



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Support for the Irish Abroad

Annual Report 2020



Emerald Centre volunteers preparing food packages © The Emerald Centre



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Department of Foreign Affairs

Foreword – Minister for Foreign Affairs



Ireland's connection to its Diaspora is a cornerstone of our global engagement. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am fortunate to have gotten to know and to work alongside Irish communities right across the globe, supporting them and helping them support each other. Whether it's providing welfare to the more vulnerable; promoting Irish culture, sport and heritage; or building links in trade, education, research and innovation, it is a tremendous privilege to be a custodian of these connections of family and community.

I am especially grateful to have received the support of Government for our new five-year Diaspora Strategy which sets out how we will support the ever evolving relationship with our Diaspora. In particular, we will recognise and support its increasing diversity. I want to ensure that our support for the Diaspora is open to all who want to share in our heritage and participate in the vibrant life of our communities abroad.

The new Strategy, building on the Programme for Government, also affirms our commitment to seek the approval of the electorate in a referendum on voting rights for our citizens outside the State in future Presidential elections.

As the shadow cast by the Covid pandemic retreats, I look forward to working with our Diaspora in the welcome return of their traditional programme of activities and events. Most especially, I look forward to gathering again in person whether back in Ireland or abroad.

Foreword – Minister of State for the Diaspora and Overseas Development



Meeting the challenges caused by the Covid pandemic has been a key priority for all of us involved in Diaspora engagement over the past year. This report covers a difficult and traumatic period in all of our lives but especially so for our Diaspora. Many in our communities abroad made incredibly hard decisions to stay apart even when Covid was impacting on their family and friends at home. To all of those who lost loved ones in this difficult time I offer my deepest sympathies and condolences.

I want to pay tribute to the many in our Diaspora who stepped forward and offered a hand of support whether locally or back in Ireland. The health care workers who travelled home from some of the farthest reaches of the globe. The community and business networks that helped to source the vital protection and medical equipment needed at the start of the pandemic. The thousands of volunteers – the backbone of our community organisations across the world – for their work and dedication in keeping their communities going and, above all, their efforts to support the well-being of those in our Diaspora who were compelled to shelter due to the risks posed by the pandemic.

Rebuilding our Diaspora communities is our most urgent task, as we recover from the pandemic. The work begun through the Government's special Covid Response Fund will continue and I am committed to ensuring the resilience of our Diaspora organisations in the next funding round of Ireland's Emigrant Support Programme.

Above all, I look forward to renewing friendships in person with our communities around the world. Connecting with family and friends is at the heart of what it means to Irish. Renewing those connections is the best means to ensure a brighter and stronger future for all our communities at home and abroad.

Introduction

Strengthening the bonds between the global Irish diaspora and Ireland is a key priority for the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The challenges of isolation and vulnerability have affected many in Ireland and among our Diaspora. It has stimulated much activity among Irish communities to look after vulnerable community members. A range of Government initiatives and funding supported these solidarity efforts. At the end of the year, the Government's ambitious new Diaspora Strategy was launched, setting out new goals and challenges for Ireland's engagement with Irish communities overseas.

Central to achieving the objectives of the Diaspora Strategy is the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP), which is administered by the Irish Abroad Unit (IAU) of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, in partnership with Irish Embassies and Consulates abroad. Over the course of 2020, the Irish Abroad Unit's ESP and Diaspora Affairs budget lines together funded €13 million to organisations. €11 million was spent through the Emigrant Support Programme (including Strategic Diaspora Projects) and a further €1.3 million was spent on the Covid Response Fund.



Irish dancer Morgan Bullock, USA © Morgan Bullock

Diaspora Strategy

In November 2020, the Government launched Ireland's new Diaspora Strategy as part of a series of measures to strengthen Ireland's relationship with the diaspora and reflecting a similar commitment in Global Ireland 2020-2025.

Ireland's Diaspora Strategy focuses on supporting Irish communities abroad, and in particular the most vulnerable Irish people abroad; on maintaining connections to Ireland; and on maintaining and promoting Irish culture and heritage in Irish

communities abroad. It takes a broad and inclusive view of the Diaspora: a vibrant, multifaceted and globally connected community that reflects the complexity and diversity of modern Irish society. The Strategy pays particular attention to groups which traditionally have been under-represented in diaspora engagement, including the Travelling community, Irish people of mixed heritage, and LGBTQ communities.



Sr Ethel Normoyle, featured in the documentary 'Poverty, Chastity and (Dis)obedience', on the role of Irish missionaries in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. © Sr Ethel Normoyle

The strategy covers five areas or pillars:

- **Our People**, which prioritises the welfare of the Irish abroad;
- **Our Values**, which sets out how Ireland will work with our diaspora to promote our values abroad and celebrate the diversity of our diaspora;
- **Our Prosperity**, which sets out proposals to build mutually beneficial economic ties with the diaspora;
- **Our Culture**, which commits to supporting Irish culture and heritage among our diaspora;
- **Our Influence**, which focusses on Ireland's global reach and the diaspora, under three headings, Reaching the next generation, Irish studies and Inter-diaspora relations.

This new strategy is a result of extensive consultation by the Department of Foreign Affairs with other Departments, State Agencies, and civil society in Ireland and among diaspora communities worldwide. The strategic direction contained within it is also informed by the experience of Ireland's mission network of diaspora engagement.

