

The LEAP Report

A practice-as-research evaluation of Baboró's pilot DEI artist development programme, LEAP

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Foreword

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children celebrates children as audiences and artists in Galway each October. Now in its 27th year, the festival invites thousands of children to enjoy engaging performances, exhibitions and workshops from across Ireland and the world with their schools and families.

Baboró's purpose is to nurture children's innate creativity and curiosity for the world around them through their experience of the creative arts. Our vision is creativity at the heart of every childhood. Every child, without exception, has the right to participate in cultural and artistic activities, as established in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Irish state is a party; realising a rich cultural life for all children and young people guides how we approach all our work. We strive to create a festival that is playful and inclusive and safe, no matter the physical or intellectual challenges. We welcome children into theatres, galleries, and outdoor spaces, while also bringing the festival to their schools and local libraries.

We strive to present a festival programme where children see themselves and their stories and interests reflected, where they see opportunities to one day grace those same stages and gallery walls. This desire was the impetus to create LEAP, an artist support programme to encourage artists from underrepresented and/or marginalised backgrounds to create work for children in Ireland. The learnings from the creation and implementation of LEAP are rich and manifold and will enhance the work of Baboró going forward as we strive to make our organisation, our festival and programmes more equitable, diverse and inclusive, whilst recognising the limits of our resources as a small organisation. I hope that the artists who took part in LEAP 2022 will go on to create work for children that enhances the sector and meaningfully impacts the lives of children throughout Ireland.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the team of people who secured funding, designed the programme, recruited participants, delivered and evaluated LEAP. Thank you for your expertise, care, consideration, vulnerability and determination. Thank you to Baboró's Board and team. But most especially thanks to the artists who participated so generously in LEAP, making this small but very significant programme one of depth and richness that I sincerely hope will have a lasting impact.



Aislinn Ó hEocha

Executive Artistic Director

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children

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Acronyms used in the report:

EDI: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

TYA: Theatre for Children and Young Audiences

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Color

Introduction to Report

What is this report?

This report is an account of the development and implementation of Baboró's LEAP as a pilot programme between December 2020-April 2022. The report examines the context of LEAP's creation, what worked about this pilot programme, what could be improved for the future, and what learnings LEAP offers that are relevant to wider Irish and international theatre for young audiences' communities. However, this report's co-authors were also closely involved in the creation and implementation as well as the evaluation of this project so this report is also presented as a mediated insider's perspective. This report also situates Baboró's LEAP within post-2000s Irish arts policy focused on interculturalism and/or diversity and the wider international landscape of politics, policy and social change in the theatre for young audiences sector and beyond that immediately influenced the creation and implementation of this programme.

You can read a shorter executive summary of this report and our LEAP learnings here: <https://www.baboro.ie/content/files/LEAP-2022-Learnings.pdf>.

Who is this report for?

We intend for this report to be used by:

- Anyone taking action to increase representation of ethnically diverse, underrepresented and/or migrant artists and arts workers in the Irish arts or internationally and/or interested in learning more about this process.
- Anyone working in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion in the creative industries or related sectors or interested in this work.

This is a broad group which might include: artists, arts workers, activists/community leaders, policy makers, educators, students and individuals.

We have done our best to be clear and direct in our language in order to be accessible to the broadest group of stakeholders. However, we also aim to address topics and themes in sufficient detail and in conversation with relevant literature and/or policy documents as appropriate.

If there are any aspects of the report that you would like further information on or to discuss further, you can contact the research team.

Description of LEAP Project and Aims

Baboró's LEAP is a community-building project and artist development scheme for creative individuals from underrepresented, ethnically diverse communities and/or migrant backgrounds curious about creating work for young audiences.

LEAP forms one component of Baboró's broader work in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion and this report on LEAP is being released alongside the publication of Baboró's first diversity, equity and inclusion policy and action plan being published by the organisation.

During its development process, Baboró described LEAP as emerging from three key impulses that are part of the festival's mission as an organisation:

1. All children in Ireland should enjoy equal access to quality cultural and creative arts experiences.
2. Baboró aspires to enable, produce and showcase work that reflects the diversity and experience of children in Ireland.
3. Baboró seeks to build diversity not only into the work they commission, but their organisational fabric at the level of board, staff, audiences, and community partners in addition to the artists that they work with.

LEAP focuses explicitly on the development and support of diverse artists seeking to make work for young audiences but other aspects of Baboró's whole-festival/organisation approach to broadening participation and access for diverse stakeholders are addressed throughout this report.

In the initial stage of development covered by this report, LEAP was a partnership between Baboró, Moonfish Theatre, and the University of Galway's discipline of Drama and Theatre Studies located in the School of English and Creative Arts. LEAP also involved consultation from an advisory board¹ with Irish and international advisors over the course of the project design and application process as well as support from consultant Noeleen Hartigan who was simultaneously guiding the creation of Baboró's first diversity, equity and inclusion policy alongside a new overall strategy for the organisation.

The first LEAP four-day paid workshop held in April 2022 was a pilot programme. Facilitated by members of Moonfish Theatre as well as Maeve Stone and Mufutau Yusuf, the workshop encouraged participants to share and exchange artistic and creative techniques and tools with a focus on how to create stories using puppetry, multiple languages, music, and movement.

LEAP's 2022 participants included Alexandra Craciun, Fernanda Ferrari, Justyna Cwojdzńska, and Justin Anene following the administration of an open call described later in the report.

¹ See the end of the report for a full listing of collaborators.

LEAP's pilot programme was funded by the Arts Council's Capacity Building Award with further support from the Irish Research Council's New Foundations Scheme.

LEAP sits within Baboró's broader suite of GROW artist development programmes which are currently undergoing a review. These programmes aim to mentor and support artists, creatives and educators who are exploring and developing theatre, dance, music and visual art for young audiences, or are interested in doing so.

Other GROW artist development programmes include:

- Pathways to Production is an artist support programme to support artists and young companies to develop their ideas with a view to presenting a full performance piece for young audiences.
- Baboró's Festival Mentoring is open to artists and creatives (writers, producers, directors, choreographers, designers) at any stage of their career wishing to develop work for children and young people.
- The Go See Fund-a small fund to support artists and creatives who make, or wish to make work for children, to travel within Ireland to see theatre work for children.

LEAP is Baboró's first GROW programme to specifically focus on artists' identities as a criteria for eligibility. Through LEAP, Baboró aims to actively enable artists from diverse backgrounds to create works that in turn will allow Baboró's young multi-ethnic and multi-racial audiences to see themselves and their stories better represented onstage.

Intention and Scope of Report

Baboró initially approached Dr Charlotte McIvor in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Galway in October 2020 to partner on the development, implementation and ultimately evaluation of the LEAP pilot programme. This was due to her research background in interculturalism, migration and performance in contemporary Ireland and established use of ethnographic research methodologies as characterised by direct participation in projects and use of interviews.² This report constitutes that evaluation by Dr McIvor and her team of student researchers from Drama and Theatre Studies which included Heidi Schoenenberger, Jillian Kenny, Maia Purdue and Mikail Nimitz. McIvor and/or her student researchers participated fully in the design and planning of the programme, attended LEAP for the four-day workshop, and conducted follow-up interviews with many of those involved with the programme as well as making use of post-programme surveys from participants and facilitators. The interviews and survey results are quoted throughout this report following review and permission by participants.

Baboró's evaluation of the LEAP pilot programme is in line with the Arts Council's increased turn towards impact measurement which they define as "the process of gathering evidence to assess the change that your activities have created for individuals, groups or communities."³ This report will therefore "identify opportunities to improve the activities

² See Charlotte McIvor, *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland: Towards A New Interculturalism*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Charlotte McIvor and Matthew Spangler, eds., *Staging Intercultural Ireland: Plays and Practitioner Perspectives*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2014) and Charlotte McIvor and Jason King, eds., *Interculturalism and Performance Now: New Directions?*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

³ Arts Council/Quality Matters, *Outcome Measurement Guidebook for Local Authority Arts Services and Arts Organisations*, pg. 5, accessed 13 June 2023,

and outcomes” attempted by LEAP as well as “demonstrate the value” of this work and “the benefits created for” both “participants and community.”⁴ However, this report will also place Baboró’s work with LEAP in a wider national and occasionally international context in order to mine the learning that we have gained through this project and most thoroughly inform our final recommendations.

Nonetheless, the scale of this pilot programme must be taken into account as well as the enmeshment of McIvor and her team of student researchers with both Baboró as an organisation and the participants in LEAP themselves. For this reason, we sometimes refer to Baboró, Moonfish or others by their organisational or individual name, but also sometimes use “we” to refer to the collective that created and implemented this project which the report authors were actively part of.

While LEAP took 19 months to conceptualise and deliver and more than a dozen key stakeholders participated in its design including Baboró staff and Moonfish Theatre as the main partners as well as advisory board, it is nonetheless a small-scale programme which was ultimately delivered to only four participants in its pilot iteration.

However, we suggest that Baboró and Moonfish Theatre’s narrowing of ambition for and with this project as a stand-alone endeavour is a strength rather than weakness of the outcomes of this project to date in terms of learning for the wider Irish and international arts sector when embarking on projects with the goal of increasing representation and eliminating barriers to participation for underrepresented artists.

Nevertheless, it is important to also name and own here that the main project team involved from the beginning to implementation as representatives of Baboró and Moonfish Theatre (including Maeve Stone as mentor) and the University of Galway identify as cisgender female and white. The advisory board included much broader representation and our own identities as drivers of the project were constantly named and examined throughout the process. We were acutely aware that the homogeneity of our own identities was playing out the problem that we had gathered to address. As Maeve Stone from the LEAP project team observed of our team and the wider art sector’s dominant composition: “We have an arts industry that’s predominately white, and middle-class and privileged because to survive as an artist in Ireland you have to have safety nets, you have to have all of the things that make you a middle-class white person.” However, we also felt as a project team that if Baboró, Moonfish and the University of Galway were to be working towards equity (and the report will define the nuances of an explicitly equity-led perspective later), we couldn’t step back from attempting this work and leaning into rather than away from the discomfort of our own limited and privileged perspectives as we worked in coalition with other stakeholders from other more diverse backgrounds in our field.

As this report details at length, any programme of this type is only one drop in the bucket of a much longer trajectory of coalitional struggle. To turn away from the work because of our privileged identities would have been wrong. To outsource the work exclusively to artists and/or administrators in our field from minority racial, ethnic and/or migrant backgrounds would have in our opinion also been wrong. As Stone observed of seeing this dynamic play out in her other experiences as an artist and an activist working with those seeking asylum in

https://author.arts council.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/Arts_in_Ireland/Strategic_Development/FINAL_2022_AC_Measurement_Guidebook.pdf.

⁴ Ibid.

Ireland: “a lot of people” can end being put “into roles that maybe they never would have chosen for themselves; as advocates for their communities, as spokespeople.” Rather, we had to come into dialogue together and begin to build one thing that cannot stand on its own or end with this report.

We are clear throughout this report that one programme opportunity such as LEAP will not redress the lack of opportunities and/or barriers to participation for underrepresented artists because one programme alone cannot overcome or even diagnose all the reasons which have led to underrepresentation of artists with the profiles we focused on here. As arts organisations, we cannot singlehandedly understand and resolve the root causes of social exclusion that impact levels of access to and participation in the arts for underrepresented individuals and communities. Rather, arts organisations like Baboró and Moonfish must work in ongoing and deliberate partnership with all the communities our work impacts as well as other types of organisations such as NGOS as well as state and private stakeholders. As Moonfish’s Mairéad Ní Chroínin put it: “I think we’ve kind of become complacent where we say ‘Oh, give it a few generations’, but I don’t think it works that way. I think the people who are in structures of power should make conscious efforts to try to change for the long-term and on a fundamental level the structures.”

As an arts community however, we also have to be cautious not to confuse short-term programmes such as LEAP with the full remediation of underrepresentation but also plan for the medium and long-term impacts of programmes like this in terms of the trajectory of the individual artists who take part. Baboró’s integration of LEAP’s pilot programme with the creation of their first diversity, equity and inclusion policy models this kind of aspirational longitudinal planning which this report will suggest needs to be standard practice.

Ultimately, this report can only be one snapshot of an extended process of creating one short-term project on improving representation for a group of artists defined as underrepresented in Ireland today as part of a wider equity, equality, diversity and inclusion strategy for one West of Ireland-based arts organisation. We are not arguing in these pages that Baboró’s LEAP can be understood as answering or resolving anything concrete regarding the wider issues it points towards in the Irish and international theatre for young audiences sectors.

