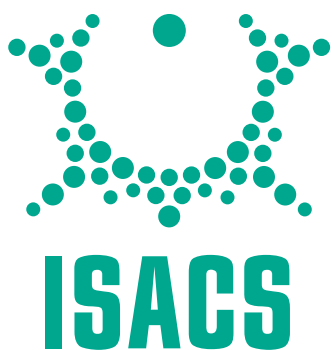




Irish Street Arts, Circus
and Spectacle Network

Annual Report 2025

1ST JANUARY - 31ST DECEMBER

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Tumble Circus LIFT Residency,
photo by Sasha Bratkova

Front Cover: Anja Nicholson and Amberlee Toumanguelov,
Áras Éanna Ionad Ealaíne Residency, photo by Emilija Jefremova, Inis Oírr 2025





Our Story

No Sleep Dance Theatre, Dance Meets Street 2025,
photo by Abigail Denniston

Organisation's purpose and activities

The Irish Street Art, Circus and Spectacle Network (ISACS) was established to support, develop and raise the profile of the street arts, circus and spectacle sectors of the island of Ireland.

We are an artist first membership organisation which acts as an info hub and resource centre, sharing information, opportunities and supporting the development of the sector through training, networks and advocacy.

History and evolution over the years

ISACS was established in 2010 with the aim of creating an umbrella network for these collective artforms to represent, raise the profile and provide a united voice for this emerging, exciting, developing, and growing sector. Since then, we have grown to become Ireland's leading voice, resource and info point for outdoor arts and circus.

ISACS has a diverse, dynamic, and highly engaged membership that includes artists, artistic companies, curators, festivals, independent producers, production companies, programmers, academics, and enthusiasts from across the island of Ireland and beyond. Today the membership is supported by a core team of four staff ensuring the sustainability and legacy of the sector is maintained and cared for.



Our Vision

To be a leading example of an artist-first members network which supports and grows the street, circus and spectacle artforms of Ireland.

Our Mission

Our mission is to celebrate our artforms, advocate for the policy and practical changes that will allow our artforms to flourish, grow our membership and sustain our organisation.

Sara Greenberg at the Creative Intensive in IACC photo by Jym Daly

Our Values

Underpin and Inform our Work

Care

We value nurturing relationships, supporting our membership across a range of issues and strive for a genuinely inclusive community which connects and cares for each other and the development of the artforms.

Ambition

We laud ambitious actions and thinking, growing determined, proud, confident and resilient behaviour across and between our membership.

Encouragement

We endeavour to encourage and empower our members in their journeys, their professional development and their creativity.

Integrity

We are honest, trustworthy, and open with our members, our board, our team, our partners, and our funders/stakeholders.
We use our resources well, consider all viewpoints, offer solutions where we can and act with integrity.



Compagnie XY rehearsing "After the Rain" with local acrobats outside Circusful, in partnership with In Your Space 2023

Strategic Goals

Celebrate

*our artforms sharing the history, value,
and potential of our work*

Advocate

*for the policy and practical changes that will enable a flourishing
Street Art, Spectacle and Circus sector to thrive in Ireland*

Grow

*our support to ISACS members to enhance their capacity to
deliver high quality work and to sustain their livelihoods*

Sustain

*our organisation through increased and diversified funding
and enhanced human capacity.*

Main Activities - A Snapshot of 2025

10

**Artistic
Development
Programmes**

11

Bursaries

7

**Professional
Development
Programmes**

6

**Funders/
Stakeholders**

344

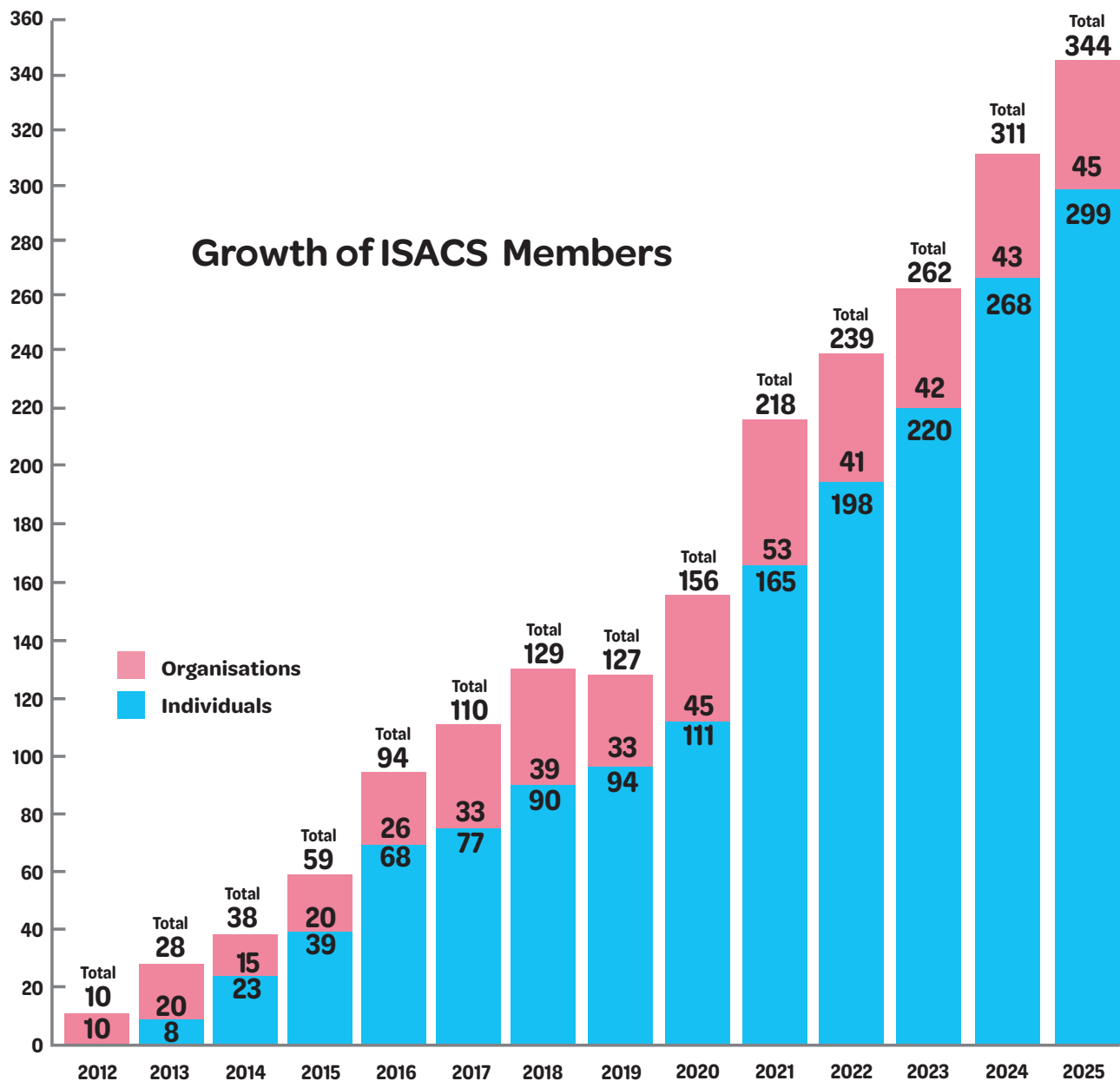
**ISACS
Members**

10

**International
Partnerships**

30

**National
Partnerships**



Online Engagement with ISACS Network

Website
63,812
views

Instagram
3,288
followers

LinkedIn
808
followers

Facebook
5,809
followers

Chairperson's Address

A Chairde,

I must begin with an acknowledgment of the huge loss we suffered as an organisation with the passing of Brian Rafferty. Brian served as a longtime board member and treasurer of ISACS, and did incredible work as the head of the Irish Aerial Creation Centre. His unexpected passing hit all of us hard, and we will surely miss not only his intelligence and diligence, but also his friendship and the kindness he brought with him wherever he went.

ISACS has grown enormously over the last five years, with hundreds of new members, and dozens of new collaborations and partners. In developing a new multi year strategic plan, we have talked to members throughout the Island about the challenges, dreams and realities of working and living as an artist. The realities are clearly challenging, yet we continue to see artists all over the Island making work, pushing the boundaries of the art form and finding ways to survive and thrive. Many of these same artists are also doing what they can to support populations around the world that are experiencing far greater pain. It is always inspiring to see the drive and talent in ISACS, the relentless push to imagine, develop and share art.

The ISACS office has also blossomed over the last few years, with numerous talented staff joining the team. Alongside Lucy, I'd like to thank Helen, Brendan, Cristina and James for their phenomenal work across 2025 and into 2026. ISACS is a membership led organisation, with members electing the board of directors, who oversee the governance, staffing, budgeting and strategic thinking. I want to thank these board members, who serve because they have an interest in the growth and vibrancy of the sector beyond their own art or work.

What makes us strong as a sector is our culture of collaboration, mutual support, mentoring, sharing resources and celebrating each other's work. It's a challenging and beautiful thing to devote your life to art and culture, and while it's an increasingly crazy world out there, we are in it together.



Jonah McGreevy Chairperson

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Director's Statement 2025

2025 opened many doors for the ISACS Network and its members. The artforms of street, circus and spectacle and the strong community that has been developed within Ireland has become a mighty force. A force for good, a force for transformation, a positive joyous force. Our collective energy and unwavering belief in the power of creativity with many people, in new places, in new spaces is exactly what the world needs right now.

ISACS has been slowly growing this positive voice for artists who work in public space, for circus artists in all its many shapes and forms, and for those who intermingle between forms gathering, exchanging and reimagining what art could be, could look like and can achieve, since our foundation.