Reflecting specific commitments contained in the Programme for Government, the new strategy:

- will prioritise the welfare of our most vulnerable and marginalised emigrants, through the Emigrant Support Programme;
- commits to a referendum on voting rights for citizens outside the State in Presidential elections;
- will develop educational and work opportunities in Ireland for members of third- and fourth-generation Irish diaspora; and
- will address barriers facing returning emigrants



Launch of African-American Irish Diaspora Network, Washington DC. © Kim Haughton

COVID-19 Response Fund

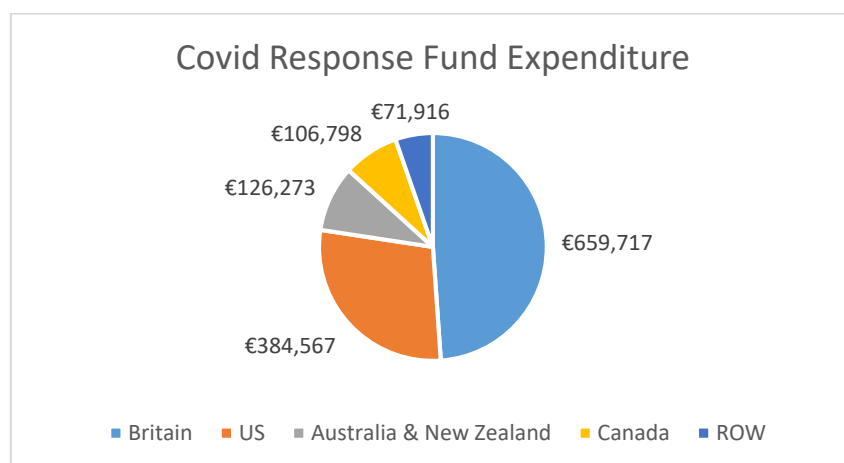
When the scale of the impact of the pandemic on our Diaspora communities became clear, the Government established a dedicated Covid-19 Response Fund for Irish Communities Abroad in 2020.

The four main priorities of the Fund were to support projects that

- protect our elderly and mitigate the impact of social isolation;
- meet the needs of those made vulnerable by the crisis and respond quickly and effectively to cases of particular hardship;
- provide mental health supports and bereavement counselling;
- support innovative ways to provide services online.

Projects were managed by Ireland's diplomatic mission network and were delivered through existing community welfare organisations and charities.

Over €1.3 million has been disbursed to organisations to fund just over 100 projects to deal with the immediate needs of the Irish community abroad.



The Department, through our Mission network, continues to engage with and support Irish community organisations and will continue to show flexibility in repurposing ESP funding should this be required. A targeted communications strategy has been developed to provide support, reassurance and connectedness to our people abroad at this difficult time.

The ability of Irish community organisations to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 in assisting their clients and finding new ways of delivering their services has been truly exceptional. Many of our organisations have come together on a regional basis and have been assisted by volunteers from the broader Irish community to deliver this vital support. The following section illustrates some of the many initiatives that sprung up.

Covid-19 Response Fund: Highlights from Around the World

Sláinte 2020

A high percentage of the Irish immigrant population works in the hospitality and construction sector. Many of these did not have legal status or were adjusting status so that when the pandemic struck, they could not avail of employee benefit, medical insurance or other support networks. This left them in a vulnerable position. Also, many elderly people found themselves in need of assistance. In response a number of Irish American organisations in New York set up Sláinte 2020. The aim of this joint enterprise was to assist those Irish and American Irish who found themselves in need. The organisations involved were: Aisling Irish Community Centre, Emerald Isle Immigration Centre, New York Irish Centre, New York GAA and the United Irish Counties Association.

Through the Covid Response Fund, \$150,000 was allocated to Sláinte 2020. The goal was to ensure food security and housing security to the neediest people and families. Money was disbursed under the supervision of the combined organisations.

Mashonaland Irish Association (MIA)

This organisation has received funding through the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) since 2009. MIA provides a vital service to the Irish community in Zimbabwe through their volunteer base, organising monthly social get-togethers for the elderly, visiting the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and distributing food vouchers at Christmas, and medical supplies for those in need.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with difficulties due to the deteriorating economic situation in Zimbabwe, the elderly and vulnerable Irish in Zimbabwe have faced increased challenges. Hyperinflation has eroded the income that people have, and people are experiencing severe financial hardship. MIA was approved for funding of €18,500 through the Covid Response Fund to enable them to provide food hampers and PPE to members of the Irish community. As a result, MIA were able to assist 49 Irish members in need during these difficult times.

The Emerald Centre, Leicester

The Emerald Centre in Leicester, established in 2006, has been serving the Irish community through continuously addressing the evolving needs of the Irish Diaspora, with a particular focus on alleviating loneliness and isolation amongst the vulnerable elderly Irish members through educational, recreational and social programmes. Due to the continued covid19 lockdown in Leicester, the centre responded rapidly by adopting its service delivery model to continue to meet the needs of the Irish elderly community. The “Shine a Light” project, which was funded under the Emigrant Support Programme covid19 response fund, achieved the Centre’s objectives to provide social, recreational and emotional support to its’ vulnerable members through the delivery of their activities during this difficult time. They provided a telephone befriending service, hot cooked meals, food parcels delivered to members who were isolating, a bereavement counselling service,

intensive one to one support, bespoke activity bags and regular newsletters. This project, which was delivered in partnership with the Gypsy and Traveller Equality project (GATE), Comhaltas, GAA, Irish Studies Group, Irish Language Class, Leicester City Council, the Northfield Emerald Food Bank and many volunteers highlighted how effective organisations working in partnership can be in supporting their communities.