Nevertheless, LEAP’s pilot iteration has been a rich and diagnostic process which has sowed new connections and links for Baboró, Moonfish and all individuals involved. It has also revealed concretely in the conversations with the project team, advisory board and later participants more of what is needed in terms of longer-term, ongoing and concrete actions in this area. As such, the report will ultimately offer actionable recommendations that will be relevant not only to Baboró and the future of LEAP but more widely.

Where does LEAP fit in Baboró’s overall mission?

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children was founded in 1997.⁵ It is a festival with the primary goal “to inspire children to engage with the world through their experience of the creative arts. To create spaces where children can deepen their understanding of themselves, the perspectives of others and the world around them.”⁶ Since 1997, Baboró has sought to

⁵ Baboró International Arts Festival For Children, “Partners,” accessed 13 June 2022, <https://www.baboro.ie/about/partners#:~:text=Babor%C3%B3%20and%20NUI%20Galway%20have.Babor%C3%B3%20events%20almost%20every%20year>.

⁶ Baboró International Arts Festival For Children, “About,” accessed 9 June 2022, <https://www.baboro.ie/about>.

inspire and reflect an expanding and ever-changing Ireland for the children of this island. This has been achieved through a programme which prioritises mentorship, community outreach, and diversity in the arts. As early as 2006, only nine years into the festival's tenure, they were programming diverse artforms, and inviting international arts companies to perform in the Galway festival.⁷

Baboró's founding principle is based in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1992. This guaranteed the right of every child to access and participate in the Creative Arts. Baboró has laboured since its inception to make the Arts accessible for children, by liaising with schools and parents to create work with and for children. In 2009, Baboró hosted a conference on "The importance and benefits of the arts and creativity for children from birth to six years" as part of the festival itself. This act in and of itself reflects Baboró's commitment to nourishing and facilitating the artistic education of children in Ireland from a young age.

In recent years, Baboró has focussed on representing and working with a more diverse cohort of children, working in particular with children with additional needs, and promoting education through the arts. "The Wonder Project", commissioned in 2021, is a residential workshop over 5 days specifically aimed toward providing an educational, interactive experience in schools for children with additional needs, involving both the children and staff in the creation of their own original performance to be presented to their school. This kind of integrational work is a frequent feature in Baboró's programming, from the 25th Anniversary "Flying the Flag" project which included six Galway schools, to the BEAST programme, which spanned four years and matched three schools with three scientists, effectively demonstrating a further integration possible in our education system.

Reflecting upon the diversity of the organisation, Artistic Director Aislinn Ó hEocha said "We were "relatively" advanced [...] in terms of how we were inviting children into the festival as audience members, but we were very conscious that perhaps some of our other programmes and the organisation itself and the artists that were presenting work, were not representative of the Ireland that we live in today."

Baboró's increased commitment to actively diversifying the organisation in terms of staff, artists, audiences, and community partners is what ultimately led to the creation of the LEAP programme.

Baboró's Approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In Irish law, there are nine protected characteristics under the Equal Status Act 2008-2018. These are: gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.⁸ Therefore, in Ireland today, policies which address increasing access and/or participation and/or leadership by underrepresented or marginalised individuals living in Ireland under the banner of "EDI" or "DEI" (Equality,

⁷ Baboró International Arts Festival For Children, 2016, *Baboro International Arts Festival For Children 10th Anniversary*, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://issuu.com/baborointernationalartsfest/docs/2006/1>.

⁸ Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, "Equal Status Acts," accessed 30 June 2022, <https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-in-the-provision-of-good-and-services/what-does-the-law-say/equal-status-acts/#:~:text=They%20cover%20the%20nine%20grounds,membership%20of%20the%20Traveller%20community>.

Diversity and Inclusion *or* Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) must consider the needs of those who may identify with one or more of these identity categories as defined by Irish law.

Of course, an individual's identity will likely also be intersectional, a term which the Arts Council EDI Toolkit defines as the “complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups,”⁹ although it is a term that originates with American legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980 as well as longer entangled histories of Black and/or woman of colour feminist theory and activism, a history that we will investigate as relevant to Baboró's work with LEAP in this particular moment in more detail in the next section.

Baboró's team and board have made an internal commitment to continue approaching their ongoing EDI/DEI work as intersectional, remaining cognisant of the multiple discriminations an individual may face or how different aspects of an individual's layered identity may impact on their ability to access or participate in the arts. However, Baboró and LEAP's project team have also had to accept that not every community or complex individual identity can be served by every single callout or programme equally, as will be detailed later.

Baboró's ongoing EDI/DEI work therefore proceeds with the knowledge that what needs to be done in this area requires action on multiple fronts in collaboration with diverse stakeholders over an extended period of time. Baboró alone cannot eliminate or even address the social, institutional and infrastructural barriers that may disadvantage potential artists, staff/board members and/or audience members protected by the Equal Status Act 2008-2018. That does not mean however that Baboró does not have an important and constructive leadership role to play.

As such, Baboró have chosen to lead with working towards equity rather than equality as the goal of their efforts in this area, consciously adopting a “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” (DEI) approach over an “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” (EDI) for the LEAP programme as well as the associated DEI policy and action plan for the organisation. As the Arts Council's EDI Toolkit summarises, “Equality means establishing equal treatment for all, equity means assisting those who could not otherwise avail of the equal treatment.”¹⁰ This translates practically into Baboró doing what they can with their organisation's limited resources to increase and broaden participation, access and representational opportunities at all levels of their organisation-staff, board, artists and audiences. Yet, as one organisation with limited resources, they are well aware that they are *mitigating* rather than *eliminating* barriers to participation, access, and representation.

Why focus on increasing opportunities for underrepresented, ethnically diverse and/or migrant artists in Ireland interested in making creative work for young audiences now?

Baboró's LEAP began from an internal impetus to encourage underrepresented artists to create work for children so that Baboró can more easily represent the audiences they serve. As the FAQs for the callout read eventually:

⁹ Arts Council, *The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit*, 2022, p. 45, accessed 12 July 2022, https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/About/Equality_Human_Rights_and_Diversity/EDI%20Toolkit%20Final_Eng.pdf.

¹⁰ Arts Council, *The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit*, 2022, p. 44.

“Our young audiences in Ireland are diverse and they deserve to experience, not only quality art, but quality art that represents them, created by diverse artists they can relate to. We wish to address a gap between our audiences and the artists presenting work for them.”¹¹

However, this baseline impetus was also shaped in direct dialogue with:

- The demographics of our Irish population now as related to their experiences hosting diverse child audiences at the festival
- The release of the Arts Council’s 2019 *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity* policy and strategy document and more recently, the *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* toolkit as well as the precedents established by earlier waves of Irish arts policy addressing cultural diversity and/or interculturalism
- National and international debates over race, racism, violence and social inclusion and the impact of these debates on the global arts sector

Our own recent history in the Republic of Ireland is that of rapid wide-scale demographic transformation since the mid-1990s due to increased inward-migration during the Celtic Tiger economic boom as well as the expansion of membership in the European Union during the same period from 11 to 27 nations which allowed more diverse nationalities’ mobility of employment.

The 2022 Irish Census results released to date have so far only disclosed that 12% of the current population are non-citizens, with full statistics on diversity, migration, ethnicity, Travellers and religion to be released in October 2023.¹² As of the most recent 2016 Irish Census for which we have full statistics on diversity, migration and ethnicity, 17.3% of the Irish population was born abroad, with 11.6% reporting as ‘non-nationals’ from outside the European Union, figures that stand in sharp contrast to the 2002 Census which recorded a less than 5% non-national population. The largest groups by nationality in 2016 other than Irish were Polish, UK, Lithuanian, Romanian, Latvian and Brazilian.¹³ The 2016 census also reveals a 14.7% increase in ‘mixed Irish and non-Irish households’ since 2007, and ‘one in three of those with African ethnicity (38.6%) were born in Ireland (22,331 persons), as were 31.3 per cent (2,126) of those with other Black backgrounds.’¹⁴

We are currently waiting for the results of the 2022 Census (delayed due to the pandemic) which was carried out in spring 2022 but given our own experience with audiences and in classrooms in schools and at the university, we anticipate the above figures to hold or increase. Taken together, these recent figures and the ones we are expecting suggest profound transformation within the Republic’s demographic profile within the space of a generation, decisively changing what can or should be assumed about the racial and/or ethnic identity of someone living in Ireland and identifying as Irish today. This means that the art we offer to younger audiences and beyond resolutely has to reflect this changed and changing reality so that a young person can see themselves and others they know reflected back to them onstage as all belonging to the same shared society.

¹¹ Baboró’, “FAQs: Why LEAP?,” accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.baboro.ie/news-events/callout-for-leap>.

¹² Central Statistics Office, “Census of Population 2022,” 2023, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/>.

¹³ Central Statistics Office, “Census of Population 2016- Profile 7 Migration and Diversity,” 2017, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp7md/p7md/>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The Arts Council has engaged in two waves of major action around policies and strategies related to equality/equity, diversity and inclusion as it relates to the inclusion of those from minority racial and/or ethnic groups and /or backgrounds of migration. While the second wave more explicitly shaped LEAP, the longer perspective is important in terms of understanding the issues that LEAP was trying to address and how our efforts in the Irish arts have evolved (as well as stagnated) over the last 15 years.

The Arts Council released their first policy and strategy document, *Cultural Diversity and the Arts*, in 2010 in partnership with the Office of the Minister for Integration/ National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) and co-ordinated by Create, the national development agency for collaborative arts. This first flagship policy followed repeated focus on the arts as a vehicle and tool for interculturalism and integration of multi-racial, multi-ethnic and/or migrant communities at state and local levels, explicitly named in key government documents including the 2005 *National Action Plan Against Racism* and the then- Minister for the Minister of Integration's 2007 *Migration Nation: A Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity*.

The Arts Council's Cultural Diversity and the Arts policy described some key issues identified at the time affecting culturally diverse communities and individuals as artists and/or audiences including:

a paucity of effective communication taking place between arts providers and individuals from minority ethnic and cultural communities. Little is available in the way of policies and guidelines for promoting intercultural arts practices or for reviewing existing provision with an intercultural lens. In addition, many arts providers acknowledge a lack of knowledge, exposure and critical engagement with culturally diverse arts practices beyond Western Europe and North America.¹⁵

These motivations from 2010 are worth quoting at length as they echo key findings of this report in terms of the barriers faced by the artists that we tried to reach and develop as part of LEAP. Alexandra Craciun, 2022 LEAP programme participant, described her experiences of being an adult artist who relocated to Ireland:

We did not grow up artistically together. I am just an entity that moves into your space, and to be fair there are issues in you being able to recognise me. There isn't a database for artists here. There isn't a database for under-represented artists or foreign artists that just moved in. I remember moving into Ireland and I didn't know where to start, to be noticed as an artist [...] Nobody knows you, nobody has you on their list. You do not know how to access funds, grants, bursaries.

There was a 2002 survey undertaken by CAFE (Creating Art for Everyone, CREATE's previous incarnation) *Artists of Distinction: Mapping Survey of Ethnic Minority Arts in Ireland*, which attempted to identify the needs and work of artists from minority and/or migrant backgrounds, but this exercise was never repeated by state agencies, arts organisations and/or NGOs in the two decades since.

¹⁵ Arts Council, *Cultural Diversity and the Arts*, 2010, p. 5, accessed 13 June 2023, https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Artforms_and_Practices/Arts_Participation_pages/Cultural-diversity-and-the-arts-policy%20and%20strategy.pdf.

Key to understanding what changed between the 2000s and the present in Irish approaches to the needs of minority and/or migrant artists is a shift in policy documents from “interculturalism” to the language of “human rights,” “equality” and “diversity” and “intersectionality.” Ireland’s earlier phase of policy and strategy on cultural diversity on the arts was centrally underpinned by an “intercultural approach” that necessitated “promoting inclusion and interaction between individuals and groups from different cultures and recognising the need for two-way negotiation and change.”¹⁶ However, Ireland’s explicit embrace of an intercultural approach (in line with wider European Union discourses at the time) receded in the late 2010s arguably due to changing priorities in the wake of the post-2008 economic crash and ongoing austerity which de-prioritised focus on provision for the particular needs of those from a racial, ethnic and/or migrant background in Ireland.