One of our major achievements this year was the presentation of the Focus Irlanda in Fira Tàrrrega to an international audience of thousands. The impact of the four Irish creations that stood on that platform was not just audible, it was immense. Irish street and circus artists created and shifted the landscape of creative connections in that very moment. To say this happened in one weekend would be a mistake, it has taken the entire lifetime of ISACS to build it. Relationships nurtured, trust built, support systems underpinning us, as we sowed, gathered and grew. The shift at that moment was real. Ireland became a space to watch.

And it wasn't just in Catalunya that we made ripples, seeds were sown in Australia, Canada, France, Montenegro, Mallorca, South America and more - ISACS artists are spreading their wings. Creating sustainable careers and building work of international appeal, which bridges cultures and explores global relations is a key tenet of our work.

At home here in Ireland, we continued to nurture the next generation of artists through the delivery of the Circus Explored programme. This programme has invested and supported multiple training and development opportunities across the island North and South, establishing youth circus as a key element of our arts ecosystem growing future generations of circus artists, teachers, pedagogues and social leaders, connecting communities and territories all while delivering grassroots change for the future of our whole island.

Providing artists with space and time for the development of their work is another key aspect of our ambition and we were delighted to continue working with our partners at Áras Éanna Ionad Ealaíne and the Wexford Arts Centre towards the delivery of two distinctive residencies which allows artists time to breathe, dream and create.

We built a wonderful partnership with the Irish Showman's Guild in recent times and 2025 saw the first oral history recordings being created with members of this community. This was delivered with the support of the Heritage Council, the University of Galway Library and Archives Ireland and has resulted in the 'Voices of the Showmen' archive. We are so very proud of this project as it highlights the incredible contribution this community made and continue to make on the wider arts sector.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our key stakeholders the Arts Council of Ireland, Creative Ireland, Shared Island, Culture Ireland, Heritage Council and Wexford County Council. Their support is incalculable.

All of this work is underpinned by a phenomenal team of people. The ISACS Board who work tirelessly to ensure our duties, purpose and leadership role is upheld. The ISACS team who so passionately encourage and champion every single person who we interact with wherever they are on their journey towards success. The ISACS members who create, believe and inspire.

One of these incredible people was Brian Rafferty who departed this life far too soon, reminding us very well of the fragility of existence. His steady hand and objective eye as treasurer, board member and champion for insurance reform was so appreciated. With gratitude always in everything.



Lucy Medlycott *Director*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Medlycott". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'L' and a cursive 'Medlycott'.

Treasurer's Statement

2025 was a year of change, growth and ambition for ISACS, with a keen eye to the future. There was a welcome 10% increase in core Arts Council Strategic Funding to €185,000 in 2025 from €168,000 from 2022-2024. The Board was also delighted with the securing of a 3 year commitment from Creative Ireland and the Shared Island Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach towards the continuation of ISACS status as all-island Strategic Partners of Cruinniú na nÓg, with €450,000 pledged (€150,000 per annum) from 2025 - 2027.

Organisationally, the ISACS team changed during 2025, with Communications Officer Cristina Ciampaglione's departure at the start of June, and her successor James Mulcahy Symmons taking up the role in October. This, combined with the taking of 9 weeks' unpaid Parent's Leave by Membership Engagement Officer Brendan Fahy, led to a lower than projected spend on salaries, which is a major contributing factor to the end of year surplus of €23,352.

International work was in the spotlight in 2025, underpinned by increased support from Culture Ireland of €25,193, as well as financial and in-kind support from many international partners including FiraTàrraga, Adelaide Fringe Festival, MICC Montréal and the Irish Festival of Oulu (Finland). Grant aid was also received from the Welsh Government in Ireland, to the amount of €2,998.

For the 2nd consecutive year, ISACS was awarded a Community Heritage Grant by the Heritage Council to the amount of €22,525. This supported a hugely important oral history project recording the Voices of the Showmen (traditional circuses, funfairs, travelling cinema and fit-ups), in continued partnership with the Irish Showmen's Guild and the University of Galway library. Fundraising and advocating for the continuation of this important work towards the creation of a national archive for Irish Showmen continues to be a key focus for ISACS in the coming years.

I would like to highlight our appreciation of Wexford County Council's continued endorsement and belief in the value of our work, allowing us to travel and develop connections with partners in Normandy in spring 2025, as well as our regular programme of local artist supports, and of course providing us with the office that serves as our HQ, hotdesk and library in Wexford Town. The Arts Office and Communities Dept also kindly provided 10% match funding enabling us to begin our consultation and research towards our next Strategic Plan, to be developed with consultants WOVE. This important work continues in 2026 with the support of LEADER grant aid (€26,148) via Wexford Local Development, and we look forward to finalising our vision and priorities for the next phase of ISACS evolution.

The ISACS Board of Directors is committed to maintaining a reserve to ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the organisation. The board considers a reserves fund equivalent to approximately 6 months core expenses as projected forward in current budget to be an optimum amount. These funds are ring-fenced in two deposit accounts for use only in exceptional circumstances with the board's prior approval as set out in ISACS Reserves Policy.

I would like to acknowledge the continued support of the many organisations and individuals who support ISACS, and our members, through benefit-in-kind, goodwill and community. I would also like to thank the board and you the members for your continued enthusiasm and participation in all of our programmes.

As I step into the role of Acting Treasurer, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the immense contribution of my predecessor, Brian. His passing this past January was a profound loss for us all. Brian didn't just manage our finances; he did so with a level of care and integrity that set a high standard for this organisation. I am honoured to build upon the solid foundation he worked so hard to establish over the last few years.



Joshua Angelo Estrella *Acting Treasurer*

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop and a series of connected strokes.

Tribute to Brian Rafferty



The ISACS Network were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of our esteemed board member and treasurer, Brian Rafferty at the start of 2026. Brian joined the board of ISACS in 2022 and quickly became a reliable and trusting pair of hands who we could always depend on.

Having joined the team at the Irish Aerial Creation Centre in 2021, Brian became a vital source of knowledge for a rapidly developing sector. Brian's entrepreneurial and project management skills brought the IACC forward through the largest capital infrastructure project for circus arts that this country has seen.

He both project-managed, oversaw and negotiated with countless partners to create and build a world class creation centre for the development of aerial and circus arts in Limerick. His contribution to the centre, to the ISACS network and to these artforms is incalculable.

Within ISACS he was a champion for insurance reform, constantly articulating the need for access to fair insurance products for education in circus arts, and for young people. His passing leaves a massive void in ISACS and in the world of Irish circus arts.

Our thoughts remain with his loving family, partner, friends and relations as they come to terms with this unexpected loss.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam



Organisation and Governance

Macnas Parade An Treun Galway photo by John McMahon 2025

Governance

The Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network is a Not for Profit, company limited by guarantee, and a Registered Charity. It is governed by a voluntary board of directors with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 directors at any one time. There is a one third rotation annually of the longest serving board members at the AGM. The term of office is 3 years with a maximum of two terms to be served consecutively.

Vacancies for the board are filled by election at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the Company. The board is also entitled at any time to co-opt up to 60% directors of the company with a view either to ensuring balanced representation of the constituency of interests the company seeks to reflect, or to add specialist expertise to the board. A co-opted director may hold office until their second AGM after appointment, when they may stand for election through the membership. Full details on board appointment and election procedures can be found in the **ISACS Constitution**

The board's functions are overseeing strategy, ensuring proper financial management and compliance with all relevant standards, including the Charities Governance Code. The board is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance, and has developed its Governance Framework, a suite of documents, which sets out policies, procedures, roles & responsibilities, which guide how we operate.

Brendan Fahy SHARE Open Forum, National Circus Festival of Ireland 2025, photo by Olga Kuzmenko



Board Members

BOARD MEMBER	ROLE	FIRST APPOINTED	RE-ELECTED	ATTENDANCE RATE
 Jonah McGreevy Circus Artist & Creative Director	Chair	24/04/2021	23/04/2024	100%
 Brian Rafferty Managing Director	Treasurer	05/05/2022 Deceased 31/01/2026	29/04/2025	86%
 Aisling Ní Cheallaigh Circus Artist	Secretary	09/05/2023		71%
 Aoife Carry Circus & Spectacle Director	Director	05/05/2022	29/04/2025	71%
 Joshua Angelo Estrella Data Scientist and Analyst	Director	30/08/2022 (co-opted)	23/04/2024	100%
 Rachel Melaugh Street Theatre Artist & Creative Director	Director	15/08/2023 (co-opted)	29/04/2025	80%
 Rami Al Ramahi EDI Specialist	Director	14/05/2024 (co-opted)		100%

To learn more about the ISACS board members and their biographies, consult our website at isacs.ie

