

Baboró

International Arts Festival for Children



**Year in Review
2025**

Welcome | Fáilte

As Baboró goes toward its 30th anniversary in 2026, we take a moment to celebrate our achievements of 2025 and the incredible depth of creative work carried out by the festival in the past year.

Baboró shines as a jewel in the crown of Galway's vibrant artistic personality, nurturing the minds of children, their families and our communities. Baboró also continues to be a key platform for international partnerships, creating connections for audiences and artists, making Galway and the West of Ireland an important part of the fabric of Europe and the wider world.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the passionate team who deliver the festival, the artists who bring worlds to life, the partners and supporters who make the work possible, our Children's Panel, and the many wonderful young people, educators and families who make Baboró so loved and so special.

Dani Gill
Chair of the Board of Trustees

2025 was a particularly busy year for Baboró as we delivered several creative projects in schools and communities throughout Galway, in addition to our annual international festival. These projects allow us to reach more children and deepen our engagement with them, their parents and community.

During our 29th festival, Galway's theatres, galleries and schools were filled with joy and laughter as many children experienced live professional performances for the first time. Our access programmes ensured that children, no matter their physical or intellectual needs, could enjoy an aspect of the festival.

As a charity Baboró relies on the generous support of our funders, partners, sponsors and donors who share our values. With their support we can continue to bring the transformative power of the creative arts to children in our community.

Thank you to our brilliant Children's Panel, artists, volunteers and Board of Trustees. And to the teachers, parents, guardians and of course children who bring our work to life - míle buíochas!

Aislinn Ó hEocha
Executive Artistic Director

creativity
at the
heart of
every
childhood





About Baboró

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children is Ireland's flagship arts festival dedicated to children and families.

A registered charity, Baboró works year-round to bring meaningful arts experiences to children in our community and to support artists making work for young audiences, culminating in our annual multidisciplinary festival presented across Galway City and County.

Children and Community

Children - in all their diverse brilliance - are who we do this work for. Our purpose is to nurture their innate creativity and curiosity for the world around them through their experience of the creative arts.



Artist Development

Baboró strives to ensure that all children in Ireland have access to quality art that represents them and their stories, created by artists they can relate to.

Annual Festival

The festival is Baboró's beating heart - a celebration of our ongoing work and an inclusive gathering place for our community. It champions every child's right to experience and participate in the creative arts as both critical audiences and artists.



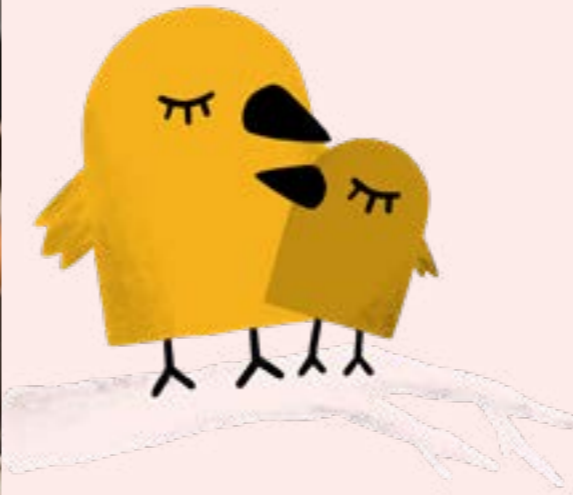


Children and Community

While the festival is the heart of our work for children and we do all we can to remove barriers to attendance, we know that it is not accessible for everyone.

Our year-round activities continue to expand our reach into the wider community. These activities include robust arts engagement programmes, community-building initiatives and new artistic projects with our partners to ensure children can exercise their right to a rich cultural life.

448
children engaged
in year-round
programmes



Creative Associate Maisie Lee

Creative Schools is a national initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme. Baboró Creative Associate Maisie Lee completed her work with Barnaderg NS in June. Their final project was a mural designed by the whole school in collaboration with local artist Jojo Hynes.

