploma in Executive Coaching. Dee is the Director of CPD at Engineers Ireland and joined the Board of An Cosán in 2020.



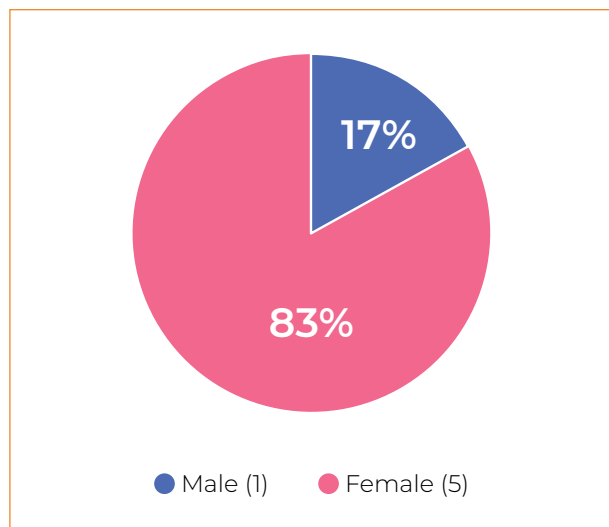
Siobhán Wall is Finance and Development Director at DCC Healthcare, part of DCC plc. Before joining DCC, Siobhán was a Director of Corporate Finance at Goodbody Stockbrokers. She has extensive experience in advising some of Ireland's largest publicly quoted and privately owned companies on raising capital, mergers and acquisitions, and strategy. Siobhán holds a Diploma in Business Studies from UCD's Michael Smurfit School of Business and a degree in Chemistry with German from Dublin City University.



Marlene McCormack is a professor in Dublin City University's School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education, where the focus of her teaching is on practice, placement and play. She has a broad range of experience and expertise in the areas of practice and policy in early childhood. Marlene has worked extensively as an educator, supervisor, manager and Director in both the community and private sectors. Her current research interests lie in pedagogical documentation, professional practice (placement) and engaged research with early childhood settings.

Board Member	Role	Appointed / Resigned
Anna Durkan	Chair	Continuing
Mairead Butler	Company Secretary / Chair of Finance & Risk Committee / Director	Resigned 8-6-2023
William Roche	Company Secretary / Chair of Finance & Risk Committee / Director	Continuing (Appointed as Company Secretary and Chair of Finance & Risk Committee 8-6-2023)
Geraldine French	Director / Chair of Early Years Working Group	Re-Appointed
Deirdre Kehoe	Director	Continuing
Siobhán Wall	Director	Re-Appointed
Marlene McCormack	Director	Appointed 17 Feb 2023

Gender Representation at year end



Attendance at Board Meetings in 2023

Number of Directors	% Attendance at Board Meetings 2023
2	100%
2	86%
1	75%
1	43%
1 (Maternity Leave)	0%
7 Directors	

Finance & Risk Committee

Member	Role	Appointed / Resigned
Mairead Butler	Chair of FRC	Resigned 8-6-2023
Bill Roche	Chair of FRC	Appointed 8-6-2023
Siobhán Wall	Director	Continuing

Early Years Working Group

Member	Role	Appointed / Resigned
Ger French	Chair of EYWG	Continuing
Marlene McCormack	Director	Appointed 17-02-2023

Members

Eileen Durkan
Dara Hogan
Brenda O'Malley Farrell
Katherine Zappone

Company Registration Number: 131383
Charity (CHY) Number: 8659
Charity Regulator Number: 20021528

Registered Office

The Shanty Educational Project CLG,
An Cosán, Kiltalown Village Centre,
Jobstown, Tallaght, D24 R3PN.

Auditors

Forvis Mazars, Audit & Assurance, Block 3, Harcourt Centre, Harcourt Road, Dublin 2.

Solicitors

A&L Goodbody, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1.

Principal Bank

Allied Irish Bank, Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Other Bank

Bank of Ireland, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Funding

Thank you to our funders and supporters!

Without you, we would not be able to build stronger women, children, families and communities across Ireland

 **accenture**

CDET B
An Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Cheathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
City of Dublin Education and Training Board

CDI Childhood Development Initiative

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Community Foundation Ireland



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

ddletb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna - Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Átha Cliath agus Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board


Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

DUBLIN NORTHWEST PARTNERSHIP
Empowerment | Inclusion | Collective Action | Accountability

 **Dublin Bus**


Erasmus+



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

indeed

IRISH ONLINE GIVING FOUNDATION

 **Kelland Homes**

 **pobal**
government supporting communities

RETHINK IRELAND Our Social Innovation Fund


Comhairle Contae Átha Cliath Theas
South Dublin County Council

 **SE TU**
Oifiscol Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt
South East Technological University

SOLAS learning works

south dublin county **CHILDCARE** committee

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Support in kind

We are hugely grateful to all the companies and individuals who generously donated equipment, time, expertise and services to An Cosán in 2023. Please see a selection below.

Early Years:

Our early years' services received very valuable support-in-kind donations during 2023. An example of such was donations of books, which were given to the children at Christmas time. This offers rich literacy experiences for the children and encourages reading at home, which is an important aspect of our early years' education programme.



Adult Education:

Our adult learners have benefitted enormously from the expertise and advice given by many of An Cosán's supporters who contributed by delivering sessions and workshops, and by giving advice on many modules of our Business Administration with Digital Skills programme.

A large number of high quality monitors were donated during the year, which were key to enabling disadvantaged students to access learning and engage in digital inclusion.



A number of individuals gave their time freely to An Cosán to speak about topics such as Health, Menopause, Women in Politics and Women's Tales in a Digital Age. We thank them sincerely for their time and insights. Their generosity is crucial to achieving our goal of facilitating empowerment and addressing specific issues for women from a wide range of backgrounds.

Dentons provided pro bono advice to An Cosán during the year. Their expertise was of enormous benefit to the organisation.

Donation of prizes for our fundraising events:

We are most grateful to all who generously donated prizes for raffles, ensuring surpluses were optimised at each fundraising event, including:



Fundraising Highlights

We were immensely grateful to everyone who supported our fundraising events in 2023 by buying tickets, through sponsorship, or by donating an item for raffle. Our International Women's Day Lunch and Golf Classic are always invaluable ways of raising unrestricted funding and we were thrilled that €40,000 was raised in this way in 2023.

Almost 300 supporters joined us for our International Women's Day celebration in the Intercontinental Dublin on 10th March. As always, this was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion with the adult learners stealing the show as they took to

the stage with Miriam O'Callaghan to share their powerful stories of transformation through adult community education. A total of €19,000 was raised on this occasion.

Our 25th Golf Classic, which was held in Powerscourt Golf Club on 1st September, once again proved a hit with our golfing supporters. A total of 120 golfers took part, enjoying a relaxing day of golf, conversation and barbeque on the golf course followed by dinner and prize-giving in the clubhouse. €21,000 was raised to support our work with women, children, families and communities across Ireland. Adult learner Tamara Kearns' speech was well received by everyone present.



International Women's Day



Golf Classic



Statement of Financial Activities

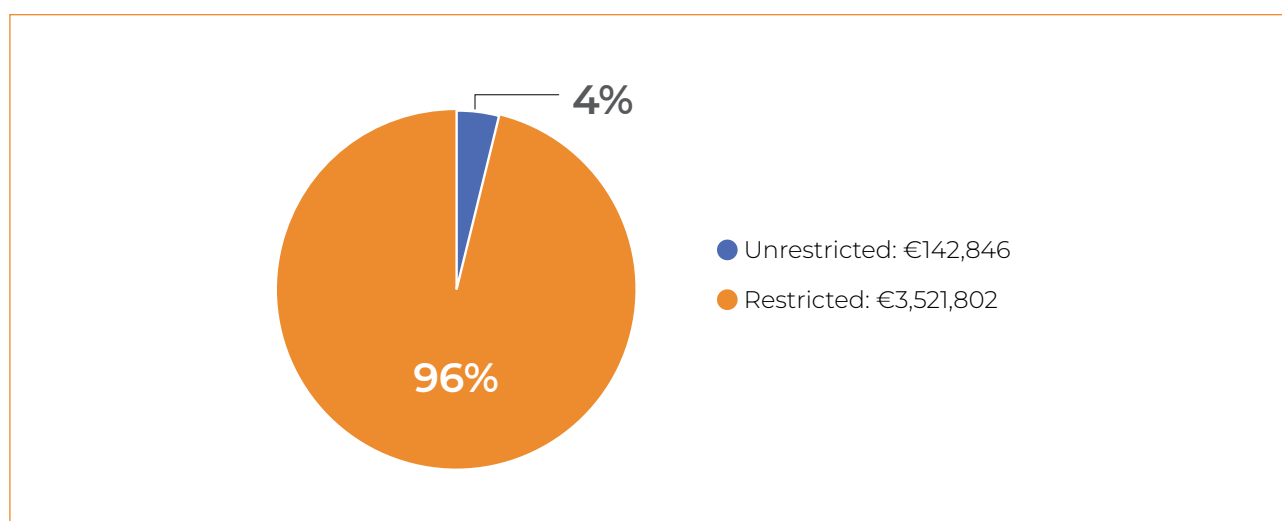
(incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total 2023 €	Total 2022 €
INCOME FROM:				
Donations and Legacies	142,846	285,110	427,956	565,779
Charitable Activities	-	2,925,670	2,925,670	3,036,424
Other Trading Activities	-	311,022	311,022	374,263
Total Income	142,846	3,521,802	3,664,648	3,976,466
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Charitable Activities	45,911	3,620,283	3,666,194	3,782,011
Raising Funds	43,352	-	43,352	80,911
Total expenditure	89,263	3,620,283	3,709,546	3,862,922
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	53,583	(98,481)	(44,898)	113,544
Net movement in funds	53,583	(98,481)	(44,898)	113,544
Total funds brought forward	309,962	1,326,719	1,636,681	1,523,137
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	363,545	1,228,238	1,591,783	1,636,681

