

COMHALTAS

COTHROMAÍOCHT

RESPECT ♦ EQUALITY ♦ OPPORTUNITY



Irish Abroad Unit

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



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RESPECT | EQUALITY | OPPORTUNITY

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1. RÉAMHRÁ

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ), also known as Comhaltas, is the largest organisation involved in the preservation, development and promotion of Irish Traditional music, song and dance, and the Irish language. An intergenerational, people-orientated voluntary movement, Comhaltas is rooted in community, whether that community is located in Ireland or throughout the Irish diaspora.

From its origins in Dublin and Mullingar 1951 CCÉ has continued to grow and evolve during its 70 years in existence and now extends to 430 Branches throughout Ireland and overseas, in 18 countries on 4 continents. These Branches, together with County (Regional) Boards, Provincial Councils and the Central Executive Committee underpin Comhaltas' national and international annual programmes of cultural participative activities and events.

CCÉ has a network of 18 Cultural Centres with a variety of resources and facilities; these centres, together with the voluntary structures, provide services to 3 million people annually.

Comhaltas considers the matter of gender equity as part of its overall ethos statement, while also giving specific consideration to gender equity throughout its organisation's structures and activities within the following societal, social and legislative contexts.

Gender Equity: Societal/Social Development

There are many theories describing the development of society across the world. One of the popular theories is Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' theory where needs are categorised in a 'hierarchy' in which basic essential needs for survival are placed at the base of the pyramid and the more altruistic needs are placed at the top. Societies in different countries vary considerably in how societal norms have developed. There has been welcome change in many areas of Irish society.

Areas where significant change has been seen include the acceptance of gender balance, equal pay and equal opportunity and child protection. These changes must be welcomed.

However, the pace of change can be slow and there can be reluctance to accept the new norms of society.

Legislative basis

The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 ('the Acts') prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. They include the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. All service providers have a duty to ensure that each individual is treated with respect. It is essential to raise awareness on the foregoing among stakeholders involved in the provision of a service but also those in receipt of the service. This requires communication and education which will be modified as society develops further. Comhaltas supports the concept of equality, dignity and respect in all its activities and places strong emphasis on child and vulnerable adult safeguarding.

When dealing with minors and vulnerable adults, child protection legislation must be fully implemented. This is regulated by the Children First Act 2015 and guidance is provided in the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).



Comhaltas fully supports the principles of Children First and all Child Protection legislation. Each branch of Comhaltas has a Designated Liaison Person [DLP] for the purpose of implementing the guidelines in respect of all Branch activity involving minors and vulnerable adults. Comprehensive training is provided to DLPs.

Extension to young adults

While children and vulnerable adults enjoy the protection of the child protection legislation, young adults must not be forgotten. As Comhaltas is an organisation involved in education, it has the capacity to impart safety and equality messages to young adults. In addition to the already mentioned legislation relating to equal status and child protection, one should mention the *Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person* legislation, enforced by An Garda Síochána.

The Role of the By-stander

It is increasingly recognised that if significant changes are to take place in the mindset of society, the role of the by-stander is of importance. This too can be improved through raising awareness. Anybody who witnesses discrimination/abuse is encouraged to 'call out' such behaviour and in this way, the secrecy under which an abuser can hide, will dissipate.

Comhaltas Action

Comhaltas continually modifies its training programmes, taking current 'Best Practice' into account, to ensure that its members, and the public in general, are treated with equality, dignity and respect. Our society can be a better place when our people are fully informed and protected. Let's all strive to protect one another.

CCÉ Ethos Statement: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann's Vision, Values, Mission and Ethos are guided by many principles:

- The essence of our movement as we interpret it, is that it is all-embracing and inclusive of everyone regardless of race, religion or ability.
- The core values of our services have always been underpinned by honesty, openness, fairness, the dignity and humanity of each person, free from harassment, anti-sectarian and anti-racist.
- We believe in the intrinsic value of every person and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our movement.
- We want each individual to avail of opportunities for self-expression in the pursuit of Irish traditional music, song, dance and language.
- We promote inclusivity, equal opportunity for all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief or lack thereof, race, ethnicity or national.



2. MAR ATÁ ANOIS

Comhaltas primarily achieves its mission to preserve, develop and promote Irish traditional music, song and dance through its annual programmes of activities, the vast majority of which are participative and available/accessible to the public including:

- 1500+ weekly classes with accompanying activities, e.g. sessions, concerts etc.
- 44 Fleadhanna Ceoil throughout Ireland, Britain and North America involving over 25,000 competitors and other participants and fringe events, including Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, the largest Irish cultural festival. Each Fleadh has upwards of 180 competitions incorporating instrumental and vocal music, solos and groupings, various forms of dance (solo and teams), categorized generally into 4 age groups, Under 12, 12-15, 15-18 and over 18
- 20+ commemorative Festivals and Events, including Summer Schools
- 450 Comhaltas Seisiúin Shows in 50 venues
- Educational Programmes, TTCT, SCT, Scoil Éigse
- Performance opportunities at national and international level, National Folk Orchestra of Ireland, Concert Tours, other formal performances overseas representing Ireland, and performance groups at CCÉ's cultural centres
- Comhaltas units provide traditional entertainment for a variety of community events.