Maisie continued working with Maree NS and Scoil Íosa in Oranmore, and in September she began working with a new Creative School - Ábalta Special School.

Philosophy for Children (P4C)

In a new collaboration with the University of Galway Philosophy Department, Dr Michela Dianetti and Dr Lucy Elvis, expert facilitators in Philosophy for Children (P4C), delivered pre and post festival philosophy workshops to school children attending the festival. The workshops allow Baboró to better understand childrens' firsthand responses to the events they attended.

The pre-festival session introduced participants to the idea that live performance calls for a special kind of attention. Through philosophical games, stories, and reflections on lived experience, participants examined their own habits of attention and prepared for immersion in the theatrical experience. The post-performance session then explored the big questions that emerged from participants' encounters with the festival.

Early Years CPD Practitioner Printmaking Workshops

In partnership with GRETb, Baboró hosted Playful Printmaking workshops in English and as Gaeilge and Instrument Making workshops as Gaeilge for early childcare educators in Galway City and County.

Outreach Projects Manager Bryony Hussey, with Associate Artists Sorcha Ní Chronín and Colm Ó Foghlú, led sessions focused on providing educators with the skills to deliver their own art-based workshops to the young people with whom they work. The workshops engaged a total of 32 childcare practitioners.

Artist-in-Residence Lindsay Deely

Lindsay Deely is an art and science educator, practitioner and researcher whose work lies at the intersection of these two disciplines. With a strong commitment to expanding access to both art and science, particularly for underserved communities, her work aims to inspire young people to explore the world around them through creative, hands-on experiences that boost confidence and curiosity.

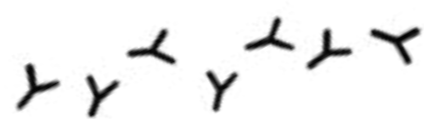
As Artist-in-Residence, Lindsay creates and delivers immersive workshops in our community year-round and during our annual festival.



Biodiversity in Your Backyard

Biodiversity in Your Backyard was a pre-festival arts and sciences workshop series. Guided by expertise from the Co-Centre for Climate and Biodiversity, TCD and run by Baboró's Artist-in-Residence Lindsay Deely, these workshops focused children's awareness of the living world within their local communities and the small but important ways they can make a difference.

Children from ARD Family Resource Centre, Ballybane A.C.E and Dominick St Direct Provision Centre were introduced to concepts of mapping, observation and data-gathering undertaken as field work. They then received a range of materials to creatively document their experience throughout the process. The workshops heightened appreciation for the rich biodiversity in their own communities and the artworks created pre-festival were shared as a public exhibition at 'WeWild' in the 2025 festival.



Chime Family Day

In August we delivered a family collage workshop at Chime Family Day for 28 families who travelled from Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Clare. The workshop focused on themes from 'The Little Prince' and was designed for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing children. These families then got to see a captioned production of 'The Little Prince' at the festival.



Galway City Council Cultural Partnership with ARD Family Resource Centre

Galway City Council's Cultural Partnership with Baboró strengthened our creative outreach in East Galway, supporting youth engagement and children's regular access to the arts.

Participants brought their curiosity and creativity to theatre and dance workshops, festival visits and philosophical and scientific enquiries with guest artists and researchers. The programme encouraged co-creation, giving participants a voice in how activities unfolded.

Artist Maisie Lee and ARD FRC Youth Worker Nike Awoyemi co-created and led theatre workshops with mentorship from Graffiti Theatre, Cork and training from Youth Theatre Ireland. Natasha Muldoon, ARD and Baboró's Bryony Hussey coordinated the project.

Intergenerational Project with The International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) Centres

Supported by TUSLA, we invited 10 families with young children from four IPAS Centres to attend a private performance of 'Be Kind' and a visit to 'First Impressions' art exhibition at the festival. Transport and tickets were provided.

To overcome the challenge of how to communicate programme content with families whose first language is not English, we worked with Cathy Joyce and her colleagues at The BRIDGE Project to translate and share the programme trailer and logistical information via WhatsApp and printed physical copies as flyers in each IPAS centre.





