

CORCA DHUIBHNE INBHUANAITHE A CREATIVE IMAGINING

THE CREATIVE CLIMATE WALL

LEARNING BRIEF FEBRUARY 2023



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme





BACKGROUND

Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe - *A Creative Imagination* was a creative climate action project based on the Dingle Peninsula which involved a creative artist working with ten farm families over the course of a year between January 2022 and January 2023.

It was funded by the inaugural [Creative Climate Action Fund](#), an initiative administered by the [Creative Ireland Programme](#), in collaboration with the [Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications](#), to support creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empower citizens to make meaningful behavioural transformations. The project was led by the [Dingle Hub](#), in collaboration with the [Green Arts Initiative in Ireland \(GAI\)](#) and [MaREI](#) (The Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine). It was supported by the [West Kerry Dairy Farmers Sustainable Energy Community \(SEC\)](#). The project team comprised [Catriona Fallon](#) (GAI), project manager; [Lisa Fingleton](#), embedded artist; [Deirdre de Bhailis](#), Dingle Hub manager; and [Clare Watson](#) (MaREI), reflective learning & evaluation lead.

This project aimed to tackle the challenge of addressing greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture through a creative lens, with an embedded artist bringing their unique perspective to the project, helping to generate new ways of thinking, fresh perspectives and alternative approaches. Key to this was listening to the farming community, providing them with a safe space to share their thoughts and concerns, and giving them a voice in the climate discussion. The focus was on supporting ten farm families to identify solutions that would work for them, and to imagine a low carbon farming future for the Dingle Peninsula and wider society. This experience was mediated through a creative lens.



**“ FARM FROM
THE LAND,
NOT FROM
THE OFFICE ”**



REFLECTIVE LEARNING AND EVALUATION METHODS

This learning brief focuses on the Creative Climate Wall project at the Ploughing Championships and brings together the experiences, learnings and recommendations of the Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe project team and the farmers involved. The initial data was collected through individual recorded interviews with the Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe project team and the participating farmers. Additional information was added during the writing and reviewing process.

BACKGROUND TO THE CREATIVE CLIMATE WALL PROJECT

The [National Ploughing Championships](#) is an Irish agricultural show, which incorporates a ploughing contest and is Europe's largest outdoor event. In 2022, it was held in Ratheniska, Co. Laois from 20-22 September and attracted 277,000 visitors and over 1,700 exhibitors. The Creative Ireland Programme sees this event as a huge opportunity to promote awareness of the benefits, work, events and initiatives of the Programme being undertaken at a national and local level, and this year invited the two farming-related Creative Climate Action projects to present their work.

In June 2022, the Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe project team organised a climate change workshop for the participating farm families. Lisa drew their ideas for a sustainable future on a large sheet of paper (see page 5).