Dates of 2025

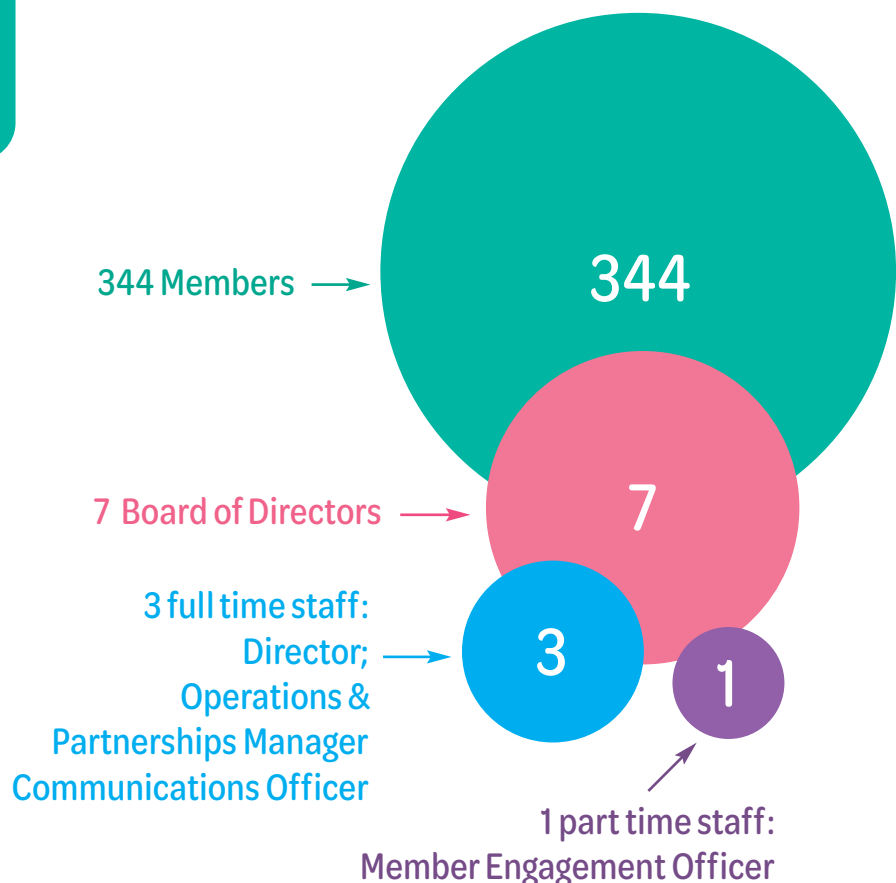
Board Meetings:

- 05/02/2025
- 24/02/2025
(Policy Review)
- 20/05/2025
- 25/06/2025
(Policy Review)
- 19/08/2025
- 18/11/2025

Board Activity in 2025

ISACS AGM was held on 29th April 2025, during which Brian Rafferty, Aoife Carry and Rachel Melaugh were reappointed to the ISACS Board, with no other candidates stepping forward for election. Four full board meetings were held in 2025, with follow up meetings held on two occasions to agree the final wording of policies.

2025 marked the final year of ISACS current Strategic Plan (2022 - 2025), and the board, in particular Brian Rafferty, were extremely active in helping to identify and apply for LEADER funding via Wexford Local Development to begin a new consultation process. Following a highly competitive and rigorous tender process, the board selected Wove to consult with ISACS members, stakeholders, board and staff and guide the organisation towards the next phase of our evolution.



Board Roles and Responsibilities

The ISACS Board working groups with particular areas of responsibility and expertise who work with the ISACS executive and report back to the board are:

- Financial Oversight: Jonah McGreevy, Brian Rafferty
- Policy Development and Governance: Jonah McGreevy, Rami Al Ramahi, Brian Rafferty
- Artists' Pay, Working Conditions and Professional Status: Aisling Ni Cheallaigh, Joshua Angelo Estrella
- Member Engagement: Aoife Carry, Joshua Angelo Estrella & Rachel Melaugh
- Advocacy & Insurance Reform: Jonah McGreevy, Brian Rafferty
- Recruitment & Exit Interviews: Jonah McGreevy, Rachel Melaugh, Aoife Carry
- Strategic Plan Consultation Evaluation and Planning: Jonah McGreevy, Aisling Ni Cheallaigh and Rami AlRamahi

See paragraph 'Governance Standards' for more details on how the Board operates.



Risk Management

The ISACS Board and staff maintain a detailed risk register which is reviewed at every board meeting. This outlines risks relating to: Governance, Strategic, Compliance (Legal or Regulatory), Operational, Financial, Environmental or External, Reputational. Risks are discussed, assigned a traffic light rating of importance/urgency, and actions to mitigate risks are identified and implemented.

Conflicts of Interest

The ISACS Board of Directors aims to act at all times with transparency and integrity, and in the best interests of the organisation. The Board recognises that it has an obligation to identify any conflicts of interest and loyalty, and to ensure that any such conflicts are disclosed, recorded and effectively managed, in line with the Charities Regulator's "Guidance for Charity Trustees".

ISACS maintains a Register of Interests and a Conflict-of-Interest Policy, which are reviewed regularly. The Policy and Register are used to inform how the Board conducts itself, and the Board may direct that any conflicted individual abstain from voting, participating in debate, and/or being present for any vote or debate where their impartiality and objectiveness may be impaired, or perceived as such.

Governance Standards

ISACS has maintained full compliance with the Charities Governance Code since November 2023. ISACS has also adopted the Safe to Create Code of Behaviour, and has a published Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy developed with an external consultant which informs our work and our decisions.

ISACS Policies and Codes of Practice are reviewed regularly, updated as appropriate and circulated among the Board for discussion and approval at regular board meetings.

ISACS Staff



Director:
Lucy Medlycott
director@isacs.ie

Lucy Medlycott started off her career studying fine art sculpture in Limerick School of Art and Design. While in Limerick she discovered the versatility & dynamism of the street as a space for artistic exploration.

Since graduating from Limerick in 1993, Lucy, together with a group of colleagues, went on to found Buí Bolg Outdoor Arts Company in Wexford. Lucy worked with Buí Bolg in many capacities over the years from community artist to costume designer to manager. Lucy orchestrated many of their flagship projects, bringing their work from Ballina to Beijing and from Mullingar to Memphis and more.

Lucy is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and previous winner in the Southeast County & City Women in Business Awards. In 2023 Lucy was awarded the Conference Ambassador Recognition Award (CARA) from Fáilte Ireland for her work bringing the FRESH STREET conference to Galway in partnership with Circostrada and Galway 2020.

Lucy co-founded the Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network in late 2010 and has worked as Executive Director with ISACS since 2014.



Operations Manager:
Helen Collins
operations@isacs.ie

Helen graduated from UCD with a BA (hons) in French and Linguistics in 2001 and began her career in the National Library of Ireland from 2002 – 2004. She discovered the object manipulation world via poi, which led her to manage the Jugglers' Rest Backpackers in Picton, New Zealand in 2005, and on her return home she joined the organisational team for the European Juggling Convention (EJC) for its first visit to Ireland in Millstreet, Co. Cork in 2006.

Following the EJC Helen returned to UCD in 2007 for a master's degree in Cultural Policy and Arts Management, where her dissertation topic was the (then recent) official recognition of circus as an artform in Ireland, and its impact on artists in the sector.

From 2006 – 2015 Helen went on to act as a cultural freelancer in a variety of production management, technical and box office roles, with organisations including Dublin Fringe Festival, The National Concert Hall, Festival of World Cultures, Dublin Dance Festival, TheatreCLUB, and many more. In 2015 she joined box office software provider Ticketsolve as a project manager providing support and training to their network of venues and festivals. Since 2015, Helen also forms part of the Black Powder Monkeys team of pyrotechnicians. She can sometimes be found in an aerial hoop.

ISACS Staff



**Communications
Officer:
(until June 2025):
Cristina Ciampaglione
marketing@isacs.ie**

Cristina is an Italian artist and arts professional based in Ireland.

She has a keen interest in all aspects related to the world of arts and culture. Her academic studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome provided her with an excellent grounding in visual arts and a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of its practice.

After her Master's in graphic arts, she pivoted into arts management, obtaining a master's degree at IULM University in Rome. She also has a post graduate diploma in Cultural Event Management from IADT, Dublin, and one post graduate certificate in creative and cultural entrepreneurship at Trinity College Dublin.

She has extensive experience managing and administrating arts events/projects in Ireland and Italy, with a focus on street art initiatives - from the point of view of mural art, and visual arts exhibitions.

As an artist, she is a printmaker specialising in woodblock and is a member of the Graphic Studio Dublin.



**Communications
Officer:
(from October 2025)
James Mulcahy
Symmons
marketing@isacs.ie**

James is a public policy and communications specialist with extensive experience in advocacy for non-profit organisations. He has a keen interest in developing the performing arts sector and working collaboratively to deliver a vibrant community of performers in Ireland. A graduate from University College Dublin, James holds an M.A. in public policy and a B.A. in philosophy and politics. His professional background encompasses a diverse range of sectors, including non-profit organisations, research institutes and public affairs consultancy. Throughout his career, James has supported national advocacy campaigns, developed membership programmes and organised training and events for Transparency International Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society and Threshold.

James is engaged with Ireland's circus and flow arts community, and holds a particular passion for poi. He has performed at the Theatre Royal in Waterford and has contributed to circus productions and walkabout performances at festivals throughout Ireland.

ISACS Staff



**Membership
Engagement Officer:
Brendan Fahy**
info@isacs.ie

Brendan learned to juggle almost twenty years ago while completing a B.A. in English Literature in NUI, Galway. He has been a part of the Irish juggling and circus scene ever since.

During his studies he also developed an interest in computer programming, which led to an M.Sc. in software design and development, which led to a twelve-year career working in software for agencies, startups, and multinational corporations, in Galway, Dublin, and Wexford.

In 2022, Brendan left the software world to focus on writing and juggling. He didn't choose the freelance life - but he had nothing else booked on those dates. He has since performed and taught juggling for festivals, schools, community groups, and audiences of all kinds all over Ireland.

He has received support from the Arts Council of Ireland, the John Hewitt Society, ArtLinks and Wexford Arts Office. He is on the Artist in the Community programme for County Wexford, and is a member of the artists & community workers advisory group for Creative Places Enniscorthy.

He lives in Enniscorthy with his wife, daughter, and dog.



**Project Manager:
Tamara Gangnus**
projects@isacs.ie

Tamara's career in the arts began with her studies in fine art at Gorey School of Art & Wexford Campus School of Art and Design, IT Carlow. During her final year, she discovered a passion for percussion and street performance, leading her to perform at festivals and events across the country and she continues to be an active member of Wexford's community Samba band, Bloco Garman.