London Irish Centre's Covid Community Relief © London Irish Centre

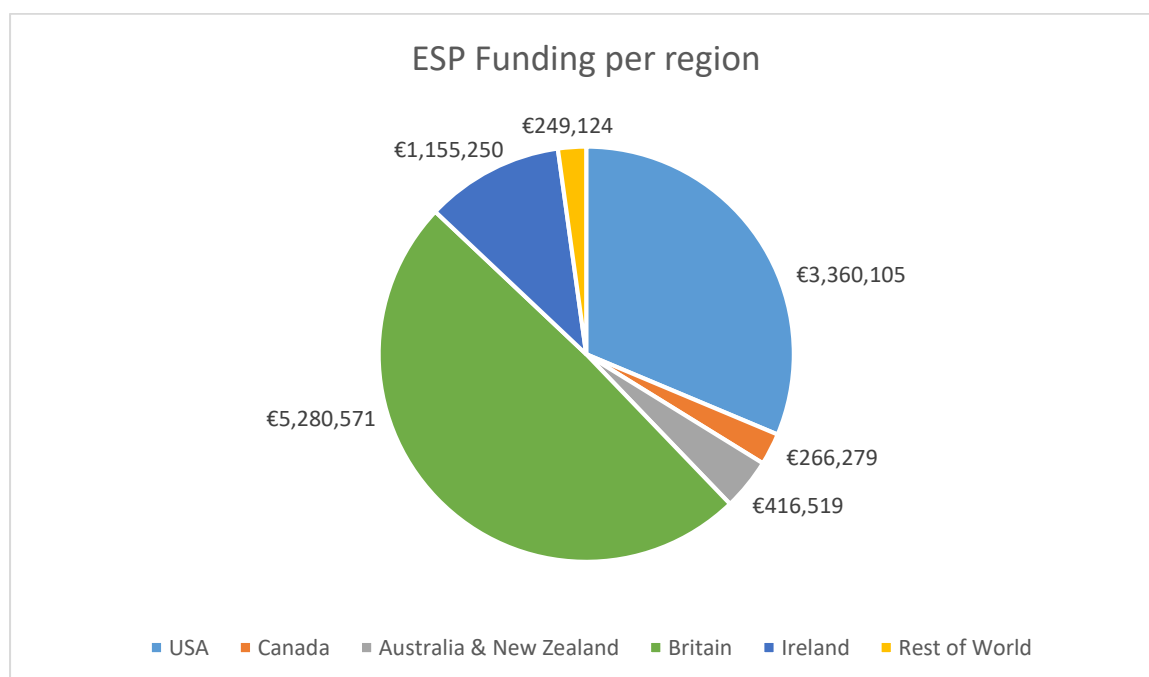
Emigrant Support Programme

The Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) is a tangible expression of the Government's support of and commitment to the global Irish community. Since its inception in 2004, the programme has supported the work of Irish organisations and communities around the world. Grants have ranged from small amounts for small voluntary groups, to major allocations awarded to community organisations operating on a large scale.

In 2020, 529 applications were received from 352 organisations requesting over €22 million worth of funding from the Programme's budget. The amount of funding awarded in 2020 was €10.7 million for 416 projects. Through the ESP, the Government provides financial support to organisations engaged in the delivery of front line advisory services and community care to Irish emigrants, particularly to the more vulnerable and marginalised members of our community abroad, including the elderly. This proved especially important in 2020 when the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear, as many welfare organisations had to reorient their services to comply with public health measures and make sure the most urgent needs of their communities were addressed.

In addition, the ESP also facilitates Irish Government investment in a range of cultural, community and heritage projects, which foster a vibrant sense of Irish community and identity, as well as strategic capital projects.

The 'Strategic Diaspora Project' stream supports the work of our embassies and consulates in extending our engagement with diaspora groups in innovative ways. It also assists in developing new diaspora contacts, in particular through reaching out to non-traditional or previously underrepresented diaspora groups. In 2020, funding over €300,000 was allocated to 18 projects.



Monitoring & Evaluation

The department is firmly committed to ensuring best practice monitoring of the expenditure associated with Emigrant Support Programme grants.

Under a commitment set out in the 2020 'Global Ireland: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2020-2025' 1% of the ESP budget is allocated to this annual programme of evaluation and audits. This amounts to €125,950 based on the 2020 ESP budget. Almost €328,838 has been allocated towards audits since 2014.

For the 2019-2020 programme, 64 external audits and evaluations have been conducted on organisations funded by the ESP: 33 in Britain, 9 in Ireland, 16 in the US, 4 in Australia, and 2 in Canada.

The auditors considered such areas as governance and management structures, board composition & rotations, value for money, and whether the grant has been used in accordance with ESP objectives, spent as per the agreed terms and conditions, and accounted and reported properly. Organisations actively engaged with Irish Abroad Unit and relevant embassies on the findings and addressing recommendations.

Emigrant Support Programme: Highlights from Around the World

The Irish Cultural Centre Hammersmith, Britain

The Irish Cultural Centre Hammersmith has been a home for Irish culture in London for 25 years now. In the months following the closure of the centre in March 2020, the Centre launched ICC Digital – an online channel showcasing the best of Irish Culture through social media, YouTube and its website - allowing the ICC to reach an audience around the world. They continued their education programme online via Zoom.

However, conscious that a significant number of the Centre’s elderly and vulnerable patrons either did not have access to modern technology or did not feel confident enough using these, they also established a Culture Hotline. This is a UK-wide free phone-in service, enabling patrons to engage and enjoy weekly concerts and storytelling, and offsetting the isolation of lockdown.

London Irish Centre, Britain

The London Irish Centre’s plans focused on keeping the most vulnerable safe, maintaining community connections, and ensuring financial sustainability. Within days, the Centre created partnerships and mobilised a community response to safely deliver hundreds of nutritious hot lunches to the isolated.

The wellbeing team created a health line for people to check in on health concerns, wellbeing and Covid-related symptoms. The advice team rolled out a telephone advice service and a new web advice chat on the Centre’s website.

The longstanding befriending service evolved from face-to-face to telephone and tripled in size. Hundreds of phone calls were made every week to maintain social connections. The Library team created an outreach service, in which staff and volunteers send bespoke book parcels based on personal interests.