The more recent shift to “human rights,” “equality” and “diversity” and “intersectionality” in Irish arts policy follows the lead of, on the one hand, UN-led global human rights frameworks, and on the other, established UK and U.S. frameworks related to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) with increased emphasis on U.S. critical race theory frameworks like intersectionality as introduced briefly in the previous section. Understanding this shift and the wider contexts in which it took place particularly post-pandemic are key to unpacking all that can be learned from LEAP.

Baboró’s LEAP was conceived in the immediate aftermath of a very particular moment of an ongoing international reckoning regarding racism, diversity and social justice following the murder of George Floyd by police in the United States in July 2020. His murder globally amplified the ongoing actions of the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM) which had been formed in 2013 by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometti and Alicia Garza following the acquittal of George Zimmerman, an armed civilian, in the murder of teenager Trayvon Martin. Meanwhile in Ireland, we then underwent parallel debates after Floyd’s death following the killing of George Nkencho by members of An Garda Síochána in December 2020.

The timing of Floyd’s (and Nkencho’s) murder during the pandemic in particular arguably allowed for a unique focus of attention on these cases, with Floyd’s murder initiating an international ripple effect that also filtered into the arts and theatre in particular. It is important to locate Baboró’s LEAP in this wider (and non-Irish exclusively) context here because LEAP and this report gives us a meaningful opportunity to understand the concrete and embodied ways in which the ripples of social movements travel and are actively reinterpreted in local, and in this case artistic, contexts.

One aspect of this wider anti-racism work is broadened inclusion and representation of racial and ethnic minority artists in the creative industries which is where LEAP’s efforts are focused in the Irish context. In the United States for example, in June 2020, a collective of BIPOC theatre artists We See You, White American Theatre (We See You, W.A.T.) released a letter and a 29-page manifesto and list of demands a month later. These focused on the need for increased representation of BIPOC artists and theatre workers as well as “intentional, meaningful, and exploratory long-term engagement with us, as cultural workers and audiences”¹⁷- an aim shared by Baboró, with Rachel Baltz stating that in doing this pilot programme, Baboró realised as an organisation that “you need to maintain and build

¹⁶ Arts Council, *Cultural Diversity and the Arts*, p. 6.

¹⁷ We See You, White American Theatre, “Principles for Building Anti-Racist Theatre Systems,” 2020, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.weseeyouwat.com>.

relationships year-round. You need to do the work to reach more diverse communities, build new connections with more diverse communities, both audiences and artists.”

In the theatre for young audiences’ sector, the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People with whom Baboró staff have been actively involved, released a manifesto articulating ways to agitate for and insure that “[c]hildren and young people have the right to access and participate in the arts, even and especially in times of crisis”- in this case, Covid-19 specifically. However, the manifesto does make reference to the need for Arts Councils worldwide to “promote inclusive and culturally diverse work in their programme,”¹⁸ linking this document to We See You, W.A.T.’s explicit focus for their manifesto.

LEAP’s efforts are located somewhere between the emphases of these two representative theatre industry documents from the period in which we conceived this process- one focused explicitly on social and artistic justice for artists of colour working in the U.S. theatre industry, and the other focused more broadly on the universal right of all children to access the arts worldwide. In joining these two perspectives with LEAP, Baboró decisively made the move in their work from an equality focus (all children should be able to access the arts as audiences or makers) to the equity focus that now characterises their work in this area (not all children will be able to make use of the universal access argument equally, we have a responsibility to identify those who may be marginalised and/or underrepresented for very specific measurable reasons and work in partnership with these stakeholders to bring them actively into our organisation’s work).

Baboró’s focus on the broader human rights agenda also brings us most in line with the Arts Council’s most recent policies in this area, but the explicitly U.S.-inflected pull of intersectionality and other aspects of critical race theory discourse are important to surface and not sideline. As an aside, it is interesting to note that European Union led policy and discourse regarding the arts as a means to integrate migrant and/or refugee communities was only ever on the extreme fringes of our discussion suggesting anecdotally that national and/or transnational discourses exert more influence on the Irish arts sector’s practices than supranational/EU discourses.¹⁹

As Baboró’s Elaine Donovan put it: “The voice of the child was where we were coming from, and representing all children, but also they [The Arts Council] were talking a lot about looking at diversity within your own organisation and your audiences.” Donovan and artistic director Aislinn Ó hEocha also spoke about being inspired by the example of their peers, Fishamble Theatre, who ran a Writing for Performance Workshop with Felicia Olusanya (Felispeaks) and Gavin Kostick, Fishamble’s Literary Manager, which they described as acknowledgement that “mainstream Irish theatre lacks representation from the many artistic voices present here in Ireland” and was open to those identifying as “Black” or from “an ethnic minority background” or a “migrant background.”²⁰

Fishamble unfortunately experienced an ugly online backlash to the publication of their call and its focus on supporting minority and/or migrant artists in particular demonstrating that

¹⁸ ASSITEJ, “ASSITEJ Manifesto,” 2020, accessed 13 June 2023, <http://www.assitej-international.org/en/2020/09/assitej-manifesto-2/>.

¹⁹ For more, see Charlotte Mcivor, “When Social Policy Meets Performance Practice: Interculturalism, the European Union and the ‘Migratory and Refugee Crisis,’” *Theatre Research International* 44.3 (2019): 230-247.

²⁰ Fishamble, “Writing for Performance,” accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.fishamble.com/writingforperformance.html>.

this is not an uncontested area in Ireland today. Fishamble’s statement in response explicitly invokes the Arts Council’s *Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy* which demonstrates the integral role that these policies have had in shaping national practice. Meanwhile, the overall incident drives home the multiple layers of additional effort that may be involved in projects like these which attempt to take on institutional structures and hierarchies in a direct and concrete way and the further layers of planning that may have to be taken into account, including crisis management such as in Fishamble’s case. Yet, the adverse reaction from a small minority of online commenters also demonstrates why workshops like Fishamble’s or programmes like LEAP are so necessary in Ireland today.

LEAP: From Concept to Execution

This section describes LEAP’s evolution from concept to execution in order to present this project’s progressive learning in narrative form. We describe in this section what we had to let go, check ourselves on, or renovate conceptually in partnership with collaborators in the hope that this full account offers insight that will support others in the meaningful design and delivery of similar programmes.

LEAP’s development began officially in autumn 2020 when Baboró applied for an Arts Council Capacity Building grant in partnership with Moonfish Theatre. Baboró then also partnered with Dr Charlotte McIvor from Drama and Theatre Studies in the University of Galway (then NUI Galway) to apply for an Irish Research Council New Foundations Grant through an “Enhancing Civil Society” scheme. As detailed earlier, Baboró chose to work with McIvor due to her research background while Moonfish was not only a long-time collaborator with Baboró but also was engaged in a long-term process of diversifying their own ensemble. As Ionia Ní Chroínin, Moonfish co-director and ensemble member, details:

We [Moonfish] came to LEAP because we became aware...that the stories that we wanted to tell couldn’t be told by the group of people that we had in the room, which was an ensemble that built up organically from when we began working. We wanted to have people in the room that could tell more diverse stories and represent a more diverse audience.

Moonfish also works through both Irish and English, and while Irish is Ireland’s national language, those who speak it daily in the home and/or as a first language are now in competition with Polish with 113,225 Polish speakers reporting in the 2016 Irish Census that they speak Irish at home as compared with 73,803 respondents indicating that they speak Irish daily including in the home.²¹ The tenuous status of Irish as a true national language and the implications this has for those who do speak Irish or use it as a first language in terms of accessing services or indeed arts funding does have some parallels to the situations faced by minority communities in terms of underrepresentation which is another point of connection between Moonfish’s artistic concerns and participants taking part in this programme.²²

²¹ See Central Statistics Office, “Census of Population 2016- Profile 7 Migration and Diversity,” 2017, and Central Statistics Office, “Census of Population 2016- Profile 10-Education, Skills and the Irish Language,” 2017, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil/ilg/>.

²² Irish language speakers as a minority group are not included or addressed in the Arts Council’s 2019 *Human Rights, Equality and Diversity Strategy* or the 2022 *EDI Toolkit*.

Baboró were successful in both funding applications and design of the project began in winter 2021 with the support of consultant Noeleen Hartigan, who was also charged with guiding Baboró's drafting of their first Equity, Inclusion and Diversity policy and action plan for the organisation. The availability of these particular funding supports at this juncture as well as the partially stalled activities of Baboró during the ongoing pandemic are both crucial conditions to highlight that made this project possible. They meant that the organisation was able to avail of the funds and capacity within their staff to resource this project. It is unlikely that this level of support for projects of this kind will continue post-pandemic but this instance of how Baboró used these funds evidences how crucial this support and space is for work of this level of nuance to develop.

Initially, this project was untitled, and its core aim was described by Baboró as “exploring ways to support artists from diverse backgrounds who are interested in making theatre for young people.”²³

This project's activities were then envisaged as directly feeding into the creation of what Baboró then described as an “Inclusivity Strategy” for the organisation to cover 2022-2025 which would be developed parallel to this practical artist and community-focused project. This led ultimately to the creation of Baboró's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy which was launched in May 2023 and is available here:

<https://www.baboro.ie/content/files/Babor%C3%B3-DEI-Policy.pdf>.

The project team involved five key layers of participants who often but not always intersected with each other in the planning and implementation of the project between 2020-2022:²⁴

- Baboró staff (Elaine Donovan, Development Manager, Rachel Baltz, Administrator, Noeleen Hartigan, external consultant to project)
- Moonfish Theatre (Mairéad and Ionia Ní Chroínin, Co-Artistic Directors and Jo Cummins, Producer) and Maeve Stone (Independent artist, mentor to Moonfish)
- NUI Galway's Drama and Theatre Studies (Dr Charlotte McIvor, Senior Lecturer)
- Advisory Board
 - Group One
 - Group Two
- LEAP Selection Panel

Throughout this report, we refer to individuals or groups working within one or more of these five layers as the “LEAP project team” but will always specify which part of the team or layers of the team working in partnership we are speaking about in context. We will also refer sometimes to the LEAP programme as it became apparent during the development process that this was developing into a more long-term initiative that the organisation hoped to repeat.

Ultimately, the plurality of perspectives which contributed to LEAP's pilot programme development was both a strength and sometimes a limitation of the project, particularly due to its small-scale and time-limited nature. For example, it was not always clear who had the

²³ Baboró, “Capacity Building Support Scheme 2020” Arts Council Application, 2020.

²⁴ The leads and/or most frequent participants in planning and implementation of this project are named here, but others from Baboró, Moonfish and NUI Galway's Drama and Theatre Studies did participate and are named at other points in this report.

final call on major elements of the project such as the scope of eligibility for the callout (as will be addressed later in the report).

Changes to Original Project Design

This project's main output was always envisaged as a multi-day workshop facilitated by Moonfish Theatre for artists from diverse backgrounds with support from Maeve Stone as project mentor and developed through input from Baboró, the University of Galway's Drama and Theatre Studies and an Advisory Board composed of artists from or working with those from minority communities. However, at LEAP's earliest stage of development immediately post-funding, there were additional dimensions, processes and stakeholders including children described as key elements of the project that ultimately had to be reconsidered in terms of scope. These eventually revised elements included:

- Holding the workshop in Doughiska, one of Galway city's most diverse areas with 47% of residents identified as foreign nationals.²⁵ Baboró also identified that this area was "home to a settled Traveller community, Brothers of Charity residential home and an Ability West independent living programme for people with intellectual disabilities."²⁶
- Surveying children from minority backgrounds to inform the design of the workshop in line with Baboró's centering of the voice of the child in their organisational and programming methodology
- A public performance-based presentation to children in Doughiska as an outcome of the workshop which could prompt "conversation with the young people of Doughiska" regarding "how Irish TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) can represent the Ireland of today and of the future"²⁷

These additional elements were initially proposed out of recognition of the urgent need to partner directly with diverse community stakeholders local to Galway city as well as due to Baboró's growing commitment to and experimentation with "Voice of the Child" methodologies. However, the project team ultimately decided that the scope of ambition had to be narrowed in terms of resources available to the project.²⁸

Quite simply, as the planning and implementation process got underway, the project team realised that the initial project proposal was trying to reach and accommodate too many people and groups at once. Therefore, if this blueprint was followed, the engagement that resulted would not be deep or rigorous enough to meet the standards of the organisation and the project in particular.