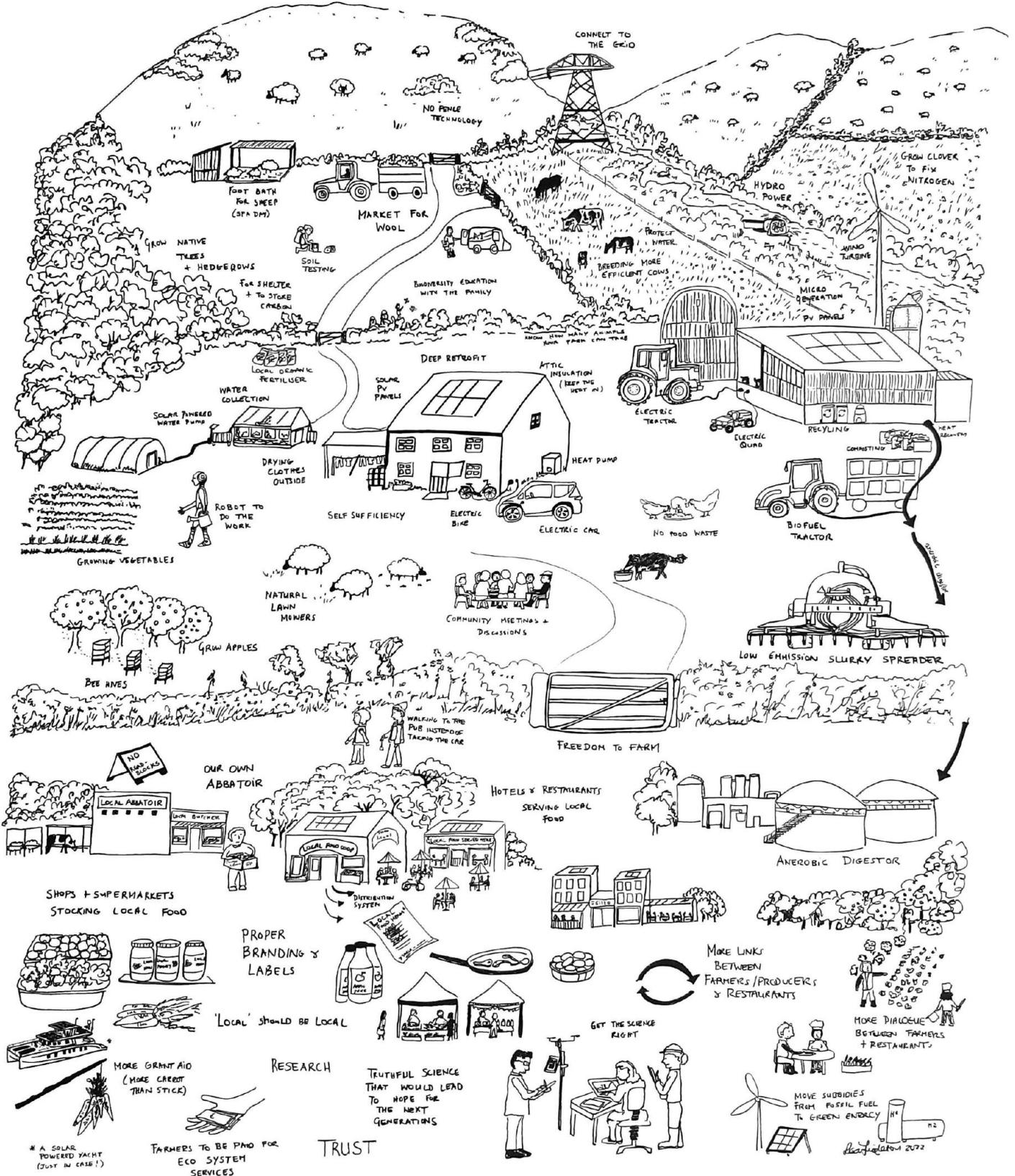
In July, Lisa created a 10-metre drawing on the wall of the Crawford Art Gallery for the Meat and Potatoes Exhibition. The previous year, Creative Ireland had partnered with [Waterford Walls](#) to create a graphic wall at the Ploughing Championships. On seeing how Lisa used her graphic harvesting and knowing how the project wanted to expand the process and involve more farmers, Tania Banotti, Director of Creative Ireland, suggested that the project collaborate with Waterford Walls to develop a Creative Climate Wall at the 2022 event. Out of these seeds grew a 33 metre (108 feet) endeavour!

Creative Ireland arranged for the Office of Public Works (OPW) to erect the plywood wall to Lisa's specifications and Waterford Walls was contracted to manage the project. Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe also provided logistical support, arranged for some of the farm families to travel up on the Wednesday, and produced comment cards. Lisa's hours were allocated from within the original project budget. Creative Ireland provided logistical, artistic and practical support and an extension to the budget (€4,460), which covered Waterford Walls and additional expenses, including an arts assistant (Noreen Breen), transport, travel, food, materials and farmers' tickets. As Lisa is from Laois, her parents provided accommodation for her and some of the team which was really helpful, as accommodation was difficult to find. The PR for the event was handled by Creative Ireland and the Irish Government Press Office.

In addition to the wall, Creative Ireland organised a number of Creative Climate Conversations over the three days. The Dingle Peninsula farmers were encouraged and supported to participate and five agreed to do so on the Wednesday. The first was in the Creative Ireland marquee and the second in the Taoiseach's marquee.

After the Ploughing Championships, Creative Ireland arranged for the OPW to transport the Wall to The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), where it was displayed as part of the Earth Rising Festival (21-23 October 2022).

INITIAL IDEAS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE





AIMS OF THE CREATIVE CLIMATE WALL PROJECT

- To spark imagination within the farming community around what farmers can do to combat climate change and biodiversity loss. *'I'm asking farmers to spark my imagination, so I can draw, and then I'm going to draw and try and spark their imagination so they can think about what they can do. So, it was a lovely two-way thing.'* (Lisa)
- To bring the climate action discussion to a broader agricultural audience.
- To showcase the Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe project and the support Creative Ireland is giving to creative climate action initiatives.

