

Creativity in Action



2023
Progress Report

An Introduction to the Report

2023 marked the extension of the Creative Ireland Programme for a further 5 years until 2027. Along with established programmes of work in Creative Communities and Creative Youth, new priorities will be pursued in the Creative Industries, Creative Health & Wellbeing and Climate Action. The Programme will also develop a major Shared Island dimension with support from the Department of the Taoiseach.

In February my colleague Kieran O'Donnell the Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning and I were pleased to welcome Cathaoirigh, Chief Executives and Creative Ireland's Creative Coordinators from 31 local authorities to Farmleigh to launch their community-led Culture and Creativity Strategies 2023 -2027 which will serve as a catalyst for more vibrant, connected and sustainable communities.

Critical to the ongoing success of Creative Communities Pillar has been the appointment by each local authority of a Creative Ireland Coordinator from among their senior staff. To build on the success of this approach, and to help drive the continued implementation of their Culture and Creativity Strategies 2023-2027, each local authority has now also appointed a Creative Communities Engagement Officer – posts that are co-funded by my Department. This will ensure even greater collaboration across the Culture and Creativity teams in each local authority to deliver projects and events that engage and inspire local communities. This delivery infrastructure represents a very significant, and long term, commitment to facilitating access to, and participation in, cultural and creative activity across the country.

In March Minister Foley, Minister O'Gorman and I launched the [Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027](#) in the National Gallery of Ireland. Designed in consultation with young people, the plan aims to nurture the creative landscape in which our young citizens will thrive. The Creative Youth Nurture Fund was also launched in 2023 to reach specific groups of young people that are seldom heard.

Following the success of the first Creative Climate Action fund, Minister Eamon Ryan and myself were very pleased to announce 43 successful recipients under *Creative Climate Action – Agents of Change* which is co-funded by my Department and the Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC). This new €5.8million fund aims to meaningfully connect people on the island of Ireland with the need for behaviour change on climate action through 2024 and into 2025.

In late 2022 the Taoiseach announced the allocation of €6 million Shared Island fund to be utilised by Creative Ireland over three years to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future. I am proud of the work that Creative Ireland has done to activate meaningful Shared Island projects throughout their 2023 programme with a special emphasis on Creative Communities and Creative Climate Action.

Working with our colleagues in the Department of Health, the HSE and the Arts Council, Creative Ireland continued its support for Traveller Wellbeing through Creativity, Social Prescribing initiatives and The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) research programme, to further investigate the impact of creativity on the health and wellbeing of older people. We brought together Creative Ireland's Coordinators and Engagement Officers with Healthy Ireland Coordinators and HSE Health and Wellbeing Officers in November, highlighted the strong opportunities for all these networks of state support to collaborate.

Catherine Martin
Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Ailbhe Gerrard and Minister Catherine Martin, Brookfield Farm
Image by Aengus McMahon

2023 Highlights

2023 Highlights

The Creative Ireland Programme is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. We are an all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme and it is our ambition to inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity. We are committed to the vision that every person in Ireland should have the opportunity to realise their full creative potential.



€6 million for Shared Island initiatives from 2023-2025



€5.8 million for 43 Creative Climate Action Projects



31 new Local Authority Culture and Creativity Strategies launched



New Creative Youth Plan launched



Over 850 Cruinniú na nÓg events held in June 2023

Creative Communities



Farmleigh Launch
Image by Barry Cronin

Creative Communities

Harnessing the creative potential of our people and communities is a cornerstone of the Creative Ireland Programme.

In February 2023, Minister Catherine Martin with Minister of State, Kieran O'Donnell with Mayors, Cathaoirigh, Chief Executives, Director of Services and Creative Ireland Coordinators from all over the country launched 31 Culture and Creativity Strategies in a celebratory event in Farmleigh.

The *Culture and Creativity Strategies 2023-2027* reflect a much more strategic approach than before. All 31 strategies share priorities in relation to social cohesion and investment in communities and propose to use the Creative Communities partnership to target inclusion, taking account of changing demographics. This will include a greater focus on health and wellbeing, creative industries, climate action, creative youth, the development of the Irish language and social sustainability.

The strategies reflect the creative ambitions of our communities and will encourage people to engage, participate and enable their creative potential.

To support the roll out of the *Culture and Creativity Strategies*, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and with the support of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) made a commitment to engage a Creative Communities Engagement Officer in each local authority. From now until 2027 they will work to support the Culture and Creativity Team in their local authority to deliver the strategic priorities of the local *Culture and Creativity Strategy* and support the delivery of **Cruinniú na nÓg**, the national day of creativity for children and young people.