Baboró Children's Panel

Baboró is a festival which belongs to children, and it's important to us that children's voices inform the development of our organisation and programmes. The Children's Panel plays a vital role in shaping our work to make all children feel welcome and represented at Baboró.

Fourteen children in 4th and 5th class from Galway City and County meet monthly for creative workshops and events. The panellists, who are recruited via open call, partake in events with the Baboró team, artists and the festival itself.

In 2025, the Children's Panel worked with the marketing team to create a video welcoming audiences to the festival and sharing some of the events they were most excited for. They also participated in creative music workshops with local artist Donal McConnon, worked with Artist-in-Residence Lindsay Deely and fed in their own insights and ideas for festival curation.

"Usually grown-ups are in charge, but Baboró understands that it's important for children to have rights too."

Adam, Children's Panel Member 2024 - 2026



Artist-in-Residence Lindsay Deely consulted the Children's Panel on her development of Biodiversity in Your Backyard.



The Panel attended 'A Children's Guide to Anarchy' during the 2025 festival.



The Panel worked with the Baboró team and the University of Galway's Ideas Lab to envision and communicate a festival designed by and for children.

"It means that children can express their feelings and opinions about a children's festival, 'cause that's what the festival's all about—children."

Doireann, Children's Panel Member 2024-2026



Creative Sensory Sessions

The Creative Sensory Sessions project is designed to bring bespoke and immersive creative experiences to children with additional needs who cannot easily access Baboró's mainstream festival programming.

This two-year project is a collaboration between Baboró and artists Amélie Bal, Phillida Eves and Inés García Montero. The project is being evaluated by Dr. Charlotte McIvor of the University of Galway.

The pilot stage was funded by Rethink Ireland as part of their Disability Participation and Awareness Fund and the full duration of the project is supported by the Toy Show Appeal Fund.

In 2025 the creative team developed four immersive sensory stories in collaboration with the staff and students of Rosedale Special School. In 2026, these experiences will be delivered in another school.

"Baboró provided our students with an immersive, responsive and sensory experience! They sprinkled magic dust everywhere they went and their creativity inspired the staff to continue the Baboró journey."

Paula Kelly, Principal at Rosedale Special School



Creating Space

Creating Space was a two-year artist-in-residence programme funded by the Lifes2Good Foundation and the Arts Council which created space for art in the classroom.

The partnership between Baboró, Merlin Woods Primary School and multidisciplinary artist Colm Ó Foghlú engaged the same group of children from the start of 1st class until they finished 2nd class in 2025. The project also involved the students' families.

Colm worked with students and teachers to create dynamic, original projects which engaged the children's creative thinking and empathy. This child-led and collaborative approach empowered students to create and experience art on their own terms.

Over the two years Colm facilitated over 50 creative sessions in the school. The students created a final exhibition on the themes of identity and their dreams for the future, which was showcased in June 2025 in ATU Galway.

"...the children are learning that it is good to question things more and have become more critical thinkers. They enjoy sharing their different ideas on how to problem solve and they have become far more comfortable to put their own stamp on their work."

Teacher, Merlin Woods Primary School



Artist Development

Baboró has a long history of supporting creatives making work for children - whether they're just getting curious about work for young audiences or have been creating it for years.

Our artist development activity has grown steadily since 2017, with significant expansion in the last few years, including new Irish and international partnerships, more inclusive and meaningful supports and ambitious multi-year programmes.



38
artists supported through
artist development

10
artist development
supports delivered

BABEL

Our fourth Creative Europe project, BABEL (2022-2025) was a large-scale project with 14 partners and 11 participating international festivals. During the life of the project, Baboró supported a total of nine artists to attend workshops and residencies with a cohort of international creatives hosted by partnering European festivals. We offered an additional two emerging artists a small bursary to attend the Baboró festival through BABEL's Next Generation programme.

