



GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD

Gaisce Impact Report 2019

"The values for which you are getting the award today are great values to have as you go forward and achieve more and more and more! Not just for personal benefit, but the interests of all humanity"

- President Michael D. Higgins



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

John Cunningham



Having been nominated to the post by Minister Katherine Zappone in 2018, 2019 was my first full year as Chairperson of Gaisce - The President's Award, a position I have been truly honoured to hold.

In a wonderful speech that he gave at the Gold Award Ceremony which took place just as 2019 was drawing to a close, Uachtarán na nÉireann remarked on the importance of the Gaisce programme in helping young people develop and express an interest and awareness of others, the opportunity to 'move beyond the self' and create a more equal and more just society. This is certainly what I have experienced and witnessed across the many young Gaisce participants and awardees I have had the pleasure to meet since taking up the post. The President also commended Gaisce on the ways it has extended its reach, not just to acknowledge diversity, but respect and welcome it. As this report shows, this commitment to ensuring any young person in Ireland, no matter who they are or their personal circumstance, can achieve a Gaisce Award, this celebration of diversity sums up Gaisce's year in 2019.

Leaving other thanks to the CEO Yvonne McKenna, I wish to draw attention to my fourteen fellow Council members. The Council of Gaisce takes seriously its governance responsibilities and I would like to thank them all sincerely for their tremendous dedication and the many hours they contribute, voluntarily, to creating an Ireland where young people can dream big.

Notwithstanding the seismic events that have taken place already in 2020, and the related challenges that Gaisce and all organisations now face, I am proud to present this Impact Report about the important work of a vital national youth organisation

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cunningham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

John Cunningham

Chair, Gaisce - The President's Award

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Yvonne McKenna



This Impact Report provides a brief overview of work of Gaisce - The President's Award in 2019, a year that seems a lifetime ago. But reflection, recognition and thanks remain important: not only for time that has passed, but as values which will help us face the challenges to come.

In 2019, more than 15,000 young people across the island of Ireland achieved a Gaisce Award. By any metric, this is a staggering number and huge congratulations are due to each and every Gaisce awardee. And huge thanks are due also: to the 800+ organisations and, particularly, the 1,400 President's Award Leaders who mentored and supporting all Gaisce participants in 2019. Without PALs, there simply would not be a Gaisce. I also wish to say a very special thanks to the wonderful Gaisce team, supporting all the Gaisce Award Partners and PALs.

We were delighted in 2019 to continue working with so many Gaisce Award Partners (GAPs) and to welcome more than 100 new GAPs too. A particular focus for Gaisce in 2019 has been our diversity and inclusion programme and, to this end, we partnered with organisations targeting young people at risk of prematurely leaving formal education, developed projects for young people with refugee status and those seeking asylum, with young members of LGBTI+ communities and further progressed measure to ensure the availability of the programme to young people in custody.

At the end of 2020, Gaisce will reach an important milestone - 35 years in existence - and launch a new Strategic Plan. In a year made uncertain by COVID-19, whatever the challenges we face, the organisation remains committed to ensuring as many young people as possible have the opportunity to pursue and achieve a Gaisce Award. Indeed, it has never been more important that we do.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne McKenna'.

Yvonne McKenna

CEO, Gaisce - The President's Award

ALMOST
25K
Registrations

15K
Awards Achieved

800+
Active Gaisce
Award Partners

50+
Challenge
Partners



100+
New GAPs

1,400+
Active President's
Award Leaders

500+
new PALs trained

GAISCE'S SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Although a non-formal learning programme, Gaisce has thrived within formal education. The simple reason is that schools have a far broader remit than academic achievement alone and are vital sites for the social, emotional and personal development of young people. The Gaisce schools programme continued to grow in 2019:

- Over 80% of post-primary schools delivered Gaisce in 2019 (90%+ non-DEIS and 62% DEIS)
- More than 1,150 school-based PALs were active in 2019: an increase of 27% on 2018!
- 2nd Year Pilot: 10 schools began delivering Gaisce to students in their second year of post-primary.
- Gaisce commenced a new partnership with the Schools Completion Programme (TUSLA-Child and Family Agency) with 3 clusters (6 schools) supported by 12 new PALs now delivering Gaisce under the pilot.