London Irish Centre volunteer and client – © London Irish Centre

Seniors Music Sessions, Australia

Sydney Arts Group and Irish Screen Projects joined forces with the Irish Support Agency for a fun arts project in support of Irish Seniors in New South Wales. In March, the Irish Music Sessions for Seniors project, which receives support from the Emigrant Support Program, got off to a strong start with an introductory session led by Noel Brophy of the Wollongong Seniors group. However, New South Wales soon went into lockdown with the Covid-19 pandemic and the project faced an uncertain future.

Undaunted, the organisers and members regrouped and ventured into uncharted territories online. In just a few short weeks, seniors got to grips with their computers, tablets and smartphones, and were enthusiastically singing songs online with the help of Zoom and multiple cups of tea.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is the largest group involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music, with hundreds of local branches around the world. Many local branches have found ways to move their music education into the digital realm.

North American Comhaltas branches have continued teaching young Irish American musicians through online classes and sessions. Chicago-based Murphy Roche Branch's successful eComórtas attracted entrants from across the continent. Comhaltas Japan started 'let's practice' online sessions with Irish music, song and storytelling videos, step-dancing lessons, and lectures on O'Carolan and The Irish Harp Tradition.

In Britain, Comhaltas branches have linked with GAA clubs and Irish welfare organisations to support the Irish community through volunteering, maintaining contact with older isolated Irish people and providing mental health first aid training focused on supporting the Irish community during this difficult period.



Sean Nós Dancing Class in Japan © Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

CARA, Britain



CARA #operationnollaig (c) Irish Community Care

family, shop online, pursue interests and hobbies, and to access the amazing programmes of Irish cultural activity that have been available during the lockdown.

Ten Irish organisations across the North West of England came together to deliver CARA, a dedicated Covid-19 response service to support their communities to stay safe, well and connected.

CARA provided a vital helping hand and listening ear to people who were particularly vulnerable during the pandemic, those who were self-isolating, older, in poor physical or mental health; managing caring responsibilities and job loss, living alone far from family and friends.

Over 70 people volunteered their time to do important practical tasks such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, making phone calls, and, at the same time, having a bit of craic and a chat. Volunteers also shared their IT skills by helping people to get online, and allowing them to see

Boston Immigrant Covid-19 Collective, USA

In response to the crisis, the Rian Immigrant Center and 10 other partner organisations came together to form the Boston Immigrant COVID-19 Collaborative (BICC). The City of Boston appointed the Rian Immigrant Center (formerly known as the Irish International Immigrant Center) to coordinate this group. Many immigrants, especially those who are undocumented, lost their jobs and have little-to-no access to benefits or healthcare.

The Irish Pastoral Centre provides services, from supports for the elderly, immigration advice, as well as welfare and counselling supports. The IPC also provided counselling and created a stockpile of essential household goods for those most in need.

Toronto Irish Community, Canada

When the pandemic first hit Toronto, it was determined that Irish seniors and new arrivals were the most vulnerable in the community, however anyone in need would be helped. Working under the umbrella of the Irish Benevolent Society, Outreach and Finance committees were set up uniting many community organisations in Toronto to coordinate help.

Along the Vincent de Paul model, grocery vouchers were offered to those in need and the initiative was promoted through all organisations' websites, the Irish and New in Toronto Facebook page and local Irish radio shows. The Emerald Isle Seniors Society also reached out and offered a virtual cup of tea and chat as well as shopping and fulfilling other needs of its members.

Members of the following organisations were involved in the initiative: the Irish Benevolent Society, Canada GAA, Ireland Fund of Canada, Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce, from Irish Person of the Year, Toronto GAA, Solace House, Irish Canadian Immigration Centre, and the Irish Cultural Society, as well as the new Honorary Consul of Ireland in Toronto.

Vancouver Irish Covid-19 Support Group, Canada

In March of this year, the Irish community in B.C. quickly came together to support each other through a daily Zoom meeting. Community leaders and representatives were concerned about the well-being of the Irish in B.C. given the speed and severity of the social and economic disruption that the pandemic caused, and out of this the **Irish Covid-19 Support Group** was born.

Some of the great initiatives that happening within the Irish community have included:

- The Irish Running Crew's **virtual runs** (including some serious virtual competitions!) and Friday night Zoom meet ups;
- The Irish Canadian Immigration Centre put in place a Vancouver based **Social Care Advisor** who is available to guide those who are experiencing mental health or other welfare issues to local appropriate resources;
- The Irish Women's Network hosted a **Virtual Cup of Tea** every Monday for anyone who just wants to connect and chat;
- Blackthorn, a traditional Irish music band, hosted a weekly "**play-along session**" with musicians Michael Viens and Rosie Carver.

To Be Irish at Christmas



Minister Colm Brophy at launch of To Be Irish at Christmas 2020, © Julie Behal photography

To Be Irish at Christmas was launched over the festive period to engage and stay connected with the 750,000 or so Irish nationals and their families abroad who could not visit family and friends in Ireland over the Christmas 2020 period due to the pandemic restrictions on international travel.

We worked with partners such as the Local Government Authorities across Ireland to support engagement in this initiative. The Department of Foreign Affairs diplomatic network collaborated with diaspora groups around the world to support a full and varied programme. The platform hosted over 200 creative, cultural and community events, 98 diaspora stories, and 60 gifting pages showcasing Irish enterprises to an audience in over 50 countries. There were nearly 700,000 visits to the TBI platforms arising from the two-week programme of events.

Plans are underway for delivery of To Be Irish at Christmas 2021.

Collaboration with Irish Cultural Organisations

GAA

There are over 420 GAA clubs outside of Ireland in 45 different countries worldwide.

For over a decade the Department has had an established funding partnership in place with the GAA for Games and Community Development officers in Britain and in areas of the US with grant funding of just over €83,000 allocated for this purpose in the US in 2020. As a result of Covid-19 and posts in the UK being furloughed, the Britain project did not go ahead as anticipated, and unspent 2019 funding was carried over and allocated separately in 2020 to cover the Britain project.