Her interests in community arts, festivals and public celebrations led her to pursue an MA in festive arts at the University of Limerick in 2016. Since then, Tamara has worked as a freelance arts professional, taking on diverse roles in programme coordination, administration, and event production. She has worked with Wexford County Council on major cultural events such as Culture Night, WexSci Science Festival, and Cruinniú na nÓg.

Most recently, she served as project manager for Music Generation Wexford's Youth Opera Project 'Seedlings' (2022–2023) and Circus Explored coordinator in 2024.

Tamara is also a practising visual artist.

Main Objectives & Activities



The Wiggle Wagon by Moss Russell
with Edaein Samuels and Bella Young,
Photograph by David Hegarty



SHARE Open Forum, National Circus Festival of Ireland 2025, photo by Olga Kuzmenko,

In 2025, the ISACS Network advanced its core objectives through a strategically aligned programme of activities, guided by the four principal pillars of our 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan: Celebrate, Advocate, Grow, and Sustain.

Celebrate

The ISACS Network and its members have continued to thrive, experiencing significant growth in recent years. This has renewed our ambition to help drive an exciting future for these artforms. To further stimulate this momentum, ISACS developed and delivered a dynamic programme of engaging, informative and celebratory projects and events.

We led public-facing events that explored our artforms and fostered meaningful engagement with audiences, communities, and industry professionals. Highlights include the Professional Programme at Spraoi International Street Arts Festival, featuring a pitching session, round table, and studio visit. ISACS Members connected with six international guests and took part in the PITCH mentorship programme at Garter Lane Arts Centre, Waterford.

We delivered our annual SHARE Open Forum in Tralee as part of the National Circus Festival of Ireland. We hosted 42 ISACS members and stakeholders at the event. The programme included the launch of the Arts Council's new Circus Policy and Implementation Plan, a series of workshops designed to inform the development of ISACS' Strategic Plan 2026–2030, dedicated networking sessions with international festival programmers, and contributions from the DELVE artists.

// *ISACS has helped create a space where artists from different disciplines can discover each other's work, exchange ideas and explore opportunities to collaborate.* **//**
Member Survey

What really blew me away was the overwhelming support and warmth we felt from our community.

Martin Shannon (DELVE)



A Snail's Tale, St. Patrick's Festival 2025, photo by Olga Kuzmenko

We remain hugely supportive of ISACS's mission to encourage and empower the Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle artists of Ireland

Sharon Barry, Director Culture Ireland.

Grow

The ISACS membership grew in quantity by 11% in 2025, reaching a total of 344 members across the year – an increase from 311 in 2024. This continued expansion reflects the strength, resilience, and vibrancy of our community in Ireland, as well as the value that members place in the support and services we provide. At ISACS, our members remain at the heart of everything we do, guiding our priorities and shaping our programmes.

This steady trend of growth signals a clear message: the demand for sector-wide support is increasing. As the network expands, so too does the need for enhanced resources, professional development opportunities, and advocacy that champions the sector. Our ongoing commitment is to ensure that every member can thrive and continue developing their practice within a supportive and connected community.

We deliver a wide range of programmes which directly support our membership in their ambitions and encourage their future artistic and professional development. This is achieved through the delivery of direct one to one mentoring sessions, artistic development programmes, bursaries specifically aimed at those who identify as minority or disadvantaged, and professional development programmes, strengthening our connections with our national and international partnerships.

These programmes grow the membership's knowledge base, strengthens professional connections, and expands the capacity of these collective and diverse artforms within the community.

Geena O'Keeffe, Spraoi 2025
by Waterford In Your Pocket



Youth Circus Gathering,
Cloughjordan 2025,
photo by Benedict Hutchinson

Future Generations

Nationally, we delivered the fourth year of Circus Explored project which celebrated both Cruinniú na nÓg and the Shared Island initiative through a vibrant programme of activity, including six Cruinniú na nÓg Circus Picnics attended by over 1,500 young people, three Shared Island Social Circus Exchanges involving 68 participants, and four Cruinniú na nÓg Local Authority Collaborations engaging a further 47 young people.

Circus Explored reached new heights in 2025 as Aidan and Ellie from In Your Space Circus shared their passion and experiences on a youth panel at the Creative Ireland & Shared Island Conference. Some of the young people from the Circus Explored programme delivered an outstanding closing performance at the event, which was attended by Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Minister Patrick O'Donovan.



ISACS at FiraTàrraga 2025

Internationally

ISACS proudly led a 38-strong Irish delegation to FiraTàrraga, one of Europe's leading international festivals for street arts and performance. This year's edition featured a special Spotlight on Ireland—designed to showcase Irish talent on a global stage through performances, discussions, and cultural exchange. Four Irish works were presented which have gone on to build strong world wide tours arising from this visibility.

We represented Ireland at key international events throughout the year, including the Circostrada Gathering at BIAC in Marseille, Festival SPRING in Normandy, Honey Pot at the Adelaide Fringe Festival, Circostrada's FRESH STREET at Out There Arts Festival in Great Yarmouth, the MICC International Market of Contemporary Circus in Montreal, Ciclop Festival in Mallorca, and the Irish Festival of Oulu in Finland.

We hosted a wide delegation of 12 international programmers and festival makers with the support of Culture Ireland at Festival of Fools - Belfast, Spraioi - Waterford and the National Circus Festival of Ireland - Tralee.

These relationships built through our active participation in Circostrada and Outdoor Arts UK are so valuable to us and to the wider ISACS membership who are now in the process of building tours from Finland to Spain, Portugal, Canada and beyond - growing a truly international artform.



Artistic Residencies

These types of programmes are incredibly helpful for artists, especially in terms of gaining new skills and sharing their own practice, experience, and insights into art. That builds artistic confidence

Magda Karol (Lumen Masterclass with Matteo Racitti)

We continued to support artists through a range of residencies delivered across Ireland and spanning multiple artforms. In the fifth year of our partnership with Áras Éanna Ionad Ealaíne, we supported artists Anja Nicholson and Amberlee Toumanguelov in undertaking a month-long residency on Inis Oírr, enabling them to deepen their practice within a unique island setting.

In collaboration with Wexford Arts Centre, we delivered the LIFT residency, offering dedicated mentoring and creation space for Tumble Circus to develop their new work 'Won't be Told'. These residency opportunities provide artists with essential time, space, and support to develop their creative practice.

The ISACS programmes and bursaries offer invaluable opportunities for growth, connection, and creative exploration

Amberlee Toumanguelov (Áras Éanna Residency)

Artform Development

We supported 15 artists through bursaries to attend artform specific events, masterclasses and training both at home and abroad. Highlights include SPASA, a 2-week street arts training programme in Catalunya and Lumen Street Theatre's puppet making masterclass. Nine artists were supported through DELVE a programme designed to support artists to attend a range of different festivals including Festival of Fools, Spraoi and National Circus Festival of Ireland. We were especially delighted to partner with Croí Glan integrated dance company this year to support artists with additional access needs, encouraging inclusive participation in the development of future circus, movement and cross disciplinary artists.

As a dancer, I felt really welcomed by the circus community, and really hope to continue working on building multi-disciplinary projects

Rachel Paul (DELVE)

Professional Development

We hosted 7 direct sector specific training programmes for over 92 ISACS members. The programme covered a broad range of topics designed to strengthen members' professional skills, including writing funding applications, identifying partners and collaborators, finance and revenue management, international promotion, how to get paid, and generating alternative income streams.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with artists, offering career advice, sector knowledge, and connections that opened new pathways for collaboration and growth. We entered into 30 national & 10 International partnerships in support of local, national and international projects. In addition to being a first point of contact for a range of national and international public and professional enquiries about street arts, circus and spectacle in Ireland, by email, telephone and in person.



ISACS with An Taoiseach Micheal Martin at the Creative Ireland Shared Island Conference 2025
photo by

ISACS gives me a sense of being part of something. It gives me access to others in the community. It gives me support and advice.
Member Survey

Advocate

ISACS plays a key role in ensuring that our sector is represented and heard at national and international levels. This includes contributing to a wide range of policy papers, discussion groups and consultations with both local authorities, state agencies and European bodies. We work hard on amplifying the voice of the sector, gathering data evidencing the impact of the same and ensuring clear representation.

In addition, we deliver presentations, knowledge share, collaborative and cross-sectoral programmes which raise the profile and increase awareness of the potential within and the need for the development and investment in these artforms.

Five areas we have a specific focus on are:

- Access to insurance for aerial circus education
- Delivery of a national archive for these artforms
- Availability of national resources and infrastructure
- Pre-budget submission & election hustings
- Expansion of the Basic Income for Artists (BIA)

We work closely with the National Campaign for the Arts, the Alliance for Insurance Reform and the Irish Showmen's Guild towards the above.

In line with our commitment to fair pay for artists, and guided by the Arts Council of Ireland's Paying the Artist policy, the ISACS Network undertook a sample study to better understand pay practices within the street, circus and spectacle sector. We used data from 57 individual member responses across five categories of work-corporate, commercial, funded project work, teaching, and community work-gathered through our annual membership feedback survey. This was done to create a new resource titled **ISACS Member Pay Review 2025**

This resource helps members understand what other artists are charging for similar work, whether their prices are below or above average, and what factors they should consider when pricing their work.