²⁵ FitzGerald, C., Diamond, S., Wijeratne, D., Walsh, K. (2016) *Doughiska Neighbourhood Report - Findings from the 3-Cities Project.*, 3 Project Lifecourse Neighbourhood Report Series, No 2, NUI Galway: Institute for Lifecourse and Society, accessed 13 June 2023, <http://www.nuigalway.ie/ilas/project-lifecourse/thethreecitiesproject/outputs/>.

²⁶ Baboró, "Capacity Building Support Scheme 2020," p. 6.

²⁷ Baboró, "Capacity Building Support Scheme 2020," p. 6.

²⁸ During the time that LEAP was created and implemented, Baboró appointed a part-time outreach Projects Manager for the first time and that position's remit involves building long-term engagement with communities including but not limited to those living in Doughiska.

Setting the basic parameters of the LEAP Callout

Once we had reduced the scope of the pilot programme to a multi-day workshop opportunity with some additional supports only, the core project team proceeded to drafting a callout. Three key conversations framed this first phase of drafting the callout before we took it to our advisory board.

1. What should we call the programme?
2. Who is eligible for LEAP and why?
3. What terminology should we use?

1. What should we call the programme?

Initial drafts of the name of the programme for the project callout also included “Spring,” “Wellspring,” “Roots,” or “Source.”²⁹ Given the programme’s emphasis on engaging with artists from minority racial or ethnic backgrounds and/or backgrounds of migration, “Roots,” “Source” and “Wellspring” were judged by team members from Baboró, Moonfish and McIvor to be potentially problematic in terms of risking essentialising potential participants’ multiple identities or being seen to judge minority artists’ cultures/nationalities of origin as fixed and/or limited prior to having the opportunity to interact with Baboró and Moonfish on this project. “Spring” very simply was judged to be confusing as the workshop was originally planned to take place in the autumn. LEAP, however, worked as it was judged to be dynamic and lend itself to visuals without the symbolic baggage of some of the other suggestions. LEAP also subtly foregrounded the project’s evolving equity over equality focus. LEAP connotes movement but is also singular. This captures the reality that LEAP is a limited attempt to bridge a gap in terms of opportunity and experiences for artists from underrepresented communities in Ireland who wanted to make work for young audiences but is only the first move in a longer sequence of necessary action to keep moving forward.

2. Who is eligible for LEAP and why?

The Arts Council acknowledges in their 2019 *Arts Council Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy* which remains the current benchmark for our national sector that:

within the arts in Ireland, many inequities still exist and that there is a substantial number of people who continue to experience barriers to engaging with and participating in the arts because of their socio-economic background, their ethnicity or religion, their sexual orientation or gender identity, their family status, their age, their membership of the Traveller Community, or through lack of accommodation of a disability.³⁰

However, we faced the real challenge that if our callout encompassed *all* artists who identified with any of these underrepresented categories of identity, the net that LEAP would cast risked being too wide and not actually advantaging the artists from the minority racial and/or ethnic and/or migrant backgrounds that Baboró had in mind from the beginning. Nonetheless, Baboró was also proceeding from an understanding of all identities as

²⁹ Charlotte McIvor, personal emails between team, 21 April 2021.

³⁰ Arts Council, *Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy*, 2, accessed 29 June 2022, <https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/EHRD%20Policy%20English%20version%20Final.pdf>.

intersectional and as such, having elements that complicate each other- for example, potential applicants might be a white Irish artist with a disability or an African Irish queer artist or a working class Eastern European female parent and artist. Further nuancing this discussion at this point in our process was that the first iteration of the advisory board included three members working in the area of arts and disability.

During this process of discernment, one of the earlier lists of those eligible for the LEAP call was indeed more in line with the Arts Council's much broader definition of those underrepresented in the arts based on the Equal Status Act 2008-2018:

...this opportunity is for creatives who identify as a member of a minority group. This includes:

- People of colour (Black, Asian, Middle Eastern, etc.)
- Individuals from an ethnic minority background
- Individuals from a migrant background
- Individuals requiring additional needs for mental and/or physical disability
- Individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community
- Individuals from the Travelling community³¹

This approach was judged across the team ultimately to be too broad. We agreed that the call needed to be focused back on individuals' minority racial and/or ethnic and/or migrant status as the criteria for eligibility. This decision did reveal however a need to be clear on the particular demographics of Ireland's minority ethnic and/or migrant communities with individuals from Eastern European backgrounds actually constituting the largest overall group living in Ireland. Therefore while our colleagues in the US, UK and other jurisdictions were most focused on the inclusion of artists of colour and in particular Black artists in projects running concurrently with ours, we needed to be clear and specific about the demographics of our own national population and the nuances of whiteness for those from Eastern European, Latin American or other non-Irish backgrounds living in Ireland. And we need to be conscious of ongoing blind spots in the sector. As Moonfish Theatre's Mairéad Ní Chroínín put it, "At the moment, there seems to be a lot of focus on people of color, which is brilliant, but I haven't seen the same focus on Travellers, for example. It's kind of interesting that even in the theatre sphere, there's an awareness of need for diversity in some areas, but not necessarily across the board."

This extended and robust dialogue particularly with our colleagues from the arts and disability sector also resulted in Baboró making a provision for "access supports to people with additional needs and those requiring assistance with childcare" for successful applicants to LEAP, although no one availed of these in the pilot programme.

3. What terminology should we use?

Ireland-specific language around race, ethnicity and migrant/immigrant communities has never totally stabilised or totally separated itself from U.S. or UK identity-based discourses or following the wider European Union trends (as with interculturalism). Work by leading scholars including Ronit Lentin and others³² have used a range of language around race,

³¹ Baboró, "Diversity and Inclusion Callout," unpublished draft.

³² See for example Ronit Lentin, "Turbans, Hijabs and Other Differences: 'Integration from Below' and Irish Interculturalism," *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2012): 226-242.

ethnicity, multiculturalism vs. interculturalism and so on. The Arts Council did produce a stand-alone pamphlet, *Cultural Diversity-Language and Meanings* in 2009 which excerpted part of the policy and strategy document for easier reference in an attempt to clarify terminology in use around this kind of work.³³ However, the differences between this 2009 pamphlet and the glossary for the Arts Council’s 2022 EDI Toolkit are deeply illustrative of the ongoing shifts in terminology and the consequences that it has for clarity and focus in undertaking the work at hand. As discussed in the previous section, 2009-2022 yielded a major shift from speaking about interculturalism as an exchange between minority and majority (i.e. White Irish) individuals living in Ireland possibly identifying across and between multiple cultural affiliations to a more race and ethnicity- focused discourse which utilises intersectionality as the key lens through which to understand the interaction of different identities as they impact on relative privilege and/or discrimination including but not *limited* to race, ethnicity, and/or migration status yet is also grounded in a universal human rights framework.

The LEAP team’s extended discussion around our own terminology for our call reflected this current proliferation but lack of agreement around language in an Irish context particularly as one of our most influential advisory board members Spark Arts/Mashi Theatre’s Trina Haldar who works in the UK while others from Baboró and the University of Galway were from the United States originally. In addition, we were all being influenced in the moment through the global reverberations of the Black Lives Matter’s impact in local national contexts as explored earlier.

Indeed, the role of social media as well as the international artist and arts organisation forums that project team members participated in during the development of LEAP does call into question how to decide what language is or would be most relevant for the artists that we were seeking to apply, particularly as Baboró actively sought and publicly engaged with international perspectives from the theatre for young audiences sector as in their 2020 festival panel, “Diversifying Performances for Young Audiences” which featured Canada-based Boomer Stacey (International Performing Arts for Youth’s founding Executive Director), South Africa-based Yvette Hardie (ASSITEJ), and UK-based Haldar among other Irish participants including Maureen Kennelly (Poetry Ireland/Arts Council) and Cliodhna Noonan (Act Up! Arts).

The terminology that we ultimately chose for the LEAP callout to describe eligibility stipulated that applicants must be “from an ethnically diverse community, including—but not limited to—Black, Eastern European, Roma, Mincéir/Traveller, Asian, Latinx, or of a migrant background.”³⁴ Our chosen terminology names many of the largest or longest established minority ethnic groups living in Ireland, but it is worth noting that our inclusion of “Latinx” does bear traces of American influences.³⁵ This is not a criticism but rather a case in point to demonstrate how terminology is transnational, evolving and unstable and the language used to describe eligibility will certainly have to continually be revisited for the next iteration of LEAP or similar programmes/initiatives.

³³ Arts Council, “Cultural Diversity and the Arts-Language and Meanings,” 2009, accessed 13 June 2023, https://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Arts-participation/Cultural-Diversity-and-the-Arts---Language-and-Meanings_2951314325/.

³⁴ Baboró, “Apply now for LEAP Artist Callout,” accessed 12 June 2023, <https://www.baboro.ie/news-events/callout-for-leap>.

³⁵ See Maria R. Scharrón-del Río. & Alan A. Aja “Latinx: Inclusive Language as Liberation Praxis” *Journal of Latinx Psychology*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2020): 7-20.

It is also worth mentioning finally that choosing and settling on our terminology for the call was one of the most fraught stages of the process, particularly considering our white-majority lead project team. Maeve Stone spoke of the danger of leading with anxiety and how this anxiousness might get in the way of what is trying to be accomplished:

I think most people, when they begin working with communities that are unfamiliar to them, they're usually just stuck in anxiety. It's usually just a sense of "am I going to do this wrong," "am I going to say the wrong thing," "what are the things that I'm not aware of." But the experience I have working with those communities is the more you think of it as just meeting other humans you want to be friends with, the further down the track and right direction you get.

Indeed, the theme of individuals meeting each as humans comes up repeatedly particularly throughout the workshop experience accounts but to work with an equity-based ethos means also grappling actively with the ways in which terminology itself can serve as a barrier to the people you want to get to know as individuals being able to access your programme in the first place. As Stone also spoke about later in her interview, anxiety can also risk centering those doing the programming rather than those for whom the programme is addressing an equity gap. This means that it is important to keep in mind that anxiety can be productive and create the conditions for rigour around terminology and approach as it did in the LEAP development process, but a team must also be mindful of how it can also waste time and decentre those who your team are actually trying to reach. And as Fernanda Ferrari, one of the 2022 LEAP participants observed: "If you keep putting barriers onto what you can talk about or not, and making the arts more difficult to connect [to for migrant artists], you are still keeping this separation."

Key Overall Learning From Drafting the LEAP Callout

Once we set the baseline parameters of who the LEAP programme was for, the team and advisory board got into the nitty gritty of what the programme was actually offering and how to communicate with potential applicants including how to actually disseminate the call. We summarise our major learning below from this phase in the hope that these pragmatic benchmarks will be of use to others setting up similar programmes:

1. Make sure that potential applicants can clearly recognise that the callout is for them.
2. Make the callout dynamic on its own terms for the artist rather than tokenising.
3. Make the offer of your programme worth it for the participant and think ahead to the medium-term follow-on at minimum.
4. Make the programme and applying accessible but be clear on your limitations.
5. Plan for the extra labour for your team in getting the call to those who need to see it (as well as supporting those working on applications and/or setting up supports).
6. Be transparent about how successful applicants will be chosen and who will be choosing them.

1. Make sure that potential applicants can clearly recognise that the callout is for them.

As narrated in the previous section, the lengthiest part of the callout development process was devoted to clarifying what the criteria for eligibility was. We named the broader focus of the programme in the first line of the callout: “Calling creators from underrepresented communities who have passion and curiosity for making theatre for young audiences!” The more specific list of criteria for eligibility in terms of race, ethnicity and/or migrant background purposely came later in the callout for reasons that will be addressed next. However, we recognised that for those glancing quickly at the call online, we might need an even clear and immediate cue to draw them to read the post or email forward in full.

Therefore, in addition to the text of the call, we decided to create a dynamic visual to attract individuals to the callout and allow them to recognise themselves in it. Advisory board member Catherine Osikoya, founder of Unsilencing Black Voices, a project “created to highlight different forms of racism through the lived experience of the black community in Ireland,”³⁶ designed the graphic reproduced below.