KEY DELIVERABLES FOR CREATIVE IRELAND

- To provide a snapshot of the views of the farming community in Ireland in 2022.
- Engagement with passers-by to encourage and record idea generation.
- Interaction in both areas: the marquee of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and the Government of Ireland marquee.

WHAT HAPPENED

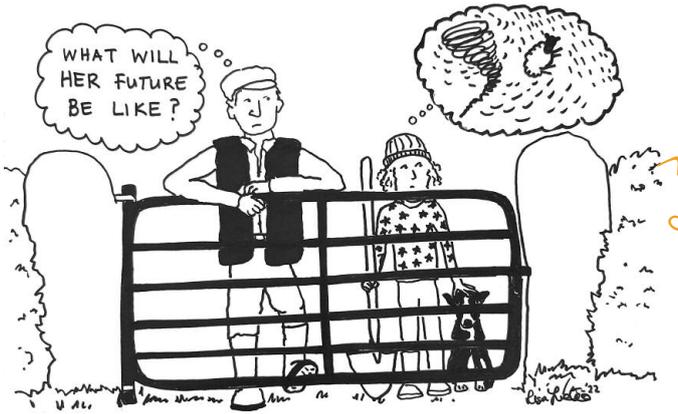
On the morning of the first day of the Ploughing Championships, passers-by saw a blank wall, 33m (108 ft) long and 2.4m (8ft) high, with the words *'How Can We Farm in a Sustainable Way?'* written across the top. They were asked to write their suggestions on cards, which were then drawn on the wall by Lisa Fingleton.

Over the next three days, the creative team, which included Lisa, Noreen and two helpers from the Waterford Walls project, Magda and Lucas, continued to draw farmers' ideas onto the wall.

Engagements with the public were led by Tania Banotti (Creative Ireland), Ailbhe Gerrard (Brookfield Farm) and Rena Blake.

On the second day, four of the farm families involved in Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe arrived by bus with project manager, Catriona Fallon, to lend a hand. The farmers were Aidan O'Connor and his daughter Ciara; John Joe Fitzgerald, his wife Karen and their two daughters, Aoife and Shannon; Sandra O'Dowd and her daughter Sharon; and Tom and Nora Greaney. Tony O Sé was at the Ploughing that day with a group of secondary school students from Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne (where he is a teacher) and Niamh Foley was involved on another stand for the three days, but they both dropped by at intervals to help out. Dinny Galvin, Energy and Agricultural Liaison Officer, Dingle Hub and founder of the West Kerry Dairy Farmers SEC also offered his support.





'A farmer and child standing at the gate, wondering what will their future be like... it's a philosophical thought... we really are only custodians.'

Tony

'There was a little girl kept, she came back three times, why hadn't I drawn her talking cow? ... So eventually, I just copied her talking cow from her postcard. She said if cows could talk, they could tell us what to do.'

Lisa



'I think the most popular drawing was a guy in a deck chair ... a young farmer of 22, he said, 'I'm selling the farm and going to Ibiza.'

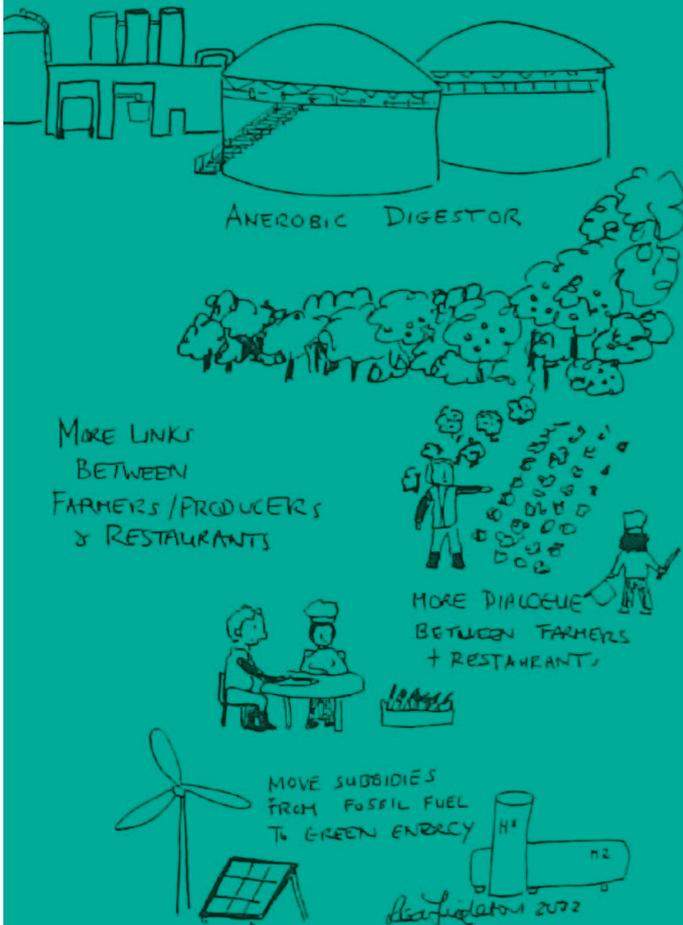
They stopped with phones, they all crunched down to get photographs taken with that drawing. That is by far the one that grabbed them.'