31 new

*Local Authority Culture
and Creativity Strategies*
launched

31 Local Authorities Commit to New Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity Strategies



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxSjyVo6AYA>

A young woman with long dark hair is wearing large black headphones and smiling. She is in a recording studio, with a professional microphone on a stand to her left. The background is slightly blurred, showing various musical instruments and studio equipment. The text "Creative Youth" is overlaid in a white, cursive font across the center of the image.

Creative Youth

GMC Beats, Gort
Image by Sean Downey

Creative Youth

Creative Youth Plan launch

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Catherine Martin TD, Minister for Education Norma Foley TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O’Gorman TD, and Minister for Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD launched the new Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027 in the National Gallery of Ireland in March, with young people centre stage. Building on the success of the first five years, this new plan will provide everyone from birth to 24 years with more opportunities for creative engagement in every aspect of their lives.

[Read more](#)

Nurture Fund

The Creative Youth Nurture Fund was announced in April 2023. The pilot fund is the first of its kind in Ireland and aims to provide children and young people with a voice in the planning and implementation of their creative activity. It focuses on specific groups of young people that have the least access to creative opportunities and supports organisations and individuals that can reach specific groups of young people that are seldom heard. Support has been provided to organisations that engage young refugees, young members of the Traveller community, those in youth detention and young people leaving the care system among others. A total of €727,234 was awarded to nine projects across the country.

[Read more](#)

New Local Creative Youth Partnership

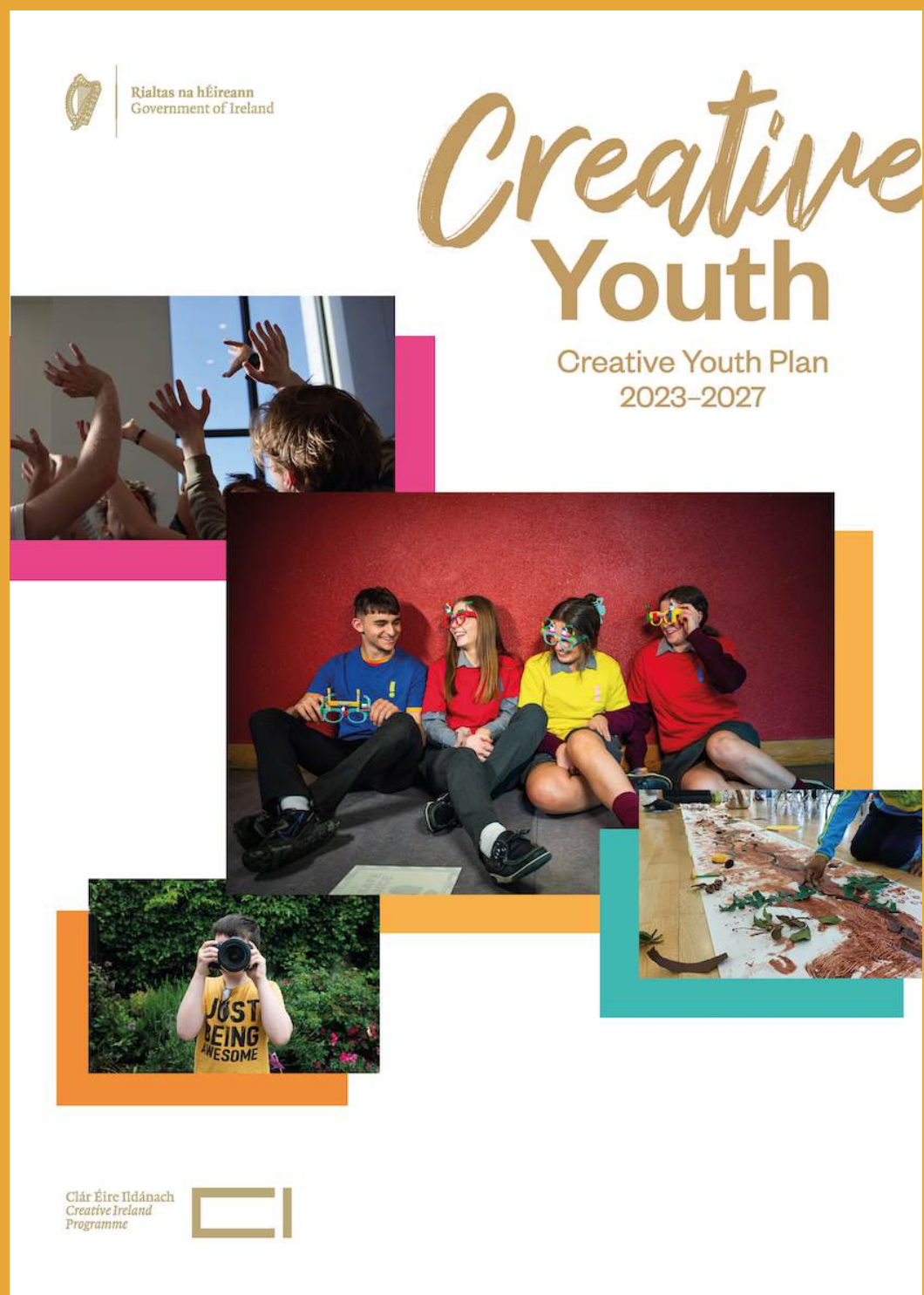
From the outset the Creative Ireland Programme has supported the establishment of Local Creative Youth Partnerships. Centred in local Education and Training Boards they engage young people in their communities in a wide range of creative activity. Following successful pilot schemes in Kerry, Laois/ Offaly and Limerick/ Clare), there are now LCYPs in Cork, Mayo/ Sligo/ Leitrim, Galway/ Roscommon. In June the Cavan/ Monaghan Education and Training Board joined the Creative Youth family in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Local Creative Youth Partnerships have been very successful in providing new and innovative creative opportunities for children and young people outside of school. They focus on the most disadvantaged young people.

