



**Helium Arts 'Journeys'**  
**Creative Youth Nurture Fund - Final Report July 2025**

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## Executive Summary

### **About the Helium Arts Project in the Lynn clinic**

'Journeys' is a two-year Creative Ireland funded collaborative project led by Helium Arts in partnership with the Lynn Clinic, Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Temple Street, Ireland's first dedicated Paediatric Inclusion Health (PIH) service, and the HSE Refugee Health Clinic at the National Reception Centre in Baleskin, Co. Dublin, supported by CHI Arts in Health Programme.

The project's aim is to support the wellbeing and happiness of children aged 8-12 years who live with lifelong health conditions, particularly from refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant, and other marginalised backgrounds. It uses creative engagement as a means for children to express their experiences and ideas, nurturing their creative passions while supporting integration and reducing social isolation.

### **Delivery & Impact**

The Paediatric Inclusion Health model provides a powerful model of possibility for creative engagement for children, young people and families who are experiencing high levels of social exclusion, trauma and disadvantage.

Children and families attending the Lynn Clinic, PIH, often experience themes of transience, many children face homelessness, others are members of marginalised communities, like Irish Travellers and Roma. Others are asylum seekers and refugees constantly reassigned to new accommodation. Many families distrust institutions and attendance and retention to hospital appointments can be a real struggle. There can be huge obstacles to engaging including language barriers, with the majority of clinics requiring an interpreter to be in attendance, and other realities including parental addiction, chaotic lifestyles and a history of violence and abuse experienced by some children, including sexual abuse.

Helium Arts delivery of creative engagements in the Lynn Clinic appointments had a significant impact for children. This type of engagement is significantly different to Helium Arts' typical Outpatient Department (OPD) engagements with the general population. With lower numbers of children scheduled to attend PIH clinics to account for use of interpreters and longer clinic appointments due to the nature of the complexities experienced by this cohort, it gave us an opportunity to work with more children on a 1-1 basis, an opportunity that the children may not usually encounter. 1-1 creative engagements with a professional Helium Artist gave children a unique opportunity to exercise their agency, choice, explore their creativity and take up a space to be themselves.

*“Thank you for asking about my day”*

*- 16 year old Palestinian unaccompanied minor at the Lynn Clinic*

*“These are kids who have very little – they’re living in hotels, some don’t have toys, their childhood is on pause. But with the art, they’re just kids again, even for a little while.”*

*- Lynn Clinic Staff*

## **Participants & Reach**

The project reached the following over the two year period:

- o 162 children and young people through the PIH clinics
- o 45 days in which there were in person community workshops
- o 137 children and young people reached through the in person community workshops

## **Wraparound Supports**

The project saw the development of various wraparound supports to increase participation from marginalised groups, refugee, asylum - seeking and minority communities.

- Translated Marketing and Communications material (posters, flyers, evaluation tools) into 11 different languages and received the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) Plain English Mark
- Provision of Transportation and relevant policy updates.
- Use of Accessible community venues
- Helium Arts appointed a Communications and Outreach Coordinator, who built on learning and connections made in the project

## **Training and Support**

Significant investment was made as part of the project into increased training for the wider Helium Artist Team around Trauma Informed Practice and Care and Artist wellbeing. This builds on Helium Arts strong track record investing in Artist training programmes, particularly in the areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), related to our DEI policy and strategy.

The supervision, mentorship and training provided to Artists as part of this specialised area was essential in ensuring the project's success.

## **Showcase Exhibition**

***JOURNEYS – For a Better Tomorrow - An Art Exhibition by Young Creators, Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) 5 - 7 July 2025***

Inspired by and featuring artworks by young people with lifelong physical health conditions, created with Helium Arts at the Paediatric Inclusion Health Clinic, Children’s Health Ireland (CHI) at Temple Street, a community service for children at risk of social exclusion in Dublin’s north inner city. Children and Young People’s voices were incorporated through the development of the work at all stages through a range of evaluation tools and consultation.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation tools and methodologies were reviewed and developed to become more inclusive. Child and parent evaluation tools were tested in the clinic and an external Evaluation Report on the project was commissioned and delivered which can be read in the full report.

## **Legacy & Lasting Relationships**

The outputs and outcomes of this project have had an organisational wide impact on Helium Arts with learnings and resources developed and disseminated across our programmes nationally, leading to positive organisational change. This means we can reach more children who are at higher risk of social exclusion, living with lifelong physical health conditions in more accessible and inclusive ways.

The relationships built with the Lynn Clinic Teams and CHI Arts in Health have been significant highlights of the project, increasing awareness and creating strong foundations for referral of children to Helium Arts programmes.

## Background

### **About Helium Arts**

Helium Arts is a national arts and health organisation in Ireland, dedicated to improving the wellbeing of children and young people living with lifelong physical health conditions. Their work focuses on creating opportunities for children to explore their creativity, build confidence, reduce isolation, and enhance their quality of life through participatory arts. By bringing professional artists into healthcare and community settings, Helium Arts bridges the gap between medical care and emotional wellbeing, offering children positive, creative experiences during challenging times.

### **About the Lynn Clinic**

The Lynn Clinic, Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Temple Street, is Ireland's first dedicated Paediatric Inclusion Health (PIH) service. Based in Dublin 1, it provides medical care to children at risk of social exclusion, including those experiencing homelessness, poverty, forced migration, and other forms of disadvantage. The clinic aims to overcome barriers to healthcare by integrating social prescribing, cultural competency, and trauma-informed approaches, while also shaping national policies on inclusion health for children.

### **About the Helium Arts Project in the Lynn Clinic**

'Journeys' is a two-year Creative Ireland funded collaborative project led by Helium Arts in partnership with the Lynn Clinic, and the HSE Refugee Health Clinic at the National Reception Centre in Baleskin, Co. Dublin, supported by CHI Arts in Health Programme.

The project's aim is to support the wellbeing and happiness of children aged 8-12 years who live with lifelong health conditions, particularly from refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant, and other marginalised backgrounds. It uses creative engagement as a means for children to express their experiences and ideas, nurturing their creative passions while supporting integration and reducing social isolation.

## Outline of Team and Key Participants

### Project Partners

- Dr Aoibhinn Walsh, Consultant Paediatrician in Inclusion Health, and the clinical staff teams at The Lynn Clinic, Dublin 1.
- Fiona Smith, Programme Curator CHI Arts in Health Programme, Children Health Ireland.
- HSE Refugee Health Clinic at the National Reception Centre in Baleskin, Co. Dublin.

