



Galway City Community Network  
Líonra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe

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# European Capital of Culture 2020

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## PPN Submission

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## 1. Introduction

Galway City Community Network, the Public Participation Network in Galway City, welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the Galway bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2020. We seek to make a contribution in the context of fully and publically supporting the bid and we welcome the potential contribution of the bid process and outcome.

In making this submission we issued a brief survey to PPN members and held a workshop on July 20<sup>th</sup> in the Galway 2020 Hub. This submission is based on the results of both the survey and the workshop. It also takes consideration of the Blue Drum's *Towards a Charter for Cultural Rights*, to which a number of PPN members made a contribution.

## 2. Principles

GCCN submit that the Galway 2020 bid needs to be underpinned by a rights-based approach to culture and by the following principles:

- Respect for human endeavour;
- Ecological sustainability;
- Dignity of the individual
- Inclusion – an acceptance that everyone matters and has a right to express their culture and participate in activities that enable them to so do;
- Creativity – an opportunity to doing things differently;
- Dynamic – an opportunity to grow and evolve;
- Innovative – a openness to new ways of expressing culture;
- Participation – as producers as well as consumers of art and cultural activities;
- Self Determination – communities encouraged to develop and run their own cultural projects



*The vision should include valuing the diversity of culture and cultures in Galway, promotion of cultural rights, support for access and participation in arts and culture activities and events for all, support for artists including young and emerging artists, respect for the rich heritage of Galway including the Irish language, recognition of the intrinsic value of arts, culture and heritage for personal, social and community development (Survey Response)*

### 3. Vision

The vision needs to step outside of the usual economic framework that seems to be attached to all things creative and cultural. Culture extends beyond and is not the sole preserve of those in the 'creative industries' or the tourism sector (Survey Response)

Based on these principles the vision needs to capture the uniqueness of Galway in a way that acknowledges that some people and communities need specific interventions and supports to ensure that they are truly included.

Our suggestion for the vision for Galway 2020 is one that reflects the aspirations in *Towards a City of Equals* and *A City of Equals* and most recently reflects the work undertaken by the PPN to develop a *Statement of Wellbeing for This and Future Generations*:

Galway, a creative and inclusive city that respects and values its people and communities, their wellbeing and quality of life, that will develop a vibrant, sustainable, economy and environment and participative and transparent governance.

The vision and underpinning principles need to be transposed into visible action that have accompanying resources.

*Risk-taking, practice-based, a focus on emerging talents, critical thinking, creating and open forum, funding and energy for new work, a focus on paying artists appropriate fees for exhibiting or producing new works* (Survey Response)

### 4. Inclusion

In seeking to be inclusive there must be an understanding that specific groups and communities will need to be proactively encouraged, facilitated and supported to participate. These groups and communities include *inter alia* Travellers; people with a disability; older people; disadvantaged young people; migrants, and in particular members of the asylum seeking community; members of the LGBTQ community, marginalised communities and others that for one reason or another do not usually participate in cultural activities. Inclusion can be achieved using a combination of community arts and community development.

## 5. Inclusion of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors

As the representative network of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City, Galway City Community Network should be afforded representation at all levels of the structures preparing the bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2020. This has not been the case thus far and needs to be rectified should Galway be successful in the first round of the bid process.

## 6. Specific projects

- As part of the bid development process, Artist Residencies should be established to work with marginalised communities in the city and county. These Residencies need to be visible to communities and engage them in Galway 2020;
- Specific communities (Roma, Travellers, migrants, people living in direct provision, people with disabilities) should be assigned arts mentors to work with them;
- Every school in the city and county should be enabled to engage with their cultural rights;
- Community-led practice should be promoted and resourced;
- There should be specific support for socially, politically and community-engaged artists;
- Positive action projects to include knowledge and cultural perspectives of people and communities new to Galway and those that do not normally participate in opportunity to express their culture.

## 7. Outcomes

Arising from the bid process, GCCN would like to see:

- Increased access and participation in arts and cultural activities,
- an enlivened and resourced cultural and creative context as outlined above
- A more collaborative approach to how we engage with the people of Galway, leading to a more self-determined social engagement and social inclusion
- A municipal gallery that complements existing grassroots infrastructure
- A recognition of the important role participatory culture plays in the city and adequate resourcing to support this.
- The identification of targets and indicators and a plan to monitor progress that is inclusive and participatory.

## 8. Overcoming barriers

In order to achieve these outcomes the following needs to happen:

- Develop the proposed new 10 year Cultural Strategy for Galway City and County, including conducting a review of the current Galway City Arts Strategy, to reflect the vision and goals with a clear action plan for the next 5- 10 years;
- Active community-led outreach that seeks to actually engage with people in places that they are familiar with and feel safe - invite people into the process;
- Adequate funding to organisations involved in this sector and a more transparent process around funding allocation.

## 9. About the PPN

As part of the Reform of Local Government Act 2014, local authorities were required to establish Public Participation Networks in each local authority area. Galway City Community Network was established in September 2014 as the Public Participation Network in Galway city. Galway City Community Network is the representative, collective voice of community, voluntary and environmental organisations in Galway City.