In addition, since 2013, through the Global Games Development Fund, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the GAA have provided funding for developmental projects in GAA clubs in Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Canada, US, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and South America. This Fund provides financial support specifically for projects and initiatives that increase or improve opportunities for the Irish diaspora and other communities abroad to play Gaelic Games, thereby strengthening Irish networks and Irish identity internationally, nurturing a sense of Irish community and creating new links between the global Irish and their local communities.



Liffre GAA – Youth International Tournament © Gaëtan Danet

The growth of Gaelic Games internationally, through the Global Irish Development Fund, has been phenomenal. In 2020 there were 75 successful applications, with an additional 73 Covid related applications supported. This compared with 76 in 2019 and 85 in 2018. Some projects are one-off events, while others have activities lasting the course of a year. In 2020 the Department contributed €200,000 to the GAA for the Global Games Development Fund, this amount being matched by the GAA. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, GAA clubs around the world have shone bright as organisers of community support initiatives and have demonstrated the deep sense of connection that characterises our diaspora. Club after club throughout the world responded quickly to reach out to members of their communities in need of support and comfort, from organising food drops to vulnerable people, to coming up with creative solutions to keep people fit and healthy.

The Department also collaborates closely with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in promoting Irish music worldwide and fostering a deeper sense of connection among the Irish diaspora to their roots. With the assistance of funding through the ESP, Comhaltas reach out through music to the younger generation of Irish communities abroad and to our affinity diaspora. In 2020 €275,200 was allocated to Comhaltas under the ESP for activities in Britain, North America, Canada and Japan.



John and Carmel Burke with Eilish Cumins, Leamington Spa © Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Covid had a heavy impact on CCE in 2020 and saw them pivot their projects to online activity. Branches, volunteers and members, in particular across Britain and the US, joined with other Irish organisations in response to COVID-19. Comhaltas members were to the fore in their communities and beyond delivering food, checking on vulnerable and isolated members of the community, while still maintaining music teaching and playing through digital online delivery. Branches hosted virtual sessions – informal and formal performances of instrumental

music, song and dance, skype lessons, family quiz nights; Comhaltas personnel also setup rounds of telephone calls to ensure everyone was supported and connected, particularly with the older and vulnerable members of the wider Comhaltas and Irish Diaspora community.

Presidential Distinguished Service Award

The Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad, administered by the Irish Abroad Unit, is an expression of the importance placed by Ireland on the Global Irish, their contributions and their achievements.

The Awards are presented by the President every year. They provide recognition by the Irish State of people living abroad who have given sustained and distinguished service to Ireland or to Irish communities abroad, or on a global or international issue of importance.

Nominations for the Award are made through our diplomatic mission network, and are considered by a High Level Panel. The nominees recommended by the Panel to receive the award are then submitted to Government for approval.

To 2019, the Awards have been presented to 83 recipients from diverse locations and backgrounds, who have made their contributions to Ireland in many different ways. An additional 14 individuals were selected to receive the Award in 2020, bringing the total number of awardees to 97. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the ceremony for the 2020 recipients was unable to proceed. However, it is hoped that they will receive their awards from the President in 2021, Public Health guidelines permitting.

The categories under which individuals can be nominated are:

- Arts, Culture and Sport;
- Business and Education;
- Charitable Works;
- Irish Community Support;
- Peace, Reconciliation and Development;
- Science, Technology and Innovation (additional category introduced in 2016).

The overall cost of the PDSA scheme to IAU in 2020 was just over €17,500.

The recipients of the 2020 Awards are as follows:

PDSA Recipient 2020	Category	Location
Jack Charlton (Decd)	Arts, Culture and Sport	Britain
James W. Flannery	Arts, Culture and Sport	US
Mitsuko Ohno	Arts, Culture and Sport	Japan
Fiona Shaw	Arts, Culture and Sport	Britain
Michael J. Dowling	Business and Education	US
Sr. Louise Horgan	Charitable Works	Thailand
Alice Kennedy (deceased)	Charitable Works	Britain
Dermot O'Leary	Charitable Works	Britain
Loretta Cosgrove	Irish Community Support	Australia

William Duncan	Peace, Reconciliation & Development	The Netherlands
Sr. Patricia Murray	Peace, Reconciliation & Development	Italy
Fr. Kevin O'Hara	Peace, Reconciliation & Development	Nigeria
Michael Ryan	Science, Technology & Innovation	Switzerland
Dennis J. Slamon	Science, Technology & Innovation	US

St Brigid's Day

The celebration of St Brigid's Day was chosen by the Department as a new and innovative way to show the work of trailblazing, inspirational Irish women. Building on the success of Embassy London's inaugural event in 2018 and coordinated by Irish Abroad Unit, Brigid's Day 2020 doubled in size compared to the year before, with more than 35 embassies and consulates hosting events to celebrate the pioneering and creative role of Irish women in various aspects of life. As St Brigid's Day is celebrated on February 1st, these events were largely unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since hosting the pilot event, London has become the focal point for global Brigid's Day celebrations as the initiative has captured the imagination of communities across Britain. While a flagship evening at Ireland's Embassy in London provided many highlights, featuring keynote speaker Aisling Bea, emceed by Derry Girls' Siobhán McSweeney, Irish community groups also hosted events in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool.

As in previous years, the Arts were well represented in the global programme of events. In Berlin, the literary festival *Brigid meets Berlin* returned for a second edition, hosting two panel discussions with authors including Jan Carson, Emilie Pine and Martina Devlin as well as six other literary and political events alongside. In Mexico, a concert by Saint Sister lit up the Lunario del Auditorio Nacional, an iconic venue in Mexico City. Closer to home, the Museum of Literature in Dublin in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Hamilton Gallery in Sligo, hosted the opening of an exhibition of 95 works of art inspired by the life and work of equality campaigner and trade unionist Eva Gore-Booth.