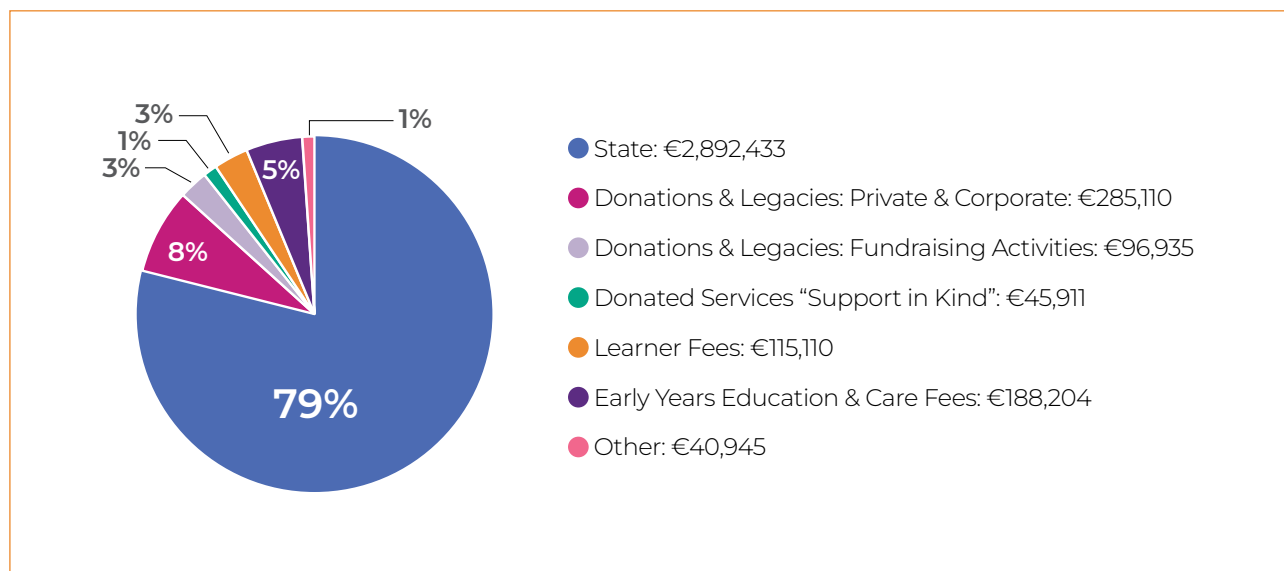
All income and expenditure arises from continuing operations. There are no recognised gains or losses other than the income and expenditure for the above two financial years.

Total Income 2023 Unrestricted / Restricted Funding €3,664,648



Total Income 2023

€3,664,648



Financial Review and Reserves

In 2023, An Cosán maintained core funding, in line with prior year amounts, from our key funders SOLAS and Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education & Training Board (DDLETB). This funding has allowed An Cosán to plan and budget with a reasonable level of comfort and to continue to provide our quality Adult Community Education services to the communities we serve.

We hugely welcomed the increases that were afforded to us by Tusla in 2023. The 4% increase that had been originally awarded in 2022 as a once-off increment was included on an ongoing basis within the provision of An Cosán's service level agreement. Then in late 2023, we also received notification from Tusla that, following the recent agreement at the Work Relations Commission between the representatives of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), Department of Health and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions regarding pay increases for workers in Section 56 organisations, An Cosán would be entitled to the related increase in funding amounting cumulatively to 8%. This funding represented great recognition of the quality and dedication that relevant An Cosán employees provide and made a gesture towards improving the pay and conditions of employees in the Early Years' services. It is hoped

that other Government departments and agencies will follow suit so that equity of pay can apply to all of An Cosán's employees irrespective of which government department funds the various roles within the organisation.

Another great step in a similar vein was made by the Department of Social Protection under the Community Services Programme. An increase of 21% was awarded to An Cosán's 2023 funding, which proved invaluable in contributing towards some of the core salary costs within our Adult Community Education programme. This funding stream also brings great comfort to us with regard to our long-term financial planning as it remains An Cosán's only State multi-annual funding stream (2023-2027). We hope this is to be the first of many Government departments to fund the not-for-profit sector in such a planned and consistent manner.

A number of new alliances were formed during 2023, the first of which was a corporate partnership in which the Macquarie Group Foundation partnered with us to fund our WorkAbility programme. This course will operate from three hubs across Ireland over a three-year period (2024 – 2026). It is fantastic to be delivering programmes with a direct national reach while meeting the needs of our learners in reaching those furthest

behind first. At the same time, we are diversifying our funding from new and alternate sources and receiving multi-annual funding. This helps to provide reassurance and visibility on future funding and to enhance An Cosán's financial and organisational capacity.

Our second new relationship was formed with Euronext Dublin, Ireland's stock exchange, when they became a charity partner of An Cosán in late 2023. The partnership offers An Cosán knowledge transfer opportunities through mentorship and internship programmes, engagement with Euronext employees to leverage its extensive business network and experience in corporate governance, and financial support through attendance at fundraising events and volunteer staff opportunities.

As always, we owe a great deal of gratitude to the long-term supporters of An Cosán who support in both financial and non-financial ways to make our fundraising events a financial success. In 2023 we were delighted that the success of our International Women's Day Lunch and our Golf Classic, along with private donations, achieved an unrestricted surplus of €53.5k.

We are also extremely grateful for the support in kind that we have received throughout 2023 from friends, individuals, corporate and philanthropic funders that amounted to circa €46k.

In 2023 our Reserves Policy stated that a target of three months' worth of operational expenses be held in unrestricted reserves (€940k). However, as this target was understood to be no longer an accurate reflection of our risks, the Board requested that a complete review of our current Reserves Policy be undertaken. The Finance & Risk Committee oversaw this comprehensive review in 2024.

Detailed calculations and permutations were prepared in order to ascertain the risk levels of the organisation and to re-set adequate reserves targets to cover these risks. The FRC produced a proposal to the Board recommending that two months' worth

of operational expenditure was the appropriate level of unrestricted reserves for the organisation to hold (€629k). This proposal was approved by the Board at the Board meeting in May 2024.

As An Cosán is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, the approach to achieving this target is to be gradual and sustainable, while ensuring the delivery of our quality services. At year-end 2023, our unrestricted reserves were €363.5k which suggested a shortfall against target of €576.5k. However, subsequent to our updated Reserves Policy in 2024, the shortfall versus target is €265.5k. It is anticipated that this target will be achieved within the next four years based on the average anticipated annual unrestricted surpluses.

1. Total reserves at the end of the financial year are €1,591,783 (2022: €1,636,681)
 - a. €1,228,238 (2022: €1,326,719) is restricted
 - b. €363,545 (2022: €309,962) is unrestricted
2. The overall deficit of €45k for 2023 reflects increased costs and a shortfall in fundraising against projections.
3. The Board has agreed to establish a Development Committee in 2024 with a view to further growing fundraising.
4. The key target is to grow unrestricted reserves from €363.5k to €629k to be in line with the Board's updated Reserves Policy, which was reviewed and revised in Q2 2024.

The current modest unrestricted reserves position gives the Board and management reasonable comfort and ability to plan longer term. It affords the organisation the capacity to withstand the risks associated with potential future income shocks and a growing cost base. It also allows us financial security while we continue to seek additional core funding across a range of government departments and agencies and while we strive to diversify our funding streams from as many sources as possible to ensure that financial sustainability is achieved, and that essential service delivery remains our priority well into the future.

Balance Sheet

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	805,189	866,506
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors and prepayments	448,313	385,785
Cash and cash equivalents	652,670	1,000,055
	1,100,983	1,385,840
CREDITORS (amounts falling due within one year)		
Other creditors	(276,744)	(570,380)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	824,239	815,460
CREDITORS (amounts falling due after more than one year)	(37,645)	(45,285)
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1,591,783	1,636,681
INCOME FUNDS		
Restricted Funds	1,228,238	1,326,719
Unrestricted funds	363,545	309,962
TOTAL FUNDS	1,591,783	1,636,681

Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
NET CASH (USED IN) / GENERATED FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	(340,303)	14,093
NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(7,083)	(8,877)
CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD	(347,386)	5,216
RECONCILIATION OF NET CASHFLOW TO MOVEMENT IN NET FUNDS		
CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD	(347,386)	5,216
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REPORTING PERIOD	1,000,055	994,839
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF REPORTING PERIOD	652,669	1,000,055

Directors' Report

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

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

a) Constitution

The Shanty Educational Project Company Limited by Guarantee was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 28 April 1988. The Shanty Educational Project Company Limited by Guarantee is a registered charity (CHY8659). The company currently operates under the registered business name An Cosán. The company is established for charitable purposes only and is governed by its Constitution.

b) Structure

The company currently has four members (Eileen Durkan, Dara Hogan, Brenda O'Malley Farrell, and Katherine Zappone), each of whom agrees to contribute €1.27 in the event of the company winding up.

c) Governance

The Board of Directors

Board Member	Role	Appointed / Resigned	Member of Finance & Risk Committee	Member of Early Years Working Group
Anna Durkan	Chair	Continuing		
Mairead Butler	Company Secretary / Chair of Finance & Risk Committee / Director	Resigned 8-6-2023	✓	
William Roche	Company Secretary / Chair of Finance & Risk Committee / Director	Continuing	✓	
Geraldine French	Director / Chair of Early Years Working Group	Re-Appointed		✓
Deirdre Kehoe	Director	Continuing		
Siobhán Wall	Director	Re-Appointed	✓	
Marlene McCormack	Director	Appointed 17 Feb 2023		✓

The Board of Directors is currently comprised of six Directors. One new Board Member was appointed in February 2023. At the AGM on 8th June 2023, three Board Members continued on the Board, two Board Members were re-appointed and one Board Member resigned. Membership and changes to membership were in line with the provisions of the constitution.

Going forward, three new Directors will be appointed to the Board on 13th June 2024 and one Director will resign at the AGM on 13th June 2024. Subsequent to that date, there will be eight Directors on the Board.

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

c) Governance (continued)

The Board identifies prospective new Directors having regard to the overall competencies required by the An Cosán Board and those represented amongst continuing Board members (following an annual self-assessment skills review). A process of engagement with prospective Board members is undertaken to familiarise them with An Cosán, its Board and senior management and to assess “fit” with our organisation prior to proceeding with their ratification. An Cosán will only appoint directors who will uphold the organisation’s core mission and values.

An Induction Process for new directors is tailored to include both informal and formal elements. The informal stages can include attendance at An Cosán events or fundraisers to become more familiar with the organisation. The formal induction takes place at An Cosán. The Chair introduces the new Directors to our governance processes and organisational structure, and the Directors Handbook is provided to each new Director. The new Directors receive a tour of the organisation, and the CEO shares insights on the history, vision, mission, culture and ethos of An Cosán. The CEO also introduces the strategic plan and current opportunities and challenges facing the organisation. The senior management team members provide an overview of each operational area to the new Directors. Governance training is provided to Directors on an ongoing basis.

There were seven board meetings in the year. The AGM was held on 8th June 2023.

Number of Directors	% Attendance at Board Meetings 2023
2	100%
2	86%
1	75%
1	43%
1 (Maternity Leave)	0%
<u>7</u>	

Sub-Committees of the Board

The Board has delegated some of its specific functions to standing committees which undertake detailed oversight in accordance with agreed Terms of Reference approved by the Board.