Lisa





Creative Climate Conversation | Culture, Creativity and Innovation Marquee Stage



Two Creative Climate Conversations were held on the Wednesday. Aidan O'Connor, Sandra O'Dowd and John Joe Fitzgerald were interviewed by the journalist and farmer, Hannah Quinn-Mulligan, on the Culture, Creativity and Innovation Marquee Stage from 12.00-12.30pm. People were moving around, but about 25-30 sat down and listened.

Later in the day (4.30-5.00pm), Tom Greaney, Niamh Foley, John Joe Fitzgerald and Catriona Fallon were in a panel discussion on the Government of Ireland Stage, chaired by Mark Gibson, presenter of The Signpost webinars. Initially the audience was small, but it grew to about 30 during the discussion.

VIDEO: [The Future is in the Fields - at The Ploughing Championships, Sept 2022](#)

LESSONS LEARNT / BENEFITS OF THE CREATIVE CLIMATE WALL

- **It is a tangible tool that really works.**

'It has been one of the most rewarding and engaging projects that I've ever looked at.' (Niamh)

'It was definitely a brilliant idea.' (Sandra)

'It really works... in the beginning, we had all the negatives, before I started drawing, it was all negative. It was climate change, and the Green Party and bureaucracy. That was all we got until we started drawing their ideas. And then it totally changed. Because we were like, this is not about a wall of criticism. This is a 'What about suggestions and ideas?' The first thing I drew hoops, less hoops to jump through. And I had little farmers jumping through the hoops. And they were like, that's exactly what we want.' (Lisa)

'Some of them commented, isn't that not very obvious? And it is, but I suppose sometimes we need to hear it a second time and a third time before it actually sinks in.' (Tony)