In 2025, we hosted our second BABEL workshop at Baboró. We welcomed 10 international artists to attend shows together and engage in a five-day workshop with facilitators Alex Byrne and Greg Hall; the weeklong workshop series culminated with a final sharing for children and festival delegates. In November we presented at the final BABEL meeting in Brussels.

Festival Connections

Our annual festival is an opportunity for artists, programmers and producers to gather, connect, showcase and learn. In 2025, 78 artists presented at the festival and a further 97 Irish and international delegates attended performances and professional events.

The attendance of these international delegates gave Ireland-based artists access to programmers from across the globe and has led to international tours of the Irish work presented.

18 professional events took place as part of the festival programme including panel discussions, workshops and delegate networking opportunities. Delivered by experienced practitioners, these events offered new ways to connect and learn.



Branar's Meitheal

Baboró proudly partnered on Branar's Meitheal, an innovative support programme for artists and producers creating work for young audiences.

In 2025 we hosted 10 participating artists and producers at the festival to see shows, attend industry events and connect with international programmers. We also programmed a show created by a Meitheal alumna and presented an exhibition from a current Meitheal participant.





GROW Programme

GROW is Baboró's programme of support and mentoring for artists making or interested in making work for children. Established in 2017, GROW has expanded to include annual and one-off programmes with local and international partners.

GROW offers a range of opportunities for artists with different levels of experience, varying artforms, diverse cultures and underrepresented communities.



“This programme gave me an insight into my arts practice in the context of work for young audiences, and a better understanding of how I can develop work for this audience.[...] these experiences opened my eyes to the potential and possibilities of making work for young people, and helped me to understand how the work I make can grow and develop in the direction of young people.”

Aoife Sweeney O'Connor, Festival Mentoring 2025 participant

Festival Mentoring

Baboró's Festival Mentoring is an annual three-day curated programme of festival performances, professional workshops, industry networking and mentorship from Phil Kingston (Community & Education Manager at the Abbey Theatre) and Maria Fleming (CEO of First Fortnight).

Each year, four artists are selected for this programme via an open call. Participants gain insights into the production and presentation of work for young audiences by attending Baboró's annual festival. It is open to artists and creatives at any stage of their career wishing to develop work for children and young people.

Áras Éanna Residency

In partnership with Áras Éanna Arts Centre on Inis Oírr, this residency is part of Baboró's drive to encourage artists to make work for children in the Irish language.

Each year one artist is selected for the two-week residency which includes studio space, accommodation and travel.

Seasonal Artist Gatherings

Each season, Baboró hosts artist gatherings as part of our goal to support artists and contribute to the healthy growth of the sector in Ireland. These are opportunities for our community to pause, connect, share experiences and learn more about the industry and best practice.

Go See Fund

Our Go See Fund encourages artists to see performances by funding tickets, travel and a contribution towards accommodation costs on the island of Ireland. Applications are open year-round.

In October, we also offer a small Artist Access Fund to cover access costs that might prove barriers to attending the festival, such as childcare or accessible transport between venues.



GROW Artist - Amélie Bal

Based in Galway, Amélie Bal is a French circus performer, Creative Schools Associate, freelance artist, hospital clown with Aoife's Clown Doctor and a member of Rosán Sensory Adventures. Her relationship with Baboró began over a decade ago through her work with Galway Community Circus (GCC) and has grown closer with each passing year.

She has presented two GCC shows at the festival, participated in two GROW programmes (including one with her newborn son!) and—through Baboró—developed her relationship with collaborator and Rosán founder Phillida Eves. Amélie continues to work closely with Baboró, particularly to bring meaningful arts experiences to children with additional needs.

“My relationship with Baboró started about 10 years ago and feels both personal and artistic. Baboró has championed me since the early days of attending workshops to creating work with and for children and now travelling internationally.”

Amélie Bal



2017: Amélie participated in the first Festival Mentoring programme (with her 6-week-old son) where she deepened her relationship with fellow mentee Phillida Eves.