### Project Team

- Helene Hugel, CEO, Helium Arts.
- Róisín McGannon, Community & Hospital Programme Manager, Helium Arts.
- Karen Leckie, Paediatric Inclusion Health, Project Manager, The Lynn Clinic.
- Mitzi D'Alton, Programme & Operations Manager, Helium Arts.
- Emma McKinley, Development Manager, Helium Arts.
- Cathy McGann, Marketing & Communications Executive, Helium Arts.

### Helium Artist Team

- Laura Cruz de Toledo.
- Jinny Ly.
- Camille Peat.
- Paola Invernizzi.
- Peggie McKeon.

### Mentorship / Supervision Team

- Aoife Bairead, Minds in Mind.
- Lucy Hyland, Creative Wellbeing Facilitator.
- Sinéad Roe, Trauma Informed Practice Ireland.

### External Evaluator

- Dr Helga Sneddon, Outcome Imps Ltd.

## Outputs

### Output 1

**Project will be delivered through creative engagement in the waiting area of the Lynn Clinic in Dublin 1 (outreach clinic for children at risk of social exclusion) who will encourage referrals through its clinics, while also delivering arts workshops within communities in partnership with the HSE Refugee Health Clinic at the National Reception Centre, Baleskin, Co Dublin.**

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The Paediatric Inclusion Health model provides a powerful model of possibility for creative engagement for children, young people and families who are experiencing high levels of social exclusion, trauma and disadvantage.

Children and families attending the Lynn Clinic, PIH, often experience themes of transience, many children face homelessness, others are members of marginalised communities, like Irish Travellers and Roma. Others are asylum seekers and refugees constantly reassigned to new accommodation. Many families distrust institutions and attendance and retention to hospital appointments can be a real struggle. There can be huge obstacles to engaging including language barriers, with the majority of clinics requiring an interpreter to be in attendance, and other realities including parental addiction, chaotic lifestyles and a history of violence and abuse experienced by some children, including sexual abuse.

In January 2024, a partnership agreement between Children’s Health Ireland, CHI Arts in Health Programme, and Helium Arts was signed. As part of Children’s Health Ireland’s commitment to place arts, creativity and imagination at the heart of the child’s and young person’s experience, the CHI Arts in Health Programme focuses on developing an Arts Programme for the National Children’s Hospital Ireland and paediatric outpatient and urgent care centres.

Following an extensive recruitment process, Brazilian artist Laura Cruz de Toledo—based in Ireland and from a migrant background—was appointed and began weekly visits to the Lynn Clinic at the end of January. Working closely with Dr. Aoibhinn Walsh, Consultant Paediatrician with s.i. in Inclusion Health, the Clinical Nurse Team, interpreters, social workers, and admin staff, Laura adopted a considered approach, sensitive to the community’s needs, especially families’ wariness of new people and institutions. An initial observation phase with gentle, creative activities such as free drawing and play helped Laura become a trusted presence in the clinic.

Having Helium Arts as a constant feature of PIH clinical appointments has had a significant impact for children. While the Doctor speaks to parents, many with the use of an interpreter, conversations often including disclosures of trauma and abuse, children can stay working with the Artist in the waiting room, avoiding being re-traumatised by hearing the details of these distressing disclosures. This is monumental for these children who are often stuck in cycles of trauma, stress and violence. Another positive benefit of Helium Arts presence, siblings can remain in the waiting room while the child attending clinic is seen, again allowing for privacy for the child and a huge benefit to the sibling, addressing themes like ‘glass child syndrome’, siblings of children with lifelong health conditions and disabilities are often unable to be a priority over their siblings.

*“Thank you for asking about my day”*

**- 16 year old Palestinian unaccompanied minor at the Lynn Clinic**

*“This room is so fun ‘cause you can do lots of things and I don’t get angry”*

**- 7 year old at the Lynn Clinic**

We worked with the HSE Refugee Health Clinic based in Baleskin National Reception Centre in Finglas in late 2024. The Artist worked in the waiting room of the shared adult and child clinic space on site, through observation and experimentation, we decided together that the community programme work was the best fit for this partnership. Through more testing, we delivered a three day Autumn Camp on site at the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) Centre in Baleskin, in late 2024. With reflection and learning, and considering the small percentage of children that live with lifelong physical health conditions on site, led to the partners deciding together that a referral partnership to our community programme work was the best fit for this partnership. Staff will refer children who come through IPAS Centre, who live with lifelong physical health conditions, to our community and online programmes, linking them in with Helium Arts Family Liaison from the outset to support them.

In April 2025, artist Jinny Ly was appointed lead artist due to staff changes. A Chinese-Vietnamese-American visual artist based in Dublin, Jinny was raised in Oakland Chinatown, California, USA, a child of Vietnamese Boat refugees. Her socially-engaged practice explores refugee narratives through objects, installation, and applied materials.

Helium Artists share that they can see how beneficial a creative offering is at these clinics. This type of engagement is significantly different to our typical OPD engagements with the general population. With lower numbers of children scheduled to attend PIH clinics to account for use of interpreters and longer clinic appointments due to the nature of the complexities experienced by this cohort, it gives us an opportunity to work with more children on a 1-1 basis, an opportunity that the children may not usually encounter. 1-1

creative engagements with a professional Helium Artist gives children a unique opportunity to exercise their agency, choice, explore their creativity and take up a space to be themselves.



Kilnarnagh FRC Summer Camp 2024, led by Artist Laura Cruz de Toledo, Photo: Credit Laura Griffen Photography

## Output 2

The project will reach the following over the two year period:

- o 144 children through the clinics\*
- o 22 days in which there are community workshops
- o 120 children reached through the community workshops

**\*Revised total figure submitted in January 2025 updated from 500 children through the clinics, more detail below**

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Overview - detail of activity outlined below.

The project reached the following over the two year period:

- o 162 children and young people through the PIH clinics
- o 45 days in which there were in person community workshops
- o 137 children and young people reached through the in person community workshops

### **Lynn Clinic Activity Overview**

500 was the original figure of estimated children reached through the Lynn Clinic. This was amended to 144 children in January 2025. As outlined in Outcome 1 This type of engagement is significantly different to our typical OPD engagements with the general population, which became clear through the development phase of the project. With lower numbers of children scheduled to attend PIH clinics to account for use of interpreters and longer clinic appointments due to the nature of the complexities experienced by this cohort, it gives us an opportunity to work with more children on a 1-1 basis, an opportunity that the children may not usually encounter. The Artist attended clinics scheduled between 1-2 times a week throughout the year where possible, the Lynn clinic did experience clinic cancellations throughout delivery, due to other scheduling commitments.