There were two sub-committees of the Board in operation in 2023: the Finance & Risk Committee and the Early Years Working Group.

The newly established Community Education Advisory Group carried out its inaugural meeting in early 2024.

It is proposed by the Board that a further sub-committee, a Development Committee, will be set-up in 2024.

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

c) Governance (continued)

The Chair of each sub-committee updates the Board about the committee's activities. The minutes of each sub-committee are noted by the Board and the Chair of each sub-committee reports to the Board on the committee's activities on a regular basis, as per the Terms of Reference of each sub-committee.

Finance & Risk Committee

Mission

The Finance and Risk Committee ("FRC") oversees, supports and guides the financial structures and sustainability of An Cosán, helping to ensure that risks are identified, considered and managed.

Objectives of the Finance & Risk Committee:

- Guide the financial sustainability of the organisation.
- Ensure appropriate financial policies and procedures are developed and implemented.
- Ensure all accounting records are maintained in a proper fashion.
- Ensure company secretarial activity and external audits are conducted appropriately.
- Meet with the external auditors as and when required.
- Ensure compliance with the Charities Regulator and other statutory requirements.

Membership & Meetings

The committee comprised of two Board Directors (with expertise in finance, accounting and governance), the CEO, Deputy CEO and Finance Manager.

The Finance & Risk Committee conducted five meetings in 2023.

Early Years Working Group

Mission

The Early Years Working Group will support, guide, promote and advocate for the work of An Cosán in reaching and, where possible, exceeding An Cosán's quality standards (to be defined) in early years education and care.

Objectives of the Early Years Education Working Group

- To review the early years quality control systems in place and how each service is performing against the quality standards.
- To understand how each operation/setting contributes appropriately to the successful implementation of the current Strategic Plan.
- To bring new insights from emerging research to the attention of the working group and the wider organisation to enable An Cosán keep abreast of emerging issues relevant to early years.
- To link into external agencies on behalf of An Cosán as ambassadors of the organisation were assigned by the Early Years Education Working Group members.
- To link into government and their agencies with a view to influencing early years education policy development.
- To identify the best ways and means of measuring outcomes in early years services.

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

c) Governance (continued)

Membership & Meetings

The committee comprised of two Board Directors (both experts in the Early Years Education & Care field), Deputy CEO, Early Years Manager (rotated between managers) and the CEO also attends on occasion.

The Early Years Working Group conducted four meetings in 2023.

Community Education Advisory Group

Mission

The Community Education Advisory Group is a sub-committee of the Board established to make recommendations to the Board of An Cosán on all matters regarding adult community education.

Objectives of the Community Education Advisory Group:

- Gaining an in-depth understanding of how Adult Community Education programmes are resourced, developed, and implemented to meet the needs of our adult learners.
- Learning from the CEO, ACE Manager and Programme Leads how programmes are documented, evaluated and how their outcomes are measured effectively.
- Monitoring and making recommendations on all training, assessment and education related activities to support quality learning and education.
- Providing advice to the Board in relation to adult community education strategy and policies, including the ACE Review and relevant parts of the An Cosán Strategic Plan 2022-2026.
- Supporting the dissemination of education, learning and training resources, standards and practices in line with National, European and international policy and within agreed training frameworks or guidelines.

Membership & Meetings

In accordance with the Group's terms of reference the Committee is chaired by a Director of the Board, includes at least two external experts in the provision of Adult Community Education, a learner and tutor representative. Membership does not exceed seven members.

The group meets a minimum of three times per annum.

Schedule of matters reserved for the Board

1. Approval of the strategic plan, business plan, budget.
2. Approval of and signing the Directors' Report and Financial Statements
3. Decision on legal matters which have, or are likely to be, the basis of an action against An Cosán.
4. HR claims which involve the CEO; HR cases stipulated in the personnel policies as requiring attention of the Board.
5. Recruitment and selection of the CEO, terms and conditions and performance reviews.
6. Considering developments or actions that may have significant impact on the organisation's strategy, finances, reputation, and capacity to fulfil its mission.
7. Considering significant matters that may impact staff and client wellbeing.
8. The setting of pay and remuneration for the senior management team (to establish an appropriate range of pay for the level of responsibility) is reviewed and approved by the Board. Overall organisational salary increases are also reviewed and approved by the Board. This review takes place as a result of sectoral salary benchmarking exercises.
9. Two Directors must approve new credit card applications.
10. Payroll is authorised by a specified Director.

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

d) Governance Code

The Board was delighted to approve that An Cosán is fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code (as submitted in Annual Report to the Charities Regulator in October 2023). Adherence to each of the core principles takes tremendous effort, determination and high standards across the entire An Cosán family: Board, Management and the An Cosán team. Engagement in this process is continuous throughout the year and an Annual Review of An Cosán's compliance is undertaken by the Board.

e) Management

The Board has appointed the CEO and has delegated operational decision-making powers to the CEO and Senior Management Team. The CEO provides a Management Report to the Board of Directors at every Board meeting. This report sets out progress on achievement of the strategic goals for the year. Organisational re-design at senior management level continued throughout 2023 to ensure that all organisational skills gaps were identified and that steps were taken to address them.

2. OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMPANY

OUR VISION

A world where people can access education to achieve their full potential.

OUR MISSION

To empower women and children left furthest behind through learning, leadership and enterprise.

OUR VALUES

Connected:

Meeting the needs of our community in an inclusive way

Compassionate:

Being kind, supportive and loving

Courageous:

Being ambitious and resilient

The main objects for which the company is established are:

- To provide for the relief of poverty, deprivation and disadvantage in disadvantaged areas through the provision of education, training, employment, enterprise and childcare.
- To empower local people through education and enable them to fully participate with local authorities and state agencies in the delivery of Government Policies.
- To promote sustainable local development by the development of the leadership, strategic and entrepreneurial capacities of local people.
- To provide education, training, enterprise and childcare by establishing, building, maintaining and conducting a centre or centres, real or virtual, or such facilities as may be thought desirable.

OUR ACTIVITIES

The principal activities of An Cosán include the provision of Adult Community Education at access, further and higher levels and the wraparound services to support our adult learners in a holistic way on their educational journey. These wraparound supports include hospitality, counselling, mentoring, learner and academic support, digital inclusion assistance and financial support through our bursaries and laptop loan scheme. Our other principal activities include the provision of quality Early Years Education and Care in our seven early years centres across Dublin in Tallaght, Whitehall and Cabra. We provide pre-school and afterschool services and use the “HighScope” curriculum to build independence, resilience and confidence in the children from a young age. Our third principal activity is our Counselling and Family Support services which ensure that the holistic needs of our adult learners and parents are met, and that they are supported at all stages of their learner and parental journeys with An Cosán.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

This year, An Cosán was delighted to receive tremendous external recognition in the areas of our Adult Community Education Programmes and our Leadership. In respect of our WorkAbility programme, An Cosán won the Social Inclusion category (large organisations) at the 2023 AONTAS Star Awards. Our CEO, Heydi Foster, received the Excellence in Charity Leadership Award from the Charities Institute Ireland, a reflection on the collective leadership, which is at the heart of the success of An Cosán.

The process of organisational renewal and re-design continued as roles were re-designed to focus on An Cosán’s key Strategic Goals. In a similar vein, developments with our new Customer Relationship Management System progressed and this new system has been piloted in 2024 and is being rolled out to reach wider service user groups. This system will improve overall efficiency within the organisation, optimise organisational capacity and ensure that we reach our key target groups and stakeholders. It will also greatly improve data management processes so that impact on people’s lives can be measured. This statistical data will in turn help to influence public policy and to ensure that our learner voices are heard.

Learners on our Level 6 Personal and Professional Development Certificate programme were invited to participate in a photovoice research project to explore the role that adult community education had had in their lives. This led to The Whirlwind and The Path exhibition where learners from communities across Ireland showcased photos and narratives they had produced capturing their unique experiences of lifelong learning pathways.

As always, An Cosán ensured services were delivered to the highest standard during 2023. Services include early years education and care, counselling & family support, and adult education at access, further and higher levels.

Measurement of Key Performance:

- 1,476 learner places: Access Education 531; Further Education 496; Higher Education 449.
- 26 Higher Education learners completed BA degree programmes in 2023 and graduated at South East Technological University’s Lifelong Learning Conferring Ceremony in January 2024.
- We had a total of 248 community partners by year end.
- 180 pre-school children received daily high-quality education and care across our 7 Early Years Education and Care Centres in Tallaght West, and Cabra & Whitehall on Dublin’s northside. Services include early years (ECCE) using the interactive HighScope curriculum; and supports to parents to inform and involve them as much as possible in their children’s education. The Jobstown service also works closely with Tusla to include children and families with particular needs who are referred to us.
- 26 children up to the age of 12 participated in our daily after-school programme in our Jobstown centre. We also ran a summer camp for them throughout July.
- 42 families supported through the Lifestart programme. This is an outreach parenting programme operating in Tallaght specifically targeting parents and carers of children from 0 to 3 years. Children

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

are visited monthly in their homes to support their educational and developmental needs. For those with the greatest needs, visits are more frequent. 377 family support visits took place throughout the year.

- 1,244 counselling sessions were provided to learners and members of the local community. The team of counsellors included counselling for teenage clients, and also clients affected by violence or abuse such as coercive control, including the provision of group therapy sessions for women.
- 3,000+ people visited An Cosán's Digital Stepping Stones (DSS) online assessment tool where users can measure their IT skills and confidence levels, before making a plan to upgrade their skills.
- 194 people enrolled on our new Get Yourself Online platform we launched to help adults boost their digital skills and confidence. 271 modules were enrolled and commenced.
- The Digital Inclusion Team provided training, support and guidance to community partners and Digital Champions to embed our digital literacy resources into their practice. By the end of 2023, 76 Digital Champions had signed up 65 laptops lent to adult learners
- As part of the Academic Primary Care Collaborative Tallaght, we continued to host the popular Innovating Community Health series of talks in partnership with Trinity College Dublin. These proved ever popular with our community and covered topics as follows; Exercise and Healthy Ageing, Inequalities and Inclusion in Healthcare; Understanding and Meeting the Needs of LGBT+ Communities, Menopause – What Can We Do To Optimise Our Health? And Addiction Recovery – Building Recovery Capital

Other key long-term achievements included:

- The process of strategic renewal of our new 5-year strategic plan for 2022-2026 led to the production of the strategic plan document which is now in place. Operational annual Implementation Plans are now in place for every team. A full staff session was held in February 2023 focussed on the progress to date on our strategic goals and our priorities for 2023.
- In line with our Strategic Plan to grow Core funding, we have been delighted to receive an increase in funding over the last two consecutive years (2023 and 2024) in respect of our Community Services Programme from the Department of Rural and Community Development (which equates to a 35% increase overall). We also are proud to have attained this multi-annual funding, 2023 to 2027, and will spotlight this model of funding as best practice in future advocacy efforts.
- We have also welcomed increases from Tusla over the past number of years. In 2023, Tusla awarded a 4% increase in core funding which is now to be incorporated within the service level agreement on an ongoing basis. This increment supported the organisation in attaining financial stability.
- Then in late 2023, An Cosán received an 8% increase in line with the recent Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) agreement between the representatives of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Department of Health and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions regarding pay increases for workers in Section 56 funded organisations.
- We continue to advocate with other public funders for increases in our financial allocations to address cost increases, including increases in cost of living for staff funded from those sources.
- As clear recognition of the power of Community Education to create transformative Higher Education pathways for social inclusion and sustainable development, the linked provision between South East Technological University (SETU) and An Cosán was awarded €1 million in the Higher Education Authority Performance Funding in October 2023.
- Based upon our successful collaboration, An Cosán and SETU now share an evidence-based model that demonstrates how learners experiencing diverse inequalities can be supported and motivated to access, participate, and succeed in third-level education in line with the objectives of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. The model also exemplifies the important role that Community Education can play in the provision of an accessible, unified tertiary system.
- An Cosán formed a new corporate partnership with the Macquarie Group Foundation with a three-year time horizon (2024 – 2026) where they will fund our Workability programme which will operate from three hubs across Ireland.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Specific measures to support beneficiaries:

- An Cosán's wraparound services in 2023 provided effective supports to learners. The most important is our culture of hospitality which reflects our ethos and vision. An Cosán meetings and classes begin with an 'opening circle' to allow a mindful pause and bring participants together. Tea and scones are provided to ensure our learners, parents, clients and families feel welcome and nourished. We continued to provide the following specific measures:
- Free Early Years Education and Care which ensured parents enrolled in courses could attend classes in person or online.
- Learner Support: Learners who encounter unexpected difficulties (e.g. finances, fees, registration) can directly access support from our Adult Learning Support Co-ordinator as An Cosán provides a role dedicated solely to learner support.
- Financial Support: this includes bursaries, phased payment options, and assistance to apply for other funding supports for which people may be eligible.
- Counselling: Any learner who wishes is offered subsidised counselling. Adults returning to learning often find they face, and want to talk through, old fears and challenges that resurface.
- Tutor Mentoring and IT Support: Tutors provide a one-to-one service to learners, especially those who need additional help with their coursework and assignments. There is online IT support during classes; this is from an IT moderator available to assist learners. We provide resources for online learning, including both software and hardware solutions.
- The Flipped Classroom: This technique is based on group activities inside the classroom where the focus is on student interaction and learning, and not the tutor lecturing. Tutors are trained to facilitate learner participation and achievement of learning outcomes; they assist proactively in different ways tailored to learners.
- Laptop Loan Scheme including access to WiFi. We continued to lend laptops to learners eligible for the scheme.

Advocacy & impact

An Cosán's advocacy work is committed to having an impact in the longer term. This is mainly through the transformative potential of education, particularly in breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty and promoting social inclusion. These highlights show how we are a leading education voice for those left furthest behind and the need to enhance the education system in Ireland:

- The CEO wrote an op-ed about the gender pay gap in the not-for-profit sector, which was published in The Irish Times on International Women's Day (8th March).
- The CEO and Digital Skills Tutor spoke at An Cosán's International Women's Day celebration on 10th March advocating for greater education for women in line with our One Generation Solution to poverty - "Educate a woman and she will lift not only herself out of poverty, but her children too." Two of our learner ambassadors shared how engaging in adult community education programmes with An Cosán had positively impacted their lives, and the lives of their families.
- The CEO spoke at our Golf Classic fundraiser advocating for greater support for adult community education, and about how An Cosán will continue to be a model for how to work in an inclusive way with communities that have faced being excluded and marginalised for too long. One of our learner ambassadors shared how her experience of adult community education with An Cosán had turned around her life, going from near homelessness to an ongoing thirst for learning, and how her education had opened up new opportunities for her.
- The Higher Education Lead presented the research findings of An Cosán's transformative work in community-based Higher Education pathways to the International Council for Open and Distance Education' Lifelong Learning Conference in Lillehammer. He also spoke at South East Technological University (SETU)'s biennial seminar.
- Our Higher Education Pathway for Non-traditional Learners Project with SETU enhanced the standing and visibility of our community-based Access, Further and Higher Education programmes and of our

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

wraparound service provision among relevant stakeholders in the community education sector. The research report will be published and disseminated in 2024. Some of our Higher Education learners participated in an innovative photovoice project in which they took photographs and wrote narratives demonstrating the impact community education had had on their lives. The resultant *The Whirlwind and The Path* exhibition ran in our Jobstown centre in July and for six weeks in the autumn in Tallaght Library. We received positive feedback from visitors to the exhibition, including from local public representatives.

- We welcomed a number of visitors to our Jobstown centre and shared with them the holistic approach An Cosán takes to community education. Visitors included Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland, and South Africa Ambassador to Ireland, Yolisa Maya.
- Our increased reach in national and local media ensured our One Generation Solution message reached a wider audience than ever before. Coverage included an interview with the Digital Skills Tutor on the [AONTAS website](#), a two-page feature in Changing Ireland magazine about our holistic approach to education, as well as items on [www.independent.ie](#), [www.businessandfinance.com](#), and the Women Mean Business website. The Higher Education Lead and two learner ambassadors were interviewed by Near FM about the transformative impact of community education.
- One of our learners had an article published in The Echo about her experience of transformative education with An Cosán. She wrote: “An Cosán is all about people with respect, equality and empowerment at its very core, building confidence and enabling people through education to find their own particular path.”
- We continued to share our key messaging on social media where we reached a greater number than ever before. By the end of 2023 our following on LinkedIn and Instagram had each grown by 24% while our Facebook reach had increased by 23%.

In conclusion, whilst still firmly rooted in our feminist principles and in the Tallaght West community, we are reaching an ever-widening audience through our increased profile in traditional and online media, and through our growing network of community partners. An Cosán is proud that, since it was established in 1986, over 21,000 people have benefited from our activities.

4. FINANCIAL REVIEW

In 2023, An Cosán maintained core funding, in line with prior year amounts, from our key funders Solas and Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education & Training Board (DDLETB). This funding has allowed An Cosán to plan and budget with a reasonable level of comfort and to continue to provide our quality Adult Community Education services to the communities we serve.

We hugely welcomed the increases that were afforded to us by Tusla in 2023. The 4% increase that had been originally awarded in 2022 as a once off increment was included on an ongoing basis within the provision of An Cosán’s service level agreement. Then in late 2023, we also received notification from Tusla that following the recent agreement at the Work Relations Commission between the representatives of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), Department of Health and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions regarding pay increases for workers in Section 56 organisations that An Cosán would be entitled to the related increase in funding amounting cumulatively to 8%. This funding represented great recognition of the quality and dedication that relevant An Cosán employees provide and made a gesture towards improving the pay and conditions of employees in the Early Years services. It is hoped that other Government departments and agencies will follow suit so that equity of pay can apply to all of An Cosán’s employees irrespective of which government department funds the various roles within the organisation.

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4. FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

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In 2023, our Reserves Policy stated that a target of three months' worth of operational expenses be held in unrestricted reserves (€940k). However, as this target was understood to be no longer an accurate reflection of our risks, the Board requested that a complete review of our current Reserves Policy be undertaken. The Finance & Risk Committee oversaw this comprehensive review in 2024.

Detailed calculations and permutations were prepared in order to ascertain the risk levels of the organisation and to re-set adequate reserves targets to cover these risks. The FRC produced a proposal to the Board recommending that two months' worth of operational expenditure was the appropriate level of unrestricted reserves for the organisation to hold (€629k). This proposal was approved by the Board at the Board meeting in May 2024.

As An Cosán is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, the approach to achieving this target is to be gradual and sustainable, while ensuring the delivery of our quality services. At year-end 2023, our unrestricted reserves were €363.5k which suggested a shortfall against target of €576.5k. However, subsequent to our updated Reserves Policy in 2024, the shortfall versus target is €265.5k. It is anticipated that this target will be achieved within the next four years based on the average anticipated annual unrestricted surpluses.

1. Total reserves at the end of the financial year are €1,591,783 (2022: €1,636,681)
 - a. €1,228,238 (2022: €1,326,719) is restricted
 - b. €363,545 (2022: €309,962) is unrestricted
2. The overall deficit of €45k for 2023 reflects increased costs and a shortfall in fundraising against projections.
3. The Board has agreed to establish a Development Committee in 2024 with a view to further growing fundraising.
4. The key target is to grow unrestricted reserves from €363.5k to €629k to be in line with the Board's updated Reserves Policy which was reviewed and revised in Q2 2024.

4. FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

The current modest unrestricted reserves position gives the Board and management reasonable comfort and ability to plan longer term. It affords the organisation the capacity to withstand the risks associated with potential future income shocks and a growing cost base. It also allows us financial security while we continue to seek additional core funding across a range of government departments and agencies and while we strive to diversify our funding streams from as many sources as possible to ensure that financial sustainability is achieved, and that essential service delivery remains our priority well into the future.

5. PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Our strategic plan for 2022-2026 undertakes to prioritise the most disadvantaged by reaching out to “the furthest behind first”. Also, that the voice of learners as ambassadors must come across, as they can express their experience and the An Cosán vision. Our future direction will continue to provide a pathway to learning, leadership and enterprise for those who are most marginalised in our society. While we welcome all, An Cosán is a feminist organisation, and our focus is primarily on women and children as we believe this is the most effective way to end intergenerational poverty. #OneGenerationSolution

Goal 1: Strengthen Our Core Services

A. Early Years Education and Care:

- Expand our services, including providing an initiative for mothers of new babies who may require additional support.
- Further develop and monitor our early years environments to ensure they are offering rich literacy and numeracy experiences for all children.
- Develop our research, training and continued professional development activities to enable us to attract, employ and retain skilled, reflective Early Years professionals.

B. Counselling and Family Support:

- Continue to develop and embed a robust family therapy model for all families attending all of our services.
- Research and develop shared psychological, speech and language plus occupational therapy services for all children.
- Sustain and expand our Lifestart Child Development Programme.