SPECIAL FEATURE

Defence Forces Challenge Participant Joel Osaghae takes on the obstacle course in the Curragh.

DEFENCE FORCES CHALLENGE

The 32nd Annual Defence Forces Challenge took place in June, with 32 Gaisce participants put through their paces by personnel from the 2nd Brigade Artillery Regiment of the Defence Forces, who led the Gaisce participants through a host of incredible adventure challenges, training, and team-building exercises. Iona Lee Parnell, a Defence Force Challenge participant was interviewed on RTE News2day about the Challenge and previous participant, and RTÉ's 'Ultimate Hell Week' 2019 winner, Grace O'Rourke, was only too happy to congratulate the group on their achievement on the final day of the challenge.

STORY EXCHANGE PROJECT

In 2019, Gaisce partnered with Mountjoy Prison and Maynooth Access Programme using the Narrative 4 methodology to deliver 'The Story Exchange Project'. This innovative project was conceived following consultation with Gaisce Award participants in the Mountjoy Progression Unit who queried if their Gaisce experience was similar to those who undertake the award outside a prison setting.

The project, which began in September 2019, involved two groups of Gaisce participants - Mountjoy Progression Unit and Maynooth Access Programme - building empathy and understanding between each other through regular story exchange workshops delivered by Gaisce team. Participants will use the story exchange process towards their Community Involvement and will complete all aspects of their Gaisce Award challenges in Spring 2020. An evaluation of the project is also being undertaken by Maynooth Access Programme, which will be published following the completion of the project in 2020.

GAISCE'S DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PROGRAMME

Gaisce's diversity and inclusion work gives expression to our core values of equality and inclusion. These values have been further examined through the development of our Diversity and Inclusion Framework in 2019. In the past year we have increased the number of organisations delivering Gaisce to young people with a disability by 7% and young people from community and voluntary organisations by more than 20%. We have further augmented our work in this area through dedicated diversity and inclusion projects which have progressed and supported the participation of young people from marginalised communities. This has been made possible due to the generous support of funders. Our 2019 highlights include:

YOUNG MIGRANTS TAKING THE GAISCE JOURNEY

In February, and with generous support from the Coca Cola Foundation, Gaisce launched Wavelength, a project that supports young refugees and asylum seekers to achieve a Gaisce Award. Through Wavelength, 45 young people participated in Gaisce in 2019 and 13 young people completed their Bronze Awards with the support of Sports Against Racism Ireland.

Ten young people from Longford Youth Service attended a world café style workshop facilitated by Shireen Shortt in November. They were asked to reflect on their Community Involvement activities, any barriers they might encounter, and how to overcome them. Some participants decided to make a starter pack for all new residents of their Direct Provision Centre with information about locally available services.

Gaisce successfully obtained 3-year AMIF funding which will enable us to offer Wavelength from 2020 to 14-18-year olds who wish to undertake their Gaisce Award.





LikeMinded

LikeMinded is a 2-year pilot programme for LGBTI+ young people and their allies with the support of Norma Smurfit and the Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI). The aim of the project was to create a space for 'likeminded' young people from the LGBTI+ community to undertake their Gaisce Award, along with additional supports to highlight their voice through a creative output in bi-weekly facilitated workshops with Shireen Shortt.

Participants time at the weekly workshops will contribute to their Community Involvement challenge area. The LikeMinded Adventure journey took place in October when 12 young people spent two nights and three days hiking 50kms through the Wicklow Mountains in glorious autumnal weather, making lifelong memories and friendships along the way. Participants will complete their award and host an exhibition of the creative work in 2020.

SPECIAL CARE UNITS

In the interest of equality and accessibility, Gaisce has worked closely with staff in Special Care Units to ensure young people have an opportunity to undertake their Gaisce Award. 2019 saw the first Gaisce Awards achieved from a Special Care Unit. At a special ceremony held in Ratra House in October 2019, seven young people from Ballydowd Special Care Unit and Coovagh House Special Care Unit were presented with their Gaisce Awards and a personal message of congratulations from President Michael D. Higgins.