### **2024 Community Workshop Activity Overview**

In 2024, we launched our first 5 week Saturday Programme 13 April to 11 May, led by Artist Laura Cruz de Toledo held in Kilnamanagh Family Recreation Centre (FRC), in Tallaght. These programmes were open to all children with lifelong health conditions, to support integration - with 60% of places reserved for underrepresented youth, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds with lifelong health conditions.

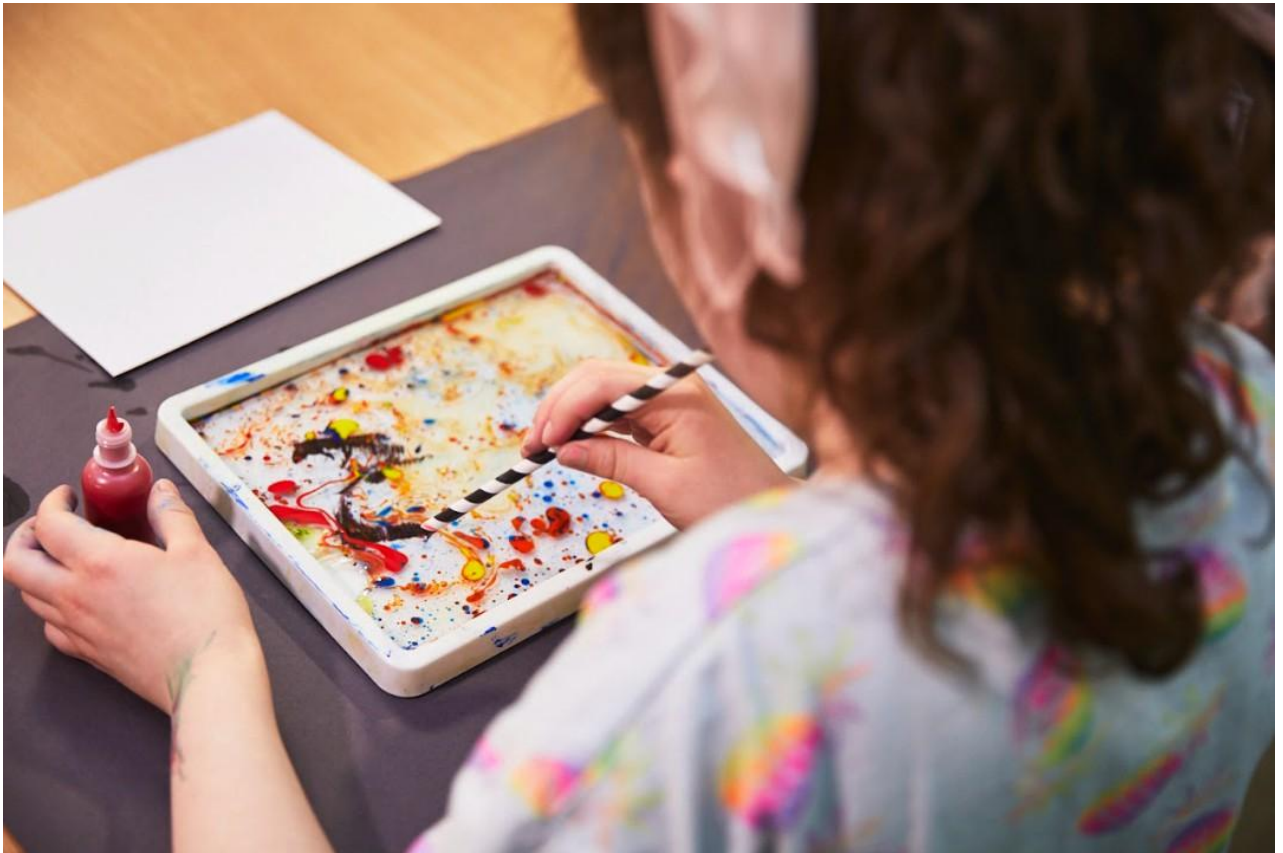
In 2024, we held our Dublin Launch Exhibition “Creativitude” held in Science Gallery Dublin on 15 June to 19 June. We also held an “Open Studio” drop in event all day, with creative activities facilitated by Helium Artists, in the exhibition space as part of Cruinniu na nÓg.

We held our 3 day Summer Camps from 16-18 July in Kilnamanagh FRC in Tallaght, led by Dublin Artist, Peggie McKeon.

For the Autumn Winter Programme, we held a 3 day Autumn camp in Kilnamanagh FRC in Tallaght, also led by Artist Peggie McKeon.

We also launched our first ever 10 week Winter Programme in a new location in Ballybrack Community Centre in Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown (DLR) led by Associate Artist Jinny Ly. An increased offering of a 10 week programme was introduced as recommended by Tusla Alignment Report by Helium Arts. Helium Arts commissioned this report to better understand the barriers to access for children linked in with Tusla services. Longer programme offerings allows for a ‘drop in and out’ approach for children, with activity planning responsive to mitigating the feeling of ‘falling behind’, ultimately increasing access and inclusion. We also held a 3 day Autumn camp in Monkstown, DLR also led by Jinny Ly.

Finally - Artist Laura Cruz de Toledo ran a 3 day Autumn Camp held with project partners in Baleskin National Reception Centre (NRC) for children living in the IPAS Centre located in Fingal.



Kilnamanagh FRC workshops Spring 2025

### **2025 Community Workshop Activity Overview**

In 2025, we held our 6 Spring Saturdays workshop series in Ballybrack Community Centre, DLR, from 8 March - 12 April, led by Artist Jinny Ly.

In March, we launched our Dublin Youth Programme offering with 9 monthly Saturday Workshops throughout the year, held in Dublin 8 in Fatima Resource Centre and a 3 day Summer Camp from 10 - 12 June in Flux Studios in Dublin 8 led by Artist Peggie McKeon.

In June, we held our 'Journeys' Showcase Exhibition held in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in partnership with the Research and Learning Team in Dublin 8, to celebrate the project from the 5 - 7 June, culminating in a drop in workshop on the 7 June, in the exhibition space, on Cruinniu na nÓg.