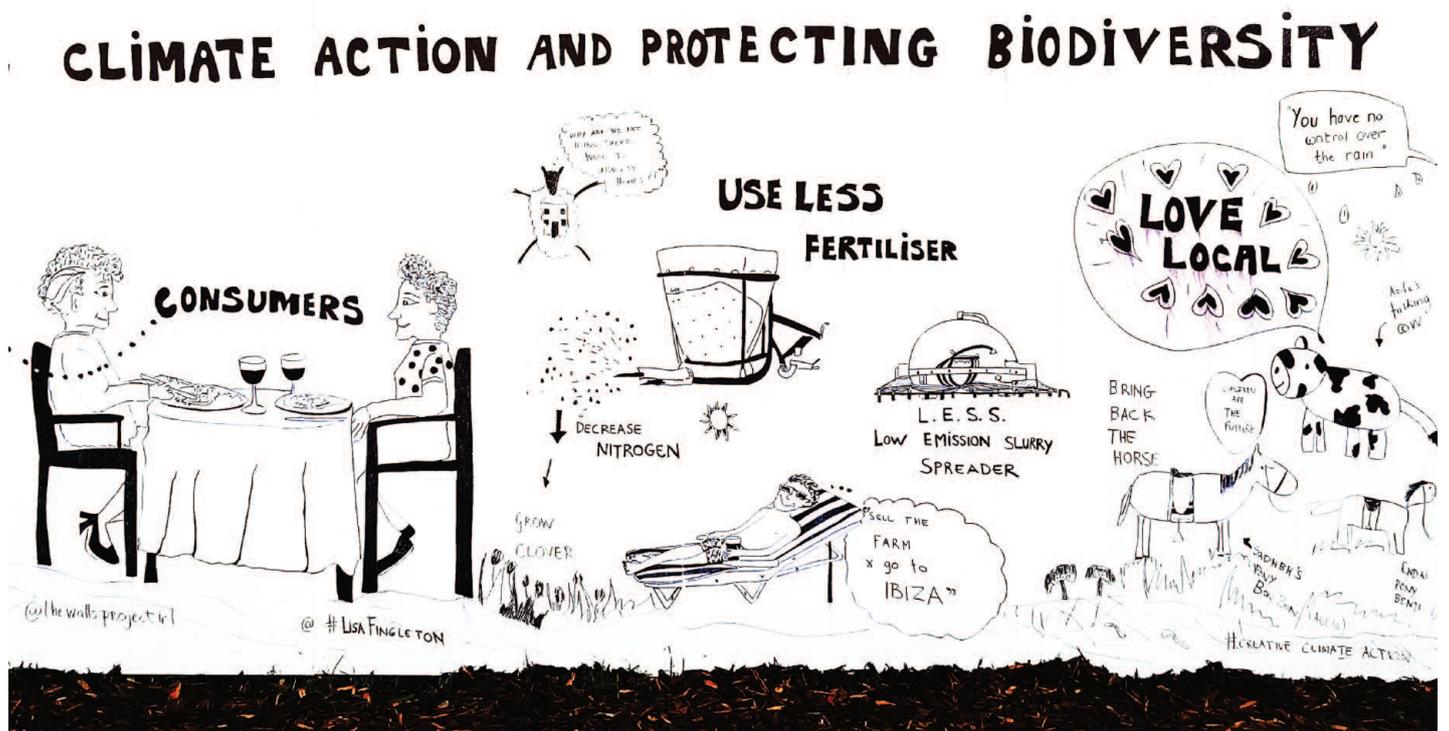
- **It told a story.**

'Wow, the engagement and the visual and the story, it was like a storyboard... It told a story about the evolution of farming.' (Niamh)

- **People could relate to the imagery.**

'Pictures sometimes speak louder than words.' (Tony)

'It was amazing, where people came back to see their voiced opinion, visual on the wall. And I think that was a big draw. You know, it wasn't in a paper document. It was laid out, people could see it... there wasn't a right or a wrong.' (Niamh)





- **It reflected the farmers' voice.**

'You couldn't have found a more brilliant pilot scheme that heard the farmers' voice. So many farmers have very creative ideas. It was similar to a knowledge transfer scheme, learning from one another - this is what works for me, why don't you try this?' (Tony)

- **It was comprehensive.**

'It highlights what's going on in the climate. It starts off with the weather and farming and the harsh conditions farmers have to endure now due to the climate, that's all depicted on the wall, through all the different stages, and what could be done.' (Tom)

'There were a lot of ideas put out there that you wouldn't have thought of yourself.' (Sandra)

- **It was enjoyable.**

'Everyone that took part in it, they reckoned it was brilliant. And you'd see the smile on the people walking around the place. And people stopping and having a chat and having the conversation. I think it went down well, very well.' (John Joe)

- **It was positive.**

'I was expecting people to not be so positive. Most, a lot of people you talk to will just say there is no such thing as climate change, but in the Ploughing Match they were kind of agreeing with you.' (Aidan)

'There were great vibes there, when I was there anyway. You know, it was very positive.' (Sandra)

- **It promoted discussion and conversations.**

'There's loads of stuff on it that will bring up conversation.' (Aidan)

'A lot of people were saying, 'god isn't it nice to see the farmers doing that for a change, instead of giving out', and that was the good thing about it. We were part of the discussion, and we were out there, and we were quite happy to do it, and people were happy to see us doing it.' (John Joe)

'You'd have one or two [naysayers] alright saying 'what's going on here?' 'What are you doing?' 'This farmer is doing this', but then you'd have the discussion with them. And then by the time they left, you had their mind changed.' (John Joe)

- **It was supported by Government bodies.**

'Farmers seem vilified. And I think they saw this process as so open. And I think when they saw Creative Ireland involved in it, being in the government channel, shall we say, at the Ploughing Match, I think that was very powerful.' (Niamh)

- **It attracted a range of different people, including children and teenagers.**

'You got a whole mix of people, you'd farmers, you'd farm families, you had school children. You had the machinery dealerships, you had people involved in animals, so you had a great blend there.' (Niamh)

