

L'Arche Ireland

Annual Report 2020



CEO and Chairperson's Report 2020

EACH YEAR carries its own memories, and we are sure that in many years to come 2020 and 2021 will be etched in our subconscious, as the years we lived through that have left permanent changes to us as individuals, to society and to all of us in L'Arche. The challenges of having to make major changes overnight, and living through those changes, the fear of COVID-19 and the unknown, has marked and challenged us in ways that we have never expected. You can see from the community reports all the life that has continued despite the lockdowns and maybe even because of them. Our individual and collective ability to live through these times has been marked by courage, resilience, creativity and the support of each other. There is an ongoing narrative as to the importance of relationships and connections. This COVID-19 time has really challenged us to maintain those relationships and connections, and through this has reinforced how important they are to us.

This time has given us the opportunity to look to the future with the understanding that we can live through change, and we can thrive in change. So, it has assisted us to open out the possibilities of what the future will hold for us in L'Arche and how we want to contribute to society.

Now we have two ongoing projects, the Reinvention Project in L'Arche Kilkenny and Renew in L'Arche Cork. Both these projects are looking to redesign day projects and to see how to develop these into the future to match the needs of our present and future core members and in line with new directions. The future is looking bright, and we thank all those involved in these projects and thank all those people who are engaging with this and looking to the future with this and guiding us on our path.



We would like to thank the HSE and the many partners who have helped us come to this stage and put us on the road to overcoming the challenges of this COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to thank core members – the people we support – for their resilience and courage during this pandemic. We want to thank all the teams in each of the communities who have kept us going and not only kept us going but actively planning for the future. I want to thank in a particular way our volunteers – those who live in the houses, our board and committee, and all the teams who have enabled us to survive and to thrive during this time.

Mairead Boland Brabazon,
CEO/Leader, L'Arche Ireland.
Grahame Coppelstone,
Chair, L'Arche Ireland



L'Arche – our mission



TO MAKE KNOWN

the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

TO ENGAGE in our diverse cultures, working together to build a more human society.

TO FOSTER an environment in communities that is inspired by the core values of our founding story, and that responds to the changing needs of our members.

Our L'Arche identity

WE ARE PEOPLE with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an international federation.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.



Adapting while keeping safe

L'Arche Kilkenny

IN FEBRUARY, a few days prior to the Election, we hosted a Town Hall Event in Westcourt Callan, inviting local candidates for a lively discussion on the funding support for people with ID and organisations like L'Arche. Then the COVID-19 situation emerged, and the required restrictions changed much of our community life in L'Arche Kilkenny during the rest of the year. Our number one priority became keeping all in the community safe. Zoom became an essential tool for us all to stay connected in the best way that we could. Restrictions meant the L'Arche Café was unable to open to the public for large parts of the year during COVID-19 but was able to do so to limited numbers during August.

In July, HIQA visited for an inspection in An Solas and the Chalets, resulting in a fully compliant report. After much work we were delighted to welcome John in October as our newest core member to Lion De. This followed the re-registration of the house from a 3 to 4 resident bedroom house.

We said goodbye to, and thanked for their great service, Monika Bermingham as our Health and Safety Manager and Mari Cahill as our Weaving Room Project Leader. Our new vehicle was purchased for An Solas later on in the year. Mary Ferns, L'Arche Ireland, assisted us on work for grants, rent supplement and the European Solidarity Corps, for which we were very grateful. David and John from the Board and Mairead consulted all the community on our new Mandate.

Great fun was had by L'Arche Kilkenny and the other communities contributing to the *This Little Light of Mine* video and we appreciate the work of Luke Brabazon for piecing it all together.



Rising to victory

L'Arche Dublin

2020 WAS ONE of the more difficult years for L'Arche Dublin – it was the year of the lock-down. At times it felt like we had the core members on 'house arrest'. With social outlets closed and day services shut down we were not sure how we were going to manage. Had we realised how long we would need to endure the restrictions I am not too sure if we would have made it through in one piece.

That said, it is most surprising how well our core members have fared in 2020. Not only did they manage remarkably well, but they even seemed to rise to victory during the time – with the occasional 'moan' every so often. It is testimony to the resilience they have mustered up and the trojan work that the team in Dublin have done.

We welcomed a new core member, Colin, into the Dublin Community this year. St Patrick's Day in 2020 was very different with the Parade being cancelled but it was still safely enjoyed in the community (see photo), and a horse was one of the celebrants at Stephen's birthday party this year.

We added a cabin into the garden of Seolta to help with extra space for isolation etc., during the lock-down. It has already proved invaluable.

In December, with a slight lifting of restrictions, we managed to do our annual L'Arche Dublin Schoolhouse Christmas Trip and Santa took some time out of his busy schedule to drop in with some presents and festive cheer.

It was a challenging year, but everyone stood ... two meters apart ... together for L'Arche Dublin.



We're all in this together

L'Arche Cork

WE HAVE HAD ZOOM MEETINGS – Lots of Zoom meetings! We have been using Zoom to connect with each other in the community but we also had a special Zoom call with the other L'Arche communities in Ireland & Northern Ireland.