Our Summer Programme offered 3 day workshops in Mountown Community Centre in DLR from 15 - 17 July led by Artist Jinny Ly. We also held another 3 day Summer Camp in Blanchardstown Library in Fingal from 22 - 24 July led by Artist Peggie McKeon.

### Online Community Programme 2024 & 2025

Throughout 2024 and 2025 we also delivered our Online Programmes for children all across Ireland for 6-8, 9-12 and 13 - 16 year olds. This strand of our programme proved a valuable offering for members of marginalised groups, from refugee, asylum seeking backgrounds who are moving from place to place. See Output 4 for stats.

*“Without a doubt 100 trillion million percent I love it so much it’s the best workshop ever”*

*- Participant Quote - DLR Workshops 2024*

### Output 3

The project will incorporate research and development with children so they can inform the methods and processes used in the project design and development.

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(L-R) David Osaseyi, project participant, Jinny Ly, Helium Artist, Photo Credit: Marc O’ Sullivan

Throughout the Journeys project, youth voice was centred from the beginning, responsive to the needs and wants of children and young people attending the Lynn Clinic. We invested in a period of research, development, and observations in the clinic, which led to successful relationship building and a sense of trust between the artist, and young people. This foundation allowed us to tap into the creativity of the young people attending the clinic.

As children, young people and the families attending the clinic are living and enduring extremely challenging circumstances. Frequently there is hesitancy to engage, if not from children, from their parents, which impacts the children's engagement. Families are simply focusing on attending appointments while stepping into a creative space simply is not possible for many. Childhood trauma due to war, neglect and other adverse factors can impact development and many children at the Lynn Clinic present with malnutrition, developmental delays (physical, emotional, cognitive) and trauma.

The Artist's observation and research indicated a need for adapting our 'typical' activities that we would use in other hospital Outpatients settings. There was less of a focus on structured activities, the focus became being with sensory - rich materials and, engaging with artistic tools that perhaps, children had not had much access to before, in the context of their transient living spaces and difficult circumstances. Children directed Artists on what materials they wanted to experiment and play with through conversation and evaluation tools (Outcome 8).

*“ There was no pressure, no constraints and children were encouraged to take what they make home and to make as much or as little as they wanted. These materials were portable and were easy to take into the clinic appointment with the use of little takeaway boxes. As a result, many children who created something during their time at the clinic were beaming with pride when they showed their family what they made. Clinic staff mirrored the same pride as the families.”*

- Lynn Clinic Helium Artist

Tactile materials like paint, clay, textiles and free drawing on large canvas along with movement and play became prominent features of the Lynn Clinic engagements. This learning along with our work in PIH clinics in the Midwest (Outcome 9) has led Helium Artists to begin expanding their approach, activities and adaptable toolkits to be more responsive to those experiencing trauma. Through beginning to develop more sensory based activities and tools in Hospital settings, ensuring Health and Safety guidelines are met, has increased access to all children.

In June 2025, in collaboration with Helium Arts' Youth Participation & Engagement Coordinator and Helium Arts' Youth Advisory Group, we launched our Youth Participation Framework. At Helium Arts, we believe that young people are experts in their own lives — and their voices matter. Too often, youth are left out of decision-making simply because of their age or identity. Our Youth Participation Framework is our commitment to changing that.

This practical “how-to” guide outlines how we include young people in shaping our work, amplify their voices, and break down barriers to participation — especially for those living with lifelong physical health conditions. The framework sets out our inclusive vision for the next three years. The Helium Arts Youth Participation Framework has been co-produced with Helium Arts' young people and is supported by the Arts Council of Ireland.

Read the framework here; <https://helium.ie/about/youth-participation-framework/>

The framework incorporates the Lundy Model of child participation. All Helium Artists and Staff will receive training in Youth Participation in 2025 and 2026, demonstrating Helium Arts commitment to youth voice and youth participation.

## Output 4

**Workshops will reserve a minimum of 60% of places for children from underrepresented youth, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds with lifelong health conditions while the remaining places will be inclusive of all children with lifelong physical health conditions. The goal of the workshops will be to support integration.**

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From January 2024 - June 2025 , all community workshops that took place reserved a minimum of 60% of places for children from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds with lifelong health conditions while the remaining places will be inclusive of all children with lifelong physical health conditions.

Across all of our Hubs, Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway, and all of our programmes from Spring, Summer Autumn and Winter Programmes 2024 & 2025;

- In **2024** 13.4% and in **2025** 7.9% of our workshop attendees identified as Non - White Irish, including Black, or Black Irish, Asian or Asian Irish, Mixed Ethnicity or any other White background.
- In **2024** 10.2% and in **2025** 7.6% of our workshop attendees shared they were a non Irish EU citizen, a citizen of a non - EU country, or an asylum seeker or refugee.

The below is an excerpt from Lynn Clinic Project Evaluation Report by Helium Arts nominated external evaluator Dr. Helga Sneddon from Outcome Imps Ltd. **See Evaluation Summary** section below for a more indepth report.

*It is clear from the stakeholder feedback that the Helium Arts contribution is highly valued by clinic staff. It results in positive outcomes for young people in terms of providing engagement with creative activities, reducing stress and anxiety, and facilitating both their and their families' engagement in the clinic. Nevertheless, there is some tension between Helium Arts' mission focus (children with lifelong health conditions) and the inclusion health cohort (primarily socially excluded children without lifelong physical health conditions). No data is available as to exactly how many of the young people participating in the clinic have lifelong physical health conditions, but anecdotal feedback is that they may be a small proportion of the overall total... There may be a need to consider alternative delivery models if current resource intensity reaches limited numbers of Helium's core target group. For example, Helium Arts could be positioned as a referral partner rather than direct delivery in clinics where cohorts fall outside organisational remit. (See Evaluation Summary)*

The identified strength of the partnership with the Lynn Clinic Team, is to build on the strong partnership to increase referrals of eligible children to Helium Arts in person and online community programmes across the country. To support this process, in 2025 we developed a new simple, short staff referral form for our hospital partners and staff to make this referral process easier across our Hub locations. This advancement is supported by the development and implementation of our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System, implemented in 2025.