Image: Catherine Osikoya

The visual intentionally represented a range of skin tones and also layered in suggestions of other aspects of identity such as religion (with the hijab) and disability (with the wheelchair). This was an attempt to capture the intersectionality of potential applicants’ identities. Within the final advisory board session, an interesting and lengthy discussion occurred regarding whether there were too many white/light-skinned figures represented and Osikoya and the project team clarified that the light-skinned figures were meant to be read across a range of identities ranging from Middle-Eastern to Latinx to Eastern European for the reasons discussed previous relative to Ireland’s overall demographics. Ultimately, we had three out

³⁶ Unsilencing Black Voices, <https://www.unsilencingblackvoices.com/>, accessed 13 July 2022, no longer available.

of four participants who were accepted onto the programme who identified as Brazilian, Polish and Romanian respectively demonstrating that this attempt to represent a broad range of racial and ethnic nuance was appropriate as these participants did recognise themselves in the call.

2. Make the callout dynamic on its own terms for the artist rather than tokenising.

The LEAP project team and advisory board continually reflected on the need for the callout to be attractive to those who were eligible not *only* because of their racial and/or ethnic identities and/or migration status, but to individuals as artists in their own right first and foremost.

As Maeve Stone, one of the LEAP workshop facilitators and project mentor to Moonfish put it:

There's a sort of unintentional reinforced racism if the projects that you offer are only ever about the person's cultural background and identity, and if it's so constricted by anxiety about what you feel about the thing [the project you are offering them to be part of]...the thing should be intrinsically valuable to an artist and not just an artist of color or artist who's dealing with a complex cultural identity.

Alexandra Craciun, another 2022 LEAP participant concurred: "Have they chosen me because I'm actually good at this? Or have they chosen me because they need to fill a quota? [...] Did they choose me because my application was good or because I'm Romanian and they need to fill that quota?" Fernanda Ferrari, 2022 LEAP participant expressed a similar set of sentiments but also discussed her process in viewing the opportunity as strategic for herself:

When I saw the call, my first thought was 'someone is talking about us and giving us the opportunity'. Of course, as a feeling, no one wants to feel discriminated [against]. When you invite people, or be specific about diversity or equality, you already feel discriminated [against]. But, for me, I grab all the opportunities I can – I don't mind what people label.

The LEAP callout therefore had to be grounded in inspiring excitement about creating theatre for young audiences generally and be clear that this experience was intended as a two-way dialogue, not just a top-down workshop experience.

The callout stated: "The workshop will allow for collaboration with Moonfish Theatre Company—they will share tools and methods for making theatre in the spirit of creative exchange, as you explore and expand your craft and skills in developing theatre for young audiences."

This language allowed space for successful applicants to show up as artists first and foremost who met with Moonfish on common (although not necessarily equal) ground as they too are interested in or experienced with working in theatre for young audiences. Notably, the callout and the workshop experience itself were in no way explicitly focused on the sharing of cross-cultural or "diverse" arts practices as the invitation but rather on meeting individuals where they were at currently while permitting whatever other languages or arts practices artists were working in and with (regardless of origin) to also come into the room.

It is however worth noting here that earlier versions of the callout did include more specialised industry language (such as “devising”) to lead the call and more openness in terms of art forms that applicants could be engaged in (theatre, music, dance, visual arts) as well as leading with emphasis on how connecting with this community of artists was furthering Baboró’s own broader DEI process and programming capacity.

One version of the callout even led with the statement: “In recognition that Irish classrooms have changed, we want all young people to see themselves represented in art,” followed later in the same draft by the statement, “Baboró are committed to making sure that all children in Ireland will be able to see themselves reflected on stage. We want to support you to help build this community.” While it was important for our project team to understand where LEAP fit in the organisation’s larger mission and strategy evolution, our prioritising this background as the opening of the call did unintentionally risk decentring the artist’s experience on their own terms and focus most on what Baboró and their audiences could *gain* from the artists who would still also have to do the work on producing the performances and so on.

Ultimately, we moved a lot of the contextualising information and use of specialised terminology such as “devising” to our FAQs section on the call out page: <https://www.baboro.ie/news-events/callout-for-leap>. We therefore were able to balance achieving clarity for the call as well as providing applicants with depth on the background of the project, the methods we would be working with and so on. This allowed applicants to choose what information they needed or was relevant to them after understanding the basic clear focus of what we were trying to do and with whom.

Finally, the callout’s eventual refocusing to lead first and foremost with appealing to the individual’s interest in and excitement for working in this genre of theatre for young audiences and an invitation to creative *exchange* with Moonfish recalibrated LEAP’s focus back towards increasing equity while valuing artists as individual creatives in their own right.

3. Make the offer of your programme worth it for the participant and think ahead to the medium-term follow-on at minimum.

From the earliest phase of the project design, the workshop programme was to be a paid gig for participants in line with the Arts Council’s 2020 Paying the Artist policy and Baboró’s long-established practices of fair remuneration.³⁷ Due to our collaboration with Moonfish Theatre and their long-term ensemble based working methods, the workshop programme was also designed to be multi-day and residential (i.e. with accommodation covered by the project) in order to replicate insofar as was possible their way of working. LEAP 2022 participant Justyna Cwojdzńska who spoke at length about juggling motherhood and work including running Limerick’s Polish Arts Festival shared the impact of this intense, concentrated, residential experience: “... for me, to be able to be *just* a participant – nothing else – was the biggest present that I could have been given. The fact that I could get away for four days from my ordinary world just to work.”

However, in developing LEAP and then with the participants, we spoke frequently about the potential trap of once-off artist development programmes, particularly for underrepresented

³⁷ Arts Council, “Paying the Artist,” 2020, accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.artscouncil.ie/about/Paying-The-Artist/>.

artists who have often found it difficult to sustain momentum in the professional Irish theatre sector in the last thirty years. As Alexandra Craçiu, 2022 LEAP participant observed even after a highly positive experience in LEAP: “We did so much beautiful work, but I’m gonna forget about it one year from now because I have no one to do it with and practice it with, and I don’t want this to be for nothing.”

We however also spoke about the need for Baboró and Moonfish to be realistic about the capacity that they had for follow-on support as organisations or individuals involved with either. We eventually settled on an offer of “(if desired)...mentorship for 6 months, post-workshop” and promised that they would “be welcomed into a community of artists making theatre for young audiences.” The promise of “community” made by the LEAP is less tangible than the pay commitment and time-bound mentorship agreement but there are concrete ways in which the post-GROW programme community (which includes those funded by Baboró on schemes other than LEAP) often gather yearly at the festival.

Ultimately, the offer extended to 2022 LEAP participants post-workshop included: “a three-day delegate pass to the Festival this October, with accommodation, travel, and tickets to select events covered, from 18-20 October with “a stipend of €150 per day.” The available LEAP participants also participated in a LEAP panel discussion during the festival, which was recorded and released in December 2022 as a Baboró podcast episode.

In addition, the mentorship package was concretised in follow-up communication as: “€200 for either a paid gap day for artistic work OR up to 4 hour-long Zoom sessions with Moonfish mentors, or a combination of the two.” Again, the rule of thumb of making limitations clear was followed here as Baboró clarified to participants that “admin support for the gap day or Zoom mentorship” is not available due to the festival season commencing. Instead, participants have to “invoice us for the €200” and then make a choice as to whether to “use it as your artist fee or for paying a Moonfish mentor.” In terms of the combination approach, they gave a concrete example: ex. “€50 for one Moonfish Zoom and then €150 to yourself for a gap day.”

Baboró and Moonfish also then provided suggestions on how to approach structuring a gap day as below as well as giving prompts for how the mentorship session might be prepped for and approached:

Gap Day:

- The Gap Day at the Mermaid Arts Centre gives a great description of how a gap day works: <https://www.mermaidartscentre.ie/whats-on/mermaid-space/gap-day-2021>
- You can decide to have your gap day at home, or you could approach your local arts centre or library to see if they could host you.

If you choose this option, it would be great to hear a bit about how you spent the day or if it was helpful!

Mentoring:

Think about how you'd like to use the time with your mentor before the call:

- What element of the project do you feel you need guidance with?
- Make a list of questions you'd like to cover

- If you're at the stage where you want to brainstorm a project, take a minute or two to throw some ideas and inspirations down on paper so you have them to hand during the call
- Make sure you are ready to take notes during the call, or if you find that difficult, ask your mentor if you can record the call.

All of this detail and the multiple pathways that can be chosen by individuals follows through concretely on the “co-creation” ethos that guides the programme as facilitated by Moonfish and Baboró together in this pilot programme. No two artists’ needs (whether or not they are from an “underrepresented” community, identity or identities) will ever be the same and this flexible model puts this understanding into action.

The Baboró team and Moonfish and other facilitators as well as McIvor from the University of Galway also promised letters of support to participants as needed in the future for Arts Council and other applications- another tangible outcome that better concretises what “community” might mean tangibly to an artist who is trying to make a living in the creative industries, a process that will go on long after one development scheme.

We ultimately do recognise however that there will be no perfect answer for this or any other short-term development scheme regarding what constitutes “enough” or adequate ongoing support for individual artists who take part in the context of limited resources and underpaid workers across the creative industries as a whole. In addition, these further supports were due to the additional funding we were able to access through collaborating with the University of Galway and McIvor as well as the additional funds available to capacity building projects at the time, conditions that may not or at least may not always be able to be replicated, although this report strongly suggests they should be striven for.

The takeaway here however is that at minimum consideration of how the impact of a scheme could be extended for participants or what tangible supports as follow on could be credibly promised must be considered explicitly from the beginning of development. The exact offer of the scheme must then be made extremely clear on the callout itself and care must be taken not to overpromise and/or be vague about what the scheme’s ultimate tangible benefits to the artist will be.

4. Make the programme and applying as accessible as possible but be clear on your limitations.

Accessibility was a central concern of the LEAP programme in terms of the most common use of the term as related to provision of support for those with disabilities/additional needs. However, the project team also talked about accessibility in terms of how other aspects of an individual’s intersectional identities might result in direct or indirect barriers to being able to access LEAP. The variables that we discussed as key direct and indirect barriers for potential participants included but were not limited to caring responsibilities, not having professional arts experience in Ireland and/or not feeling their previous experience is relevant here, not having English as a first language, and/or not recognising the Irish/Western European terminology we were using to discuss artistic practices particularly the more specialised genre of “theatre for young audiences.”. Some of these other variables were directly related to this programme’s specifically targeting artists from diverse racial, ethnic and/or migrant backgrounds and others were not (an individual could have caring responsibilities for children, elders or partners from a variety of backgrounds and identities).

The project team and advisory board's broader discussions on accessibility resulted in adaptations to the design of the LEAP application process and the inclusion of a budget for tangible supports that could be made available to individuals who were successful in their application and was advertised as part of the callout.

First, we did not ask for a CV and asked individuals to reply to a simple prompt about their interest in making work for young audiences. We also made it possible for individuals to apply through a number of different communication mediums including writing, using image and/or visuals, and/or filming themselves speaking to us.

The callout read: "We'd love to hear from you—introduce yourself and tell us what excites you about making work for young audiences! This may be written (1 A4 page attached as Word document or PDF), audio recorded or filmed (3 min) and may include images or songs." We also included another statement "We're open to any other ways you might want to apply, just get in touch!"

This openness was meant to provide for alternatives to the standard Irish/Western European application standards of cover letter and CV and accommodate different fluencies in English as first, second, third, fourth, fifth language and so on.

To this end, we also accepted bilingual applications although we were transparent that the language of the workshop would be delivered in was English.

The callout read: "We are happy to accept bilingual applications and we welcome a multilingual approach to work, but please note that the workshop will be delivered in English." Ideally, we would have had access to translators/translation or interpreter services to accommodate participants without English-language fluency but the limited resources of the project meant that we could not credibly promise that we'd have the resources to fund a translator/interpreter across multiple languages at the callout, application review and then workshop stages

This of course means that LEAP was not truly accessible to all those from migrant backgrounds who did not have fluent English but it was important to be honest about our limits rather than promise something that could not be delivered.

There was strategic support that was promised however including a statement of care and advertisement of willingness of a Baboró team member to provide "assistance in creating your application." Our statement of care read: "We recognise that life comes with challenges and needs are different for everyone. We can offer additional support for access and are happy to discuss any additional access supports you might require."

We purposely left the types of support for access that could be requested open for the applicants to describe themselves out of recognition that needs are diverse and personal which on the one hand, granted applicants agency, but on the other, might have left the offer too open to be understood as ultimately none of the successful applicants availed of this support, despite some having for example caring responsibilities.

Nevertheless, these discussions did prompt Baboró's staff to discuss extending this offer of access support as standard across their wider suite of GROW artist development programmes.