'It got the children to stop, and the teenagers... they were interested in the drawing and the colouring in and that kind of drew them to it as well and then the parents would have to stand there and read.' (Nora)

'What was really lovely was the amount of children under ten who were walking past me and then stopped to have a little chat and to tell me what they felt was missing.' (Lisa)

'Even my own daughter, she was delighted, she was drawing away there and just listening to what was going on in the background. And it was nice to see the young people taking part in it, they're the future. And that's what motivates me more than anything else, is to be part of these things, is that there's something there for the next generation.' (John Joe)

'[The young ones] seemed interested and do you know they were giving their opinions on it. And it's their opinions really that should be there. Because they're our future.' (Sandra)

- **The issues were linked through art.**

'One of the big things that actually came out of the Wall was... the connection between, you're looking at the food we eat, looking at farming, looking at climate change, but actually looking at how that can be brought forward through art, rather than a written document... we always linked food and farm and climate change, but we never actually link art in and actually see the benefit.' (Niamh)

- **It demonstrated the power of graphic harvesting.**

'What's been lovely about this project is realising that... I actually can capture people's thoughts and ideas and show them back to them immediately. Which to see that magnified on the big wall and see the joy and the pride that they gave people was magic, you know, and it's given me more confidence in that, which is fabulous. And also, I suppose what it's done is, it's given me a sense that those drawings actually can have an impact in terms of climate and in terms of the planet, so that was a lovely thing to realise, that people could relate to them instantly.' (Lisa)

- **It provided a bridge between artists and farmer (on the third day it rained really heavily and the team stayed drawing).**

'[Tania said] 'Okay, everybody. We're just like farmers. We're just like farmers - artists are out in the rain. And we want to hear your ideas, we have a farmer artist here. She wants to hear your ideas. And we're like farmers, we are going to stay working in any weather.' And she kept saying it. And at one stage, I turned around and there was a whole line of farmers, and they were all clapping.' (Lisa)



Creative Climate Wall | National Ploughing Championships 2022

- **The visit of the six farmers and four of their children from the Dingle Peninsula on the Wednesday added to the team effort.**

'Their energy was just superb. After coming from Dingle, they all got off the bus and they started drawing, colouring in, on the wall. It was superb, that was the highlight for me - seeing parents and their kids drawing was fantastic.' (Lisa)

'I really wanted it to be a team project... there was a really interesting moment where it had come up about abattoirs and factory control and meat and everything. And I had never drawn a butcher, or that whole meat thing, because, you know, I'm always like, it's not that I'm vegetarian, but I don't really want to glamorise meat or, do you know? So, I've always been torn about it. And I just couldn't draw the picture. I just couldn't draw it. And even though people were saying we need to bring abattoirs, we need to connect butchers with farmers and families and consumers, I just couldn't do it. And then when the farmers arrived, I said, 'lads, I need your help. I said, I'm having a real ethical quandary. I just don't know what to do. Will I draw the butcher and will that affect people, you know, because it would be a big knife?' And they were all like, 'DRAW THE BUTCHER!' (Lisa)

[A few of Tony's school kids] 'were actually participating, it got them thinking. They were sketching so enthusiastically. They were brilliant, absolutely brilliant.' (Tony)

- **The two Climate Conversations allowed the Dingle Peninsula farmers to voice their experiences and opinions in more depth.**

'They liked that idea that there was a link up and there was a story behind this board. And that small time farmers were getting their voice heard on these platforms in the Ploughing Match...what they wanted to showcase was their positivity, the positive measures that they're taking around farming.' (Niamh)

'Farmers shouldn't be afraid to take part in these discussions. Because at the end of the day, who knows their land better than farmers, and knows the climate better and can see what's happening? But I suppose farmers are worried, it's the bad publicity with farmers. And you know, they've been hounded. But they've always been talked down to and don't take part in these discussions, 'ye have nothing to say', and you get caught out, right? Those discussions, I think were great and there should be a lot more of it.' (John Joe)

'I did want to put out there that there are women in agriculture, trying to rear a family and do the best for the environment. At the end of the day, we do love what we're doing, and it's not that we're out to harm the land or anything else. We're out there to try and do our very best. And I think, at the end of the day, that's what we're doing.' (Sandra)

- **The farmers moved out of their comfort zones and had new empowering experiences.**

'When we landed above that morning, I had just put my rucksack on the ground and this woman came up talking away and Lisa introduced me. And I never knew she was the Minister for the Arts... so I was caught on the hop. But I had a great discussion with her.' (John Joe)