IRISH PRISON SERVICE PARTNERSHIP AND YOUTH JUSTICE ENGAGEMENT

Director General Irish Prison Service Caron McCaffrey, Sabina Higgins, President Michael D. Higgins and CEO of Gaisce Yvonne McKenna at Áras Uachtaráin



Following up on the 2018 The Award in Custody symposium recommendations, Gaisce hosted an Action Plan Workshop with the Irish Prison Service which resulted in the formation of a joint Gaisce/Irish Prison Service National Steering Commitment to ensuring all young people aged under 26 who find themselves in custody have the opportunity to achieve a Gaisce Award.

The day began with a visit to Áras an Uachtaráin at the invitation of President Michael D. Higgins, who commended both organisations on the strong partnership they have developed.

Participation by young people in custody continued to grow in 2019 with almost 80 Gaisce Awards achieved, including 7 Silver and 3 Gold Awards.

Gaisce's partnership with the Irish Prison Service reflects the organisation's broader commitment to ensuring access to the programme amongst young people in contact, or at risk of contact, with Ireland's Criminal Justice System. Across the spectrum of services from diversion and intervention to detention and post-detention, 175 young people registered for a Gaisce Award in 2019.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Gaisce is governed and guided by a 15-member Council, appointed by the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs. The President of Ireland nominates two of the members and the Taoiseach nominates one member. In 2019, President Higgins nominated Philly McMahon to the Gaisce Council and, Justin McAleese for a second term of office.

Gaisce thanks all Council members for their voluntary commitment to the organisation and the guidance and support they provided in 2019:

Marcella Bannon, Lydia Bracken, Karen Buckley, John Cunningham (Chair), Pauric Dempsey, Miriam Dollard, Denis Duggan, Emma Farrell, Feargal Hynes, Maura Kiely, Justin McAleese, Jimmy McGovern, Philly McMahon, Lindsay Malone (retired Nov 2019) and Paul Sweetman.



Gaisce Council Members
Philly McMahon and
Justin McAleese

Sinéad Burke with Gold Awardees Oisín Butler, Rebecca Duffy, Lorcan Tuohy-Donnelly and Christy Benny at the Gold Awards in Dublin December 2019



CEREMONIES AND EVENTS

GOLD AWARDS

In December, 77 young people from the island of Ireland were presented with their Gold Award by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins in Dublin Castle. The Master of Ceremonies was Sinéad Burke, Irish writer, academic, influencer, activist, and broadcaster. At the ceremony President Michael D. Higgins said that “the values for which you are getting the award today are great values to have as you go forward and achieve more and more and more. Not just for personal benefit, but the interests of all humanity”.

SILVER AWARDS

In 2019, Gaisce hosted four Silver Award Ceremonies in Limerick, Cork and Dublin with over 260 awardees attending to receive their Silver Awards. Attendees were joined by some special guests including Olympian Jessie Barr and Marcus Horan from Munster Rugby.

YOUTH EVENTS

Gaisce attended, presented and exhibited at over 20 youth events in 2019, including School Summit, Zeminar and Higher Options. At the Ombudsman for Children’s ‘Beyond Limits’ conference, Gold Gaisce participants Jason Hopkins and Karen O’Mahony from the Cope Foundation did a truly excellent job as hosts of the event at Croke Park alongside Dancing with the Stars judge Julian Benson.

Gold Awardee Jamie Moore, Chairperson John Cunningham, CEO Yvonne McKenna and former sports broadcaster Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh

CIVIC MERIT

Our annual Civic Merit Award is an opportunity for Gaisce to celebrate and thank President Award Leaders (PALs) who have contributed more than five years active service supporting young people undertaking their Gaisce Award. Who better to be our special guest on such an important evening than renowned broadcaster Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh who presented PALs with their Civic Merit Awards and gave an inspirational speech filled with wisdom, humour, and cúpla scéal.



BRAND NEW LOOK!