C. Adult Community Education:

- Be recognised as the most effective community education provider in the country that empowers women: and enabling this in various ways, including by building confidence, having pathways for progress and brokering new career opportunities for learners.
- Be Ireland’s leading universal, inclusive, accessible technology adult community education provider by actively embracing new approaches and technological developments; regularly refining our teaching and learning approach and practice.
- Be part of the community; be learner led; have equality between the learner and tutor; include critical reflection; foster empowerment; advance social justice; contribute to civic society; develop skills; support progression; be committed to the development of inclusive learning environments where all learners can be supported to achieve their full potential.
- Grow and develop our Adult Community Education programmes based on evidence of needs and ensuring a high standard of inclusive teaching; undertaking research and sharing our innovative work in creating and delivering new progressive pathways for non-traditional learners; designing,

5. PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS (continued)

- delivering and assessing our work according to the highest quality assurance standards and by using continuous improvement process and innovation.

Goal 2: Promote Inclusivity

A. Exemplify how to work with marginalised communities inclusively:

- Increase participation and evaluate our work with the furthest behind communities in Ireland.
- Engage with women and children in marginalised communities, identifying needs and enabling access to our services.
- Continue to be a leading feminist and anti-racist organisation, facilitating empowerment and addressing specific issues relating to the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. sexual health) whilst working with women from a range of backgrounds (e.g. lone parents, women of colour, Traveller and Roma, LGBTQIA2+, homeless, individuals addicted to substances, etc).

B. Continue to be pioneers in the area of digital inclusion:

- Be Ireland's national champion in driving digital inclusion in the community sector.
- Be a leading advocate to raise awareness and promote the active participation of women in IT and other Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)-related careers involving digital skills.
- Build and participate in international networks of like-minded communities of practice such as 'DigComp CoP' (EU), 'Digital Inclusion National Alliance' (US), 'DigiCo' (pan European), 'Digital Poverty Alliance' (UK), etc.

C. Create accessible and inclusive educational community spaces:

- Include the voices of learners, and ensure best practices, as part of processes to improve our work (e.g. as part of curriculum development and evaluation).
- Harness our community partner network.
- Expand online and blended learning opportunities.

Goal 3: Influence Systemic Change

A. Influence public policy:

- Be a key contributor to relevant national policies (e.g. community and further education, early years, digital inclusion, socio economic rights as it relates to women and children etc.).
- Enable and encourage women and children towards more active citizenship.

B. Evidence our impact on people's lives:

- Share robust evidence showing the scale and depth of the impact of our work (e.g. through publishing the results of internal research plus partnering and participating in external research).

C. Become an influential voice in the education sector:

- Become an internationally recognised leader in the community education sector, including through continuous learning, consistency in messaging and building networks.
- Use digital platforms to educate and influence change.

5. PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS (continued)

Goal 4: Our Enabling Goals

A. Nurture our Team and culture:

- Ensure our values are woven into our culture, continually strengthening the feeling of connectivity, compassion and courage.
- Celebrate achievements and build on each other's strengths.
- Have a continually adapting structure that enables strategic progress whilst empowering people and building cross organisational synergies, effectiveness and capability.

B. Diversity and increase our funding:

- Grow unrestricted and core funding.
- Attract funding for innovation plus learning and development.
- Identify and develop opportunities for partnerships and social enterprises.

C. Strengthen our systems and processes:

- Continue to enhance our systems and processes.
- Further strengthen our policies.
- Design and deliver solutions to support data-informed decision making.
- Further improve monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement systems.

D. Improve our internal and external communications:

- Have clear, concise, regular communication about our strategy and plans internally and externally.
- Continue to raise organisational profile, including through disseminating the impact our work.

6. DIRECTORS

The names of the persons who were Directors at any time during the year ended 31 December 2023 are set out below. Unless indicated otherwise, they served as Directors for the entire year.

Anna Durkan (Chair)
Mairead Butler (resigned 8th June 2023)
Geraldine French
William Roche
Deirdre Kehoe
Siobhán Wall
Marlene McCormack (appointed 23rd February 2023)

Secretary

Mairead Butler (resigned 8th June 2023)
William Roche (appointed 8th June 2023)

7. TRANSACTIONS WITH DIRECTORS

There were no transactions between the charity and the directors, or between any related parties.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Identifying, managing and controlling An Cosán's organisational risks, along with ensuring that an exceptional standard of corporate governance continues to permeate throughout the organisation, are of paramount focus of the Board and management of An Cosán.

An Cosán manages risk across the organisation on an on-going basis, including:

- Maintenance of a Risk Register comprising all organisational and financial risks as identified by the Senior Management Team, Finance & Risk Committee and the Board of Directors (full details of review, update, controls and mitigation of said risks are contained in Section 8. Principal Risks and Uncertainties below).
- Annual risk management review by the Senior Management Team and Board of Directors.
- Discussion by CEO and Finance & Risk Committee Chair of emerging risks with action plan at each Board meeting.
- Health and Safety officers appointed at each site to conduct and manage risk.
- On-going establishment, review and update of policies and procedures to mitigate risks identified.
- Implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impacts on the charity should risks materialise.
- On-going monitoring of risks identified and the mitigation controls put in place to ensure that the controls are working as intended.

The Directors have reviewed the risks to which An Cosán is exposed and they have taken the appropriate action to mitigate these risks.

9. PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

An Cosán maintains a Risk Register comprising all organisational and financial risks as identified by the Senior Management Team, Finance & Risk Committee and the Board of Directors. This document records the following: likelihood and severity of the named risk, controls to mitigate said risk, testing of controls, residual risk severity post mitigating controls, actions required (by date) and the person responsible.

The risk register is reviewed twice a year by the Finance & Risk Committee and updated accordingly. It is then brought to the Board for review, discussion and further updates as necessary.

The principal risks are reviewed, managed and mitigated on an ongoing basis by the Senior Management Team and wider team as appropriate.

The Directors consider the principal risks and uncertainties faced by the organisation to be as follows:

- **Large Reduction in Annual Income / Over Reliance on any one source of funding**

This risk is of medium likelihood, but high severity should it arise. As a way to mitigate against this happening An Cosán aims to diversify funding streams as much as possible (balanced across Government / Corporate / Earned Income & Fundraised) and to diversify sources of income as much as possible within each funding stream.

9. PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES (continued)

- **Cash Flow Problems**

Mitigation of this potential risk is managed on an ongoing basis by the finance team and overseen by the Finance Manager. The likelihood of this risk would be medium but the severity would be high. Following on from the point above, this is another reason why diversification of income is so important for An Cosán so that cash flow can be managed and projected coming from a variety of different sources and thus timelines. A recent review of cash management overseen by the Finance & Risk Committee provided assurances to the Board as to the controls and plans in place to mitigate any potential risks in this area.

- **Low Reserves**

As both the likelihood and severity of this risk are deemed by the Board to be high, it is given great attention at senior management level, by the Finance & Risk Committee and by the Board. Reserves are a standing agenda item at all Board meetings and the Reserves Policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. As Fundraising is the sole avenue for An Cosán to build unrestricted reserves, great focus is given to promote and showcase An Cosán at our flagship fundraisers in an effort to build up unrestricted reserves in an ongoing and sustainable way. The Finance & Risk Committee has recently overseen a comprehensive review of An Cosán's current Reserves Policy to include in depth calculations as to what level of risks are appropriate for An Cosán to have covered in unrestricted reserves. The recommendation was approved by the Board at a recent Board Meeting and the Reserves Policy has been updated to reflect this decision.

- **Service User Significant Complaints / Child Protection Issues**

Although the likelihood of this risk occurring is low due to the number of robust controls that the organisation has in place in this area, the risk would be high, as many service users are part of vulnerable adult groups or are children.

An Cosán has excellent quality control procedures and proper complaints procedures in operation. All Early Years teams are compliant with and fully trained in our practice, policies & procedures. All parents & learners are fully aware of An Cosán's complaints policies and procedures. There is a Designated Child Protection Officer and Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer in place in each Early Years service and there is a Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection & Welfare Officer and a Deputy Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection & Welfare Officer in place for all our adult learners. An Cosán is compliant with Children First (Tusla) Guidelines. All Early Years Educators are trained in child protection and Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. There is a Child Protection and Welfare Policy in place throughout the organisation and our recruitment process includes Garda Vetting and Reference Checks. These are under ongoing review and attention by the Deputy CEO.

- **Loss of key staff**

In the current environment the loss of key staff carries with it a high likelihood and is of medium risk to the organisation. To that end we ensure pay and terms and conditions are compared with similar roles in the sector through benchmarking, although there are limits to An Cosán's ability to address such issues without increases in public funding. We also ensure that staff have comprehensive performance reviews and regular one to one sessions with line managers so that feedback can be given and issues raised and discussed in an open and honest environment. We ensure that CPD (Continuous Professional Development) / Training is made available to staff in a consistent, transparent and fair way and that our CPD policy is regularly updated.

9. PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES (continued)

- **The Risk of poor GDPR systems and implementation lead to breaches or loss of data**

To this end An Cosán has appointed a Data Protection Officer and has a GDPR champion in each area of operation. It has an active Data Protection Policy and GDPR statement in place. All staff receive training in GDPR twice a year and administrative staff are available to carry out or track any Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) should they arise.

- **Information and Communications Technology (exposure to Hacking / Ransomware)**

The risk of cyber-attacks in society in general has become a very real and constant threat. Our in-house ICT team provide regular training sessions and updates to our teams about IT security and the dangers of phishing attempts. An Cosán has also acquired the services of a third-party contractor to ensure the safety of our information, data, records and systems.

10. EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE YEAR END

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the balance sheet date.

11. 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, employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel with appropriate expertise, the provision of adequate resources to the financial function and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The Company's accounting records are maintained at the Company's registered office at Kiltalown Village Centre, Fortunestown Road, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

12. STATEMENT ON 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 the Companies Act 2014:

- (a) so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- (b) 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.

13. AUDITORS

The auditors, Forvis Mazars, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm, have expressed their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

On behalf of the Board


Anna Durkan
Director

Date: 13 June 2024



William Roche
Director

Date: 13 June 2024

Directors' Responsibility Statement

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 period. Under the law, the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under the law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at the financial period end and of the result of the Company for the financial period and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- make judgements and 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 charity 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 result 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 for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

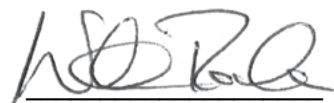
The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the Board



Anna Durkan
Director

Date: 13 June 2024



William Roche
Director

Date: 13 June 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of An Cosán



Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of An Cosán for the year ended 31 December 2023, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council (FRS 102).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at 31 December 2023 and of its result for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report.