MoLI Eva Gore Booth Exhibition Opening in partnership with Hamilton Gallery © Paul Sherwood

Brigid's Day also celebrated women in other walks of life. Boston saw an event celebrating Founding Women in STEM in cooperation with the Ireland America Science Forum and Boston College Global Leadership Institute. Budapest hosted its inaugural Brigid's Day event featuring veteran equality campaigner Dr Gráinne Hayes. In Paris, events included a business networking breakfast *Blazing a*

trail: Women championing change in business and tech for a high level audience of over 50 French, Irish and international businesspeople.

As in the previous year, several events also played host to *Blazing a Trail*, a travelling exhibition celebrating historical female pioneers of the Irish diaspora. This exhibition, curated by Dr Angela Byrne in 2019 for EPIC the Irish Emigration Museum with support from the Department of Foreign Affairs, continues to travel the world to showcase the extraordinary history of Irish women and their impact on the world.

With the great enthusiasm that St Brigid's Day has inspired so far, the Irish Abroad Unit is looking forward to expanding this celebration of women, and bringing Brigid to an even wider range of locations in 2021.

Centenarian Bounty

The Centenarian Bounty is the award made by the President of Ireland to people living in Ireland who have reached 100 years of age. In 2006, the Government approved the extension of the 'Centenarian Bounty' scheme whereby persons born on the island of Ireland, who have reached 100 years of age, wherever they may now reside, became eligible for the award of a €2,540 centenarian bounty from the President.

The Irish Abroad Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs support Áras an Uachtaráin in processing applications from people resident outside the State.

In the period 24 April 2006 to 30 December 2020, 2,658 people resident outside of the State received the award from the President, with 209 applications processed in total in 2020.

Samaritans Freephone Helpline

Samaritans, in partnership with the Government of Ireland, through the Emigrant Support Programme, have been working together to provide 24-hour Freephone access to the Samaritans helpline in Ireland for Irish people in a number of countries abroad. The purpose of this project is to provide access to a culturally sensitive emotional support resource for the Irish abroad who are in distress, struggling to cope and who are in need of emotional support.

Members of the diaspora are signposted to the Samaritans Freephone number through the relevant Irish Embassy, or Irish community organisation, in that particular country. All calls to this number are connected to a Samaritans volunteer in Ireland via a technical divert, and are free of charge to the caller.

Since 2018, the service has operated on a pilot basis initially in the United Arab Emirates, China, Hong Kong and Poland. The service was extended to Canada and Australia in January 2021.

Diaspora Affairs

The Department of Foreign Affairs provides funding through the Diaspora Affairs Fund for projects and programmes which support engagement between the Diaspora and Irish communities, as well as programmes which support the implementation of national Diaspora strategic objectives. The Fund supported a number of projects in 2020, including Ireland Reaching Out, Back for Business, EPIC, the Museum of Emigration and the Citizen's Information Board returning to Ireland services.

Back for Business

To assist emigrants returning from abroad to set up a business in Ireland, the Department has for several years now funded "Back for Business". This free, six-month mentorship programme matches participants with lead entrepreneurs who act as mentors, and provides workshops on the Irish business environment and networking opportunities. The third edition of the programme ran in 2020 and for the first time trialled a Further Development stream for previous participants. At the end of the cycle, virtually all participants were very positive in their feedback and would recommend the programme to others. Back for Business will run again in 2021 for a fourth cycle.



Back for Business Lead Entrepreneur Áine Denn with participants Barra Kelly, SHD Consulting Engineers and Shane Bourke, Irish Office Space at a Review Roundtable Session in the Merrion Hotel, Dublin. © Orla Murray, Coalesce

Annex I: Emigrant Support Programme Spending 2020

EMIGRANT SUPPORT PROGRAMME GRANTS	
<u>Name of Organisation</u>	<u>Amount Paid Euro Total</u>
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AUSTRALIA	
Fenians Fremantle & Freedom Inc	
Great Irish Famine Commemoration	€3,574
Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce	€17,509
Irish Australian Support and Resource Bueau Inc	€76,480
Irish Australian Support Association Queensland	€62,709
Irish Screen Projects	€3,693
Irish Support Agency	€130,319
Lake School Celtic Music Song & Dance	€2,529
Queensland Irish Choir	€1,953
St Patrick's Day Parade Association Inc	€4,501
St Patricks Day WA Inc	€9,233
Sydney Irish Sport and Social Club	€2,415
Sydney Queer Irish	€6,155
Sydney St. Patricks Day Organisation Incorporated	€9,233
The Claddagh Association	€86,217
Total ESP paid out Australia	€416,519
BRITAIN	
Acton Homeless Concern Emmaus House and The Damien Centre	€27,900
Age UK Hillingdon Harrow & Brent	€11,130
Aisling Return to Ireland Project	€118,281
Ashford Place	€180,402
Bell Farm Christian Centre	€7,812
Benefit Advice Shop, The	€2,232
Benevolent Society of St. Patrick, The	€5,480
Birmingham Irish Association	€251,070
Bolton Irish Community Association Social Club Limited	€6,489
Brent Centre for Young People	€21,555
Brent Irish Advisory Service	€131,657
Brian Boru Club	€8,023
Causeway: Ireland Scotland Business Exchange	€16,581
Ceann Creige Hurling and Camogie Club	€2,411
Conradh na Gaeilge Glaschú	€41,044