2023 - 2024: Amélie was selected for Baboró and Rosán's Breaking Ground Bursary where she received mentorship and funds to cover training in making work for children with additional needs. She simultaneously was co-devising 'Antarctica!', a Baboró commission, with Phillida Eves' company Rosán Sensory Adventures and students of St. Joseph's Special School.



2025 - 2026: Amélie and Phillida teamed up again as lead artists on Baboró's Creative Sensory Sessions, bringing bespoke, meaningful creative experiences into schools for children with additional needs, whose students are unable to access the festival.





An **audience of 17,926** children, families, schools, communities and international industry professionals attended **over 50 spectacular events** presented in **25 venues** by **78 artists** from Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon and the UK.

Audience

Our audience comprises children of all ages, families in all their diversity and school and community groups.

We also welcome artists, arts workers and professionals working with children who attend as delegates from Ireland and across the world.

Total Festival Audience: 17,926



97
Irish and international industry professionals attended

Festival

The festival champions every child's right to experience and participate in the creative arts. We strive to present a festival programme where children see themselves and their stories reflected, where they see opportunities to one day grace those same stages and gallery walls.

The 29th festival presented more than 50 unique shows, exhibitions and workshops in venues, galleries, schools and libraries throughout the city and county over 10 days. Our audiences of babies, children and young people experienced moments of beauty and joy whilst being challenged by themes of connection, loneliness, nature and magic.

"Baboró sparked imagination and inspired creativity as children witnessed the magic of storytelling come to life."

Teacher from school group

"I'm constantly impressed by the calibre of the work presented at Baboró. It's so important for children to get these experiences."

Family audience member

72
people employed for the festival

Local Economy

Galway is intrinsic to Baboró as an organisation - it is our home. We are dedicated to strengthening our community by investing in our local economy and supporting local businesses and individuals.

- €662,253 spent locally
- 72 people employed for the festival
- 25 partner venues across Galway City and County
- 308 hotel room nights

€662,253
spent locally





Festival Inclusion

Baboró prioritises inclusivity by working to remove barriers, both real and perceived, and creating spaces that are safe and welcoming, no matter the physical or intellectual challenges.

We substantially subsidise our ticket prices and offer free tickets to teachers, SNAs and community groups. We offer free events for schools and families and bring work directly into schools and libraries.

In 2025, we expanded our relationships with community organisations and charities providing 302 free tickets and hosting groups at performances and exhibitions which included 10 families from four IPAS (International Protection Accommodation Service) Centres.



Families & Communities

All children, families and communities are welcome at Baboró. Our festival programme is heavily subsidised to reduce financial barriers. We present free events and exhibitions as well as programming for children with additional needs. We are aware that finances are not the only barrier to attending the festival. We engage in outreach activities to reach communities and groups that may not be connected to Baboró.

In 2025 we offered:

- 302 free tickets for disadvantaged community groups
- 9 free festival events for the public
- 8 captioned performances
- 1 bilingual ISL-spoken English workshop
- 1 audio-described performance and touch tour
- 9 relaxed events
- Sensory kits and ear defenders at primary venues

302
free tickets for disadvantaged community groups

9
free festival events

Ticket Subsidy

Our 2025 festival programme was subsidised by 87% which is reflected in free events and the reduced ticket prices for performances and workshops.

Ticket Prices:

€12	Adult
€8	Child
€6.50	School
€5.50	DEIS School

Baboró

87% Subsidised

Schools

School audiences enable Baboró to reach children who may otherwise not get to experience the festival. The teachers and staff of schools in Galway City and County go to great lengths to organise trips to Baboró. We support them through heavily subsidised ticket prices, a transport subsidy and a school liaison during the festival.

In 2025:

- 977 students attended a free festival workshop or performance
- 582 students attended free exhibition tours
- 1 show & 1 installation specifically for children with additional needs
- 1,175 students supported by bus subsidy
- 718 free teacher and SNA tickets

977
students attended a free festival workshop or performance

582
students attended 38 free exhibition tours



Festival Team

Every Autumn, Baboró's small year-round team expands tenfold to include dedicated staff and volunteers who ensure the festival runs smoothly and all audience members feel welcome and safe.