Comhaltas and the Irish Diaspora

The activities of CCÉ's structures overseas throughout the Diaspora are similar to that in Ireland at local level, with continuous interconnections between diaspora based Irish traditional musicians, at all levels of experience, and Irish cultural enthusiasts with Comhaltas in Ireland.

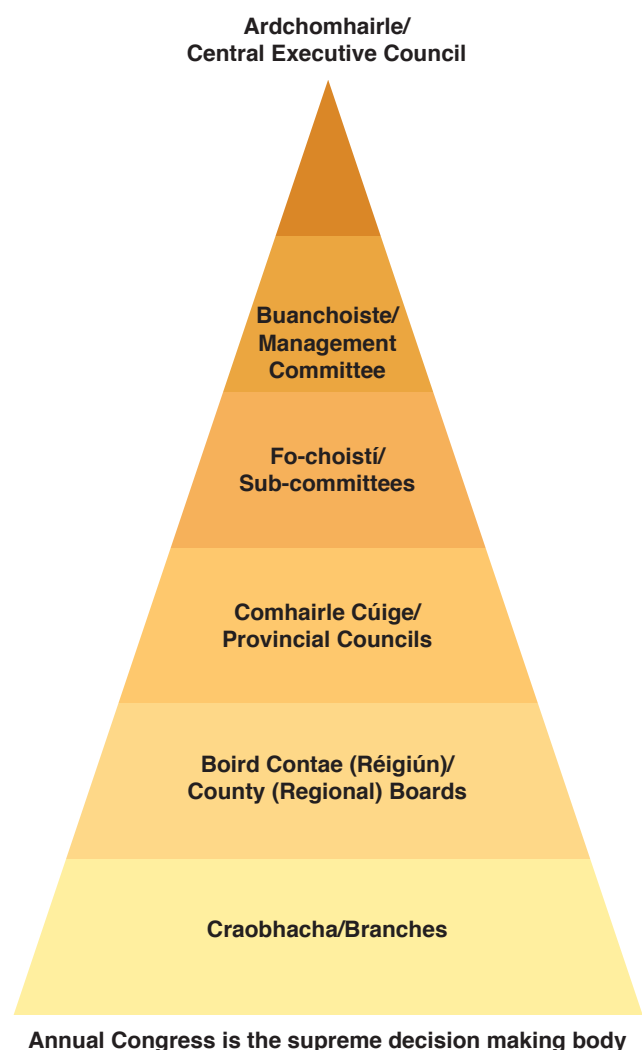
Fáilte Ireland surveys/statistics for attendances at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann are that between 22-27% of the attendance are from overseas.

CCÉ has formal structures in Britain since the 1970s and in North America since the 1980s; Britain and North America have Provincial status in CCÉ structures, with qualifying status /entry to Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann competitors.

CCÉ has a designated Diaspora and International Officer (Management staff).

CCÉ overseas Branches include; locations including; Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and various locations in Europe etc. Participation at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is open to all such overseas locations.

CCÉ's activities are organized in accordance with the organisation's governance structures.



Internal review

Most Irish traditional musicians have had an active involvement with CCÉ throughout various stages of their musical journeys, whether through its holistic educational programme or through performances and at its Fleadhanna Ceoil and other events.

As an organisation CCÉ has reviewed its internal structures and activities for the purposes of establishing a factual presentation on the current statistics re gender equity in Comhaltas.

The scope of this internal review extended to arts and culture practitioners, organizational and administrative personnel, including event organisers/producers and other relevant roles. The Irish traditional entertainment sector involves a diverse variety of personnel and roles, including the visible ‘roles’ and those that which can be equally influential, but not as visible.

The Comhaltas education programme, which has underpinned the current success and vibrancy of Irish traditional music throughout Ireland and the Diaspora is a holistic model, the various educational activities provided for young people are interconnected, thus the statistics on the various core components of this programme were reviewed.

Young people are invariably shaped by their experiences in their formative years; as the vast majority of young traditional musicians, throughout Ireland and the world over, engage with the various strands of CCÉ’s educational programme, this programme has the potential to positively influence sector and organisational change to promote the principles of respect, equality and opportunity bringing about long-term impacts on gender equity.