Conradh na Gaeilge i Londain	€3,802
Corby Young at Heart Luncheon Club	€8,675
Coventry Irish Society	€69,449
Derby Saint Patrick's Day Celebration Committee	€2,412
Edinburgh's Festival of Ireland	€1,644
Emerald Centre, The	€57,481
Emerald Circle Club	€4,177
Emerald Senior Citizens Group	€3,681
Feith an Cheoil School of Music	€8,314
Fréa	€38,799
Friends, Families and Travellers	€55,270
Golden Shamrock Club	€9,396
Green Curtain Theatre	€2,833
Gypsies and Travellers Wales	€16,441
Halifax & District Irish Society	€6,576
Haslingden Davitt Irish Democratic League Club	€2,879
Harborough District Children and Young People's Charity	€10,961
Huddersfield Irish Centre	€3,259
Huddersfield St. Patrick's Day Parade Association	€1,747
IIBN - Irish International Business Network	€20,984
Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy (ICAP)	€172,885
Irish Chaplaincy	€273,035
Irish Club Warrington	€6,977
Irish Community Care	€323,612
Irish Community Care Manchester	€151,360
Irish Community Services in Greenwich, Bexley & Lewisham	€217,306
Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith Ltd	€166,904
Irish Democratic League of Great Britain	€2,582
Irish Elderly Advice Network	€138,064
Irish Film London	€33,162
Irish Heritage Limited	€8,221
Irish in Britain	€438,428
Irish in the UK TV, The	€11,160
Irish Literary Society	€4,354
Irish Music and Dance in London (IMDL)	€23,017
Irish Pensioners Choir	€5,552
Irish Pensioners Forum of East London	€5,580
Irish Studies workshop (Irish Cultural Activities)	€3,348
Irish Tuesday Club	€8,370
Jersey Irish Society	€3,165
Kilburn Irish Pensioners	€1,644
Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE)	€40,926
Leeds Irish Arts Foundation	€42,005
Leeds Irish Centre	€11,160
Leeds Irish Health and Homes	€205,605
Leeds St. Patrick's Day Parade	€11,085

Leicester and Leicestershire Irish Forum	€27,635
Leicestershire GATE	€27,635
Lewisham Irish Community Centre	€77,533
Little Ireland Arts Collective	€1,644
Liverpool Irish Centre	€69,518
Liverpool Irish Festival	€12,712
London Gypsies and Travellers	€81,319
London Irish Centre	€514,014
Luton Irish Forum	€138,700
Manchester Irish Education Group	€453
Manchester Irish Language Group	€701
Mansfield & Dukeries Irish Association	€3,931
Maya Centre, The	€25,131
Milton Keynes Irish Centre	€10,197
Monica's Place Limited	€20,649
New Horizon Youth Centre	€33,560
NOAH Enterprise	€55,427
Northampton Irish Support Group	€46,461
Nottingham St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival	€2,788
Passage 2000	€38,689
Portsmouth Irish Society	€6,448
Safe Start Foundation	€54,721
Sandwell Irish Society	€37,583
Sanktus	€27,635
Sheffield Irish Association	€1,833
SIFA Fireside	€16,029
Solace Women's Aid	€38,799
South London Irish Association	€22,040
Southwark Irish Pensioners Project	€131,977
Southwark Travellers Action Group (STAG)	€44,216
St Mungo's	€11,085
St Thomas More Roman Catholic Church	€575
Strange Fish Theatre Company	€2,232
Traveller Movement, The	€155,197
Troubles, Tragedy & Trauma	€3,326
Tyneside Irish Centre	€17,017
Tyneside Irish Cultural Society	€28,875
Wake The Beast	€2,740
West Hampstead Women's Centre	€8,928
Womens Irish Network London	€6,222
York Irish Association	€1,754
Young@Heart	€636
1916 Rising Centenary Committee -Scotland	€1,644
Total ESP paid out Britain	€5,280,571

CANADA	
Anna Liva Productions (Bloomsday Toronto)	€4,511
Capital Area Chapter, Irish Canadian Cultural Association of New Brunswick	€2,571
Celtic Cultural Society of Nova Scotia	€4,500
CelticFest Vancouver Society	€9,569
Ciné Gael Montréal	€1,929
Emerald Isle Seniors Society	€26,914
Festival Bloomsday Montréal	€2,571
Halifax St. Patrick's Day Parade Society	€3,214
Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Toronto	€6,911
Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Ottawa	€9,000
Ireland Canada Center for Commerce, Calgary	€4,238
Ireland- Canada Chamber of Commerce, Montreal Chapter	€4,243
Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver	€3,857
Irish Association of Manitoba Inc.	€6,445
Irish Canadian Immigration Centre	€113,995
Irish Cultural Society of Calgary	€3,825
Irish Cultural Society of Central Alberta	€3,889
Irish Families in Vancouver	€1,948
Irish Seniors Social Group Ottawa (ISSGO)	€5,800
Irish Society - National Capital Region	€2,571
Irish Sports & Social Society	€5,786
Irish Women's Network of BC	€5,709
Okanagan Irish Society	€3,968
Solace House Canada	€9,643
The Irish Benevolent Society of BC	€3,190
The Irish Club of White Rock	€1,978
The New Trad Society	€3,857
Toronto Irish Film Festival	€3,222
Toronto Irish Players Community Theatre	€6,428
Total ESP paid out Canada	€266,280
IRELAND	
Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas	€154,073
Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann	€248,529
Crosscare Migrant Project	€200,616
Foróige	€65,500
GAA	€211,391
Irish Heritage Trust	€20,000
MART / CIACLA	€14,000
Safe Home Programme CLG	€228,141
UCD - Clinton Institute	€7,000
UCD - Library Belfield	€6,000