'That was the first time I've ever spoken in public, but it was grand... It was just another thing for me to have done...you want to be part of something if you're in it. I don't like doing the job halfways. I know you're not forced to do anything, but you're expected to do a certain amount of stuff so there's no harm for me. It's not that I wouldn't do it, but I always feel that I couldn't do it.' (Aidan)

'I was glad I'd done it when it was over. I suppose really a lot of time it's the thought of actually going up there and doing it.' (Sandra)

- **It was an opportunity for the children of the participating farm families to see their parents in a new light.**

'She was very impressed with her mom... because I put things across very well.' (Sandra)

'She was glad I suppose that I was part of it, you know that I had put myself out there and was doing it... she was proud of her father, to see her father being one of the people involved.' (John Joe)

'She did enjoy being involved in what I was doing as well... she enjoyed seeing me up on the stage talking.' (Aidan)



CHALLENGES

Creative Ireland invited Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe to input into the Ploughing Championships and this was flagged with the farmers and project team well in advance. The project accepted the invitation, but like all great innovative ideas, the details emerged organically. This required a flexible approach and a certain amount of organising on the fly.

There were a number of challenges:

- The size of the wall.
'This was a good project. And it was probably one of the most powerful things that I've been involved in. Unfortunately, it was just that it was so big that it stretched my enjoyment.' (Lisa)
 - The amount of work required over the three days was underestimated - there were too few people to draw, to discuss the issues and take suggestions from passers-by, and to protect the wall from potential graffiti.
'It captured a lot of people's imagination, maybe more than we thought and more people stopped and wanted to have that conversation.' (Lisa)
 - The working hours (from 8.30am until about 6pm) were too long and intense.
'I wish I'd had more time to be fun and creative with it. I felt I was really just drawing, drawing, drawing, drawing.' (Lisa)
 - There was no protection for the Wall against the weather. It rained on the second night and the following morning, and the drawings ran. Also, the pens used, which were excellent for drawing, proved not to be very waterproof. Nevertheless, as one passer-by said to Lisa:
'It is all the more authentic that the rain has made this drawing... you have an original work of art... before that it was a graphic that could have been, you know, typed onto the wall or printed onto the wall... I think it's extraordinary that you have a drawing that's made from rain.'
- And it raised the level of interest.
'I feel like the planet is bleeding literally. And here was this drawing of ideas bleeding and the engagement went up tenfold. Everybody wanted to chat that day. Even though it was lashing rain.' (Lisa)
- Despite being a visual, participative, media friendly initiative, there was very little media coverage.
'I felt it was a really novel project. I felt it was really participative, really engaging and it could have reached a much, much bigger audience... we had an opportunity to say, here are farmers, hundreds of farmers trying to make a difference.' (Lisa)
 - The amount of administrative work required was extensive and, as this was a new venture, we had limited understanding of what would be involved. The work included Zoom meetings with the partners (Creative Ireland and Waterford Walls) and farmers, the budget agreement, an additional Service Level Agreement, Health and Safety and Risk Assessments for the OPW, design and printing of cards and organisation of the farmer input (which included supporting the farmers who were speaking, organising travel and providing food).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Never underestimate the power of accessible art. Drawings such as these appear so simple but can be loaded with meaning and energy. People often make a very direct and instant connection, and they have the capacity to resonate deeply with people.
- Allocate a project manager to organise and oversee the project from beginning to end, and to facilitate the partner collaboration. This would ideally be somebody who has experience of this kind of initiative and of the Ploughing Championships itself, who could anticipate the kinds of issues that might arise.
- Organise a comprehensive planning session well in advance and identify who is required to do the different jobs.
- Have a shorter wall.
- Create an overhang to protect the mural from rain and ensure materials are fully waterproof.
- Have specific 'talking' times with passers-by and then focused 'drawing' times during the day. That would then allow the artists to engage and converse with people, rather than just be drawing all the time.
- Include a written piece on what passers-by are being asked to do in the explanatory section at each end of the Wall. This would be particularly useful on the first morning when the main part of the Wall is blank.
- Provide a covered stand in which people can fill out the comment cards if it rains.
- Have a designated media person for the project and agree a press strategy and press release in advance, especially for an event where there is so much competition for coverage.