[Read more](#)



New

Creative Youth Plan launched



Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027



Cruinniú na nÓg 2023

Cruinniú na nÓg 2023 launch
Image by Mark Stedman

Cruinniú na nÓg 2023

Cruinniú na nÓg, the national day of free creativity for children and young people under 18. Ireland is the first, and only, country in the world to have such a day.

Shared ambition and collaborative effort is essential to ensuring the success of any initiative. Critical partners in the delivery of Cruinniú na nÓg have always been local authority Culture and Creativity Teams. Again, this year Local Authorities across Ireland, together with a multitude of artists, makers and creatives came together to develop and deliver over 850 activities for young people and families to enjoy, from workshops and tutorials to recitals and readings.

Strategic partners in 2023 provided hugely engaging national engagement opportunities for children and young people. Irish Street Arts & Circus rolled out **Circus Explored** for a second year, with the distribution of free, branded circus equipment, Spinning Plates, as a timeless circus prop, affordable, portable, accessible for all ages and abilities.

GMC Beats delivered workshops in creative song writing, rapping, singing, recording, beat making & music technology for schools and youth groups. For 2023, **Rhyme Island - Rap is for Everyone** – was designed as an initiative to encourage young people in marginalised communities across Ireland to express themselves through rap, singing, and song writing. A series of online and in-person workshops culminated in a showcase of youth rap and beats in Elizabeth Fort in Cork City.

Over the past few years, the work submitted to **RTÉ's This Is Art!** on-line art competition, represents the beginnings of a unique and powerful national collection of young people's art. It is an important and permanent representation of young people's creativity in Ireland today. Through their art, honest and contemporary responses to the times we live in provide a living history of young people's creative expression.



Over 850

Cruinniú na nÓg events held in June 2023



Cruinniú na nÓg
Image by Mark Stedman



Creative Health and Wellbeing

Volunteers Louth Panel
Image by Sean McMahon

Creative Health and Wellbeing

Creative Ireland, in partnership with the Department of Health, the HSE and the Arts Council, continued the Traveller Wellbeing through Creativity pilot initiative into 2023. The purpose of this innovative programme is to support creative projects that will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the Traveller community.

Creative Ireland Traveller Wellbeing Through Creativity



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRT27SpziGs>

In June the results of an on-going research collaboration between Creative Ireland and the Irish Longitudinal Study on Aging (TILDA), at Trinity College Dublin were announced. Key findings included



Participation in arts, creative and cultural activities is associated with higher quality of life and lower levels of depression, stress, worry and loneliness.



Older adults who have previously participated but no longer do, report lower levels of quality of life and higher levels of depression and loneliness compared to those who currently participate.



Women are more likely to participate in arts, creative and cultural activities than men, with 62% of women current or past participants, compared to 46% of men.



Older adults with third level education are over five times more likely to participate compared to those with primary level education.



Participation rates are highest in Dublin City and county and lower in more rural counties such as counties Kerry, Cavan, Monaghan, and Westmeath

In 2023 the Creative Ireland Programme through its **partners in the local authorities** supported creative projects around the country that engaged older people in creative activity. These included a survey of the holy wells of Carlow, suicide prevention workshops in farmer's marts in Clare, one on one art workshops for those living with dementia in Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown, a vintage music and arts festival in Swords Castle and "Cupán Ceoil Tea Dances" in Galway.