This expansion includes a Front of House team, technicians and production staff, a box office team, communications team and seasonal office roles.



"The staff were amazing! We felt so welcome and comfortable throughout the whole experience."

Teacher from a school group

Front of House Team

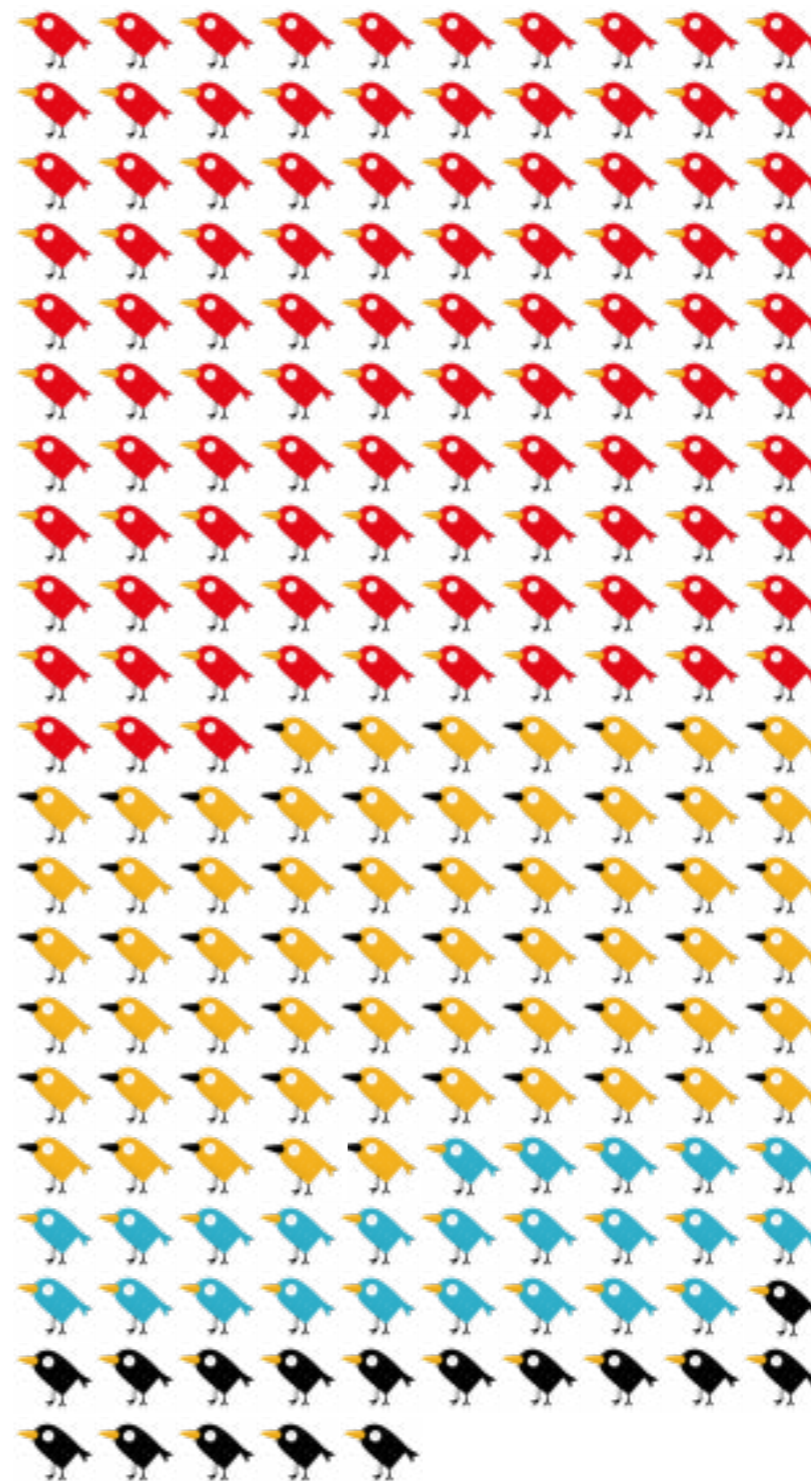
Baboró's Front of House team is the face of the festival. These are the people who welcome audiences and create a real sense of excitement, safety and belonging.

