

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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# A MESSAGE FROM EIL/AFS

Dear Friends and Supporters of EIL Intercultural Learning,

As we celebrate our 60th anniversary, we are filled with immense pride and gratitude for the journey we have undertaken together. Since our inception in 1963, EIL Intercultural Learning has been dedicated to fostering global understanding through intercultural exchange. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the team, volunteers, partners, and participants who have contributed to our mission over the decades. In addition to our 60 year presence in Ireland we are proud members of two international networks, AFS Intercultural Programmes and Federation EIL, both born out of the need to promote peace following the two World Wars.

The year 2023 was noteworthy for EIL as we continued to recover and improve post the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, through steady growth on our participant numbers. We also started the process of a leadership transition, and continued the upward trajectory of our income towards pre 2020 levels. Whilst this success was somewhat offset by increased costs which prevailed across the globe, we remained steadfast in our dedication to the vision of a just and tolerant world where all cultures thrive together in peace; a world that works for everyone.

Looking to the future, our vision remains clear: continue as a leader in intercultural learning whilst adapting to the changing needs of our global community. We will remain committed to the educational standards of excellence proven by our longevity as we focus on expansion and diversification across our programmes and our volunteer network. We will look to deepen and strengthen our partnerships and diversify our income base. Continuing to engage with emerging leaders will ensure that sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain at the core of every action we take.

As we embark on this next chapter with your continued support, EIL Intercultural Learning will achieve even greater impacts. Together, we will build a more interconnected and understanding world.

Thank you for being a part of our journey.

Warm regards,

Aideen O'Leary - CEO

Niamh Hill - *Chairperson of The Board*



*Aideen O'Leary (CEO) & Niamh Hill (Chairperson of The Board)*

# ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

## VISION

Our vision is to facilitate people of different cultures working together to develop mutual understanding and create a fair, cooperative and tolerant world.

## MISSION

Our missions is to provide intercultural learning experiences that enrich lives and inspire global citizenship.

## VALUES

The activities of EIL/AFS Ireland are underpinned by the following set of values:

- We believe in the transformative power of international intercultural experience and the importance of life long learning; education through travel is the cornerstone of all our work.
- We believe in the capacity of people to effect positive change, in inclusiveness and we encourage participation across all sections of society.
- We commit to the highest standards in all of our work, particularly safety and care.
- We cherish our not-for-profit status and measure our success by the delivery of social good over commercial profit.
- We believe that the entire EIL community, and external partners who share our values, have a role to play in achieving our goals.

We believe that all people are valued global citizens and that through participation in structured intercultural learning opportunities they can learn, develop, grow and thrive in a way that enriches their lives, fosters self efficacy and empowers them to be advocates for a more responsible world.



# 60TH ANNIVERSARY IN IRELAND

## - EIL / AFS IRELAND



1964 was a pivotal year in the USA, marked by the signing of the Civil Rights Act and Martin Luther King Jr. receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Amidst this, eight young Americans arrived at Shannon airport on Ireland's west coast. They were welcomed by host families who escorted them to Dublin. Maeve Binchy was part of the group that initiated the first EIL program, which included a visit to Dáil Éireann and a meeting with Jim Larkin Junior, an advocate for workers' rights.

The progress of EIL in Ireland faced challenges due to the Troubles in the North, but a dedicated group of volunteers successfully registered the organisation in 1988. By 1989, 302 individuals participated in EIL programs, increasing to 1,460 by 1996 and peaking at 2,500 participants and over 5 million euros before the pandemic.

EIL's roots trace back to 1932 when 23 students left New York for Germany under the leadership of Dr. Donald Watt, who envisioned an "experiment in International Living" (EIL) to foster understanding among nations. Initially seen as radical, the homestay concept proved successful and led to EIL being recognised as a Peace Messenger organisation by the UN in 1989.

AFS, originally the American Field Service, began in 1915 during World War I, with volunteers aiding in France. After World War II, AFS launched a student exchange program in 1946, which evolved into AFS Intercultural Programs. EIL Ireland joined the AFS network in 2017, representing both organisations in Ireland. While school programs remain central to EIL's mission, the organisation has also fostered cultural initiatives, such as conflict resolution programs linking youth from Northern Ireland with peers in Israel, Palestine, South Africa, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

The first EIL Explore Scholarship occurred in 1994, sending young people to Japan. To date, over 1 million euros have funded scholarships, allowing exploration of more than 50 countries. Since 2003, EIL Ireland has received support from the Irish government and other partners, showcasing resilience and quality, especially post-pandemic.