The Creative Ireland **Creativity in Older Age** programme also supported a comprehensive programme of live musical performances in healthcare settings in Carlow, Cork, Donegal, Fingal, Galway, Dublin, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Longford, Louth Meath, Monaghan, Cavan, Offaly, South Dublin, Waterford, Westmeath and Waterford County Council. Embracing the learnings from the very positive outcomes of the 2022 pilot Social Prescribing initiatives, Creative Ireland supported new creative interventions in Donegal, Mayo and Dún Laoghaire/ Rathdown. These are designed to break social isolation and assist in the forging of social connections, developing self-confidence and healthier life choices.



Elders of Clonmel
Image by John D.Kelly

Creative Climate Action

A group of people is gathered in a field, looking at a large wooden water wheel and a yellow tractor. In the background, there are rolling hills and several wind turbines under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a community or educational event.

Worker's Villages
Image by Evelyn Darcy

Creative Climate Action II: Agents of Change



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcmVRml4mXw>

Creative Climate Action

The success of our inaugural Creative Climate Action initiative is hard to deny. The first 15 projects were in equal parts exciting, thoughtful and ambitious. However the real value of the initiative was the unrelenting desire for meaningful change amongst all those involved. I believe the projects that we are launching today will drive that momentum for change even further.

– Catherine Martin



€5.8 million

Creative Climate Action

Fund II – Agents for Change

Following the success of Creative Ireland and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications' Creative Climate Action Fund in 2021; the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of the Taoiseach announced 43 successful recipients of the €5.8 million *Creative Climate Action Fund II – Agents for Change*. This initiative supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and enables citizens to make meaningful behavioural changes.

Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change is unique in that it pairs creative minds with experts in climate science, sustainability and biodiversity. The fund received 239 applications from an array of disciplines and industries; architecture, creative facilitation, film, participatory design, visual arts, cultural heritage, theatre, service design, dance, literature, music, traditional arts, festivals, circus, publishing and press, and animation and augmented reality.

The 43 successful awardees will establish projects spanning the island of Ireland, including 3 projects funded under the Shared Island initiative (Antrim, Down and Fermanagh). [Read more](#)

The fund supports projects under two strands: **Strand 1, Ignite**, will support 19 large-scale interdisciplinary projects with extensive public engagement on a national level. Some these will run until 2025. [Read more](#)