We strive to ensure our Front of House team is diverse and inclusive, with a total of 26 nationalities represented as well as neurodivergent individuals.

We also work with community groups to provide volunteer and steward opportunities to individuals from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds.

26
nationalities were
represented across
the festival team

205 Festival Team Members



103 Volunteers

62 Production
and Support Team
Members

24 Venue Stewards

16 Front of House
Managers



How Baboró is Supported

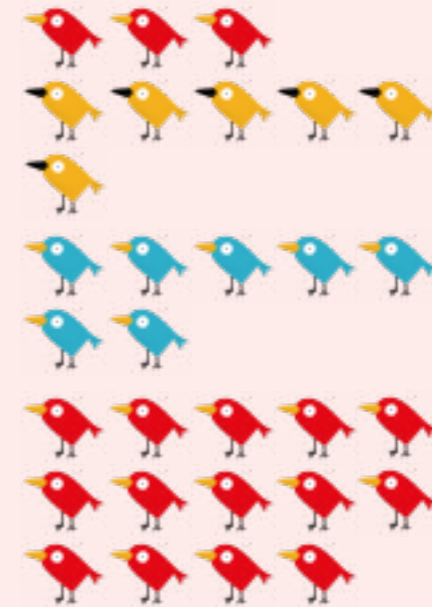
Baboró is a registered charity funded by the Arts Council of Ireland, Galway City and County Councils and other public funding bodies. We also rely on the support of the local business community, multinational organisations, private funds and donations. Together all of these income streams enable us to produce a world-class arts festival for children that is accessible and affordable.

Baboró is a full-time organisation engaged in year-round community programmes for children and artist development, in addition to presenting the annual festival. These programmes are led and managed by a small team employed year-round. They are supported and governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees and a Children's Panel.

Team

A small year-round team delivers the annual festival and our community projects.

This team is supported by a committed voluntary Board of Trustees as well as an equally committed Children's Panel.