We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements;
- in our opinion, the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014;
- the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited; and
- the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by Sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 92, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Respective responsibilities (continued)***Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements (continued)***

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

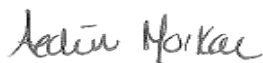
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Aedín Morkan
for and on behalf of Forvis Mazars
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm
Harcourt Centre
Block 3
Harcourt Road
Dublin 2

Date: 14 June 2024

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
		€	€	€	€
INCOME FROM:					
Donations and Legacies	3.1	142,846	285,110	427,956	565,779
Charitable Activities	3.2 / 3.3	-	2,925,670	2,925,670	3,036,424
Other Trading Activities	3.4	-	311,022	311,022	374,263
Total Income		142,846	3,521,802	3,664,648	3,976,466
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Charitable Activities	4.1	45,911	3,620,283	3,666,194	3,782,011
Raising Funds	4.2	43,352	-	43,352	80,911
Total expenditure		89,263	3,620,283	3,709,546	3,862,922
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)		53,583	(98,481)	(44,898)	113,544
Net movement in funds		53,583	(98,481)	(44,898)	113,544
Total funds brought forward	15	309,962	1,326,719	1,636,681	1,523,137
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	15	363,545	1,228,238	1,591,783	1,636,681

All income and expenditure arises from continuing operations. There are no recognised gains or losses other than the income and expenditure for the above two financial years.

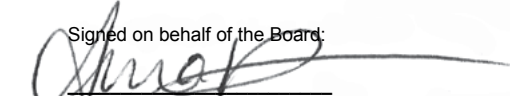
The notes on pages 99 to 107 form part of these financial statements

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE


BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	9	805,189	866,506
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	10	448,313	385,785
Cash and cash equivalents	11	652,670	1,000,055
		1,100,983	1,385,840
CREDITORS (amounts falling due within one year)			
Other creditors	12	(276,744)	(570,380)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		824,239	815,460
CREDITORS (amounts falling due after more than one year)	14	(37,645)	(45,285)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		1,591,783	1,636,681
INCOME FUNDS			
Restricted Funds	15	1,228,238	1,326,719
Unrestricted funds	15	363,545	309,962
TOTAL FUNDS		1,591,783	1,636,681

Signed on behalf of the Board:


 Anna Durkan

Date: 13 June 2024


 William Roche

Date: 13 June 2024

The notes on pages 99 to 107 form part of these financial statements

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	€	€
NET CASH (USED IN) / GENERATED FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	17.1	(340,302)	14,093
NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	17.2	(7,083)	(8,877)
CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD	17.3	<u>(347,385)</u>	<u>5,216</u>
RECONCILIATION OF NET CASHFLOW TO MOVEMENT IN NET FUNDS			
CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD	17.3	(347,385)	5,216
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REPORTING PERIOD	17.3	1,000,055	994,839
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF REPORTING PERIOD	17.3	<u>652,670</u>	<u>1,000,055</u>

The notes on pages 99 to 107 form part of these financial statements

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

These financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes 1 to 25 constitute the financial statements of The Shanty Educational Project Company Limited by Guarantee, "the charity", for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

The Shanty Educational Project Company Limited By Guarantee is engaged in the provision of Adult and Early Years Education programmes and meeting the needs of the economically disadvantaged communities across Ireland. It is a registered charity and is a public benefit entity. Its registered office is Kiltalown Village Centre, Fortunestown Road, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24 which is also its principal place of business.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

CURRENCY

The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the charity.

2. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council and the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP (FRS102)) as published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator which are recognised by the UK Financial Reporting Council (FRC) as the appropriate body to issue SORPs for the charity sector in the UK. While reporting under Charities SORP is not a legal requirement in Ireland it is considered to be best practice.

The principal accounting policies are set out below. The policies have remained unchanged from the previous year.

INCOME

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be measured with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable. The following specific policies are applied to categories of income:

Grant and service income: Grants from public authorities and other agencies in Ireland are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year to which they relate. Grants received towards capital expenditure are treated as described under the heading "Capital Grants". Grants are recognised when there is evidence of entitlement and their receipt is probable. Grant income is deferred where the charity is restricted by specific performance related conditions that are evident in the grant agreement, where there is a specification of a time period that limits the charity's ability to spend the grant until it has performed that activity related to the specified time period and when there are specific terms or conditions within the agreement that have not been met and are not within the control of the charity.

Fundraising Income: Fundraising income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which it is receivable by the charity.

Donations and legacies: Voluntary income including donations, gifts and legacies are recognised where there is entitlement, receipt is probable, and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when the donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods or the donors have imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Donated services and facilities: Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised. On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market, a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Fees: Fee income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as it is receivable by the charity.

2. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Charitable activities include costs of services and grants, support costs and depreciation on related assets. Costs of generating funds similarly include fundraising activities. Non-staff costs not attributed to one category of activity are allocated or apportioned pro-rata to the staffing of the relevant service. Finance, HR, IT and administrative staff costs are directly attributable to individual activities by objective. Governance costs are those associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs arise from those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include Human Resources, ICT, Procurement and Administration. Costs are charged to each service and activity in proportion to direct expenditure, which is considered to reflect estimated benefits received. Costs are not allocated to designated or fixed asset funds.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The charity provides a limited range of benefits to employees being paid holiday arrangements and defined contribution pension plans in some cases.

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN

The charity operates a defined contribution plan for an employee. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the charity pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the charity has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Balance sheet. The assets of the plan are held separately from the charity in an independently administered fund.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Restricted funds are accounted for in accordance with the particular terms of trust arising from the express or implied wishes of donors in so far as these are intended to be binding on the charity. Where any such wishes are not intended to be legally binding, they are taken into account and recognised in appropriately designated funds.

UNRESTRICTED RESERVES

Unrestricted reserves represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the directors in furtherance of the objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Such funds may be held in order to finance working capital or capital expenditure.

CAPITAL GRANTS

Grants from public authorities and other agencies in Ireland are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year to which they relate. Grants received towards capital expenditure are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities when received or receivable whichever is earlier. Grants are recognised when there is evidence of entitlement and their receipt is probable.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

Tangible fixed assets are stated in the Balance Sheet at cost or revalued amount less accumulated depreciation.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, so as to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful economic life as follows:

Buildings	2% Straight line
Office, Media and Computer Equipment	33% Straight Line
Fixtures and Fittings	10% Straight Line

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

DEBTORS

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment.

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

CREDITORS

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

TAXATION

No charge to taxation arises as the charity has been granted charitable status by the Revenue Commissioners under Section 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

2. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

OPERATING LEASES: THE CHARITY AS LESSEE

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis over the lease term.

A lease agreement exists between "The County Council of the County of South Dublin" and "The Shanty Educational Project CLG" in respect of the plot of land on which the An Cosán building stands. The term of the lease is 99 years from the 1st January 2010. As long as the demised premises are used as a multi purpose centre for education, training, enterprise and childcare then an abated rent of €1.27 is payable annually under this lease.

A Lease agreement exists with SDCC for the rental of the Eco House premises where our Early Years Kiltipper service operates from. The term of the lease is 99 years from the 1st November 2010, amounting to €127 per annum.

JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(a) Establishing lives for depreciation purposes of property, plant and equipment.

Long-lived assets, consisting primarily of property, plant and equipment, comprise a significant portion of the total assets. The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on the estimated lives of each type of asset and estimates of residual values. The directors regularly review these asset lives and change them as necessary to reflect current thinking on remaining lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in asset lives can have a significant impact on depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. There were no changes to useful lives in the current and prior years, further details of the useful lives is included in the accounting policies.

(b) Providing for doubtful debts

The charity makes an estimate of the recoverable value of trade and other debtors. The charity uses estimates based on historical experience in determining the level of debts, which the charity believes will not be collected. These estimates include such factors as the current credit rating of the debtor, the ageing profile of debtors and historical experience. The level of provision required is reviewed on an on-going basis.

(c) Income recognition

In applying the income recognition principles of the Charities SORP, judgements are occasionally required to ascertain whether a grant agreement is performance or non-performance based. This is done using established criteria that are applied consistently across all funding instruments and from one period to the next. Furthermore, where grant agreements are found to be performance based, judgements are required as to the level of income that should be recognised for the year. The organisation typically uses incurred expenditure as the most appropriate basis to measure progress on grant agreements and to recognise the related income. This is done in conjunction with a qualitative assessment of the status of the underlying projects in order to ensure this represents the most appropriate basis of recognition. All judgements are made at the individual grant level and are subject to appropriate review and approval processes.

(d) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis. The validity of this assumption is dependent on achieving sufficient operating cash flows for future years. The directors have prepared budgets and cashflows for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements which demonstrate that there is no material uncertainty regarding the charity's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due. The charity is heavily reliant on donations and grant revenue streams in order to carry out its operations. If funding was reduced the ability to continue as a going concern may be affected.

3. INCOME

Income is mainly derived from within the Republic of Ireland, with one stream from within the European Union, which is an insignificant amount.

Income is composed of Donations and Legacies, Income from Charitable Activities and Other Income as follows:

For further details on state funding, refer Appendix 1 to the financial statements.

	2023	2022
	€	€
3.1. Donations and Legacies		
<i>Restricted</i>		
Private and Corporate Funding	285,110	332,036
	<u>285,110</u>	<u>332,036</u>
<i>Unrestricted</i>		
Fundraising activities	96,935	196,165
Donated services (Support in Kind)	45,911	37,578
	<u>142,846</u>	<u>233,743</u>
	<u>427,956</u>	<u>565,779</u>

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3. INCOME (CONTINUED)

3.2. Income from Charitable Activities - Restricted

State Funding:		2023	2022
State Organisation	Type of Funding	€	€
Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB	Adult Literacy & Community Education (ALCE) & Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)	139,999	129,100
Department of Justice	Victims of Crime	10,465	10,000
Department of Social Protection	School Meals Programme	4,456	3,093
Department of Social Protection	Community Employment Scheme	265,251	276,306
Department of Rural & Community Development	Empowering Communities Programme 23	1,500	1,500
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - TUSLA Child & Family Agency	Erasmus + (Fatherhood Project)	2,819	26,009
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - TUSLA Child & Family Agency	Counselling Service Grant	28,671	28,600
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - TUSLA Child & Family Agency	Core Funding & Programme Funding	713,928	698,836
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - TUSLA Child & Family Agency	Transport to support attendance of child in Early Years	1,647	-
Cherry Orchard Equine Centre CLG	Blue Door	-	638
Solas	Programme Funding and Core Funding	660,049	660,049
Solas	Collaboration & Innovation Fund	28,179	-
Solas/DDLETB	Reach Fund	32,706	30,860
Department of further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science - Higher Education Authority	Innovation and Transformation Call 2018	-	117,447
Department of Rural & Community Development	Social Inclusion Grant - Age & Opportunity Active Programme	340	-
Department of Transport - Dublin Bus	Community Spirit Awards	1,000	-
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - South Dublin County Childcare Committee	Parent and Toddler Group	1,319	1,480
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - South Dublin County Council	Staying Connected	378	5,534
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Transition Funding	-	22,967
Dublin City Council	Local Area Community Grant	250	-
South Dublin Co. Council (SDCC)	Social Inclusion Grant	-	370
South Dublin Co. Council (SDCC)	Community Activities Fund	255	1,000
Department of Social Protection (Pobal)	Community Services Programme	299,643	245,679
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Early Childhood Care & Education Programme (ECCE)	264,416	300,385
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Access & Inclusion Model (AIM)	52,953	29,460
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Temporary Wage Subsidy Childcare Scheme (TWSCS)	12,000	-
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Community Childcare Subvention Plus	3,906	23,154
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	National Childcare Scheme	144,184	101,665
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - POBAL	Core Funding	158,149	67,393
Department of Rural and Community Development - Rethink Ireland	Mná na hEireann	-	66,533
Department of Rural and Community Development - Rethink Ireland	Mná na hEireann - Recovery Fund - Employability Skills	-	45,000
Department of Rural and Community Development - Rethink Ireland	Urban Uplift Fund - Accelerator Programme	63,970	-
Revenue Commissioners - Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Employee Wage Subsidy Scheme	-	87,263
Irish Aid - Department of Foreign Affairs	2021 Development Education Grants	-	17,443
		2,892,433	2,997,764