Gaisce developed a fresh new look in 2019. A new Communications Guide was developed as well as 28 new branded materials including the PAL guide, Gaisce promo videos, information leaflets and slide decks, all of which are available to download on the PAL resources section of the Gaisce website. Irish versions are also available.



MEDIA COVERAGE

During 2019 Gaisce was covered in more than 230 print articles, including sixteen national features. Gaisce also featured in three national broadcast items and six regional radio items.

11.9 MILLION

people reached at an AVE* of €422.2K.



SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



30%

increase in social media performance in 2019 vs 2018

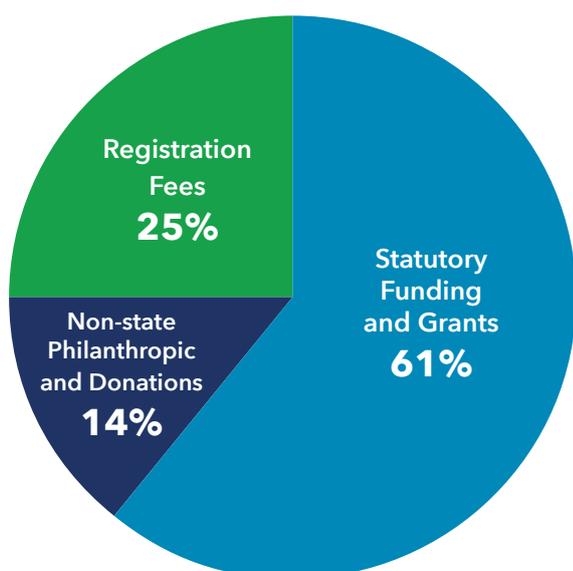


Website page views	545K
FB impressions	322K
FB Reach	217k
Twitter impressions	802K
Instagram impressions	54K
LinkedIn impressions	19K

Financial Information

INCOME 2019

Total: €1,301,307



INCOME BREAKDOWN 2019

Statutory Funding and Grants:
€790,055

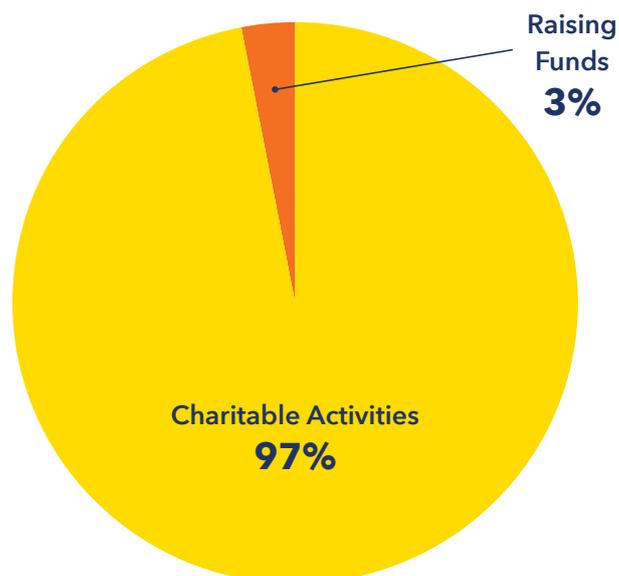
Non-state Philanthropic and Donations:
€188,292

Registration Fees:
€322,951

TOTAL: €1,301,307

EXPENDITURE 2019

Total: €1,249,041



EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN 2019

Charitable Activities:
€1,208,836

Raising Funds:
€40,205

TOTAL: €1,249,041

Gaisce prepares its accounts in line with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), requiring all income received be recognised in the same financial year. 2019's €52K surplus comprises a deficit of ca. €6K on unrestricted funds and a surplus of ca. €58K on restricted funds. The surplus on restricted funds for the year relates to funding received in 2019 for special projects that were either still ongoing at year end or not due to begin until 2020.

A VERY SPECIAL
THANK YOU...



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

**SOCIAL
INNOVATION
FUND**
Sustaining great ideas



The organisation also wishes to sincerely thank Norma Smurfit and an anonymous donor for their continued support.

KEEP IN TOUCH



**GAISCE
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AWARD**

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