Rachel Baltz, Baboró's Artist and Programme Coordinator, reflected that "no matter what the callout is for...ability shouldn't be the criteria." However, ensuring that this is the case does require allocation of additional financial *and* human resources to work with applicants which was Baltz in the case of LEAP. But as she reflected at the end of LEAP's process, "I think it's really important to make sure that there is a human representative that people can contact... but how do you make that sustainable when...you can't just dedicate a single person to the application process of one artist support that you're offering?" This is a reflection that is not unique to Baboró or LEAP and again makes evident how DEI work in the arts must always be located in a wider social context where support, provision and infrastructure need to be increased across the board to minimise barriers before a single application process throws the accrued impact of an individual's challenges into sharp relief and puts responsibility for addressing these back on a single worker (in this case Baltz) who must try to assist them in closing the gap.

5. Plan for the extra labour for your team in getting the call to those who need to see it (as well as supporting those working on applications and/or setting up supports).

LEAP was founded in Baboró and Moonfish's desire to find and build relationships with more diverse artists to make work with for young audiences who they did not already know and were having trouble connecting with, as well as the desire to make the Irish theatre for young audience sector more equitable overall. If these artists were already known to and being developed with the organisations, the programme would not have been necessary in the same way. This meant that releasing the callout in and of itself necessitated the development of new contacts beyond Baboró and Moonfish's own mailing lists or industry hubs like Theatre Forum.

Maeve Stone's role initially as mentor to Moonfish and later workshop facilitator as well as McIvor's long-term research in this area was key in concretising what this kind of a process of establishing new networks might look like and that it would necessitate building links outside theatre and even artistic networks. Stone was one of the founders of Change of Address which was "a collective... co-founded by Maeve Stone, Oonagh Murphy and Moira Brady Averill" that "operated between 2015-2020 creating unique projects that looked to formalise friendship between artists and asylum seekers"³⁸ including but not limited to theatre and working with a range of partners including the Irish Refugee Council, Spirasi, Axis Ballymun, Science Gallery Ireland and the National Gallery of Ireland. As Change of Address's work was directly with individuals seeking asylum or who had been granted refugee status or leave to remain, these individuals were almost certainly not embedded within the Irish professional arts sector. This meant that Stone and her collaborators had to develop deep relationships with individuals and sites (including but not limited to direct provision centres) over time.

In addition, as McIvor's research demonstrates over time,³⁹ there has been more provision for minority and/or migrant arts work within community and/or participatory arts contexts in Ireland over time which has meant that relationships with emerging artists have often been forged through these kinds of networks or local projects and/or migrant/minority artists' work has been marginalised as "community" rather than professional work, as 2022 LEAP

³⁸ Maeve Stone, "Activism," accessed 13 June 2023, <https://www.maevestone.com/activism>.

³⁹ See Charlotte McIvor, "Migration: Migrant Artists Changing the Rules in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland," *The New Irish Studies: Twenty-First Century Critical Revisions*, ed. Paige Reynolds, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 63-79.

participant Justyna Cwojdzńska's often frustrating long-term efforts to set up and make sustainable Limerick's Polish Arts Festival also makes clear. She says of her own struggle to transition the Polish Arts Festival from a community to professional festival: "You can't just be ticking this box that you have something like that in your city if you don't support it properly. It's going to disappear – people will burn out. Once we got validated by the Arts Council, all of a sudden, we were in a different scenario." Yet, the Festival's origins in community-engaged work was also crucial as Cwojdzńska articulates:

The origin of the Polish Arts Festival in 2007 was to show a different face of a Polish person in Ireland – not just a good worker who is contributing to society with the value of their work – but as an artist. An artist that has a very strong impact on the community as well. It was to promote the artists that have no possibility of being artists full time – that they work in underpaid jobs during the day, and creating after hours. [We wanted] to show those artists; to exhibit their work, to give them the platform so they can be seen.

Stone and Cwojdzńska's experiences demonstrate that in order to find and work with artists from migrant backgrounds in particular, new and sometimes unexpected networks have to be built and maintained. Of the successful applicants to the programme who disclosed to us where they heard about LEAP, only one had been on Baboró's mailing list as a former applicant to another scheme. The other two had heard about LEAP from friends, demonstrating the importance of word of mouth within minority and/or migrant communities.

The project team did establish and compile some new contacts as a result of disseminating this callout but like with our acknowledgment that we could not provide translation or interpretation in a meaningful way to applicants/participants, relationship development with new individuals and groups was more limited in this instance due to the human resources available in Baboró at this time. However, during the project, Baboró did hire a part-time Outreach Projects Manager, Bryony Hussey, whose remit includes developing relationships with minority racial, ethnic and/or migrant communities in line with Baboró's overall strategy and DEI strategy specifically. Again, this is an example of recognising the medium and long-term investments of time and human resources that continuing this multi-layered work necessitates in order to keep advancing equity in small but tangible ways.

6. Be transparent about how successful applicants will be chosen and who will be choosing them.

Our advisory board flagged immediately that our application process had to be transparent in terms of how we were assessing applicants and who was assessing the applications. The transparency of assessment criteria is particularly relevant for this project due to the concerns raised above regarding making applicants feel as if they were being tokenised as well as the consistent feedback that Irish arts applications processes are often opaque and/or vague, particularly for those not raised or educated within the Irish system. We told applicants in the frequently asked questions section for the scheme that:

Successful applicants must fulfill all eligibility criteria. We will be looking for you to demonstrate passion and interest in creating theatre for young audiences, but you do not need to have an idea for a project to apply. We want to facilitate collaboration and new relationships and will seek applicants who want to be part of a community to engage with fellow artists and create art.

In retrospect, as with the application format itself discussed above, the criteria for selection as well might have been more concrete as we were seeking to make space for those who had a developing interest in the area and/or might have been professionally disadvantaged and less able to advance their artistic practice in Ireland recently. However, our criteria might have made clearer what would count as excellence from applicants in their application or doing the interview as currently, this language mostly focuses on enthusiasm and general interest whereas the evaluation process itself had to look at individual's measurable experience and expertise because LEAP does also prioritise respect for the excellence of the artists applying a.

Ensuring knowledge of who was doing the assessing also relates to increasing awareness for applicants of who makes decisions in the sector. However, the selection panel was also an opportunity for our project team to put together a more diverse panel of assessors whose backgrounds more closely aligned with those eligible through the scheme. Some like Michael Chang had worked with Baboró and/or Moonfish previously and others like Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan formed a relationship with the organisations through this programme and both also served on the advisory board.

We provided the following information and guidance on the selection panel and process:

There will be two rounds of selection, the first round yielding a shortlist that will be narrowed down to the final four.

First Round Panelists:

Ionia Ní Chróinín - Moonfish Co-Founder and Ensemble Member

Cian O'Brien - Artistic Director of Project Arts Centre, Voluntary Chair of Baboró Board

Aislinn Ó hEocha - Baboró Executive Artistic Director

Second Round Panelists:

Michael Chang - Independent Artist and Composer

Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan - Writer and Cultural Consultant

Maeve Stone - Independent Artist and Facilitator

Please note: Any applicant who attempts to contact or influence a panelist will become ineligible for this opportunity and their submission will be removed from consideration.

What We Wish We'd Done Differently At the LEAP Callout Stage

We've detailed our key learning that shaped the pilot LEAP callout above and now we will share some of the adjustments we'd make going forward to our drafting process and the application itself.

1. Be clear on who is making the final call on each key decision and be conscious of how many might be too many voices to have involved at key decision junctures.
2. Make sure that you are specific as well as open about the materials that applicants need to submit as their application.
3. Collect optional demographic information as appropriate at the callout stage to understand more about potential applicants and also where you are not reaching to be able to strategise outreach more effectively in the future.

As this was a mostly new area for Baboró and to some extent for Moonfish, there was a desire to follow best practice in terms of consultation and co-design at all stages of this project. However, as this report has identified, this was a small-scale and time-limited project complicated as well by shifting timelines due to the pandemic. As Maeve Stone, project mentor and LEAP facilitator observed, “I would say the process became elongated in a way that was difficult. There were moments where the ambition that I could sort of feel in it for myself couldn’t be met by the parameters of this project because it didn’t have the support.” The changed composition of the advisory board over time also multiplied perspectives in ways that were useful but also too various for Baboró to fully take on board for LEAP although they did feed into the strategies that were also drafted during this time, as well as plans to adjust the access supports available for example across all artist schemes in the future.

The extreme openness of application format and materials that could be used to make a case for inclusion in the programme were meant to allow applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds to articulate their case for involvement in the programme as best suited them and their comfort level. Yet, at the application review stage, the materials submitted varied widely and often left the review panel with questions about basic background, specific prior experiences and so on that arguably made fairly assessing the materials harder as well as resulting in a high volume of queries to Baltz about what actually needed to be included in the application in the pre-review stage, taking up staff resources that could have been used for example in more outreach within the non-arts and/or migrant communities. Baltz reflected:

The queries were generally about specifying-and ...we did a zoom info session as part of the application process ...because we were getting queries about like “how do I actually apply?” [... So,] we gave people kind of an outline of “You can do two sentences introducing yourself, and then four sentences about your art.” You know it was really, really quite concrete and that seemed to help.

This experience demonstrates the need to balance between openness and clarity for applicants and to be cautious of allowing the spirit of what is being attempted (more radically opening how artists can present a case their work as a way of reducing/minimising access barriers) to get in the way of practically facilitating as many people as possible to apply and have a fair chance at success in the scheme. This is because in the absence of a transparent common set of guidelines on possible structure, those who have more education or experience of professional application processes would likely still have an advantage in being able to successfully articulate their case.

Finally, the project team was so focused on not forcing applicants to speak explicitly about their minority and/or migrant identity as the distinguishing feature of their theatre practice that we actually did not specify that applicants should even indicate where they lived in the Republic of Ireland or for any other identifying details. This sometimes made it difficult to

ascertain whether or not someone was eligible for the scheme at all, as well as did not allow our project team to analyse any geographical patterns in application beside ultimately being aware at interview stage that we had a very low number of applicants and no successful applicants from the West of Ireland, where Baboró is based. There are sensitive issues here – an individual’s minority, racial and/or ethnic and/or migrant status is not necessarily evident for any number of reasons in an application or maybe even at an interview, and the point of this scheme was not to compel artists to perform those minority identities and be judged on them but rather to bridge an equity gap by providing a development and networking programme. However, as this is an equity-based programme, we also needed to be sure that the resources and opportunities we had available were being channeled to those truly eligible.

We also learned that we need to be very clear on where people are and are not applying from geographically in Ireland and so that we can use this information to concentrate efforts and resources on broadening our catchment area in the future. Key to this goal as well will also be asking applicants in the future where they learned about the scheme due to organisations’ need to actually understand how word of mouth operates within arts and non-arts networks for this particular community of artists as our post-programme interviews have confirmed that the successful participants they have frequently found professional arts networks difficult or inaccessible.

The LEAP Application Evaluation Process

The LEAP pilot programme callout received 22 applications overall. 3 were deemed ineligible due to being incomplete or the panel being able to conclude from the information given that they were not eligible according to the criteria. 4 programme participants were chosen with three alternates. All 4 successful applicants (Justine Anene, Alexandra Craciun, Fernanda Ferrari, and Justyna Cwojdzńska) took up their place on the LEAP programme. See the appendix for their full bios.

LEAP Workshop Experience

This account of the four-day workshop experience is written primarily by Jillian Kenny with some contributions by Charlotte McIvor and also makes use of quotes from the participants and facilitators throughout which the research team gathered from interviews and the surveys that Baboró also sent to participants and facilitators following the workshop. We highlight the sources of information as well as subjective slant of this section in particular as the section is intended to give a representative but purposely subjective account of the overall workshop experience for those who were not in attendance.

Each day of the LEAP workshop had a different focus:

Day One: Song, music, sound and language

Day Two: Movement and dance

Day Three: Puppetry, Objects and Images

Day Four: Introduction to producing theatre

The LEAP experience started at 9:30am on Monday, April 4th, 2022, with the participants, facilitators, and members of the research team gathering together in a tiny kitchen drinking tea, eating biscuits, and chatting about the state of the world today. “Tea and Chats”, as the facilitators from Moonfish Theatre called that time, was a thirty-minute long period of time at the beginning of the day to allow a space of welcoming and an opportunity to help members

of the group gain a sense of comfort with each other. All four days of the LEAP workshop began with this routine: having tea, chatting, and then getting prepared to warm-up and participate in the Check-In.