Thank you for your support over the past 60 years; we look forward to the next 60!



# CULTURAL GROUPS



EIL welcomed **1393** participants on cultural programmes in 2023 including Road Scholar groups on the Best of Ireland, Town and Country, Countryside and Culture, Best of South, Best of North, Coast and Family programmes.

2023 also saw the successful return of a Faculty Led Group from East Carolina University through our partner Academic Experiences Abroad (AEA).

Cultural groups are guided around Ireland through a combination of Group Leaders and Local Experts such as Denis Kissane in Kerry who has extensive and intimate knowledge of the county's history, culture, and landscape. Denis talks to groups about the transformation of Kerry over the years from a personal perspective.

Lionel Pilkington, an expert speaker on Anglo-Irish Literature, regals our Road Scholar participants with his love of Yeats at Glenlo Abbey. Lionel is a Professor of English and Creative Arts at the University of Galway.

EIL Cultural Groups Department strives to provide participants with unique educational experiences through experts such as Dennis and Lionel, as well as other highly qualified academics, story tellers, musicians, and characters.



In 2023, the department began working with a new software package, 'Tourplan', to improve operational efficiency, and in the off season we undertook a comprehensive review of providers to ensure we maintain and improve quality standards for the 2024 season ahead which will mark our 30th year in partnership with Road Scholar.

2023 saw us improve our Net Promoter Score (NPS) by 6 points, bringing us to 66 overall with further improvement targeted for the year ahead. 2023 saw us face many challenges with the integration of Tourplan, the staffing issues faced by many hotels and restaurants, and many participants getting Covid-19. However, the team's hard work and support of each other saw the NPS increase in spite of these issues.

For the coming year, 2024, EIL anticipates near 1600 participants across our Road Scholar programmes and the arrival of students from AFS Thailand.

## 1393

Participants on Cultural Programmes in 2023

## ~1600

Anticipated Participants on Cultural Programmes in 2024

## 6

Point improvement on NPS in 2023

## 30

Years in partnership with Road Scholar



# STUDY ABROAD



The Study Abroad department is dedicated to fostering intercultural understanding among young people from around the world through its international Secondary School Study Abroad programs. These initiatives are designed to enhance cross-cultural learning within schools and communities while maintaining strong partnerships with organisations such as AFS, Federation EIL, and the European Federation of Intercultural Learning, as well as community-based volunteers both in Ireland and abroad.

The department operates two main sub-departments: the Inbound sub-department, which facilitates the arrival of Secondary School students to Ireland, and the Outbound sub-department, which oversees the departure of Irish students to study abroad.

In 2023, EIL/AFS Ireland hosted 226 participants across eight communities, with significant concentrations in Clare, Mayo, Waterford, Monaghan, Cork, and Meath. The cohort included students from diverse global regions, thanks to newly established partnerships in destinations such as Chile, Spain, and Hong Kong.

Additionally, EIL/AFS Ireland facilitated the outbound mobility of students to various European countries in 2023, including France, Germany, Belgium, and Spain. Notably, while students did not venture to other continents, there was a remarkable 160% increase in the number of students leaving Ireland to study abroad, compared to 2022.

**226**

Inbound Participants

**8**

Different communities across Ireland

**160%**

Increase in Outbound Students

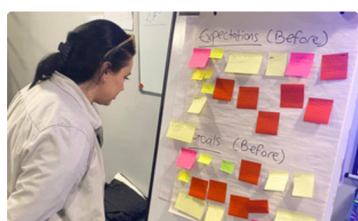


The Study Abroad programmes extend beyond language acquisition; they focus on building lasting connections. Owen, a participant in the programme, encapsulated his experience by stating,

**"The time I had in Germany supported by EIL/AFS was a life-changing experience for me. Of course I was able to learn a new language, but the most important thing for me was all of the new people I met along the way. My time with my host family was amazing and I have kept in contact with them ever since my journey back, and as well as this I made so many new friends among the people in my school and with other exchange students I met.**

**I would absolutely recommend the EIL exchange experience to anyone interested in meeting new people from around the world and forging connections that will last long past the end of their trip!"**