<https://helium.ie/make-a-referral/>

In March 2025 we appointed a Community Outreach & Communications Officer to specifically focus on building relationships and referrals to communities from underrepresented groups. This new role will create greater capacity for us to make meaningful connections to community leaders, building trusted long-term relationships with members of the community from refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant, and other marginalised backgrounds. This will also allow us to embed recommendations from working with these communities to further support integration and access, building on the *wraparound supports* that were achieved in the Nurture project such as marketing and communications, travel and accessible venues in locations that ensure accessibility from Inclusion health clinics and IPAS centres.

## Output 5

The participants will decide the creative means of the final creative work.

### JOURNEYS – For a Better Tomorrow

#### An Art Exhibition by Young Creators

Inspired by and featuring artworks by young people with lifelong physical health conditions, created with Helium Arts at the Paediatric Inclusion Health Clinic, Children’s Health Ireland (CHI) at Temple Street, a community service for children at risk of social exclusion in Dublin’s north inner city.

**Dates:** 5–7 June 2025

**Opening Times:** 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM

**Venue:** IMMA Studios/Stables, D08 FW31

Image: *Cake 1, 2, 3* by, a 9 year old visually impaired attendee of the Lynn Clinic, living in emergency accommodation. Photo Credit: Jinny Ly



As C.S. Lewis once said, “With the possible exception of the equator, everything begins somewhere.” For children attending the Lynn Clinic, Paediatric Inclusion Health Clinic at CHI at Temple Street, whose works are featured here, that “somewhere” may look different—but it’s no less powerful. Each creation acts as a personal beginning towards a brighter future, challenging expectations while creating works of art. With every stroke of a marker a world starts to appear whilst colours act as a foundation for emotion and self expression. These artworks welcome us to witness the journeys of these young artists as they create their own paths in life – reminding us that a journey isn’t only about where it leads, but also about the stories it tells along the way.

- *Journeys* Exhibition Description

The Journeys Showcase Exhibition was an opportunity to celebrate the creativity of the children, young people and families of the Lynn Clinic. A blend of collaborative, individual and anonymous works.

Ahead of this exhibition there were many questions to answer around the ethics, feasibility and plausibility of showcasing work from young people attending the Lynn clinic. Jinny Ly, the Artist, Curator and Creative Producer considered and explored these ideas when consulting the children and families and in the curation of the final exhibition. These crucial questions are considered below in the Artist, Curator and Creative Producer Jinny Ly's, Artist Methodology and Process Overview.

### **Artist Methodology and Process Behind the Curation and Production of the Helium Arts Dublin Showcase, Journeys: For a Better Tomorrow**

“[W]atching the destruction of what had been a permanent structure, like a home, or having to abandon ones’ home under forced circumstances, appears to result in the perceived collapse of everything secure and strong, particularly in children, who lose the hope for a future”.<sup>1</sup> What children from war-torn countries have seen, we can’t help them un-see. But what we can do is reignite that spark of hope through building trusting relationships through art.

When I was given the opportunity to step into the Lynn Clinic as an associate artist for Helium Arts, there was a vast, invisible, yet delicate obstacle in terms of exhibiting work created by the young people attending the clinic. How do I showcase the artwork of children from marginalised communities without exploiting their creativity or desire to create? How do I ask for consent for displaying works created by children whose family doesn’t speak English? And most importantly, how can I develop trust between Helium and families at the Lynn Clinic?

Amongst the many questions presented, this was a situation where a life of lived experiences as a child of Vietnamese Boat refugees and learned compassion of having lived and worked with marginalised groups, combined with my arts practice, could benefit a larger community. The methodologies which I employ in my visual arts practice, which I’ve carried into my curatorial practice, include a multi-layered approach to visual storytelling through the archival and documentation process, applied materials and process-informed artwork.

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<sup>1</sup> Daya Somasundaram, Collective Trauma, *Migration and Mental Health*, ed. Dinesh Bhugra & Susham Gupta. Cambridge University Press, 2011. P.153

Sensory-rich activities included working with air dry clay and playing with beads. On occasion, the two were combined for some chaotic fun. The switch to colourful clay and beads enticed shy and nervous children. The confident and curious ones would approach me as ready participants. There was no pressure, no constraints, and children were encouraged to take what they make home and to make as much or as little as they want. These materials were portable and were easy to take into the doctors office with the use of little takeaway boxes. As a result, many children who created something during their time at the clinic were beaming with pride when they showed their family what they made. Clinic staff mirrored the same pride as the families.

The approach to curating work started with the prioritisation of respect for the families at the clinic and awareness of sensitive information and realities of acquiring consent from potentially fragile situations with underlying language and cultural differences. The enlisted approach to curating work came from an archiving methodology which I use in my own projects. By documenting bits and pieces of left behind art work from each session, be it a crumpled glob of clay or half-made bracelet, I built up an archive of artefacts from the Lynn Clinic. These objects documented that child's grasp at that specific moment of time – a moment where a child who experienced some form of adversity or trauma was allowed to be a child. Personal information and stories, shared with me by families, were also not documented in the exhibition, with the exception of age and first name. Four children and their families expressed (a particular) interest in the arts, to which they were the ones I approached with the opportunity of showcasing their child's work at IMMA studios.

There are different methods of curating and exhibiting artwork which forego exhibition labeling often seen at institutions such as the Irish Museum of Modern Art or Tate London. The white label is meant to provide information and context for its viewers, the intention of leaving out this exhibition label was done to respect the privacy of these young creators. For the four young artists who actively participated, I listed their name and age in the exhibition document.

- Artist, Curator, Creative Producer - Jinny Ly

As part of the Showcase Exhibition from 5-7 June, the Artist, Jinny Ly was present throughout the exhibition run, to verbally describe and explain to all visitors the context of the work. At the launch event on the 5th of July, Jinny gave an informative presentation to those in attendance that contextualised the artwork to attendees. Upon receiving positive feedback on this element of the exhibition, Helium Arts are considering programming an Artist Walkthrough into all showcase events going forward. With the addition of an Artist

Video containing the same, so visitors can access this important context setting in future showcases.