All houses/day services/administration areas were matched with other houses/day services/administration areas in other communities. We prepared and posted packages to each other. We had a HUGE Zoom call with everyone involved on 16th March and we opened the packages, sang songs and had a great get-together.



We showed solidarity with other L'Arche communities.

One evening in September we united with other L'Arche communities around the world lighting a candle at sunset to show our solidarity and to be signs of hope during the pandemic.

We kept fit. The Rebel Run is an event organised annually by SportsAbility Ireland. Several local services including L'Arche Cork get involved each year. The aim is to set challenges to increase everyone's fitness levels. This event

would normally have culminated in everyone from the different services joining together at the Cork Institute of Technology sports field for a sports day and prize giving. Because of lockdown this year each organisation involved held their own final sports events and prize giving ceremonies. We choose to hold ours at the Lough. There was a photographer from the Evening Echo who took photographs of the occasion, and these appeared in the paper that week.

We improvised. With the closure of hairdressers and beauty salons we had to become creative and improvise! Many honed their hairdressing and nail polishing skills.

We celebrated. No virus was going to stop us celebrating birthdays, Halloween and other events even if it was in smaller numbers and adhering to COVID-19 restrictions.

We enjoyed the fine weather. We still managed to spend time outside together making the most of the sunny days we had.

We remained creative. All our core members have been very creative over the past year, whether it was carving pumpkins, painting stones for family and friends, to decorate our houses and day service or creating portraits for previous assistants. The An Cuan team were also part of creating artworks which were placed in COVID-19 test centres at Christmas.

We have been involved in the vaccination programme. To date all our core members and most of the staff have received a least their first dose of the vaccine and we are looking forward to the day when everyone has been fully vaccinated.

And so, our journey continues



Opportunities

IN A STRANGE WAY while this pandemic brought about many challenges it has also presented opportunities. The emphasis is now being placed on the importance of community, rural economies, urban regeneration, social capital, innovation, engagement, partnership, connecting, empowering, marginalised, sustainability, green, upcycle, vision, youth, volunteering, solidarity, etc. Hopefully, post the pandemic, these sentiments will become the new norm.

At L'Arche we are also on this journey of finding local solutions to local problems. We are maximising our gardens for horticulture and mental health

wellbeing; our aim is from field to fork where every nook and cranny is being explored. The Communities have been busy reconfiguring their day services programmes to offer more choice, smaller more focussed project groups and with a greater emphasis on training. We plan to collaborate and partner with other community groups and agencies to add value to our day services. We have connected with the inclusion officers in the sports and recreational partnerships which has reinforced the significance of physical exercise; we recognise the important role our beautiful countryside and built heritage has played during COVID-19 times.

Changing phases groups are being established to assist core members ease into retirement and continue to participate in activities of their choice while interacting with the wider community.

We are so grateful to Rethink Ireland, Saturday Hospital Fund, Local Enterprise Offices/Local Authorities, Léargas/European Solidarity Corps for their invaluable support; the impact of these supports will have long lasting sustainable and transformative outcomes for everyone in our immediate and wider

communities. A special thanks to our very loyal donors, supporters and champions who without your invaluable assistance would make this new journey a lot longer and more arduous. We very much look forward to continuing this developmental journey and engaging in the social economy where everyone will reap the rewards of a more inclusive, vibrant and sustainable communities into the future. Let us together turn a ripple into a wave in the creation of stronger communities for generations to come.

Mary Ferns, Development Officer, L'Arche Ireland



L'Arche Ireland Accounts Summary as at 31.12.2020

	2020		2019	
Income	€	%	€	%
Government Funding	4,076,101	89%	3,781,514	88%
Donations & Events	144,203	3%	120,030	3%
Bank Interest & Investment Income	37	0%	88	0%
Core Members Personal Income	250,315	5%	233,383	5%
Café and Workshop Sales	49,281	1%	134,685	3%
Other Income	37,369	1%	6,898	0%
Fundraising	7,505	0%	30,342	1%
Total Income	4,564,811		4,306,940	
Expenditure				
Pay/Allowances	2,679,426	58%	2,433,043	57%
Living	450,541	10%	412,454	10%
Property	227,509	5%	263,422	6%
Transport	66,208	1%	98,122	2%
Administration	323,151	7%	168,759	4%
Employer's NI/PRSI contributions	266,356	6%	249,477	6%
Staff Defined Contribution Pension Costs	226,757	5%	191,498	4%
Café/Workshop Expenses	20,747	0%	76,437	2%
Legal and Professional	9,470	0%	-	0%
Training/Formation	70,169	2%	132,968	3%
Depreciation	207,903	5%	204,442	5%
Accountancy	44,998	1%	33,771	1%
Bank Charges	2,309	0%	1,872	0%
Surpluses/deficits on disposal of intangibles	3,801	0%	-	0%
Fundraising Expenses	3,570	0%	12,692	0%
Total Expenditure	4,602,915		4,278,957	
Total Income over Expenditure	-38,104		27,983	



L'Arche Ireland

Tel: 056 775 5494

email: admin.central@larche.ie

www.larche.ie