'The wall was a big success for Creative Ireland. The sheer level of engagement in terms of visibility and what it was trying to convey was huge, as was the creative way it allowed us to have conversations around climate action. Having the farmers from the Dingle Peninsula and Lisa and Catriona there allowed us to deepen the conversation during the panel discussions. Many farmers seemed intrigued by Lisa as both a farmer and an artist, and that credibility disarmed the initial sceptical reactions from some.'

Tania Banotti, Director, Creative Ireland

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Dingle Hub, Green Arts Initiative in Ireland (GAIL), MaREI (The Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine) and Lisa Fingleton would like to acknowledge and thank all those who have so generously given of their time and support to this project, both on the Dingle Peninsula and further afield. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the following:

- The ten farmers and farm families for being such enthusiastic, willing and fun participants. Without you there would be no project!
- The committee of the West Kerry Dairy Farmers Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) for providing such crucial guidance and support from the outset.
- The Dingle Hub team for providing back up services and for so ably helping with large events.
- The MaREI engaged research team for providing on-going support, particularly with the reflective learning and evaluation aspects.
- The Creative Ireland Programme and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications for providing ground-breaking funding and support through the Creative Climate Action Fund, which supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empower citizens to make meaningful behavioural transformations.
- The financial support from the SFI Discover Programme (received by Dingle Peninsula 2030 for 2021/22 to strengthen legacy structures and ensure continued learning and impact), which enabled capacity building and the bringing together of the people and expertise required to support and facilitate this and other projects.

This is one of a series of three learning briefs on this project:

1. *The Experience of the Participating Farmers*
2. *The Experience of the Project Team*
3. *The Creative Climate Wall*

Clare Watson (MaREI) led the reflective learning, evaluation and writing process, with crucial and valuable support and input from Catriona Fallon (GAIL), Lisa Fingleton, Deirdre de Bhailis (Dingle Hub) and all the farmers involved. Maria Power, Community Consultants, engaged by MaREI, carried out a review of the embedded evaluation processes and use of reflective learning in the project.

Photography by Manuela Dei Grandi and Dominic Walsh. Filming by Chris Garrett and Editing/Colour grading by Clint Fitzgerald.

Drawings: c. Lisa Fingleton

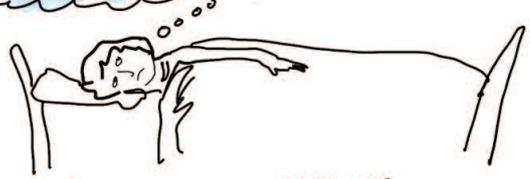
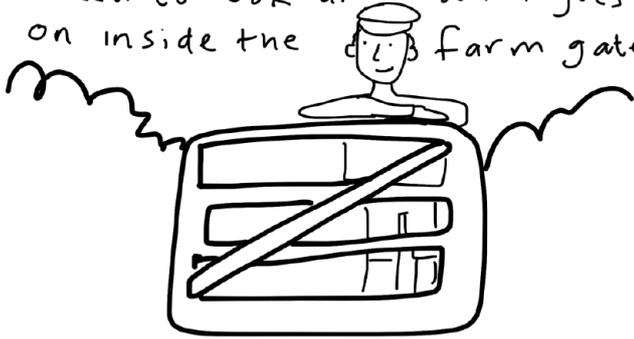
FILMS

For more please see the following videos: [*Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe: A Creative Imagining*](#) Interview with embedded artist, Lisa Fingleton at the end of the project, January 2023

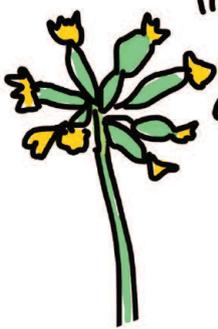
[*The Future is in the Fields*](#) at the Ploughing Championships, September 2022

[*Guthanna ón nGort: Voices from the Field*](#) Film trailer, directed by Lisa Fingleton, December 2022

"I need to look after what goes on inside the farm gate"

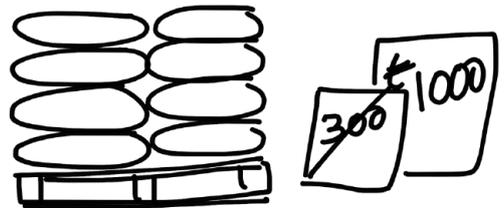


CAN'T SLEEP... WORRYING ABOUT THE RAIN



"Where are the cowslips on my farm?"

Fertiliser Frenzy



Where does the seed come from?



"They will finish off what insects are left..."