The Check-In was promoted as a “safe space”, where everyone was allowed and encouraged to take as much time to speak as they wanted and say whatever it is that they felt they needed to say. As Moonfish Theatre’s Ionia Ní Chroínin put it:

Something that was also really important to us was creating a sustainable practice. Things like check-in can feel like a ‘waste of time’, but having that framework allows people to relax into the process so much more and feel so much safer, that the benefit outweighs the time it takes to do it. For those participants from countries that had a break-you-down-to-build-you-up approach in theatre, it was interesting to hear them say that, over the four days, the things like the check-in and lack of hierarchy in the room made them feel so much freer. The fear was really holding them back. And being able to put that down at the door and knowing that they were in a safe space, opened them up to that sense of creativity and play that we have found in our practice is absolutely invaluable. We wouldn’t be able to do what we do if we didn’t have that energy in the room. We wanted that check-in process to be a key element; we wanted it to be a part of the process of the workshops so it is visibly a part of a process going forward if you were to make a show, that you would see the benefit of it in practice.

The only instruction for the check-in exercise was for everyone to remain in an open and neutral pose with arms hanging down by their sides and look at the person who was speaking. The openness, comfort, and warmth that was emanating from the circle was one of support and sympathy; from the very first circle to the last day, these Check-Ins included stories of fear and anxiety, of sadness and hope, of joy and laughter, and a gratitude for being allowed to just “be”. Throwing all of the anxieties and words spoken into the invisible fire in the center of the circle, the space transformed into a magical world, which no outside force could harm.

Each of the four days of the LEAP Workshop contained many different games and activities to promote connectivity, while also allowing for individuality. Everyone was eager to be involved in the process, and the participation of everyone was one filled with joy and a willingness to learn. The “Safe Space” created by the Check-In each morning allowed each of the participants to bring a sense of fearlessness and bravery with them; getting their minds out of their personal fears of judgment, to allowing the freedom of following impulses and interacting with the other artists in the room.

All the activities, whether it was with each other or with the activity itself, required engagement. There was a lot of work done around the concept of “yes, and”, and the excitement of possibilities that are found within that idea. The challenges of participation and embracing the unknown was filled with a sense of joy and willingness to learn – the level of involvement from everyone was one inspired by the acceptability of making mistakes, and the opportunity to try new things. And it wasn’t only the participants who were learning new things - as Rachel Baltz of Baboró stated, ‘There was such a gorgeous kind of fluidity between who was learning and who was teaching.’ The atmosphere created by the set-up of the workshop allowed each person in the space, whether it was participant, facilitator, or member of the research team, to have an opportunity to learn from each other regarding interpersonal communication, creating art and the differences in how each artist creates work, and gave a space of freedom of expression.

There was also a deliberate choice to not foreground themes of diversity, difference, race/ethnicity or migration status although it was made clear from the beginning that use of any language was welcome in the room during the exercises. This deliberate lack of emphasis on what had actually allowed participants to be eligible for LEAP was appreciated, and LEAP 2022 participant Fernanda Ferrari drew a direct line between the callout, application process and workshop in this regard:

Over this whole process [with LEAP – through the applications and workshops], I've never felt like "they're putting me in a box." What I think was amazing about LEAP and all the participants is that we are people. We are all people that just speak different languages and are from different backgrounds... Sometimes when you are put in a box, you feel like a monkey that's constantly being observed. That was never felt doing the workshop... The workshop felt more like it was about what Fernanda, Alex, Justyna and Justin, who they are – not as a Brazilian, not as an artist – but who we are.

Yet, the theme of how humans understand, interpret, and use language was continuously reflected on throughout the four days. One activity in particular allowed the participants to have some freedom in choosing the tone of the story they were creating, giving them the chance to go wherever they wanted to go, rather than being prompted to go a certain direction. The participants paired up in groups of two, and were given a prompt for a five-minute free write: "Tell me about a moment where everything changed". Each member of the duo got five minutes to speak and tell their story to the other, and the other was tasked with listening to their partner's story and taking notes. After both stories are shared, the participants are asked to share their stories with the group; however, instead of sharing their own stories, they are tasked with sharing the story that their partner told them. All of the stories seemed focused on a sense of purpose, and the journey towards finding what that purpose is. This task had a delicate nature to it, where the participants had the responsibility of telling another person's story; a moment that was precious, and personal to them. The responses to this activity seemed to be positive, where the participants felt that this activity allowed for their stories and voices to be heard.

Taking the prior mentioned activity one step forward, there was more freedom allocated to the participants when they were invited to tell their partner a story, whether it was personal or a fairytale, with the same procedure of one person speaking and the other taking notes. However, during this round of presentation, the participants were not allowed to speak in English. The first partnership, when delivering their stories, both spoke in gibberish, with one person speaking at a time, while the other had to move their body to tell the story. The second group both spoke in their native languages, working off of each other to tell the story; although the words couldn't be understood, the story could be. As Ionia Ní Chróinín said, "It was a respectful invitation to understand," inspiring a conversation on audience engagement and the relationship between the jobs of an artist and the invitation to the audience to understand. There was a repeated statement of purpose where the intention behind the treatment of an activity or a story had to be genuine, because that was how the audience was going to absorb and believe it.

Another theme that was highly discussed was finding individuality within connectivity, and the beauty and importance that comes from working together as a group to create art. One activity that highlighted this was a long-form improvisation activity; on the floor spread out was five spikes of tape, each spike indicating a different task that needed to be completed. For example, the first round had: 1. Describing a game; 2. Telling a lie; 3. Singing a song; 4.

Describe a feeling while sitting in a chair, and as they're describing, another participant is following the dialogue with body movement to portray the feeling; and 5. Conversation by dance, where the participants had to dance instead of talk. With those guidelines, the participants got the opportunity to decide the order on which they visited the different marks, how long they were going to stay at a certain mark, and how long they were going to spend in between actions. There was no time limit, but everyone had to complete each task at least once. Rather than having a focus on competition and finishing the tasks before the other members of the group, it was a challenge to follow instincts and be more performative. There were rich moments of connection and disconnection, and the intensity and tension found in those moments, as well as a growing comfort of the concept of silence. There was also a highlighted point of the importance of communication, fulfilling the role within the whole, and forgetting the ego to focus on the non-restrictive nature of the exercise. There were moments of cacophony, when everyone was doing different tasks at different times, and there were moments of silence, where the focus was more centralized.

On the third day of the LEAP workshop, the participants were split into two groups of three and were taught how to make puppets using pieces of brown paper – the puppets themselves looking like 3D versions of stick figures. Each puppet had three operators: one in control of the head and one hand, another had control of the stomach and the other arm, and the third had control of the feet. The participants were assigned tasks to complete with their puppet, with an instruction on focusing on the puppet's breath. This "breath" brought the puppet to life, and discovering a rhythm of togetherness for each operator of the puppet. There were urges seen of being an individual versus the role as part of a team, and the hesitancy of waiting for a signal or taking the lead. One of the participants pointed out that they had lost the anxiety and expectations of "what" should be done or "how they should act" because they were focused on the task at hand. Ionia summarized this activity, and theatre as whole, by saying, "You are a part of this process, but you're not in control of it". There was a highlighted importance of working together as a team, having persistence to accomplish the task at hand, and the integrity of artistry and following impulses.

Throughout the games and activities filling the four days of the LEAP workshop, there was a freedom for the participants to explore, play, and enjoy the process of creating. Mistakes were encouraged and celebrated. A radiating sense of belonging and support filled the room each day, as each participant would bravely approach the challenges that were provided, and fearlessly fall head first into the activities planned for them, when they had only met each other at the beginning of the week. The participants all echoed a sense of gratitude from the experience; one of the participants, Justyna Cwojdzńska expressed how, after being in isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic for so long, returning to a space of creativity was healing:

My experience was very emotional – there were a lot of things happening – from this kind of fear to this total freedom...I've learned a lot of techniques and exercises – but what was really interesting for me was to watch myself overcoming certain barriers or being brave in the way that I responded to the exercise in a free way. When you're self-conscious, I think your creation is totally different from when you feel liberated and feel like you can do anything. So once I realized that I can be whatever, to just allow myself this creative openness to try and see if it works. All of us started being more open and we experimented more. You could just sit and watch and immerse yourself into it – go deeply into the experience – that sometimes I didn't want to get out of the exercise. I wanted to be in it all the time. It was joyful – it was truly joyful –

to watch and to be in it. And so many ideas came to me: how can you work with people, how can you work with the group, how can you then introduce certain things?

It was agreed by the group from the beginning that a full description of all workshop exercises including warmups would be created and shared with the group by the research team post-workshop, ensuring that participants could take and adapt exercises for their own future use. Moonfish Theatre's Zita Monahan explained their thinking behind this promise to participants:

Sometimes when you do a workshop, you go and have a great time and write down the exercises, but could come away going "I don't really know how/why I would use that." We wanted participants to be able to identify what they need and go to their resources of the games and activities to inspire them. We wanted to give the participants a "why" that will help you generate material. But also, leaning into the reflection of "why am I feeling this, and what can I use to remedy that?"

Moonfish's Ionia Ní Chroinín elaborated: "We can help by making our process available. So that people recognize there are other options and approaches to theatre other than what's expected" or within their own experience to date.

Both Monahan and Ní Chroinín also shared that they were transformed as much by the experience as they hoped that participants would be able to make use of what they shared:

Monahan: "Something that I'm taking away from the process is the incredible value of seeing what people do. And the value of getting an insight into what these artists do. There's something so valuable about seeing what it is that artists are interested in and what they do, and giving feedback and discussion. For me, it's just incredible to meet people. I'm really taking away from this our internal processes, how we show up in a room, and when we play games what happens to us? We're coming in with different experiences and approaches, and how to respect that but also play the game."

Ní Chroinín: "...what I came away [with] was "how lucky am I to have this way of meeting and engaging with people that I would never have in any other setting." It's such an incredibly organic way to get to know people on a deep level; you get to know people really intimately and quickly but in a way that feels safe and respectful. It's such a privilege. It's so enriching and enjoyable.

Mufutau 'Junior' Yusuf, LEAP movement facilitator working with Moonfish Theatre also concurred that: "The warm, open and collaborative environment created and supported by both facilitators and participants... gave space to share information and develop creative ideas and visions." These reflections from the facilitators articulate what the "creative exchange" promised by the original call between Moonfish Theatre and participants actually looked and felt like in practice for the facilitators themselves.

However, crucially, the final day of the workshop focused on producing and financial skills for the independent artists in terms of negotiating not only the Irish funding landscape but the tax system. Although this pivot in topic did change the tone and kinds of conversation and embodied action that the group was engaged in, all four participants commented on the day and in follow-up questionnaires and/or interviews how useful this concrete financial advice was. Fernanda Ferrari, 2022 LEAP participant, shared: "I still need to understand how to make a living with my art – I'm working, and I'm grateful – but it's not enough to pay the

bills.” Justyna Cwojdzńska, 2022 LEAP participant, spoke generally of the incredible importance of making the range of funding structures available to artists from migrant backgrounds more evident:

We wanted to create [the Polish Arts Festival] out of passion – so we went to the Polish Embassy first, but their funding is very limited. We were doing a lot of stuff voluntarily, and we were paying peanut money to people. First of all, there was no information really available once you’re not in a certain circle that you can apply for certain funding; then how to apply for those fundings with criteria you need to meet, how to write the applications, how to fit into the boxes. For many years I was knocking certain doors and nobody really said to me ‘why don’t you apply?’ – it was only in 2014 when there was this call and we had certain relationships established that we were told that we could apply for funding (from the Limerick City Council). So, we did... When we were granted the funding, that was a game changer. Because that meant that we had been seen, that we had been acknowledged, and that the trust was given to us.

Summary of What Worked in the LEAP Workshop for Participants and Facilitators

Based on our interviews with participants and facilitators, agreed strengths of the LEAP pilot workshop included:

- A design approach by Moonfish Theatre , Maeve Stone and Mufutau Yusuf that emphasised concrete skill-building and fluid artistic exchange through structured activities.
- The invitation to participants to bring their whole self into the space each day (through brief and facilitated discussion of extenuating life circumstances during the check-in as well as ongoing conversation in features of the day like “tea and chats” and the lunch break).
- LEAP’s full-time residential experience for participants with extra supports advertised as available for those that needed it to participate
- Up-front commitment to being given full detailed notes of exercises and techniques used for further development/usage for participants allowing them to be fully present in the room.
- Reflection on the learning for all involved (participants, facilitators, research team) throughout each day and full participation from all in all exercises and discussions.