To this effect the percentages of females to males across all various aspects were reviewed:

- Staff: Head-Office and Regional; Management and Administrative:

	Female	Male
Head-Office	50%	50%
Regional Staff	60%	40%

- Ardchomhairle/Central Executive Committee: Key Leadership Positions, National Officers including advisory sub-committee Chairs:

Female	Male
43%	57%

- CCÉ Voluntary Structures: Based on Management Committees of Comhaltas units, which comprise 5 elected officers; Cathaoirleach, Leas-Chathaoirleach, Rúnaí, Cisteoir and Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO):

	Female	Male
	40%	60%
Or		
	60%	40%

- Comhaltas personnel involved in the delivery of cultural educational services to young people at local level throughout Éire to include Teaching and Mentoring young people, Irish traditional music (instrumental and vocal) and dancing including administration and organisational roles, from a total of 3,166 3 years 2017-2020:

Female	Male
67%	33%

- Adjudicators; Fleadhanna Ceoil (County, Provincial and All Ireland level, general review):

Female	Male
c. 50%	c. 50%

Note: Similar percentages apply to other competition personnel.



- Comhaltas TTCT – Teagasc i gCeolta Tíre – Traditional Music Teaching Course. An intensive residential course including mentored teaching practice, applicants primarily are young people but as the course requires some previous teaching experience in a supervised/mentored, capacity intake amongst 25-30 years age category is significant. Preparatory and refresher Courses are linked to the TTCT. Established 1980: To date c. 850 graduates from Ireland, Britain, North America and overseas:

Female	Male
63%	37%

- SCT – Scrúdú Ceolta Tíre Graded Examinations in Irish Traditional Music including performance; aural awareness; literacy and discussion:

	Female	Male
Examiners	55%	43%
Candidates/Students	73%	27%

Approximately 4,400 Examinations take place annually.

Note: The percentage of male to female students in both SCT and Scoil Éigse programmes has been noted by CCÉ, but appears to be in line with general trends in the 12-15 age category; the male representation tends to increase again proportionally from aged 15-16 onwards.

- Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra of Ireland; age group c. 18-35 years:

Female	Male
65%	35%

- Scoil Éigse: Annual immersive national and international Summer School in conjunction with Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann:

	Female	Male
Tutors		
2018	47%	53%
2019	52%	48%
2020	46%	54%
2021	47%	53%

	Female	Male
Students		
2018	68%	32%
2019	61%	39%
2020	63%	33%
2021	72%	28%

- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Concert Tours of Ireland, Britain and North America:

Year	Female	Male
2016	55%	45%
2017	50%	50%
2018	38%	62%
2019	56%	44%
2020	57%	43%

- Comhaltas General Membership statistics throughout Comhaltas, representing CCÉ's Provincial Structures which incorporate Leinster, Munster, Connacht, Ulster, Britain and North America:

Province	Females	Males
Leinster	59%	41%
Munster	61%	39%
Connacht	58%	42%
Ulster	57%	43%
Britain	57%	43%
North America	53%	47%



3. AN RÓD SEO ROMHAINN

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann has the structures and experience in planning, facilitating and delivering a range of training and mentoring courses at community, regional and national level:

- TTCT, Irish Traditional Music teacher training course
- SCT, practical graded exams, as part of examiner training
- Pre-TTCT Preparation Courses
- Adjudicators for county, provincial and All-Ireland Fleadhanna, as part of training seminar and continuous mentoring
- Event Organisers
- Artistes and Performances across all levels of the organisation
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Safeguarding Training
- Officer and Leadership Training
- Youth Officer Training
- Volunteer Training
- PR Seminars/Irish language related courses.

These tailored programmes are available to groups or individuals involved in the Irish traditional arts. Further development would also be made to include professional and commercial musicians/groups together with production and promotion personnel.

Education and Training for the purposes of promoting gender equity and general best practice in relation to equality and equal opportunity would extend to all units within our global organisation based on CCÉ'S structures, networks and in conjunction with CCÉ Regional Resource Centres, all of which have seminar/course facilitation resources.

Development of gender equality modules within our new educational structure will embrace learnings re 'in person' and 'online delivery'.

References and Resources to be utilised

- www.genderequality.ie
- gov.ie – Gender Equality
- EIGE – Online glossary of gender mainstreaming concepts and definitions
- Council of Europe gender equality glossary
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2021 (NSWG)
- National Women's Council of Ireland
- Bystander Intervention Programme, UCC

What is Gender Equality?

National policy for gender equality works towards women and men enjoying the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, with an aim to make sure the needs of women and men are equally valued.

What is Gender Equality Training?

Gender equality training provides participants with the relevant Knowledge, skills and values that allow them to implement 'Gender-Mainstreaming Strategy' (European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE) in their area of expertise within the Irish Traditional Arts.

Gender equality training provides:

- Knowledge Building
- Skills/tools
- Values
- Effective implementation
- Awareness
- Understanding
- Empowered learning.