*- OWEN, 2023 STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANT*



## AFS: IMPACT OF HOSTING ON FAMILIES

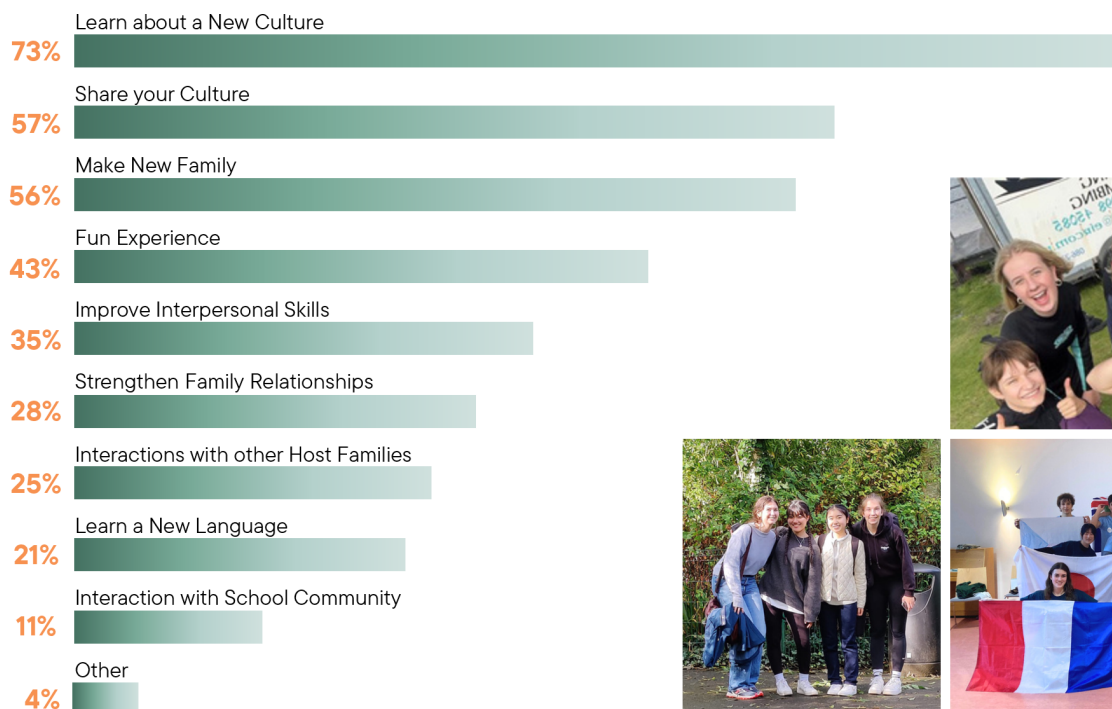
AFS views the hosting experience as a transformative educational program for families. Based on a robust educational methodology developed over 75+ years of expertise in intercultural exchange, the AFS Host Family Learning Journey is a curriculum designed to engage host families with content related to intercultural learning at every step of their experience, preparing them to embrace individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and build their intercultural awareness and understanding every step of the way. Additionally, one of the key promises of the AFS hosting experience is that it will foster lifelong connections and allow the student to leave the experience as a family member.

*(Research and Survey Content by Ana Carolina Cassiano & Andrew Menges of AFS Intercultural Programs)*

### Main Benefits of Hosting

A survey carried out by AFS asked families to select from a list of benefits they gained as a result of the AFS hosting experience, allowing for multiple selections. The top three were:

- **Cultural Learning and Exchange:** Most families (73% of respondents) identified the primary benefit as the opportunity to learn about and experience a different culture and way of life
- **Cultural Sharing:** The second most common answer (57% of respondents) indicated they benefited from sharing their culture with the hosted student
- **Expansion of the Family:** The third (56% of respondents) believed they benefited from having new extended family members. As described in the open-ended responses, the family grew by adding the host student as a new family member, and often, their home families are considered extended family members by the host family as well.



## Personal Growth and Development as Global Citizens

In addition to the general benefits of the hosting experience for the families and their children, AFS also asked families to rate their learnings in terms of specific skills and attitudes that we want learners of all ages to develop as a result of their engagement with an AFS program. These abilities derive from our educational framework for active global citizenship. They include:

- **Adaptability:** Understanding situational cues, as well as different norms and behaviours, and adjusting accordingly and effectively.
- **Critical thinking:** Being able to look at things from different perspectives and challenge one's assumptions and beliefs before acting or making a decision.
- **Self-awareness:** Being aware of one's feelings, thoughts and behaviours and understanding how these have been influenced by the cultural groups that one belongs to.
- **Open-mindedness:** Being open to considering ideas and opinions that are new or different to one's own.
- **Valuing difference:** Appreciating diversity and displaying respect for people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values.
- **Effective Communication:** Conveying ideas, opinions, and feelings effectively and appropriately, as well as accurately interpreting what others communicate.
- **Empathy:** Developing a more profound concern and sensitivity for others by understanding and relating to their feelings, needs and experiences.
- **Global awareness:** Taking a broad view and using a global lens when approaching issues, being aware of the local implications of global challenges and vice-versa.
- **Change-making:** Having a sense of co-responsibility and taking action to have a positive impact on one's community and the world.