“The Irish Showman's Guild are delighted to be working with the ISACS Network on our joint project 'Towards a National Circus and Fairground Archive'.”
Chris Piper, Vice-President
Irish Showmans Guild

“The ISACS network has not only expanded my professional connections but also motivated me to think bigger about my own projects.”
Member Survey

Building on our 2024 report: 'Towards an Irish Showmen's Archive' ISACS commenced an oral history programme 'Voices of the Showmen' in collaboration with the Irish Showmen's Guild, the University of Galway Library and Archives Ireland, supported by the Heritage Council. This project saw the first recordings being collected with members of the showman's community and shared within a university resource for future students, academics, researchers and journalists to access.

In addition to our focus on national policy, ISACS has worked hard to develop international advocacy, which plays a vital role in strengthening Ireland's presence on the global stage. As a core member of the Circostrada Network and multiple international platforms, ISACS deepened its international relationships and ensured that Irish artists remain connected to key partners abroad and are well positioned to access high-quality artistic, professional, and touring opportunities worldwide.

Voices of the Showmen Project at The National Heritage Week, photo by Claire Sheehan





ISACS with the Arts Council
at SHARE Open Forum,
National Circus Festival
of Ireland, photo by
Olga Kuzmenko

Sustain

In 2025, we bid farewell to our much-loved communications officer, Cristina Ciampaglione, whose contributions over the past three years have been immeasurable and whose dedication has left a lasting impact on the ISACS Network. In October, we were pleased to welcome James Mulcahy Symmons into the role on a full-time basis, ensuring continuity and renewed momentum in our communications work. The team is now composed of three full time roles and one part time role. The retention of these core roles is invaluable for providing stability to the organisation, allowing us to respond to the evolving needs of our Network.

We remained firmly committed to investing in our team by prioritising professional development, promoting staff wellbeing, and embedding the internal supports necessary to sustain a healthy and resilient working environment. Over the past year, these measures have strengthened our team's skills base and operational capacity. As a result, ISACS is now better positioned to fulfil its responsibilities as a national resource organisation, delivering enhanced support to members and meeting the evolving demands of the sector.

In addition to our core team, we collaborated with freelancers throughout the year across a wide range of specialities, including photography, graphic design, videography, accounts, legal services, PR and more. A key contributor to sustaining our all-island youth circus work was our ongoing partnership with freelance project manager Tamara Gangnus. Tamara led the Creative Ireland-funded Cruinniú na nÓg / Shared Island initiative, Circus Explored, which focused on empowering both current and future circus trainers to build sustainable careers within the sector. Through this work, we were able to bring circus workshops to diverse settings across the entire island through our Cruinniú na nÓg Circus Picnics, Shared Island Social Circus Exchanges, and Cruinniú na nÓg Local Authority Collaborations.



Finance, Income and Expenditures

Waterford Spraoi Parade 2025 photo by Patrick Browne

Income & expenditure summary 2025

Income 2025 €

Arts Council Strategic Funding	€185,000
Arts Council Capacity Building	€5,989
Arts Council Access Funding	€1,984
Creative Ireland	€153,903
Wexford County Council	€9,268
Membership Fees	€15,816
Culture Ireland	€25,193
Heritage Council	€22,525
Other Income	€11,698
Reimbursed Expenses	€5,925
TOTAL	€437,301

Expenditure 2025 €

Programme of Activities	€231,153
Wages and Salaries	€155,007
Rent, Light & Heat	€1,281
Insurance	€883
Marketing & Website	€3,318
Company Development	€3,444
Training	€1,054
Legal & Professional	€3,471
Board Expenses	€877
Bank Charges	€1,367
Auditor	€3,247
Advocacy Expenses	€2,100
Phone & Broadband	€1,476
Software	€3,064
Dues & Subs	€868
Sundry	€2,121
Depreciation of Tangible Assets	€649
TOTAL	€415,380

Interest Receivable €1,431

SURPLUS / Deficit €23,352

See Appendix 2: Financial Statements 2025 for full audited accounts.

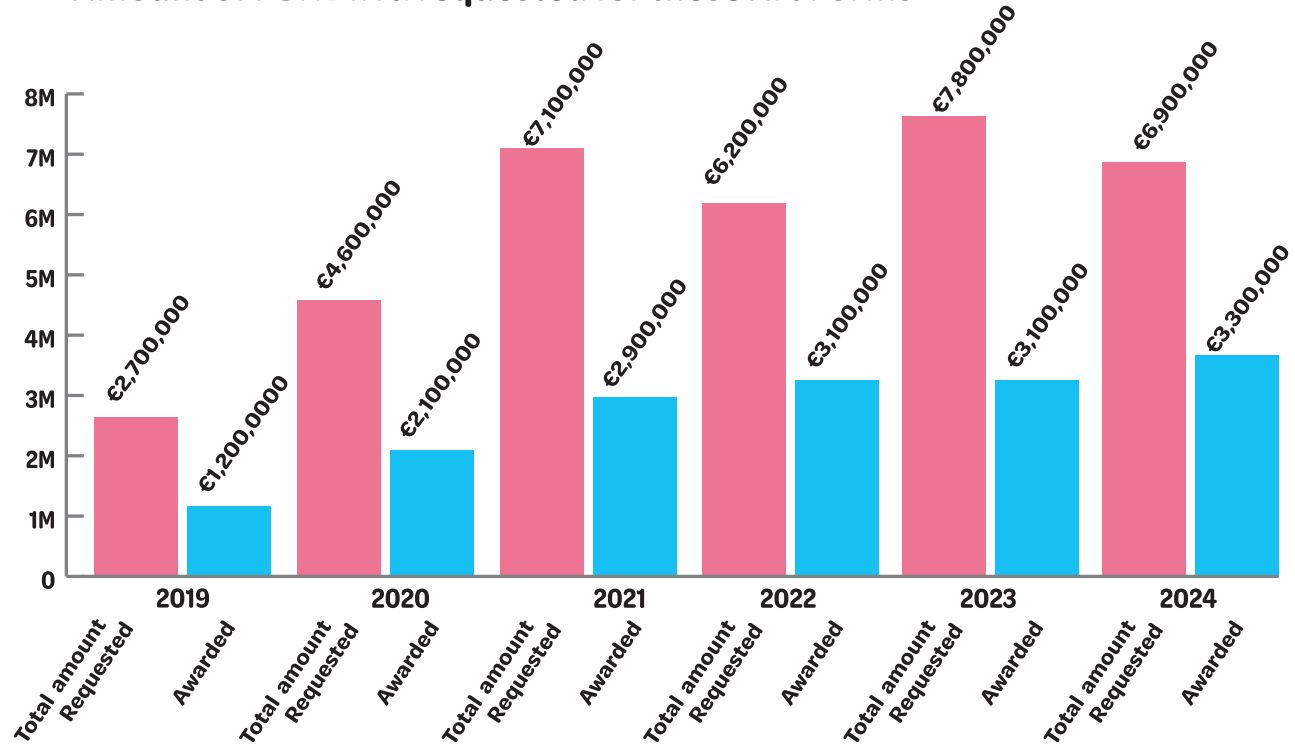
N.B.: Wexford County Council also support ISACS through Benefit in Kind including the provision of an office valued at €5,000 per annum

Photo Credit: Circus Fergus, Fire, by Olga Kuzmenko

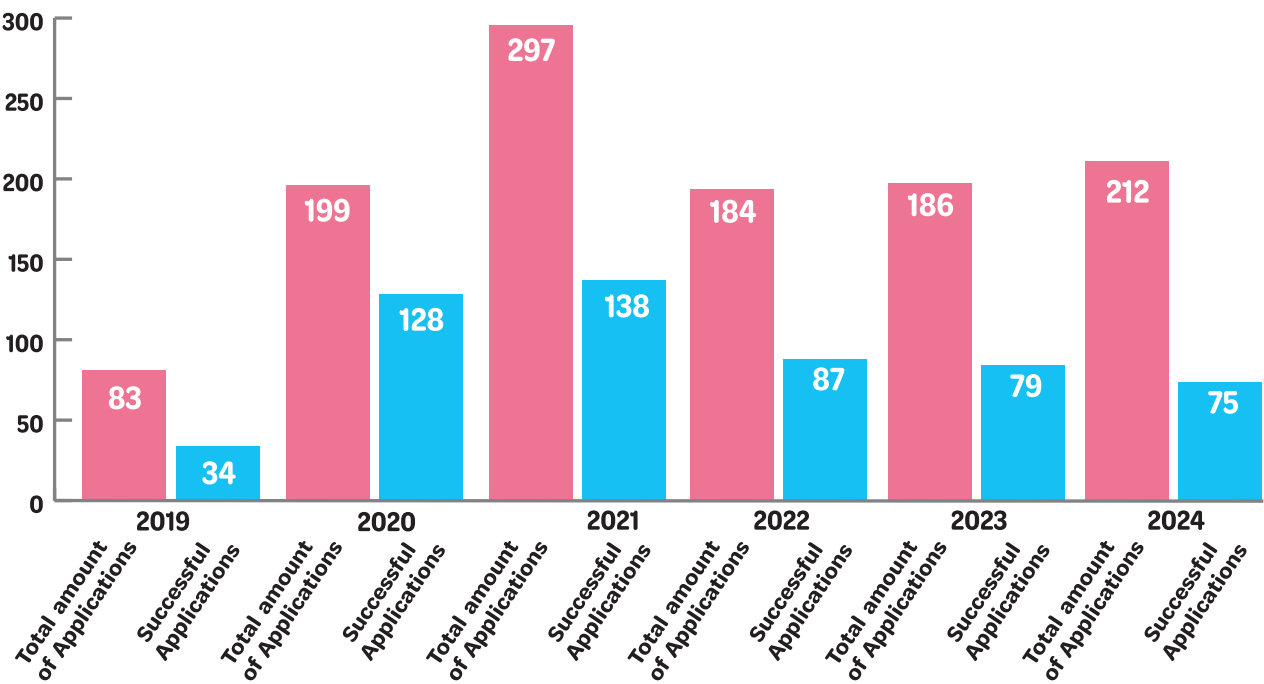
Arts Council of Ireland Funding for the CSAS Sector