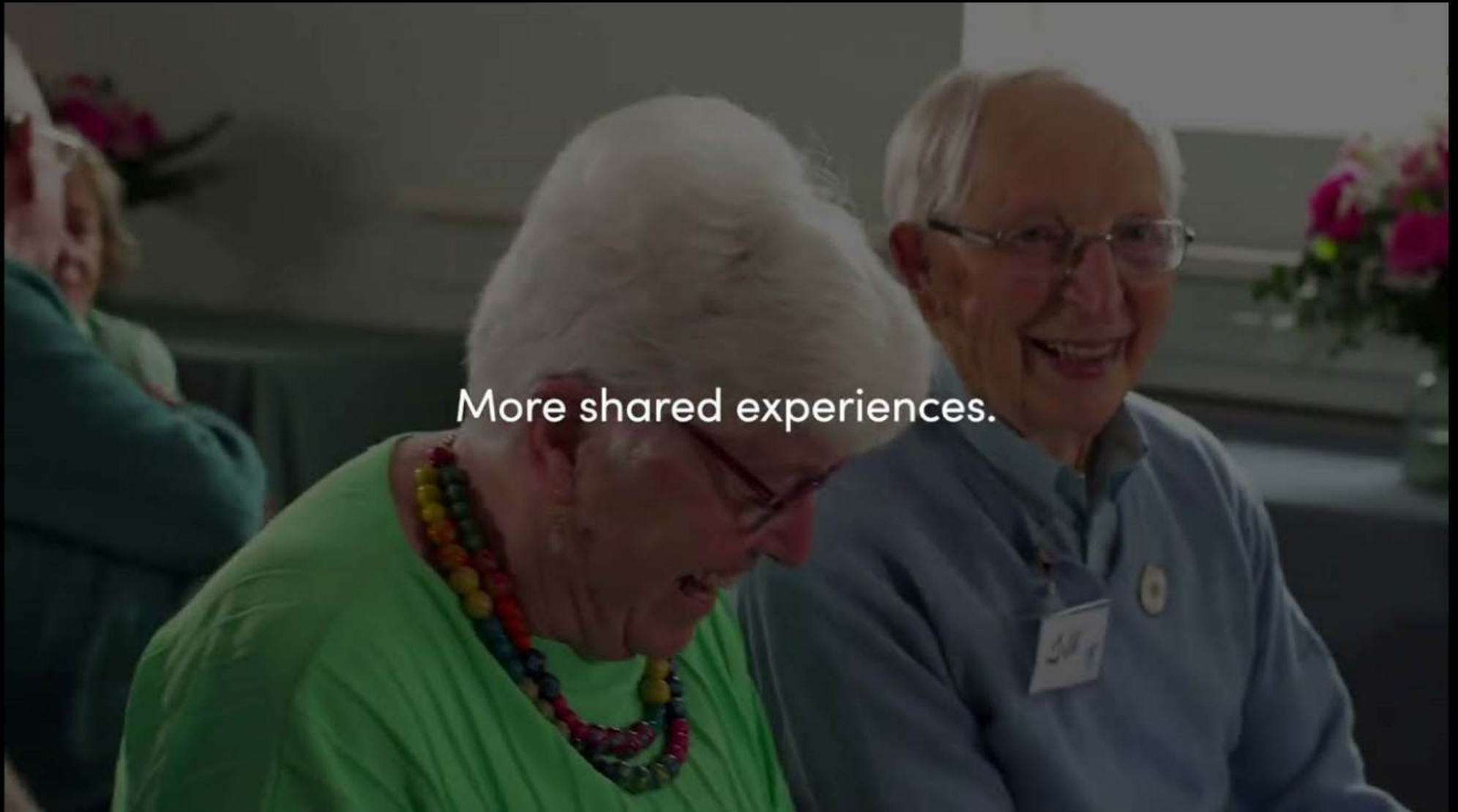
Strand 2, Spark, will fund 24 smaller projects to pilot new ideas for public engagement at a local, community, or community-of-practice scale. These projects will be completed by the end of 2024. [Read more](#)

A group of children are shown in a joyful, energetic state. The child in the foreground is wearing a white t-shirt with a vibrant, multi-colored floral pattern and has their mouth wide open in a shout or cheer. Behind them, other children are visible, some with their hands raised in the air. The background features a building with large windows and a prominent red facade. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and community.

*Creative Ireland
Shared Island Initiative
2023-2025*

Rhyme Ireland Derry
Image by Seán Downey

Creative Communities on a Shared Island



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfTkF-clQLg>

Creative Ireland Shared Island Initiative 2023–2025

2023 marked the first year of Creative Ireland’s participation in the government’s Shared Island initiative which aims to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future.



€6 million

for Shared Island initiatives
from 2023-2025

The Creative Ireland Programme has been allocated €6 million over three years (2023-25) to invest in our programme of creative initiatives on a Shared Island basis.

Creative Opportunities for Children and Young People

Supporting the development of flagship initiatives for children and young people throughout the island, a one-year creative writing initiative ‘Story Seeds’ has been established in partnership with Fighting Words Northern Ireland.

Cruinniú na nÓg

In order to help build capacity towards an all island day of creativity for children and young people, cross-community events connecting young people from both sides of the border were developed with Cruinniú na nÓg partners, Irish Street Arts and Circus with Circus Explored and GMC Beats with Rhyme Island.

Creative Communities on a Shared Island

On 5th October Minister Martin announced €850,000 for 9 new cross-border creative initiatives. Two projects receive €250,000 each for large-scale music, dance and crafting initiatives to be delivered over 2 years and 7 awards of €50,000 for more focused projects that include the development of an all-island Lace Trail, cross-border Dementia Choir Recitals, farm walks and talks in Leitrim and Fermanagh and creative exchanges between Belfast and West Cork.

Creative Health and Wellbeing

In partnership with Creative Aging International, Creative Brain Week launched a publication outlining Ireland’s leading role in the area of Brain Health at a round table event in Belfast in November.

Creative Climate Action

The three recipients of Shared Island funding under the *Creative Climate Action II: Agents of Change* Scheme were announced by Minister Martin on 14th July 2023. The Shared Island fund will contribute €730,000 between 2023 and 2025 for the following projects: (i) Divergently Together (ii) Shifting Tides and Sea Change: Creative Coastal Conversations (iii) Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate.



Sophie McCarthy, Cara Cullen, Sean Downey, Derry
Image by GMC Beats.

Thank you...

To find out more about the Creative Ireland Programme
please go to www.creativeireland.gov.ie

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