*(Research and Survey Content by Ana Carolina Cassiano & Andrew Menges of AFS Intercultural Programs)*

The AFS survey questionnaire asked respondents to rate their perceived improvements related to these abilities on a 1-5 scale (with 1 being no improvement and five significant improvement). For instance, families rated a high average of 4 for increased curiosity about other countries and cultures due to their experience as a host family. Average ratings ranged from 3.3 to 4, indicating positive improvements across all these abilities - see graph below.



The improvements reported by our host families match those seen in the ratings reported by AFS exchange students. This finding reinforces the notion that host families are also actual participants in educational exchange programs, reporting learning outcomes similar to those of our exchange students.

Despite these positive findings, we identified areas where host family growth could be improved compared to our students. According to the AFS Framework for Active Global Citizenship, program beneficiaries (students, host families, etc.) can expect to improve in four areas of global citizenship:

- 1. value and belong,
- 2. inquire critically,
- 3. understand and relate, and
- 4. take action.



*(Research and Survey Content by Ana Carolina Cassiano & Andrew Menges of AFS Intercultural Programs)*

# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Explore is EIL/AFS Ireland's flagship outbound programme that provides scholarships of overseas intercultural learning adventures for Irish citizens which challenge participants to become global citizens. Explore is a programme that supports participants with an interest in global issues to travel abroad for the purpose of cultural immersion, volunteering, or language education through a variety of awards.

In 2023, Explore provided scholarships for 28 participants and we were delighted to see all participants go on and complete an Explore programme with a dedicated budget of over €91,474. Our 28 participants went on various learning adventures across the world to places like: Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Mexico, Spain, USA and Vietnam.

12

Individual counties represented

8

Third Level Institutes represented -  
DCU, Maynooth University, MTU Cork,  
TCD, UCC, UL University of Galway)

15

Secondary Schools represented

3

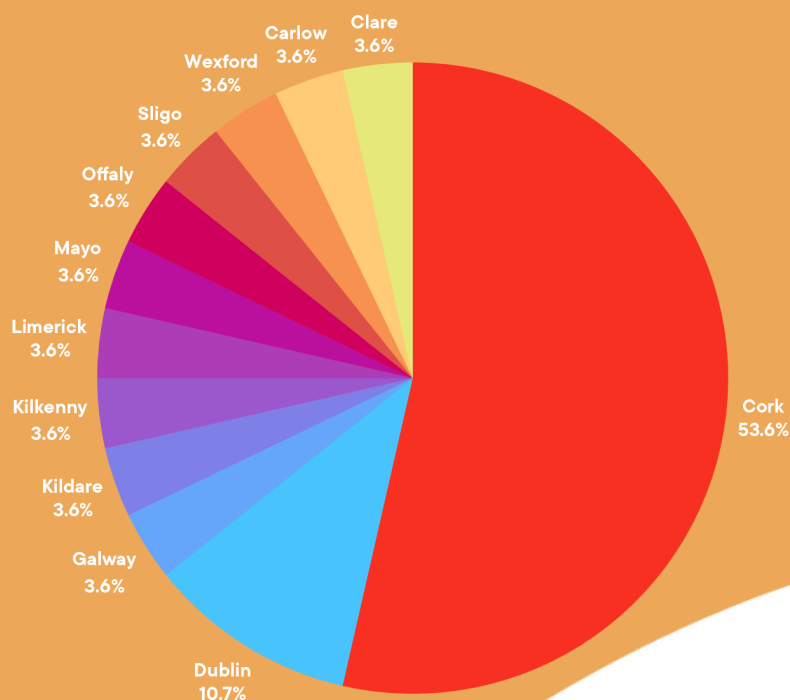
Group Leaders led young people on  
their programmes

10

Different host countries

2000+

Hours given to volunteer projects  
correlating with United Nations  
Sustainable Development Goals



Explore participants, in 2023, went to ten different host countries and there were over 2000+ hours given to volunteer projects that correlated with all United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,

All participants recorded a growth in:

1. Personal Development
2. Global Citizenship Education
3. Active volunteering here in Ireland

**“I have not only learned so much about Mexican culture from the amazing people in this country, I have also learned a huge amount about myself and my capabilities in my short time here. Although there have been some challenges here, such as a language barrier and battling homesickness, all in all, this has been one of the best experiences of my life and I have loved every minute, both the good and the bad.”**

*- Chloe Phelan, GAP Winner, 2023*

## VOLUNTEER NETWORK

One of our greatest assets at EIL/AFS Ireland is the rich diversity of our volunteer network, which plays a crucial role in the operation of our organisation, from the Board level to providing essential support for current participants.