As part of the showcase exhibition, Jinny created an 'Artist Response' to her work in the Lynn Clinic titled *'The Future is Bright'* see images on next page of this work. The Artist response reflected the transient nature of the clinic, it includes bracelets and beads, created and left behind by attendees of the clinic. These 'artefacts' were woven into rope, a common material used in the Artist's own artistic practice. These rope and bead structures demonstrate the relationship between the Artist and the children attending the Lynn Clinic. Colourful Rope that saturates in colour as it flows down, reflecting the deepening nature of the relationship and engagements with children throughout the project. The beads, although left behind, no less significant, a memory of a child taking a moment to take up creative space and just be a child. The structure, installed in a large gallery space, is interactive for the viewer, visitors could engage with the structure, walking through tugging on rope feeling the textures and motion of the work, again indicative of the playful, sensory rich nature of the Lynn Clinic engagements. The title of the work reflects conversations between the Artist and the families, reflecting the stories shared with her, each creating a moment of hope for the future *'The Future is Bright'*.

The considered curation, coupled with the Artist's response, and blend of collaborative, individual and anonymous works culminated in a rich celebration - focusing on the magic of creativity, rather than the primary focus being the adversity the families experience. A focus on play, youth voice and moments of hope for the future.

Helium Arts will work with the Lynn Clinic to display some of the works in a temporary display in the Lynn Clinic, bringing the magic of creativity to the spaces and places where they began, reclaiming the space and making it their own.

As detailed in Output 6, our approach to development and curation with vulnerable families highlighted a need for increased training for staff and artists on working with vulnerable groups, trauma informed practice and ethical ways of working, striking the right balances considering all factors at play. See Output 6 for more details.



Journeys: For a Better Tomorrow, IMMA Studios, 'The Future is Bright' Artist Response to the Lynn Clinic by Jinny Ly, Photo Credit: Jinny Ly



Journeys: For a Better Tomorrow, IMMA Studios, Photo Credit: Jinny Ly

## Output 6

**The Trauma Informed Therapeutic Social Worker will provide mentorship and supervision in relation to trauma based care once a month, 12 times a year to the Artist.**

From January 2024 - February 2025, Trauma informed social worker [Aoife Bairéad](#) from [Minds in Mind](#), hosted monthly in person meetings with the lead Artist. These in person supervision meetings were vital to the project's success. They provided a safe, supportive environment for the Artist to access trauma informed approaches to the engagements, how best to engage appropriately with the specific cohort of children and young people, but also to best manage the Artists wellbeing, boundaries, and role in the space.

Aoife Bairéad is a qualified social worker who specialises in attachment and trauma informed work with children and families. Her post graduate training includes specialised attachment assessments such as the Infant Care Index, the Adult Attachment Interview and the School Age Assessment and is qualifying to become a CARE-Index trainer. Aoife is also trained in therapeutic approaches including Theraplay, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy

and Mentalisation Based Treatment. Aoife has been working with children, young people and their families for seventeen years and has worked in Ireland, the US and Vietnam. Aoife professional supervision and mentoring to professionals including teachers, social workers, youth and community workers and social care workers who are working with those who have experienced adversity and trauma.

In March 2025, there were staff changes, and a new lead Artist began leading the engagements in the Lynn Clinic with support from Helium Arts Associate Artists. Helium recognised the need to expand our offering of Trauma Informed Practice and care to our wider Artist Team.

Helium Arts engaged [Lucy Hyland](#), Creative Wellbeing Facilitator to lead small group sessions, and as needed, 1-1 sessions monthly for the Artists working in the Paediatric Inclusion Health Clinics. Lucy Hyland's work is dedicated to fostering creativity and well-being within arts and health organisations, creative and wellness sectors. The aim of these *Practice & Presence* sessions was to provide the Artists with much needed reflection time away from their everyday practice, assisting Artists to develop their work within an Arts and Health context, with the context of the inclusion health clinics specifically in mind. These 1.5 hour online sessions provided Artists with an opportunity to engage with creativity as part of their professional development, to develop their capacity for awareness and presence and to find a space to connect with peers for mutual benefit and support. The sessions were a space to elevate creative reflective time as an invaluable aspect of the Artists practice, allowing you to continue to engage in a sustainable method of working through the challenges and magic within Arts and Health.

Helium Arts continues to invest in training our Staff and Artist Teams to gain the tools, skills, confidence and care to continue to deliver the highest standard of creative engagement to marginalised children who are experiencing extreme disadvantage. In 2025 we are hosting an in person training day for all Artists and for all staff in Trauma informed Care led by [Sinéad Roe, from Trauma Informed Ireland](#). This training has a specific focus on medical related trauma, informed by feedback from our Youth Advisory Group to ensure our training is responsive to the needs of the children and young people we meet. This is followed by further online group sessions to continue the learning and reflection and apply practical examples to digest in a supported setting.

In 2025, the Artist Team attended an in person training session led by Mamobo Ogoro and Anastassiia Zubareva from [GORM](#), on Intercultural Competency. Ensuring our teams adopt an anti-racist, anti-oppression approach to their engagements, and are equipped with the skills to engage with children, young people and families across different cultures. Our Staff team will also receive this training in late 2025.

The Journeys project highlighted the importance of continuing to invest time and resources into maintaining training and continuous learning in areas Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in particular, the area of Trauma informed practice and care. We learnt the importance of looking through the lens of Trauma informed practice through all aspects of our work with families, all the way from planning and development, showcasing events, marketing and communications to Artists and facilitators engagements on the ground. Asking ourselves along the way, as professionals supporting survivors of Trauma, what do we need to know about trauma, and how does that knowledge impact our practice / the way we do our work?

This builds on Helium Arts existing work in Diversity Equity and Inclusion Training. In 2023 we held an extensive Inclusion Training Programme for Helium Artists and Staff focusing on creating accessible workshops for children with additional needs and intellectual disabilities who also live with a lifelong physical health condition. We also sought training from marginalised community leaders like the Travelling Community and Black and Irish on creating inclusive spaces for diverse communities. We constantly strive to ensure we meet the needs of families at higher risk of social exclusion with dignity, care and safety, and support staff delivering this work.

In 2023 we also launched our full Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy, this can be found here;

<https://helium.ie/dei-strategy-and-plan-2023-2026/>

## Output 7

**The project will support the development of communication tools, transportation/guides and accessible community venues that are easy to get to, bearing in mind the limitations of refugee accommodation.**

---

### Communication Tools - Received Plain English Mark

Following our research and development with the teams in the Lynn Clinic, it was advised that our marketing material should be reviewed to simpler language, making it more accessible to families in the clinic, the majority of whom English is not their first language, with a presence of lower literacy levels among families in attendance.

Heliums Marketing & Communications Executive successfully submitted all of our most used communication tools, flyers and posters to the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) , the Plain English service and we are delighted to have received the Plain English Mark.



**REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER ART CAMPS IN LIMERICK & ENNIS**

**Creative art workshops to help your child live well. For ages 6-12yrs and teenagers.**

Is your child living with a complex medical condition? We know it can be lonely. That's why we want to help you discover life 'beyond the diagnosis' and give your child the chance to shine.

Our summer art camps are open to children and young people with underlying or complex medical conditions aged 6-12 years. Recommended by hospitals across the country, you can find us at your local outpatient clinic, sign up to a community workshop, or join us remotely at home.

**WHEN & WHERE**

**LIMERICK**  
Tuesday 5 - Thursday 7 July at Southside Child and Family Centre  
Ages 6-8: 10.30am-11.30am  
Ages 9-12: 2pm-4pm

**Teens:** Helium Arts will be running teen meet-ups in Limerick in the first half of July.

**ENNIS**  
Tuesday 12 - Thursday 14 July at CBS Primary Ennis  
Ages 6-8: 10.30am-11.30am  
Ages 9-12: 2pm-4pm

**About Helium Arts**  
Helium Arts is the national children's arts and health charity supporting the social and emotional needs of children facing long-term health conditions through arts-based projects in hospital, community and public settings.

**ABOUT CREATIVE HUB WORKSHOPS**  
All workshops are...

- Free of charge
- Delivered by professional artists
- Inclusive and accessible
- Overseen by paramedics
- Supported by volunteers

**We give children the space to...**

- Be themselves and have fun
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Learn new skills in painting, crafting, filmmaking and more!

**HOW TO REGISTER**  
Contact Helium Arts Family Liaison helio@helium.ie or 053 010 3240

**Closing date for bookings is Friday 10 June.**

Places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

**Parents/Guardians, please note:** booking a place on a workshop for your child constitutes agreement to Helium Arts' Terms of Service.

**www.helium.ie**

**Supported Conditions Include:** Diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, juvenile arthritis, heart conditions, spina bifida, cystic fibrosis, allergies, rare conditions and more.

2022 Helium Arts Flyer



**Free art workshops for children with lifelong physical health conditions**

**We're nationwide!**  
Castlebar, Cork, Dublin, Ennis, Galway, Limerick, Mallow, Nenagh and online!

**Sign up today!**  
Professional artists | Onsite medical support  
Meet new friends | Learn new skills | Ages 6-16

**helium.ie**

**Supported Conditions Include:** Diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, juvenile arthritis, heart conditions, spina bifida, cystic fibrosis, allergies, rare conditions and more.

**Testimonials:**  
"Looking forward to the workshop - lasts all week" (Parent)  
"I get to be myself and make new friends" (Participant)

**Partners:** Arts Council Ireland, The National Council for the Blind, Community Foundation Ireland, RETHINK IRELAND, Play English

Registered Charity No. 20075200

2025 Plain English Approved Helium Arts Flyer

## Communication Tools - Translated Materials - Posters / Flyers

It was also recommended by the clinic staff teams that we translate our marketing materials, to be inclusive of all families attending the clinics. These translated posters and flyers would complement the presence of Interpreters in attendance at the clinics, but also be effective in the space even when the Interpreters or indeed the Artist was not present, sharing with families more about Helium Arts, supporting connection to our community and online programmes.

We engaged a translation service to translate our plain English material to 11 different languages, including the most prevalent languages seen in the Inclusion Clinics and in accordance with the 2022 census, they are:

Arabic, French, Georgian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Ukrainian and Urdu.

This material is currently being printed and will be distributed and available in the Inclusion Health Clinics and also be rolled out to our other Hubs in the Hospital and Community settings (Output 9).

In 2026, we will be updating our website to also feature the ability to choose your preferred language, connecting all of our supporting material for a fully accessible experience.

## Communication Tools - Translated Marketing Materials & Translated Evaluation Tools

We have also developed our child and parent feedback tools (Output 8) adapting to using Plain English, in a practical format with simplified design, e.g. bookmark for parents. We also provide paper versions for those who may not have access to email, or smartphones.

Our parent evaluation surveys and children's feedback comment cards have all been translated to the aforementioned languages and are in the process of being designed and printed, ready to distribute to not only the Pediatric Inclusion Health Clinics, but all of our Hospital Hubs across the country, including Cork, Limerick, Galway, Kilkenny and Mayo, ensuring we hear the voices of all children, all parents and all families that Helium Arts work with.



**Helium Arts**  
مركز الإبداع يغيّر الحياة

**ورش فنية مجانية  
للصغار، الذين  
يعانون من حالات  
مرضية جسدية  
مدى الحياة**

انتشر فروعنا في شتى أنحاء البلاد  
كاسلبار، كورك، دبلن، إينيس، جالواي، ليمريك، مالو،  
الينا، وغير الإنترنت

أنتخب أن تستمر ورشة  
"العمل طوال الأسبوع"  
ولي لبر

أكون على طبيعتي،  
"وأكتسب أصدقاء جددًا"  
مشارك

فنانون محترفون | دعم طبي في الموقع  
اكتسب مهارات جديدة | التقى بأصدقاء جدد | الأعمار: 6-16

**helium.ie**

الحالات المرضية، التي تعطل بالدمع، تشمل  
السكري، الصرع، الربو، التهاب المفاصل عند الأطفال، أمراض القلب،  
الشلل الحاد، العمود الفقري، التيف الحوضي، الحساسية، الحالات المرضية  
التأخرية، وفق ذلك

Community Foundation Ireland | RETHINK IRELAND | FUND

مركز الإبداع يغيّر الحياة | 2023/2024

Arabic Helium Arts Flyer



**Helium Arts**  
ПОПІВНЕННЯ ЖИТТЯ ЛЮДЕЙ ЧЕРЕЗ ТВОРЧІСТЬ

**Безкоштовні  
уроки  
образотворчого  
мистецтва для  
молоді з хронічними  
захворюваннями**

«Син заводив будильник, щоб не проспати заняття в таборі Helium»  
одна із батьків

«Кожен відчуває себе частиною групи»  
Тетяна

Ми працюємо по всій країні!  
Каслбар, Корт, Дублін, Енніс, Голвей, Лімерік, Маллоу,  
Ніна. До того ж, заняття проводяться онлайн!