2025 Arts Council figures to be added when available.

Amount of **FUNDING** requested for these Art Forms



Number of **APPLICATIONS** received from these Art Forms

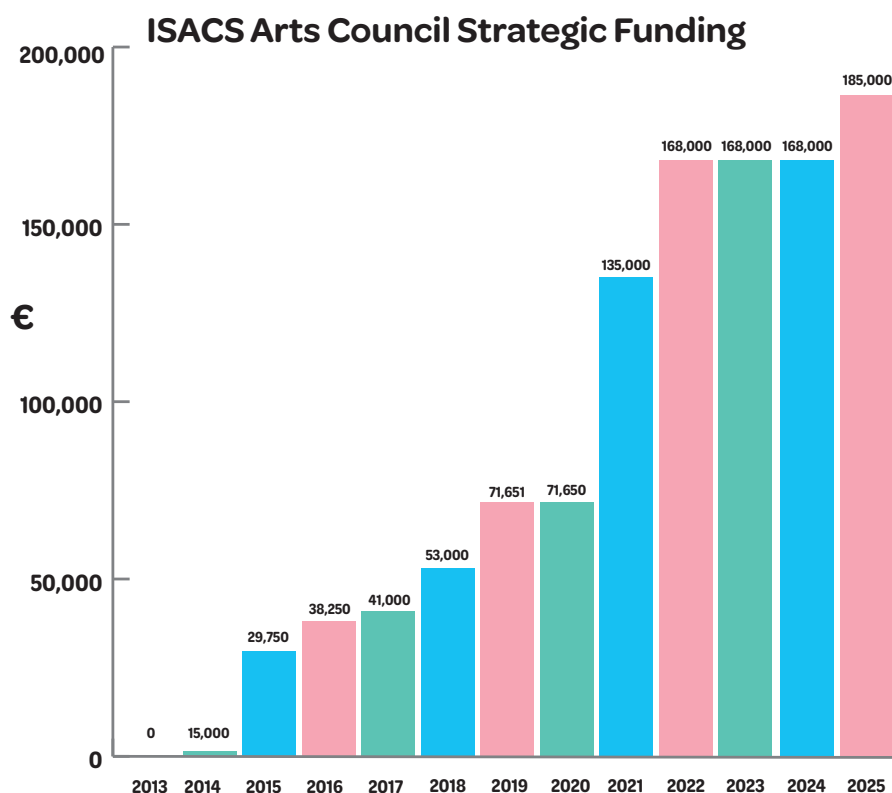


Year	Total AC Budget	Total entire Circus, Street Performance, Spectacle budget	% of total budget for Circus, Street Performance, Spectacle budget
2019	€75 million	€1,200,000	1.6%
2020	€109 million	€2,100,000	1.93%
2021	€130 million	€2,900,000	2.23%
2022	€130 million	€3,100,000	2.38%
2023	€130 million	€3,100,000	2.38%
2024	€134 million	€3,300,000	2.46%

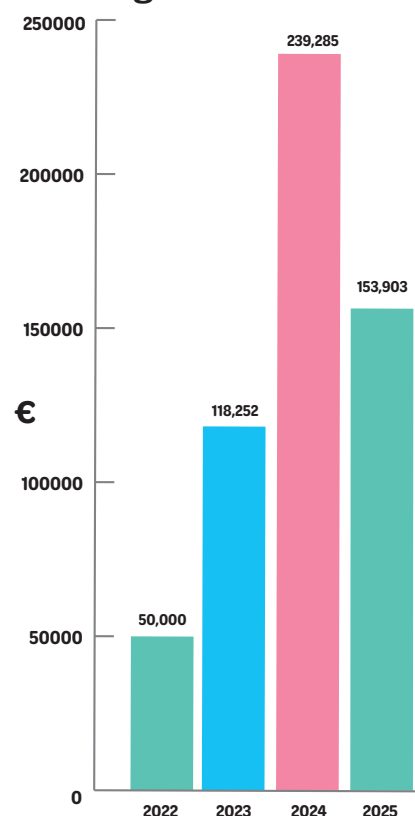
Source of data: Arts Council of Ireland.

Please note that several of our members receive funding through a variety of streams such as Young People, Children & Education, Arts Participation, Local Place & Public Art. These figures are not included in the above table.

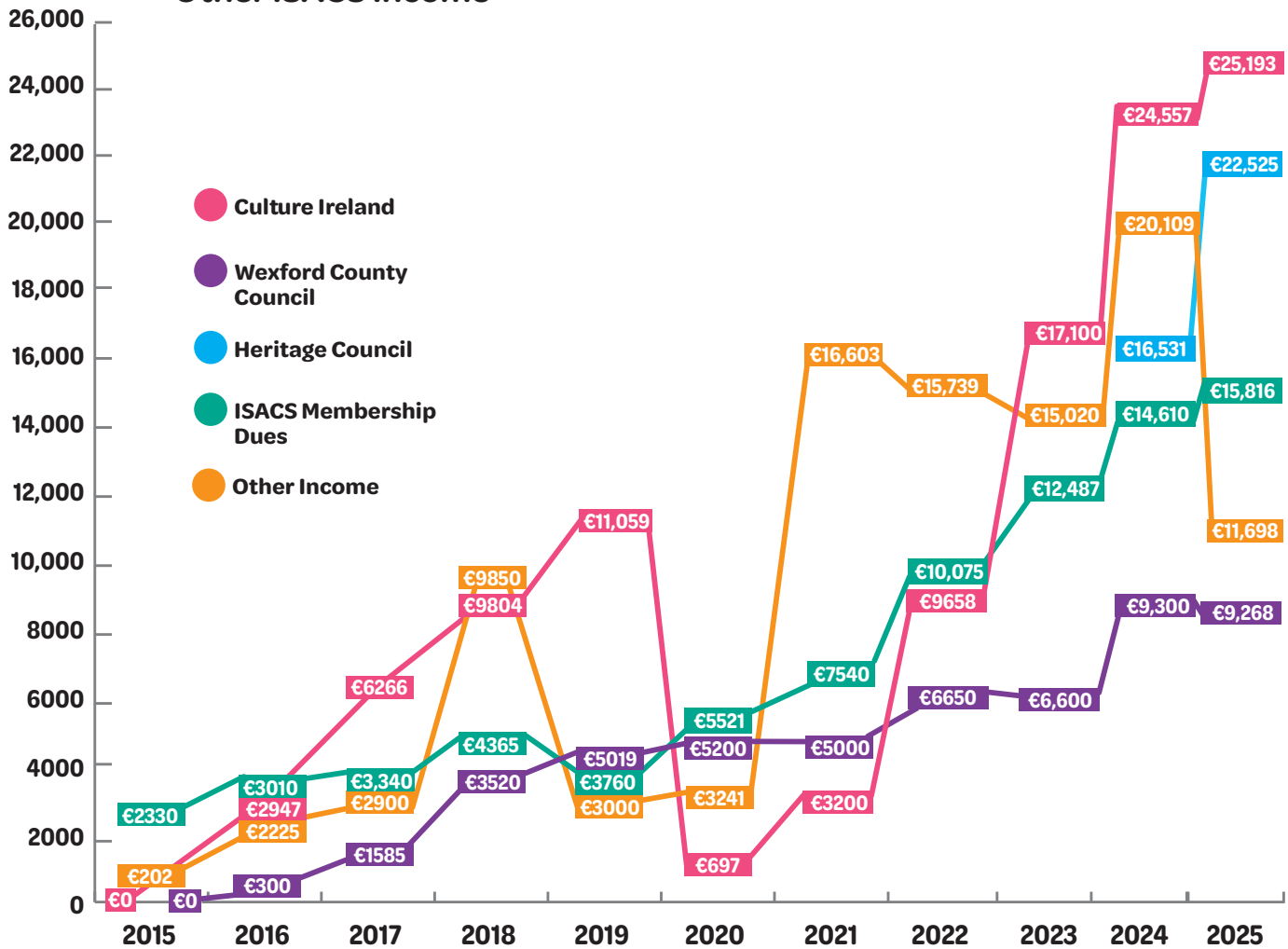
In 2025 ISACS Arts Council Strategic Funding was increased to €185,000.



ISACS Creative Ireland Funding



Other ISACS Income



Future Plans



Beanie Belle, Little Top Stars, photo by Pedro Elias Dutra



Our key priority for 2026 is to deliver a new strategic plan which draws a roadmap for the future development of the network; our vision, ambition and goals. The work on this has already started in collaboration with WOVE Strategic design consultants and supported through the LEADER Programme via Wexford Local Development (WLD). ISACS is on the brink of a new chapter in its journey and we are excited to discover what that is going to look like.