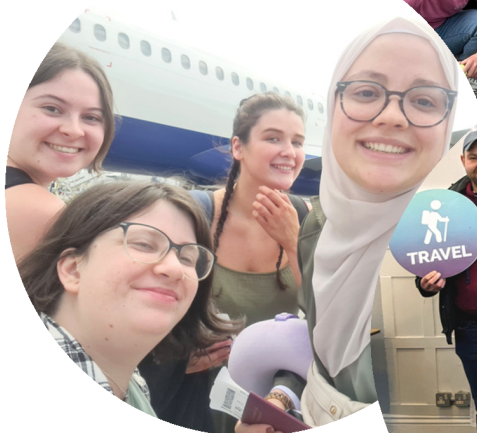
In 2023, 56 individual volunteers contributed to various Explore events, including the Read-a-thon, Interview & Selection Day, Enrolment Day, Pre-Departure, and Welcome Back events, as well as offering administrative and marketing assistance. A total of 85 individual volunteers participated in at least one EIL/AFS event throughout the year, with over 75% of them actively engaging in multiple activities.

Additionally, four volunteers attended the AFS Volunteer Summer Summit in France in 2023, where they networked and collaborated with volunteers from across the AFS global network.



**“The Explore programme has given me the strength to trust my own choices and not fear how other people perceive me. I have grown to harness my independence and make choices I never thought I would have had the courage to do before. Many people would say I am a completely different person since returning from my 8 weeks in Mexico and I would agree, I’m proud of the person I am now.”**