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3. INCOME (CONTINUED)

3.3. Other Charitable Income (restricted):	2023	2022
	€	€
Childhood Development Initiative - CDI Powerful Parenting ELC Programme	33,237	38,660
	<u>33,237</u>	<u>38,660</u>
Total Income from Charitable Activities	<u>2,925,670</u>	<u>3,036,424</u>

3.4. Other Income (restricted):

	2023	2022
	€	€
Learner Fees	115,110	154,374
Early Years Education & Care Fees	188,204	203,789
Participant Contributions	-	4,133
Counselling Income	6,323	4,265
Other Income	1,385	7,702
	<u>311,022</u>	<u>374,263</u>

4. EXPENDITURE ON:

4.1. Charitable activities

	Adult Education €	Early Years Childcare €	Total 2023 €	Total 2022 €
Wages & Salaries	1,409,454	1,447,554	2,857,008	2,866,839
Other Staff Costs	39,683	17,528	57,211	94,640
Human Relations Costs	24,028	462	24,490	22,768
Programme Costs (incl. Course, Best Start, Food & Virtual L.)	80,230	50,086	130,316	197,031
Premises Costs	87,436	154,318	241,754	227,584
Advertising & Promotion	20,077	7,593	27,670	22,739
Depreciation	31,126	18,937	50,063	61,902
Bank Interest & Charges	4,116	5,781	9,897	10,351
Management & Administration	76,336	33,014	109,350	138,308
Other Costs	4,612	12,538	17,150	2,414
Overheads	46,480	22,724	69,204	74,886
Governance Costs	15,304	10,866	26,170	24,971
Support in Kind (unrestricted)	26,628	19,283	45,911	37,578
	<u>1,865,510</u>	<u>1,800,684</u>	<u>3,666,194</u>	<u>3,782,011</u>

4.2. Raising Funds

	2023	2022
	€	€
Fundraising - International Women's Day Lunch	31,116	30,375
Fundraising - Winter Ball	86	39,294
Fundraising - Golf Classic	11,308	8,996
Fundraising - Other	842	2,246
	<u>43,352</u>	<u>80,911</u>

4.3. Governance costs include the following

	2023	2022
	€	€
<u>Auditors' remuneration</u>		
Statutory audit services	23,044	21,525
Assistance with preparation of financial statements	2,786	2,614
Audit of CE Scheme	1,394	984
Over provision in prior year	-	(152)
	<u>27,224</u>	<u>24,971</u>

5. PENSION COSTS

	2023	2022
	€	€
Retirement Benefits	9,765	9,300

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The expense has been fully allocated to the restricted fund as these costs were incurred on restricted activities. The pension cost represents contributions payable by the charity to the fund. Contributions outstanding at year end were €775 (2022: €2,088).

6. DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION AND TRANSACTIONS

No remuneration is paid to Directors for their services as Board Members. Directly incurred expenses are reimbursed, if claimed. No directors expenses were claimed in the year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

7. EMPLOYEES AND REMUNERATION

The average number of employees during the year was 112 (2022: 112) and is analysed into the following categories:

	2023		2022	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
Management	9	5	9	1
Administration	8	1	7	1
Education and Training	11	13	8	13
Early years education and care	12	27	11	36
CE Scheme	1	16	1	17
Other Services	-	3	-	3
Hospitality	-	6	-	5
	<u>41</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>76</u>

The staff costs are comprised of:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Wages and Salaries	2,605,963	2,617,233
Employers PRSI	241,281	240,306
Employers pension contribution	9,765	9,300
	<u>2,857,009</u>	<u>2,866,839</u>

Senior staff remuneration:

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer's pension cost and PRSI) is greater than €60,000 is 5 (2022:4) as follows:

	2023	2022
€60,000 - €69,999	3	2
€70,000 - €79,999	1	1
€90,000 - €99,999	1	1
	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>

Key Management remuneration:

Key management personnel include the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management team for whom the total remuneration cost was €387,962, (2022: €325,957). The CEO Heydi Foster Breslin was paid a gross remuneration (inclusive of employer's pension cost and PRSI) of €118,205 (2022: €110,164).

8. TAXATION

No charge to taxation arises as The Shanty Educational Project Company Limited By Guarantee has been granted charitable exemption by the Revenue Commissioners.

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Buildings	Fixtures and Fittings	Office, Media and Computer	Total
			Equipment	
	€	€	€	€
COST				
At 1 January 2023	1,275,655	133,889	127,019	1,536,563
Additions	-	4,991	2,092	7,083
Disposals	-	(4,018)	(40,985)	(45,003)
At 31 December 2023	<u>1,275,655</u>	<u>134,862</u>	<u>88,126</u>	<u>1,498,643</u>
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 January 2023	566,312	41,509	62,236	670,057
Charge for the year	25,513	13,803	10,747	50,063
On disposals	-	(3,177)	(23,489)	(26,666)
At 31 December 2023	<u>591,825</u>	<u>52,134</u>	<u>49,494</u>	<u>693,454</u>
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 December 2023	<u>683,830</u>	<u>82,728</u>	<u>38,632</u>	<u>805,189</u>
At 31 December 2022	<u>709,343</u>	<u>92,380</u>	<u>64,783</u>	<u>866,506</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

10. DEBTORS (Amounts falling due within one year)

	2023	2022
	€	€
Grants and Funding Receivable	230,693	181,488
Fees Due	109,957	118,753
Prepayments & Sundry Receivables	107,663	85,544
	<u>448,313</u>	<u>385,785</u>

All debtors and funders are due within one year. All fees, grants and funding is due within the terms of the grant or funding agreements, which varies between one and twelve months, dependant on the source of income. Fees are shown net of impairment in respect of doubtful debts.

11. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2023	2022
	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>652,670</u>	<u>1,000,055</u>

12. CREDITORS (Amounts falling due within one year)

	2023	2022
	€	€
Creditors & Accruals	87,804	184,104
Deferred Income (Note 13)	130,596	314,536
Payroll Taxes & Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme	58,344	71,740
	<u>276,744</u>	<u>570,380</u>

Creditors and accruals are payable at various dates in the next 12 months in accordance with the suppliers' usual terms and conditions. Payroll taxes are payable within the first month of the new year in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions.

13. DEFERRED INCOME

	2023	2022
	€	€
At 1 January 2023	314,536	461,363
Credited to Statement of Financial Activities	(262,830)	(397,519)
Deferred during the year	78,890	250,692
At 31 December 2023	<u>130,596</u>	<u>314,536</u>

Deferred income relates to: Grants and funding received which do not meet the criteria for recognition as income as terms and conditions attaching to the income have not yet been met. This income has therefore been deferred to future years in accordance with Charities SORP.

14. CREDITORS (Amounts falling due after more than one year)

	2023	2022
	€	€
Department of Social Protection - Redundancies	<u>37,645</u>	<u>45,285</u>
	<u>37,645</u>	<u>45,285</u>

An arrangement was made with the Redundancy & Insolvency Payments Section of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in 2018 to repay this creditor over 120 monthly instalments. The monthly instalments are in the amount of €637 and are being paid over a 10 year period.

15. FUNDS OF THE CHARITY

15.1. ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS ON FUNDS

	Opening Balance	Income	Expenditure	Closing Balance
	€	€	€	€
Restricted Income	1,326,719	3,521,802	(3,620,283)	1,228,238
Unrestricted Income	309,962	142,846	(89,263)	363,545
Total Funds	1,636,681	3,664,648	(3,709,546)	1,591,783

15.2. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	€	€	€
Tangible assets	-	805,189	805,189
Current Assets	363,545	737,438	1,100,983
Current Liabilities	-	(276,744)	(276,744)
Non-current Liabilities	-	(37,645)	(37,645)
	363,545	1,228,238	1,591,783

16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

	2023	2022
	€	€
Financial assets		
Financial assets measured at transaction value	993,320	1,300,296
Financial liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at transaction value	218,400	498,640

Financial assets measured at transaction value comprise cash, amounts due from government grants and contributions receivable, fees due and other debtors.

17. RECONCILIATION OF NET CASH MOVEMENTS IN NET FUNDS

17.1. OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	€	€
Net movement in funds	(44,898)	113,544
Depreciation	50,063	61,902
Disposal of fixed and other assets	18,337	-
Increase in debtors	(62,528)	(4,540)
Decrease in creditors	(301,276)	(156,813)
Net cash flow from operating activities	(340,302)	14,093

17.2. INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	€	€
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	(7,083)	(8,877)
Net cash outflow from financing activities	(7,083)	(8,877)

17.3. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	01-Jan 2023	Cash Flows	31-Dec 2023
	€	€	€
Cash and cash equivalents	1,000,055	(347,385)	652,670

18. COMMITMENTS

At 31 December 2023 the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Not later than 1 year	16,054	12,749
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	508	508
Later than 5 years	10,378	10,506
	<u>26,940</u>	<u>23,763</u>

19. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

20. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no transactions between the charity and the directors, or between any related parties.

21. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There has been no significant events affecting the company since the balance sheet date.

22. PROVISIONS AVAILABLE FOR SMALLER ENTITIES

In common with many other businesses of our size and nature, we use our auditors to assist in the preparation of the financial statements.

23. LEGAL STATUS OF THE CHARITY

The charity is a public benefit entity and operates as a charity limited by guarantee without share capital. At 31 December 2023, there were 4 members (2022: 3), whose guarantee is limited to €1.27 each.

24. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

The members of The Shanty Educational Project Limited Company Limited by Guarantee are considered to be the ultimate controlling party.

25. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board of Directors approved these financial statements for issue on 13 June 2024.

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

APPENDIX 1

Grant 1

Agency	Tusla
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Core and Programme Funding
Purpose of the Grant	Core and Programme Funding
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€713,928
- Grant deferred/due at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€713,928
- The Cash received in the period	€713,928
- Grant amounts deferred or due at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€713,928
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 2

Agency	Tusla
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Counselling Service
Purpose of the Grant	Counselling Service
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	No
Total Grant	€28,671
- Grant Deferred/due at 01 Ja 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€28,671
- The Cash received in the period	€28,671
- Grant amounts deferred or due at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€28,671
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

This supplementary information does not form part of the financial statements and is unaudited.

THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 3

Agency	Tusla
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Child and Young Peoples Services Committee (Better Outcomes Brighter Futures)
Purpose of the Grant	To provide transport to a child attending Early Years Services at An Cosán
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	No
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, taxi charges	Yes
Total Grant	€2,900
- Grant Deferred/due at 01 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€1,647
- The Cash received in the period	€2,900
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€1,253
Expenditure	€1,647
Term	Expires 31 December 2024
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Tax Clearance	Yes
It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"	

Grant 4

Agency	SOLAS learning works Further Education & Training Authority
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science
Grant Programme	Digital Transformation Programme €510,049 Building Core Organisational Capacity €150,000
Purpose of the Grant	
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€660,049
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€660,049
- The Cash received in the period	€660,049
- Grant amounts deferred or due at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€660,049
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes
It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"	

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 5

Agency	SOLAS Further Education & Training Authority
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science
Grant Programme	Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy Collaboration & Innovation Fund 2023
Purpose of the Grant	Discover Your Path, Life Skills & Future Literacy Programme
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such Expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant Approved	€30,152
Total Grant Claimed	€28,179
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€28,179
- The Cash received in the period	€24,122
- Grant amount Receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€4,057
Expenditure	€28,179
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 6

Agency	Department of Social Protection
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Social Protection
Grant Programme	Community Employment Scheme
Purpose of the Grant	Community Employment
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€265,251
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€24,012
- The Cash received in the period	€257,705
- Grant released to income in the period	€265,251
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€16,466
Expenditure	€265,251
Term	Expires 26 July 2024
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	N/A
Restriction on use	N/A
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 7

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	The Department of Rural and Community Development
Grant Programme	Community Services Programme
Purpose of the Grant	Community Services
i.e. - Support for staff wages	Yes
Total Grant	€299,643
- Grant amount deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€70,376
- Grant released to income in the period	€299,643
- The Cash received in the period	€282,990
- Grant amounts deferred 31 Dec 2023	€53,723
Expenditure	€299,643
Term	1 January 2023 - 31 December 2027
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	Support for staff wages
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 8

Agency	Dublin & Dun Laoighaire ETB
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
Grant Programme	Adult Community Education Programmes BTEI Adult Community Education Programmes
Purpose of the Grant	Adult community education
i.e. - Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€154,100
- Grant amount receivable at 1 Jan 2023	€172,890
- Adjustment made to income in respect of 2021	€3,634
- Adjustment made to income in respect of 2022	(€17,735)
- Grant released to income in the period	€154,100
- Net income released in the period	€139,999
- The Cash received in the period	€156,621
- Grant amounts receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€156,268
Expenditure	€154,100
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 9

Agency	Solas/DDLETB
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
Grant Programme	Reach Funding 2023
Purpose of the Grant	For Learner Assistance, All Strategy, Support for Refugee Groups, Participation of Priority / Target Cohorts
Total Grant Approved	€37,120
Total Grant Claimed	€32,706
- Grant Amount receivable at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€32,706
- The Cash received in the period	€32,706
- Grant Receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€32,706
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Majority capital with small amount of program funding
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 10

Agency	School Meals Section
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Social Protection
Grant Programme	School Meals (Local Project) Scheme 2022/2023 & 2023/2024
Purpose of the Grant	
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	No
- Service provision / charitable activity	No
- School Meals for Children	Yes
Total Grant	€4,456
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€1,128
- The Cash received in the period	€5,001
- Grant released to income in the period	€4,456
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€1,673
Expenditure	€4,456
Term	Expires 31 August 2024
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 11

Agency	Rethink Ireland
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Rural & Community Development
Grant Programme	Social Innovation Fund (match funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund)
Purpose of the Grant	The Urban Uplift Fund Accelerator Program – ‘Workability’ - Providing Transferable Skills for Flexible Employment
Total Grant	€127,939
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€63,970
- The Cash received in the period	€63,970
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€63,970
Term	Expires 30 June 2025
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, “Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments”

Grant 12

Agency	
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Justice
Grant Programme	Victims of Crime Funding Call
Purpose of the Grant	Provision of services supporting victims of crime in the criminal justice system
i.e.	Yes
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€10,465
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€10,465
- The Cash received in the period	€10,465
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€10,465
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, “Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments”

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 13

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Core Funding
Purpose of the Grant	Core Funding
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€158,149
- Grant deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€158,149
- The Cash received in the period	€158,149
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€158,149
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 14

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
Purpose of the Grant	Childcare
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as PPE, Insurance, Audit	Yes
Total Grant	€144,184
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€144,184
- The Cash received in the period	€144,184
- Grant amount receivable at 31 Dec 23	€0
Expenditure	€144,184
Term	Year End 31 Dec 2023
Received year end	31- Dec- 2023
Capital Grant	No
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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Grant 15

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	AIM Level 7
Purpose of the Grant	
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	No
Total Grant	€52,953
- Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- The Cash received in the period	€55,200
- Grant released to income in the period	€52,953
- Overpayment to be returned to Pobal	€2,247
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€52,953
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-2023
Capital Grant	N/A
Restriction on use	N/A
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 16

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
Purpose of the Grant	
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€264,416
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- The Cash received in the period	€265,451
- Grant released to income in the period	€264,416
- Overpayment to be returned to Pobal	€1,035
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€264,416
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	N/A
Restriction on use	N/A
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 17

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP)
Purpose of the Grant	Childcare
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€3,906
- Deferred balance at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- The Cash received in the period	€3,906
- Grant released to income in the period	€3,906
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 23	€0
Expenditure	€3,906
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	N/A
Restriction on use	N/A
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 18

Agency	Pobal
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	TWSCS
Purpose of the Grant	Childcare
i.e.	
- Pay and general administration	Yes
- Service provision / charitable activity	Yes
- Specified others, including such expenditure as advertising, consultancy	Yes
Total Grant	€12,000
- Provision balance held while Pobal TWSCS Audit outcome pending at 1 Jan 2023	€12,000
- The Cash received in the period	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€12,000
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 23	€0
Expenditure	€12,000
Term	Expires 31 December 2020
Received year end	31-Dec-20
Capital Grant	N/A
Restriction on use	N/A
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 19

Agency	South Dublin County Childcare Committee
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Parent & Toddler Group
Purpose of the Grant	Related expenditure to running Parent & Toddler Group
Total Grant	€1,319
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€1,319
- The Cash received in the period	€1,650
- Amount Repaid to SDCC in the period	€331
- Grant amount deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€1,319
Term	Expires December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 20

Agency	South Dublin County Council
Sponsoring Government Dept	Dept of Rural and Community Development
Grant Programme	Covid 19 Emergency Response Fund
Purpose of the Grant	Staying Connected Online
Total Grant	€1,000
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€378
- Grant released to income in the period	€378
- The Cash received in the period	€0
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€378
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-21
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 21

Agency	Dublin City Council
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Grant Programme	Local Area Community Grants
Purpose of the Grant	Educational Resources and Chairs
Total Grant	€250
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€250
- The Cash received in the period	€250
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€250
Term	Expires December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 22

Agency	South Dublin County Council (SDCC)
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Rural & Community Development
Grant Programme	Community Activities Fund
Purpose of the Grant	U3A Program – 'Make a Move Fitness'
Total Grant	€255
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€255
- The Cash received in the period	€255
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€255
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 23

Agency	South Dublin County Council (SDCC) (HSE/ Sport Ireland / The Arts Council)
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Rural & Community Development
Grant Programme	Social Inclusion Grant - Age & Opportunity Active Programme
Purpose of the Grant	Promote increased participation in recreational sport or physical activity for older people
Total Grant	€340
- Grant Amount Receivable at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€340
- The Cash received in the period	€340
- Grant amounts receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€340
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 24

Agency	Dublin Bus
Sponsoring Government Dept	Department of Transport
Grant Programme	Community Spirits Award
Purpose of the Grant	Educational Resources
Total Grant	€1,000
- Grant Amount Receivable at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€1,000
- The Cash received in the period	€1,000
- Grant amounts receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€1,000
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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THE SHANTY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

APPENDICES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Grant 25

Agency	SICAP
Sponsoring Government Dept	Dublin Northwest Partnership
Grant Programme	Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) 2023
Purpose of the Grant	To Support Local Community Groups Children's Reading Corner (Furniture & Shelving)
Total Grant	€1,500
- Grant Amount Deferred at 1 Jan 2023	€0
- Grant released to income in the period	€1,500
- The Cash received in the period	€1,500
- Grant amounts deferred at 31 Dec 2023	€0
Expenditure	€1,500
Term	Expires 31 December 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

Grant 26

Agency	Erasmus+
Sponsoring Government Dept	N/A
Grant Programme	Erasmus+
Purpose of the Grant	Fatherhood Project
Total Grant	€45,617
- Grant Amount receivable at 1 Jan 2023	€6,334
- Grant released to income in the period	€2,819
- The Cash received in the period	€0
- Grant amounts receivable at 31 Dec 2023	€9,153
Expenditure	€2,819
Term	Feb 2021 to March 2023
Received year end	31-Dec-23
Capital Grant	Nil
Restriction on use	As per Budget Application
Tax Clearance	Yes

It is compliant with relevant Circulars, including Circular 44/2006, "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments"

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'Education is the light that shines your path. I'm not where I want to be, but I can see the light now, and I have realised my potential. I want to further my education. I want to develop. Yes, the light is there, so I'll take one step at a time and pursue my goals.' - Thembi



'An Cosán has given great hope to me and to my family. We can all look forward to a brighter future now, thanks to the caring staff and the wonderful support we have received.'
- Angela



“An Cosán changed my life for the better. Completing my course gave me a better understanding of my goals and limitations, and helped me achieve my goal of becoming a health care assistant. I learned a lot, I enjoyed myself and I made friends for life. Because of my busy work schedule, I really liked the flexibility. The support was excellent. I will forever be grateful to An Cosán.”

- Claire Joyce, An Cosán graduate 2023



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