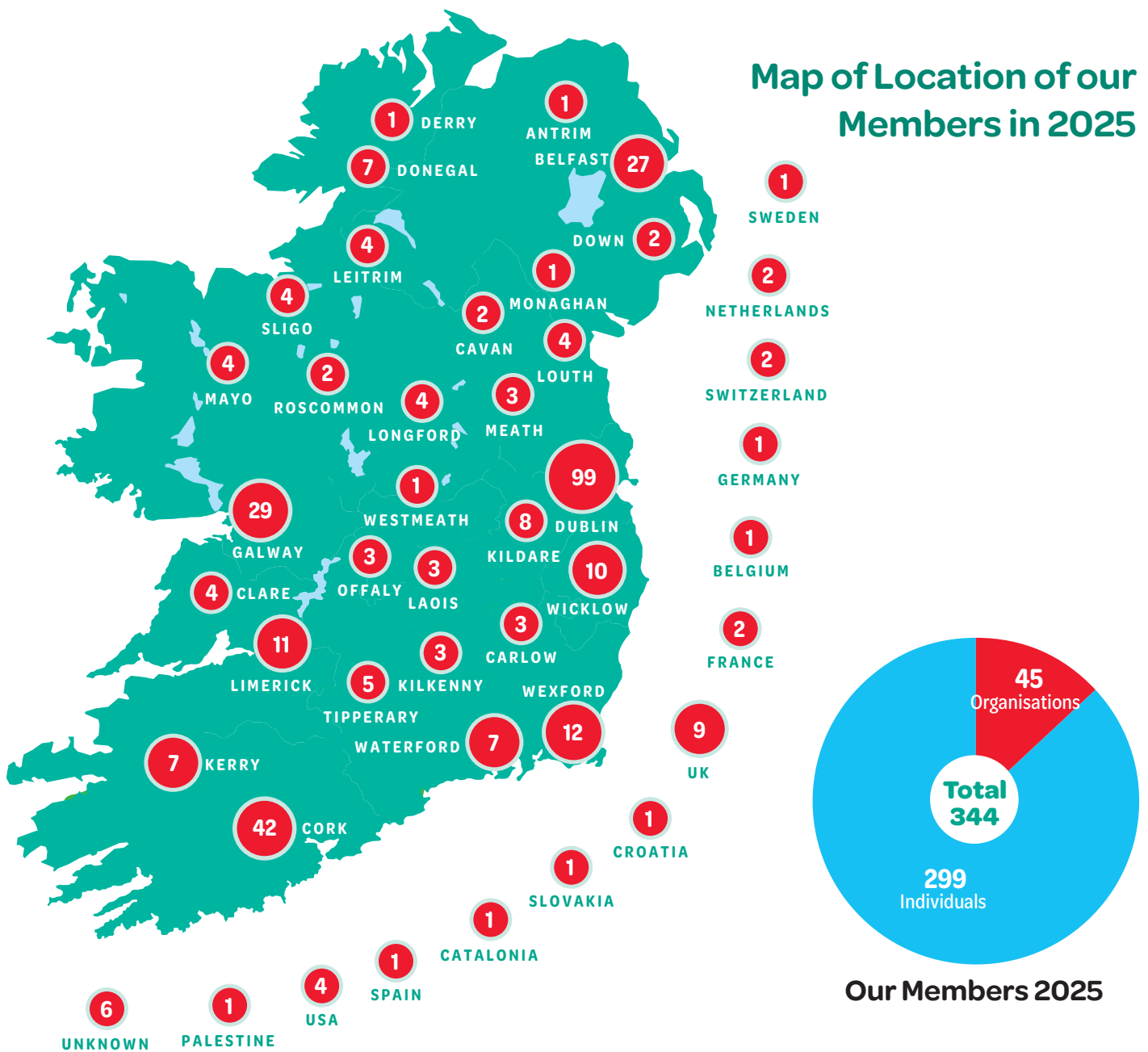
In the meantime, ISACS will continue to work on all the objectives as outlined above with a view to maintaining stability in these unstable times.

SHARE Open Forum, National Circus Festival of Ireland,
photo by Olga Kuzmenko



Appendix 1

Ria Corcoran and Aoife Raleigh of Symmetry Circus,
photo by Neil Hainsworth 2025



Circus Explored at the Creative Ireland & Shared Island Conference 2025



Names of our 2025 Members

ISACS
Members
2025

AcrophobiA	Birr Vintage Week Arts Festival	Circus Factory
Adela Marchis	Black Powder Monkeys	Circus Fergus
Agnese Santoro	Blackbird Cultur-Lab	Circus Gerbola
Aidan Phelan	Blue Hanley	Circus Simon
Aine Gallagher	Bobbi Byrne	Circus250
Aisling Miklis	Breaked	Circusful
Aisling Ní Cheallaigh	Brenda Long	Claire Carroll
Alan Meaney	Bria Evans	Claire McKerverey
Alchemy Arts	Brian O'Mahony	Claire Sheehan Creative
Alice Gavigan	Bridget Ní Dhuinn	Cloughjordan Circus Club
Alison Doodly	Brilliant Events	Colm Gallagher
Amadan Ensemble	Broken Theatre Promotions	Cormac Mangan
Amberlee Tourmanguelov	Bugsy Devine	Cristina Ciampaglione
Amy Hegarty	Buí Bolg	Curious State
An Fear Tine	Bumble Movement Arts	Damian Carr
An Féile Eile	Burning Circus	Danae Wollen
Andrew Loretto	Cait Ní Ceilleacair	Darrell Elliott
Angelica Santander	Caitlin Middleton	Deirdre Grant
Angelique Ross	Caitríona Ní Threasaigh	Donna Fox
Anita Woods	Cal The Musical	Doulab for Circus and Dance
Anja Horrig	Carla Lewis	Dublin Circus Project
Anja Nicholson	Carlow Arts Festival	Dunn Create
Anna Jones	Caro Hangs	Edaein Samuels
Annique van Niekerk	Carol Walsh	Eilis Carey
Aoibhinn O'Dea	Caroline Conway	Eimear Mhaoldomnaigh
Aoife Clarke	Catrin Harris	Elaine Barry
Aoife Kavanagh	Charli Sweet	Elevate
Aoife Raleigh	Charlotte Bruce	Elina CU - CU Theatre
Apartheid Free Circus	Chloe Commins	Elisa Gallo Rosso
Artfx	Chloe Dougan	Ellen McSweeney
Ashton	Chloé Pisco	Em Murphy
Asuna Elemental Arts	Chrissie Ardill	Emma Donoghue
Avram Rosewood	Christina Offutt	Emmen Jude Donnelly
Barry Cahill	Christopher McAuley	Esmeraldo Tavares BlackDiamond
Baubo Theatre	Cian Booth	Faerialist
Beat Carnival	Ciara Moloughney	Fanzini Productions
Belén Vergara Amado	Ciara-Louise Grey	
Beth Darragh	Cikada Circus	
Bill and Fred Productions	Circo Coranco	

Fi Hull
Fiachra Lynam
Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre
Fiona Hession
Fizz & Chips
Flight of Fancy Shadows
Flora Fauna Project
Fred Rush
Fuinneamh Drum
Funky Fi
Gabriella Armini
Gail O'Brien
Galway Community Circus
Giddy Up Theatre
Gill Byrne Circus and Rigging
Gracie Marshall
Grant Goldie
Hands Down Circus
Handstand Press Magazine
Hannah Emory
Hannah Julienne
Hannah Nic Ruairí
Hannah Ryan
Hannah Scully
Hannes Jung
Helen Keenan
Helen Welsh
Hillas Smith
Honey Morris
Hoopixie
Hugh Brown
Human Collective
In Your Space Circus
Inés García Montero
Ingrid O'Beirne
Instant Dissidence
Iona Matheson
Irish Aerial Creation Centre
Irish Aerial Dance Fest
Irish UNIMA
Isabela Mello

Jack Wise
Jacob Anderson
Jake Fairbrother
Jazzville Productions
Jenni Nikinmaa
Jennifer Whitney Rothwell
Jennifer Wyman
Jenny Tufts
Jessica Doolin
Jessica Leong
Joanna Reynolds
Jonah McGreevy
Jonathan Walsh
Jonny Moore
Joshua Angelo Estrella
Judenald Marcus Penders
Juggler Brendan
Juley-Ann Collins
Julia Sparkle
Julie O'Connell Kent
Julie-Rose McCormick
Karen Aguiar
Kate Dunne
Kate Mitchell
Kate Shelley
Kateo
Kathleen Doherty
Katie Martin
Kayleigh McGinley
Kazoo the Clown
Keeva O'Neill
Kelly Maher
Kenzie Mitzner
Kevin O'Riordan
Killian Ryan
Kristyn Fontanella
Kyle English
Laura Connolly
Laura Jansen
Laura Mahon
Laura Murphy Dance

Leness Falls
Liam Cahill
Liam McGlinchey
Lidija Sola
Lilitha
Linda Cullen
Lisa Carley
Lisa Moore
Lisa Wong
Little Top Stars
Longford County Arts Office
Loosysmokes
Lords of Strut
Louis Plissonneau
Louise Holian
Lucia Kickham
Lumen Street Theatre
LUXe
Lydia Moran
Lysette Golden
Macha Shewolf
Macnas
Magdalena Karol
Magdalena Rudnicka
Mai Abdalla
Maiya Powell
Maleta
Maria da Paixao Vieira
Maria Lydia Polotto
Maria Tivnan
Marion Cronin
Mary Aherne
Mary Doyle
Maryam Madani
Masha Mitkova
Master Synge
Megan Cronin
Megan Maher / Miz Meg
Megan O'Connor
Megan Roberts
Melanie Gordon