In order to effectively implement gender equality at all levels of our organisation and throughout the Irish Traditional Arts community training participants gain knowledge of the following:

- Identifying inequalities and gaps in their field of activity
- Define objectives
- Take into account gender when developing activities, policy, committees, programmes
- To be aware of gender equality when implementing activities, policy, committees, programmes
- Monitor progress
- Evaluate activities and programmes from a gender perspective.



Key Areas

Three key areas are important for gender equality training to be successful are planning, implementation and evaluation. During the planning stage it is important to develop and integrate gender skills and competency within the participants field of activity, to make sure there are sufficient resources available and prepare documentation. Involved parties must also play an active role in implementing the plans developed and to evaluate and monitor said plans. To make this possible training will include:

- Theoretical knowledge
- Practical skills
- Change in attitude and behaviour
- Well-designed framework
- Good organisational management
- Competence development
- How to bring about expected results.

Training is a continuous and long-term process and developing effective training involves:

- Policy commitment
- Availability of resources
- Encouragement to attend training
- Monitor and evaluate
- Aim for high standards
- Quality assurance
- Right form of training tailored to the needs of individual or group.

The Bystander

The role of the bystander is extremely important and would also form part of our training strategy. The following would be incorporated into training:

- Dangers of behaviour
- Awareness of what is inappropriate
- Development of support systems and positive change
- Encourage positive learning environments
- That all is well informed
- Strong leadership and education.

Resources

Resources and infrastructure are imperative to develop gender equality competence. To deliver high standards, awareness and understanding the following resources will be put in place:

- Face to face training
- Courses of study
- Online modules
- Guidance materials
- Network of sharing expertise
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Mentoring
- Promotion of equal opportunities
- Staff certified in gender equality
- Continuous development of documentation
- Easy accessible website with all courses, policies, contacts, legislation and documentation
- Website and social media platforms to create awareness



4. Maoiniú na Scéime

ACKNOWLEDGING AND RESPONDING TO THE SOCIETAL CHANGES AND REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE THE SUBJECT OF THIS REPORT. IDENTIFYING THE RESOURCES REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM RESULTS.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is a national and international cultural movement which is rooted in the community and largely volunteer-driven. It has operations in every county in Ireland and 18 countries worldwide. It provides services to 3m people.

Comhaltas in Ireland embraces villages, towns, cities, and the rural community. It is served by 7 Regional Resource Centres and 11 Outreach Cultural Centres.

It has a clearly defined structure which has evolved and been enhanced through its democratic structures – member, branch, county board, Provincial Council, Ardchomhairle and Annual Congress – over the last 70 years. It is governed by a Bunreacht (Constitution) which is decided by the membership at Annual Congress.

Given the obvious positive potential and outcomes of such an expansive, multifaceted and far-reaching cultural movement, Comhaltas is well positioned to play an expanded pivotal role in responding to the needs, potential for change, the creation of awareness, education and training related to the subject of this Report.

To do so comprehensively and professionally the following RESOURCES are required:

	€
2 Facilitators (salaries and expenses) (Communications, Training, Vetting, Administration)	115,000
Upgrade and reconfigure national website and IT	50,000
Upgrade and reconfigure the seven regional websites attached to the Regional Resource Centres	105,000
Training for members and others	35,000
TOTAL	€305,000



IONAID RÉIGIÚNACHA AN CHOMHALTAIS

CCÉ Regional and Outreach Centres across Ireland are there to represent and support Comhaltas in your region



(Donegal, Tyrone, Derry, Antrim and Down)

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CEOLÁRAS COLEMAN
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info@ceolarascoleman.ie
www.ceolarascoleman.ie

OUTREACH CENTRES:

▶ Morrison Teach Ceoil
Riverstown, Co. Sligo



(Galway, Clare, Limerick and Kerry)

COIS NA hABHNA
Galway Road,
Ennis, Co. Clare
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eolas@coisnhabhna.ie
www.coisnhabhna.ie

OUTREACH CENTRES:

- ▶ Cnoc na Gaoithe
Tulla, Co. Clare
- ▶ Teach Ceoil
Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- ▶ Teach Ceoil
Kilrush, Co. Clare
- ▶ Ceolann
Lixnaw, Co. Kerry
- ▶ Comhaltas Chiarraí
Kerry Sports Academy
Institute of Technology
Tralee, Co. Kerry



(Tipperary, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford and Cork)

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OUTREACH CENTRES:

- ▶ Brú na Sí
Youghal, Co. Cork
- ▶ Bruach na Carraige
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(Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan, Louth and Meath)

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- ▶ Dún na Sí
Moate, Co. Westmeath
- ▶ Teach Ceoil CCÉ
Ballynacargy, Co. Westmeath
- ▶ Teach Ceoil CCÉ Cill Aichidhe
Tullamore, Co. Offaly