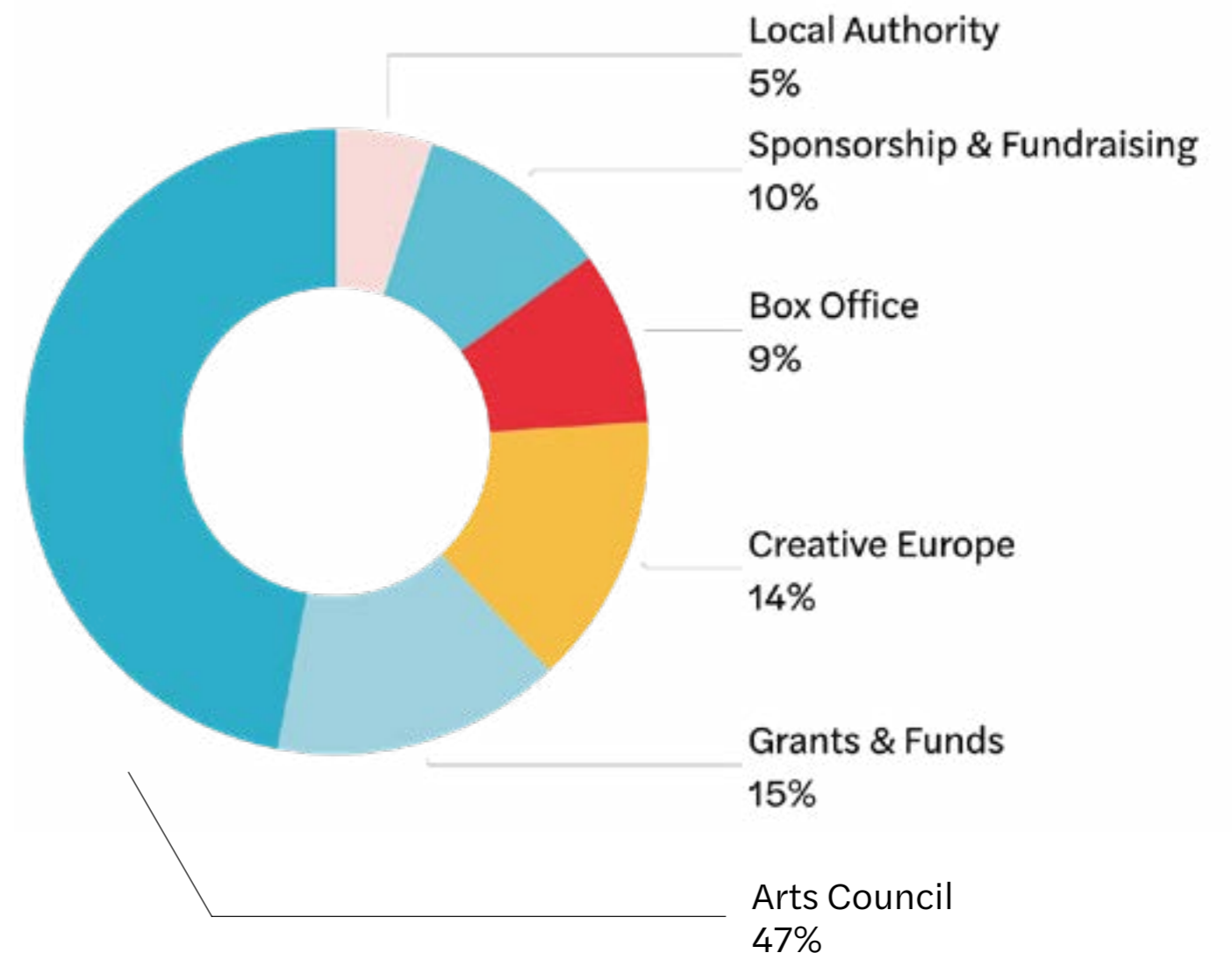
3 Full-time staff

6 Part-time staff

7 Voluntary
Members of
Board of Trustees

14
Children's Panel
Members

2025 Funding Sources





2025 Supporters

Baboró is grateful for the generosity and commitment of our loyal business supporters, sponsors and individual donors.

We are reliant on their support in order to fill the gaps in our funding so that we can continue to ensure the festival is accessible to all.

Funders



Partners



Supporters



Cultural Partners



Media Partners



Accommodation Partners



Donors & Patrons

Annette Curley | Cian O'Brien | Dr William E. Warren in memory of Dr Thomas Mitchell | Barbara Baltz Jaffa Frank | Erin McErlean | Fergal Bradley and Co. | Aislinn Ó hEocha | Laya Healthcare | John & Sally Coyle Ground and Co. | Marie Donnellan | Hilary Eustace | Nikunj Sakhrelia | Revive Active | Elizabeth Jordan Purejoy Laser and Advanced Skincare | Stewart Developments Ltd. | Sylvia Trant | Anna Dunlevy Caroline Harrington | John Clancy | Milano | Dough Bros | Aunty Nellie's | Ard Bia



Baboró

International Arts Festival for Children

www.baboro.ie / admin@baboro.ie
+353 91 562 667

2nd Floor, Augustine Court
St. Augustine Street, Galway H91 VXT1,
Ireland

Registered Charity No. 20043834.
CHY No. 13790.



Principal Photography:

Anita Murphy

Other Photography:

Andrew Downes
Sebastian Pizarro

the arts
council
= chomhairle
ealaíon

funding
the arts