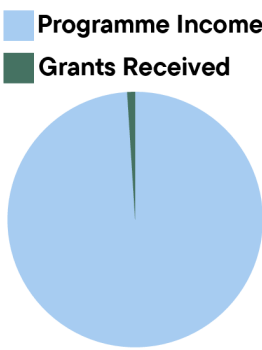
*- Molly Measey, Access Winner, 2023*



# FINANCE

## INCOME 2023

Programme income	€ 4,783,871	99%
Grants Received	€ 44,034	1%
Total	€ 4,827,905	



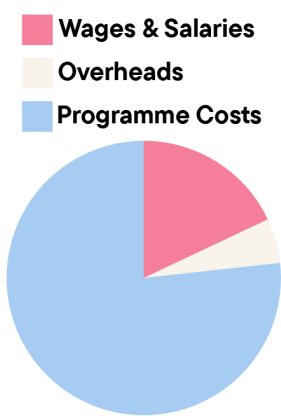
## GRANT INCOME 2023

*Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth*

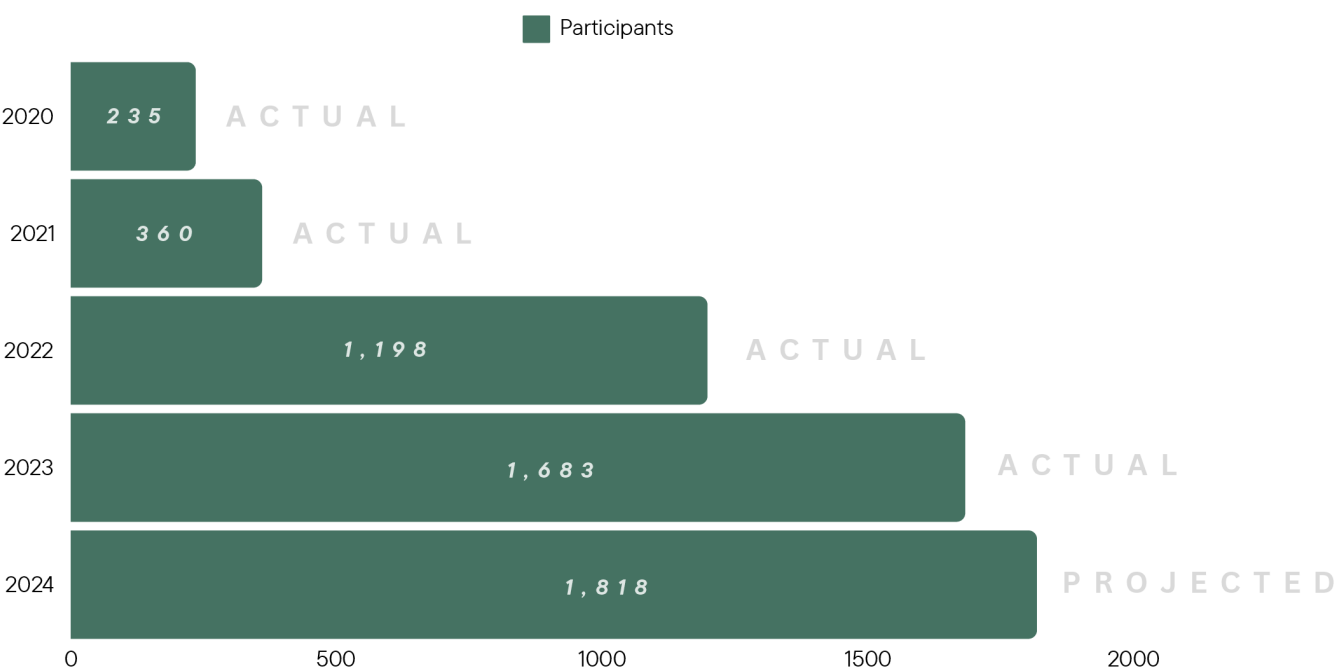
Youth Service Grant Scheme	€31,451
Youth Capital Funding	€12,583
Total	€44,034

## EXPENDITURE 2023

Wages & Salaries	€858,408	18%
Overheads	€251,289	5%
Programme Costs	€3,667,207	77%
Total	€4,776,904	



## PARTICIPANT NUMBERS 2020-2024



EXPERIMENT IN INTERNATIONAL LIVING CLG  
DIRECTORS REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023*

		2023	2022
	Notes	€	€
<b>Income</b>	<b>3</b>	4,827,905	3,805,032
Administrative expenses		(4,776,904)	(3,702,314)
Operating surplus	<b>4</b>	51,001	102,718
Interest payable and similar expenses	<b>7</b>	(7,343)	(4,960)
 <b>Designated expenditure</b>			
Explore scholarships		(91,474)	(74,277)
 <b>(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year</b>		(47,816)	23,481

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

# BALANCE SHEET

## AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible Assets	8	713,606	698,192
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	9	59,003	10,870
Cash at bank in hand		1,543,318	1,475,544
		<b>1,602,321</b>	<b>1,486,414</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	(748,388)	(569,251)
<b>Net current assets</b>		853,933	917,163
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		1,567,539	1,615,355
<b>Reserves</b>			
Unrestricted capital reserves		713,606	698,192
Unrestricted operational reserves		454,773	470,187
Designated funds (scholarship fund)		399,160	446,976
		<b>1,567,539</b>	<b>1,615,355</b>

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors and authorised for issue on 29 June 2024 and are signed on its behalf by:

Niamh Hill  
**Director**

Kate O'Brien  
**Director**

# EXPERIMENT IN INTERNATIONAL LIVING CLG

## COMPANY INFORMATION

## BOARD

### CHAIRPERSON

Niamh Hill

### VICE CHAIRPERSON

Santo Leung

*Chair of Governance & HR Committee*

### VICE CHAIRPERSON

Kate O'Brien

*Chair of Audit & Risk Management*

*Appointed 6th March 2023*

Celine Quinn

*We thank Celine whose service ended in 2023*

Gary Cooke

Aleksandra Ananica

Paul Conway

Andrew Ormsby

Aedin McAdams

*Appointed 1st January 2024*

Emma McNally Jacobs

*Appointed 1st January 2024*

*[Correct at time of print]*

## CONTACT US

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### Email

info@eilireland.org

[www.eilireland.org](http://www.eilireland.org)

The Experiment in International Living is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered in Dublin, Ireland with offices at:

**Classic House**  
**11-13 Washington Street,**  
**Cork T12 NHP1**  
**T/A EIL Intercultural Learning.**

### Charity Number

20107390

### Revenue Charity Number

22114

### Registered Charity Number

136044

## MEMBER OF



european  
federation for  
intercultural  
learning



## SUPPORTED BY



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



Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin



MTU  
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumbaí  
Munster Technological University



UCC  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



NUI MAYNOOTH  
Ollscoil na hÉireann Mú Buidé