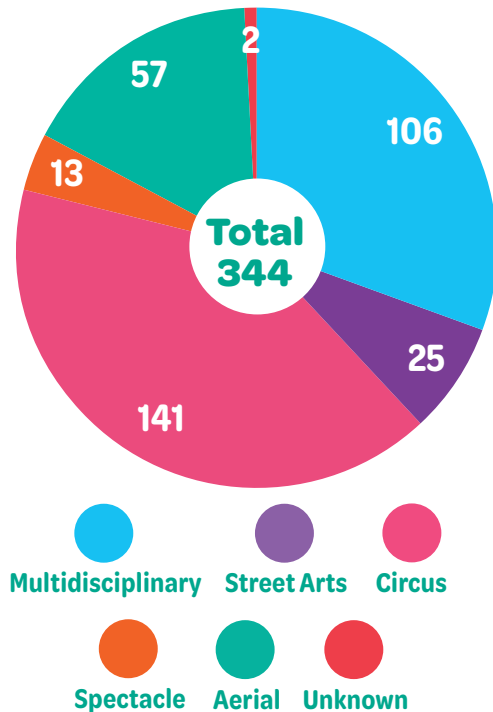
Miquel Barcelo
 Mira Geluk
 Mish
 Missy Fortune
 Molly Kelly
 Molly O'Brien
 Monika Palova
 Moon & Sixpence Puppet Theatre
 Moss Russell
 MOTHÚ
 Motion Chapel
 Mr. Wilson's
 Muirne Bloomer
 Musici Ireland
 Natasha Bourke
 Nathan Mac
 Nathaniel Whittingham
 National Circus Festival of Ireland
 Neasa O'Brien
 Nell Buckley
 Nicola Moran
 Noeline Kavanagh
 Nora Kelly Lester
 nuranora
 Oisin McWeeney
 Oksana Barhatkov
 Olga Kuzmenko
 Olivier Dietrich
 Oran Leong
 Orlaith Carr Ní Chearra
 Orlaith Nic Aidhne
 Ouch Productions
 Outdoor Arts UK
 Pastel Pole Studios
 Paul Curley
 Pearse Stokes
 Peter Moran
 Pitch'd Productions
 Polina Shapkina
 Promenade

Púca Puppets
 Quentin Reynolds
 Rachel Ní Bhraonáin
 Rachel Paul
 Rather Gather
 Rebecca McVicker
 Renata Dima
 Ro with the Flow
 Rob Heaslip
 ROGU
 Róisín Whelan Dance
 Ruairi OShea
 Ruairi Weiner
 Sadbh Grehan
 Safire Hikari
 Sara Granda
 Sarah Lou Kinneen
 Sarah Luna Courlander Whelan
 Sarah McAvoy
 Scoil Seamus Ennis/Fingal Mummery
 Seamus Murphy
 Sean McIlraith
 Sean McIver
 Selene Murphy
 Seve Feathers
 Shadowbox
 Shane O'Leary
 Shantie Langer
 ShapeScape Movement Arts Company
 Shay Quinn
 Sophia Bikova
 Sophia Tseng
 Sophie Carroll
 Sophie Davies
 Spraoi International Street Arts Festival
 Squarehead Productions
 Stevie Wicks
 Street Theatre Ireland
 Strix Nebulosa

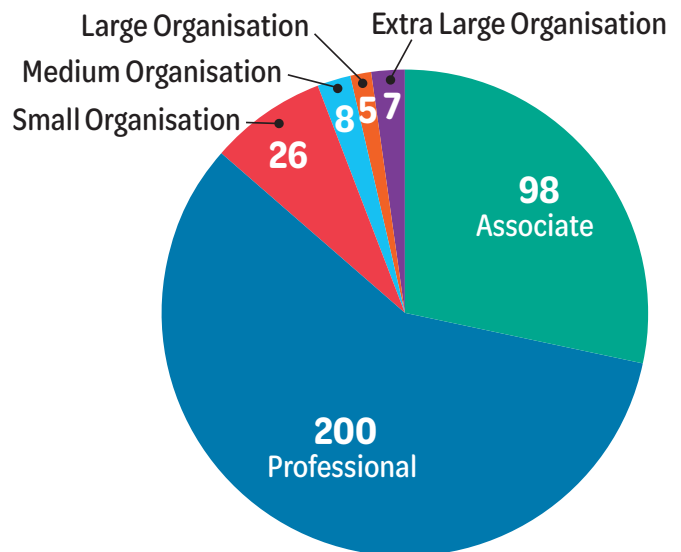
Taking Flight Education & Performance
 Tara Brandel
 The Dirty Circus
 The Fire and Light Fairy
 The Growery
 The Irish National Clown Orchestra of Ireland
 The Outing Queer Arts Collectival & Festival
 Timothy Ferguson
 Timothy Peril
 Tom Campbell
 Tom Duffy's Circus
 Tom Meskill
 Tornado
 Tribe Fitness Dance Studio
 Tumble Circus
 Turas Theatre Collective
 Twisted Lane Productions
 Ulrike Liebetrau
 Valerie Bryce
 Vibes Scribes
 Vince Yip
 Visceral Art Studio
 Vivian Brodie
 Wobbly Circus
 Yeray J. Morillas Belmonte
 Yiu Kuen (Ken) O'Shea-Poon
 Zara McAuley
 Zoe Patterson

ISACS Members Data 2025

Unique ISACS Membership by Artform



Member type



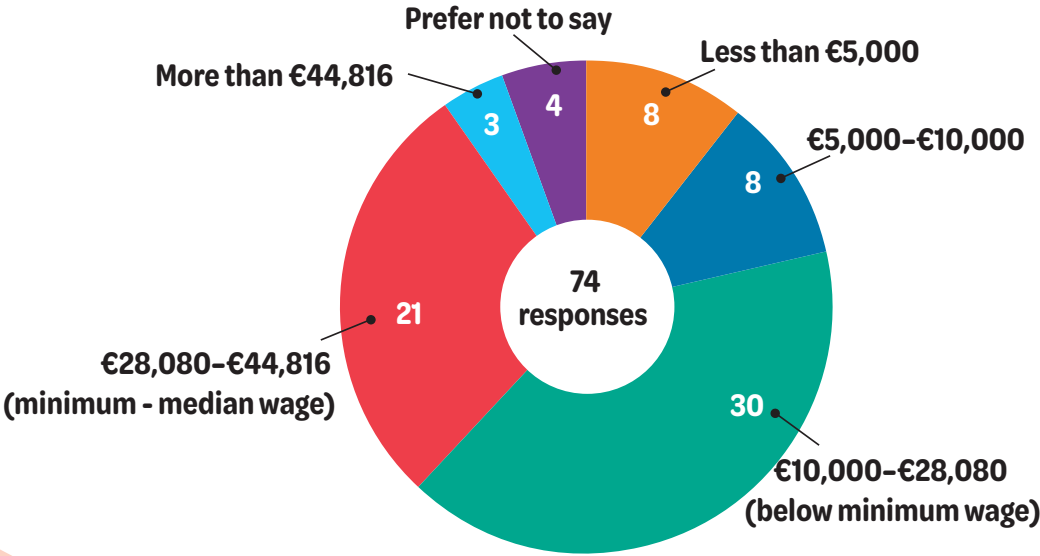
The Top Three Reasons cited for Being a Member of ISACS are:

- 1 Regular sector news and updates
- 2 Funding and other opportunity information
- 3 To be part of a community of like-minded people and organisations

The following data is drawn from a sample survey in which 25% of ISACS 2025 membership participated:

Individual Income - 2025 Data

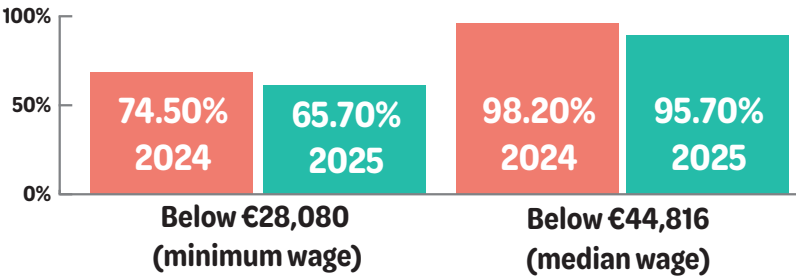
What was your approximate earned income from all sources?
(74 responses)



What would help meet your financial goals?

- 1 Basic income for artists
- 2 More Arts Council funding
- 3 More job opportunities

Individuals earning below:



- Almost a quarter of individual artists (23%) earned less than €10,000 in 2025 (16 out of 70 individual artists).
- Two thirds of individual artists (66%) earn below minimum wage.
- Almost all individual artists (96%) earn below the median wage. Only 3 out of 70 identified that they earn above it.

Appendix 2

A photograph of three young women performing aerial silk. They are suspended in the air, holding onto a single blue silk ribbon that forms a large loop. The background is a dark, textured blue. The women are wearing dark, long-sleeved leotards with light blue accents. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the performers against the dark background.

Limerick's Future Creators at the Creative Ireland Kids Show in IACC,
photo by Jym Daly



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Shared Island
Initiative



Culture Ireland
Cultúr Éireann



wexford
local development
Forbairt Áitiúil Loch Garman



We are members of:



Stronger Charities.
Stronger Communities.



Business to Arts
Developing Creative
Partnerships

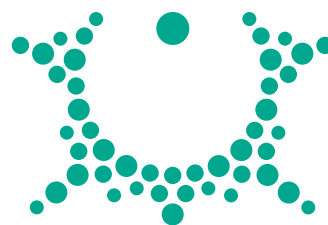


create national development
agency for collaborative arts



Our other valued partners:

Áras Éanna Arts Centre
Archives Ireland
Bussola
Cairde Sligo Arts Festival
Carlow Arts Festival
Cloughjordan Circus Club
Circus Factory
Circusful
Croí Glan Integrated Dance
Dublin Circus Project
Earagail Arts Festival
Fira Tàrrega
Garter Lane Arts Centre
Galway Community Circus
In Your Space Circus
Irish Aerial Creation Centre
Irish Aerial Dance Festival
Irish Showmans Guild
National Opera House
National Circus Festival of Ireland
Spasa
Spraoi
SpringMoves Dance Festival
Taking Flight
University of Galway Library
Wexford Arts Centre



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CRN: 493045