What Could Be Expanded or Improved About the LEAP Workshop for the Future

Based on our interviews with participants and facilitators, some feedback included for future development included:

- More workshop days
- More participants to fill out the group and make bigger exercises and more extensive networking possible
 - Interviews with Ferrari, Craciun and Cwojdzńsk all stressed the need to keep and build networks that could be accessed often in terms of collaboration and exchange. Cwojdzńska stressed: “I think this is the most important skill to have when you’re in Ireland; to know how to network, to know which network

you should go to, and just go there and be yourself, see what happens, and work hard.”

- Expand who can be included in the LEAP community, including unsuccessful applicants to the scheme.
 - Maeve Stone observed that it would be ideal to extend who could be “part of the ‘LEAP community’, and that not all of those participants would necessarily go into the workshop week, but everybody who applied [would] form the fabric of a new community who is attached to and supported by Babaró.”
- Create structured ways for the cohort of participants to meet up again in order to support each other and track ongoing development
 - At the time of post-programme interviews in May-July 2022, three of the four participants were developing projects or funding applications with one another and participants and facilitators were in individual and/or group contact semi-regularly.

Final Reflection on LEAP and the future of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Babaró as an Organisation

Babaró and Moonfish Theatre’s conceptualization of LEAP began with the urge to take more decisive action in partnering with diverse Irish artists interested in making work for young audiences to represent the Ireland that now exists on stage. Ireland’s demographic changes over the last 30 years mean that in addition to being more racially and ethnically diverse than ever before, second-generation immigrants and migrants form an ever more considerable group in our society.

In being developed between 2020 and 2022, LEAP responded directly to both national and global calls-to-action to expand representation of minority/underrepresented artists as well as expand access and participation to these individuals as audience members, board members, administrators, decision makers and so on. LEAP’s co-design alongside Babaró’s review of their overall strategy and the creation of a stand-alone Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy signal that Babaró intends to continue pursuing this work as a central feature rather than an add-on or time-limited extension of what they already do. As Maeve Stone articulated passionately:

I think, essentially, for an organization with a real intention towards this as a goal [that] the aim should be that some of your staff in the next five, ten, fifteen years are going to be different kinds of people to the ones that you usually hire. I think until that becomes the mindset shift, we’re not going to see real structural change – it needs to come from the top-down and there needs to be bodies in the room that represent those communities and those priorities.

Babaró’s learning through LEAP and the strategy writing process does name and put a multi-year action plan with measurable targets tied to the intentions on which LEAP was founded and going beyond them as well. Through these planning commitments, Babaró has modelled what equity might look like as a planned and longitudinal practice in theory as they continue the coalitional extended work of putting it into practice.

Throughout this report, we have introduced obstacles that were made apparent throughout the process of formation of the LEAP project and we have chosen to be transparent about moments of vulnerability where questions or misgivings about the project were met with even more questions and misgivings, and often a sense of anxiety regarding the relative privilege of our core project team or the reality of what our limited funding and human resources would enable us to actually contribute towards increasing equity. We have very intentionally presented an evaluation that is comprehensive, vulnerable and which even documents versions of the programme that we let go of or revised. This is because our research team ultimately believes that to keep moving forward with this work, we need to not lose touch with the nuance of what has been learned and the ways in which our learning in the present intentionally and unintentionally picked up the threads and struggle of those who are also working towards equity for underrepresented artists in Ireland and beyond.

This is not easy work, and it will require our ongoing effort and commitment not only within Baboró, but as a national and international sector. As Baboró's Rachel Baltz put it:

Diversity always complicates things, difference of opinions, difference of backgrounds and stuff, yeah it makes things complicated, but guess what? Humans are complicated, life is complicated, and the richness that having different perspectives and different experiences and different-just difference. When you have that in the room it's so gorgeous and what it yields is so amazing and so fun! Being able to play with that is just so great, and when you have y'know trust and vulnerability with these other people and the fact that I- I think it was so important that the evaluators and the administrators got to sit in as participants. That became huge because it allowed for the vulnerability of that room to be protected. There was no kind of outside observer judging or anything like that. [...] I just feel like the richness that comes from diversity- It just really really reminded me of why this work is so so important and why it can do nothing, but ultimately make our sector better. It can just strengthen the sector.

Baboró looks forward to remaining engaged in this work, building on these and other learnings in partnership with colleagues in Ireland and internationally.

Appendices

Appendix A: Project Collaborator Biographies

The LEAP programme involved co-design, collaboration, and consultation at multiple levels prior to delivery.

Description of the different groups involved in LEAP:

- Baboró team leads and staff
- Facilitators/workshop design: Moonfish Theatre
- NUI Galway Drama and Theatre Studies Research Team
- Consultancy
- Advisory Council (*Appendix B*)

Jennifer Ahern (Advisory Council): Jennifer Ahern, appointed Producer of Baboró in 2016, has worked with Baboró in multiple roles and capacities including Festival Administrator and Acting General Manager. A member of the core team with Baboró, her primary responsibilities include producing the festival, liaising with visiting companies, and filling out application forms for funding.

Justin Anene (Participant): Justin Anene, an actor and professional wrestler from Dublin, began his acting career in 2019 where he was taught by actor Mary Murray at Visions Drama School. In addition to acting in productions with Motien Films and BAFTA winning Damian O'Donnell in an Londis Ad campaign, he has also received an award for a short film that he wrote called Forever a Brother, which placed 'Top 3' in the Under-18 Irish Short Film of the Year.

Rachel Baltz (Baboró staff, LEAP Project Lead): Rachel Baltz graduated with her Masters of Arts degree in Theatre Practice and Production from National University of Galway in August, 2020, and shortly thereafter completed an internship with Baboró. Now working full-time with Baboró as the Artist and Programme Coordinator, Rachel provides aid in project coordination, communications, development, and production.

Alexandra Craciun (Participant): Alexandra Craciun, a classically trained Romanian artist based in Dublin, with a postgraduate degree in Cultural Management from IADT. She is the co-founder of Bibabo Independent Theater Company, and has recently begun to focus on the arts of writing and illustration and creating performances for young audiences.

Jo Cummins (Workshop Designer): Jo Cummins, Producer of Moonfish Theatre, graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2005. After spending ten years performing at various locations throughout the UK and Ireland such as the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, and Nottingham Playhouse, she became the producer of Moonfish Theatre in 2015.

Justyna Cwojdzńska (Participant): Justyna Cwojdzńska, the founder and artistic director of Polish Arts Festival, is a Polish artist who moved to Ireland in 2000 after graduating with her Masters of Arts in English Language and Literature from the University of Wrocław. She has a special interest in producing bilingual work, such as previous works that she has been a part of including *Nameless* and *Julia*, and has previously received an Outstanding Pole Award in the Culture Category from the Polish Government.

Elaine Donovan (Project Manager): Elaine Donovan was Development Executive with Baboró from 2016 to 2022 and is currently Producer for Phillida Eves. She previously worked at one of Canada's leading fundraising agencies. From that experience, she discovered a passion for providing subsidised access to the creative arts for young audiences; her favorite part of working with Baboró was being able to tell stories of the transformative impact of the arts has on children to Baboró's philanthropic partners. She now continues that work with Phillida Eves on *The Wonder Project*.

Fernanda Ferrari (Participant): Fernanda Ferrari, a Brazilian multidisciplinary artist, participated as a performer with the Five Lamps Arts Festival and Mother Tongues Festival, and has received an award from the Arts Council and the Young People, Children, and Education Bursary Award to study puppetry. She has a passion for inspiring children to experiment with art and to use creativity as a tool of transformation.

Noeleen Hartigan (Consultant): With over 25 years experience in the not for profit sector, Noeleen is recognised as a leader in human rights, strategy and the intersect between creativity and social change. She has worked with national and international NGOs including the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, the Simon Communities of Ireland, Amnesty International and the Planned Parenthood movement. In recent years she has worked in the creative sector supporting the strategic goals of Chamber Choir Ireland and Science Gallery International, representing the latter in major international fora including the World Economic Forum in Davos. She was the inaugural CEO of the Humanist Association of Ireland. As an independent consultant she supports NGOs to increase their capacity to make real impact, with a specific focus on strategic planning, human rights and the arts, and diversity.

Jillian Kenny (Research Team): Jillian Kenny, an actor and director from Vermont, USA, is currently in the process of completing her Masters of Arts degree in Drama and Theatre Studies at National University of Ireland, Galway, while acting as an ensemble member of the growing Galway-based theatre Company HystERia Téatar. In addition to making her professional stage debut in 2016 with Saint Michael's Playhouse, she has performed in and directed multiple productions in the US and Ireland; most recently, she directed a production of *Macbeth* that was selected to perform at the Irish Student Drama Awards.

Grace Kiely (Facilitator): Grace Kiely, an Ensemble Member with Moonfish Theatre, is an actor and musician who moved to Galway in 2006 after graduating from University College Cork with a degree in English and Irish. She has devised and performed in multiple productions with Moonfish Theatre such as *Tromluí Phinocchio*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Star of the Sea*.

Thomas Langan (Baboró staff): Thomas Langan, the Marketing Executive of Baboró, manages the marketing of the festival and acts as a communicator for the work that Baboró is involved in throughout the year. Thomas is originally from Galway, and has held marketing roles with various enterprises, creative entrepreneurs, and community organisations.

Charlotte McIvor (Research Team): Charlotte McIvor, a lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at National University of Ireland Galway, has been a member of the Baboró Board of Directors since 2019. She received her PhD in Performance Studies from University of California, Berkley in 2011, and has since had multiple publications and has directed and produced productions like *The Kinds of Sex You Might Have in College/How I Learned About Consent* through University of Galway's Active* Consent Programme and she specializes in the topics of contemporary Irish performance, interculturalism, migration, race, gender, sexuality, and practice-as-research.

Zita Monahan-McGowan (Facilitator): Zita Monahan-McGowan, an Ensemble Member with Moonfish Theatre, graduated with a Masters of Arts degree in Drama and Theatre Studies from University of Galway, and holds an ADPA Diploma in Performance Arts Teaching from London. With a particular interest in devising theatre and theatrical improvisation, she has participated in multiple productions with Moonfish Theatre, is a member of The Sky Babies improv troupe based in Galway, and facilitates drama classes with Ability West.

Ionia Ní Chróinín (Facilitator): Ionia Ní Chróinín, the Co-Director and an Ensemble Member of Moonfish Theatre, graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2005. In addition to Moonfish Theatre, in which she has appeared in all productions in the UK and the US, she has also worked with various theatre companies in the UK and Ireland such as Dundee Rep, Theatrecorp, and Making Strange; she also works with Galway-based theatre company Branar Téatar do Pháistí.

Aislinn Ó hEocha (Baboró staff): Aislinn Ó hEocha was appointed as the Executive Artistic Director for Baboró in 2015; also, she currently serves as the Chair of Theatre for Young Audiences Ireland, a volunteer organisation that supports and advocates for artists and performance arts for children in Ireland. She oversees the Baboró organisation, curates the festival each autumn, and works to develop supports to encourage Irish artists to create work for children.

Maeve Stone (Facilitator): Maeve Stone, a director and writer for film and theatre, is an artist-in-residence with Project Arts Centre where she is editing a limited-run publication called “How Do We Start?”, provides mentorship through RHIZOME, and is facilitating a pilot project called Roots for the Future; she has a strong focus on activism for issues surrounding the climate crisis and revisiting the canon with a feminist lens. In addition to the formation of her own film and media company called Cracking Lights Productions, she has worked with PopUp Green Arts Department, The Abbey Theatre and Pan Pan Theatre Company.

Appendix B: Advisory Council

Cohort One

- Trina Haldar, Spark Arts, UK
- Melatu Uche Okorie, Author/PhD student of Education, Trinity College Dublin
- Phillida Eves, Artist/Creative Sensory Educator
- Michael Chang, Musician/Composer
- Máiréad Folan, Creative Director - NoRopes Theatre Company
- Pádraig Naughton, Executive Director of Arts and Disability
- Niamh O’Brien, Teacher - Scoil Bhríde, Galway

Cohort Two

- Kasia Lech, Lecturer, freelance artist, Polish Theatre Ireland
- Chandrika Narayan-Mohan
- Cathy Osikoya