Total ESP paid out Canada	€1,155,250
UNITED STATES	
Aisling Irish Community Center	€132,051
American Conference for Irish Studies	€14,960
Amherst Irish Association/Cumann Gaelach Amherst	€3,847
Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.	€29,894
Battery Heritage Foundation	€8,207
Boston Currach Rowing Club	€4,018
Brookside Irish Fest d.b.a. Kansas City Irish Fest	€12,792
Catholic Charities Community Services	€50,459
Celtic Heritage Festival Savannah	€8,347
Celtic Junction Arts Center	€41,876
CelticMKE	€2,332
Center for Irish Music	€4,274
Charlotte Irish American Center Inc	€8,500
Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform	€17,299
Chicago Gaelic Park	€19,449
Chicago Irish Film Festival	€8,375
Chicago Irish Immigrant Support (ICS)	€264,244
CNAG Gaelic League LA	€1,708
Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers	€82,203
Commodore John Barry Arts & Cultural Center	€17,097
Corrib Theatre	€4,273
Craic Fest	€6,411
Cumann na Gaeilge i mBoston	€2,137
Daltaí na Gaeilge	€7,266
Digital Irish	€40,952
Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate	€21,371
Emerald Isle Immigration Center	€251,226
Gael Scoil	€5,129
Gaelic League of Detroit	€5,008
Georgetown University Global Irish Studies	€17,097
Gingold Theatrical Group	€8,548
Graduate Center and Queens College, CUNY	€6,839
Greater Danbury Irish Cultural Foundation	€6,839
Hibernian Transmedia NFP	€4,188
Hudson Valley Irish Fest Inc	€12,823
IIBN - Irish International Business Network	€15,831
Ireland American Science Forum	€7,694
Ireland Network Chicago	€25,126
Ireland's Great Hunger Institute, Quinnipiac University	€32,057
Irish American Heritage Center	€24,003
Irish American Heritage Museum	€23,508

Irish American Partnership	€17,097
Irish Apostolate USA	€25,893
Irish Arts Centre	€250,000
Irish Books Arts and Music Celebration NPO	€3,350
Irish Business Organization	€7,779
Irish Center of Cincinnati	€29,313
Irish Congress of Southern California	€3,931
Irish Cultural & Learning Foundation	€20,089
Irish Cultural Center of New England	€135,453
Irish Cultural Center of Western New England Inc.	€41,674
Irish Culture Bay Area	€3,416
Irish Diaspora Center	€179,793
Irish Fair of Minnesota	€12,563
Irish Genealogical Society International	€854
Irish Heritage Club	€4,274
Irish Heritage Club	€6,410
Irish Immigration Pastoral Center	€199,979
Irish Music School of Chicago	€12,563
Irish Network Boston	€5,126
Irish Network Colorado	€42,706
Irish Network DC	€8,548
Irish Network USA	€16,976
Irish Pastoral Center	€208,258
Irish Repertory Theatre	€57,275
Irish Screen America	€13,202
John F. Kennedy Library Foundation	€53,531
Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Inc.	€8,375
Louisiana Hibernian Charity	€12,823
Maine Irish Heritage Center	€34,194
Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural and Sports Centre	€15,025
Michigan Irish American chamber of Commerce	€4,271
New York Irish Centre	€107,719
NYCStPatricksParade.org	€38,468
Origin Theatre Company	€25,645
President and Fellows of Harvard College: Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures	€17,097
Rian Immigrant Centre	€256,533
Savannah Irish Festival Committee, Inc.	€2,562
Scituate/West Cork Sister City Committee	€12,823
Solace House Inc	€17,288
Solas Nua	€50,436
St. Pats For All	€6,678
Tara Hall	€4,188
The Friends of Irish Studies in the West	€20,512
The Irish Outreach Center	€63,801
The Rosenbach	€8,548

The Young Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago Charities	€4,174
UC Berkeley	€8,974
United Irish Cultural Center	€12,820
Washington Ireland Program	€6,839
Total ESP paid out US	€3,360,105
REST OF THE WORLD	
ARGENTINA	
Irish Business Network Argentina	€2,424
BELGIUM	
EFACIS	€41,480
BRAZIL	
ABEI	€724
Universidade de São Paulo	€11,545
CHINA	
St. Patrick's Society of Hong Kong Ltd	€2,867
CYPRUS	
Cyprus Ireland Association	€5,652
CZECH REPUBLIC	
Centre for Irish Studies, Charles University, Prague	€19,460
FRANCE	
Irish in France Association	€3,585
Cercle Littéraire Irlandais	€3,000
GERMANY	
Irish Business Network	€2,000
Bergische Universität Wuppertal / University of Wuppertal	€15,000
GREECE	
Greek-Irish Society	€3,600
JAPAN	
Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce	€20,023
JORDAN	
Jordan Ireland Business Association	€7,268
KENYA	

Business Ireland Kenya Association	€5,563
LUXEMBOURG	
British & Irish Film Festival Luxembourg (BIFFL)	€2,000
MALAYSIA	
Irish Chamber of Commerce Malaysia (ICCM)	€7,203
NEW ZEALAND	
Christchurch Irish Society	€2,809
St. Patrick's Trust NZ	€11,746
NORWAY	
Norwegian Irish Society	€3,290
POLAND	
Irish Culture Foundation (Fundacja Kultury Irlandzkiej)	€4,937
PORTUGAL	
Ireland Portugal Business Network	€19,250
SOUTH AFRICA	
Business Ireland Southern Africa	€2,990
Irish South African Association	€4,108
SWEDEN	
The Swedish Irish Society (Svenska-Irländska Föreningen)	€1,280
Irish Chamber of Commerce in Sweden	€6,799
SWITZERLAND	
Basel Irish Club	€2,784
Irish Business Network Switzerland	€3,341
THE NETHERLANDS	
Ireland Netherlands Business Association	€4,283
ZAMBIA	
Wild Geese Society Lusaka	€2,109
ZIMBABWE	
Mashonaland Irish Association	€26,000
Total ESP paid out Rest of the World	€249,124