**Подайте заяву!**  
Професійні художники | Черговий медичний персонал  
Можливість зустріти нових друзів | Опанування новими навичками  
Для дітей віком від 6 до 16 років

**helium.ie**

Запрошуються діти з такими захворюваннями:  
цукровий діабет, епілепсія, бронхіальна астма, деякі види дитячої  
опухлики захворювання, серйозна станніксізова грижа, нервові розлади,  
атерія, різкі захворювання тощо.

Community Foundation Ireland | RETHINK IRELAND | FUND

Зареєстрована не-благотворна організація за номером 26875200

Ukrainian Helium Arts Flyer

Flyers with Plain English Mark (NALA) and translated

## **Accessible Venues**

As part of Helium Arts policy, all of our venues are accessible for those who may have additional mobility requirements and additional needs. Ahead of booking a venue we implement our procedures of visiting a venue with a venue checklist to ensure it meets our criteria to proceed with a booking. Some of the criteria we assess include:

- Accessible entryways, ramps, steps, accessible fire escape routes
- Accessible parking
- Ventilation
- Lighting
- Heating
- Accessible toilets with sufficient turning circles
- Access to adjustable tables
- Access to room or area for medical intervention if required

Accessibility also refers to social economic factors, we primarily use venues such as Family Resource Centres, Community Centres and libraries to connect families with local communities and services and to mitigate against any barriers to entry that may present when using venues such as Art institutions for example.

We select locations close to hospitals and community hubs to ensure access to public transport is available and locations in areas of disadvantage according to the Pobal Indices. Our work on the “Journeys’ project, has furthered our understanding of accessible venues to include access to marginalised communities from refugee, asylum - seeking and migrant communities. Ensuring venues can be accessible, located close to inclusion health clinics, HSE Refugee clinics and close to IPAS Centres, and the relevant access routes. This can be further supported by provision of travel to members of these communities, see below for further detail.

## **Provision of Travel to Workshops**

In July 2024, Helium Arts set up a Travel Working Group to develop and implement a pilot programme providing transport to children attending Helium Arts community workshops. During a period of research and development and relationship building across all of our Hub locations, we partnered with Enable Ireland in Galway which enabled 4 children to attend our community workshops using Enable Ireland’s bus. This partnership was a great source of information sharing for how effective provision of travel might be implemented across Hub locations, highlighting the challenges and barriers to overcome. We identified key measures and actions to implement regarding governance and procedures, in consultation with our governance committee, Helium Arts’ Communications & Outreach Officer, Programme & Operations Manager and the Helium Board.

In July 2025, after months of this research, development and review, we are delighted to have launched our *Helium Bus Service Travel Pilot* in partnership with St John’s Ambulance

bus service in County Clare for our Summer Programme. This Pilot includes the hiring of an accessible bus, bus escorts for supervision, trained staff to administer emergency medication if required and the introduction of individual care plans for participants. We have also drafted up a new Helium Bus Service Policy led by our Communications & Outreach Officer.

This successful pilot allowed us to include children at higher risk of exclusion including members of the Travelling Community, to access our community programmes. We saw unexpected outcomes related to connection and building friendships;

*“ (on the first journey) There were lots of conversation starters from the staff with the group of children, but on the return journey, they were all too busy talking amongst themselves, we didn't get a word in! Great friendships were made and all said they would definitely go on the Helium Bus again.”*

#### **- Helium Arts Bus Escort**

We envision Helium Arts Bus Service to continue to offer free travel services in order to increase access and integration from marginalised communities, aiming to begin rolling the service out to other Hub locations across the country.

In tandem with the pilot bus service development, we supported families from the Lynn Clinic to attend some of our community workshops and events in Dublin, who are living in emergency accommodation by way of Taxi service.

#### **Visual Guides**

Work is in progress to develop and implement Visual Guides across Helium Arts programmes addressing various settings and accessibility points.

These visual guides will not only support children we work with with additional needs but also those whose English is not their first language. The following guides are being developed by the Helium Arts Team with plans to launch ahead of Autumn / Winter Programme 2025;

- How to book a workshop
- How to make a referral
- What to expect in a workshop (in person and online)
- What to expect in a hospital / inclusion health setting
- What to expect on the Helium Bus service
- Communication Cards for online and in person workshop participants; Helium Arts adaptable toolkits

## Output 8

**Evaluation of the project will gather ongoing feedback from children and families. This will include surveys/focus groups pre- and post- questionnaires that will be reviewed quarterly and may be translated as required.**

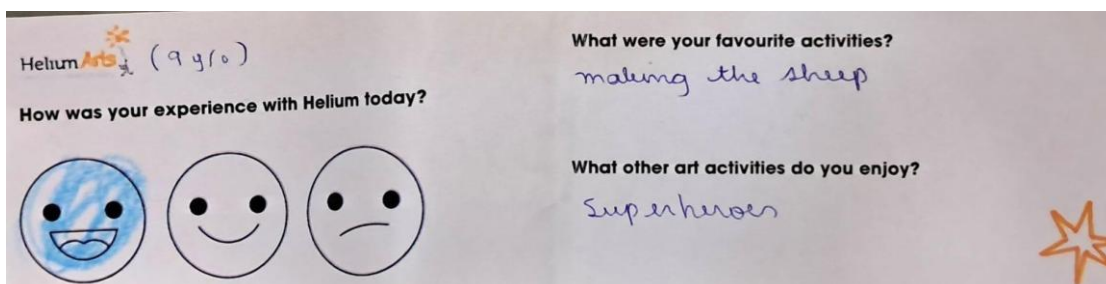
In 2024 Helium Arts undertook an evaluation internalisation process with a new external evaluation consultant, Dr. Helga Sneddon of Outcome Imps Ltd. supported by Rethink Ireland. Extensive work took place to update our evaluation methods, we evaluated how we evaluate, made our evaluation methods more inclusive, and made our processes more streamlined, working within a redeveloped outcomes framework.

We're excited to share the results of an independent evaluation of the Helium Arts Creative Health Programme, covering January to December 2024. The report, carried out by Helga Sneddon of Outcome Imps, takes an honest, in-depth look at the difference we're making in children's lives.

The full impact report for 2024 can be accessed via our website - <https://helium.ie/about/helium-arts-impact-report-2024/>

A learning from our work on the 'Journeys' project is that extremely vulnerable cohorts are found to have high levels of distrust in institutions, services and this can make evaluation harder to gather. This is typical of any healthcare setting but particularly so for the Paediatric Inclusion Health setting, therefore, evaluation processes can take longer as time is needed to build a presence in the space, leading to building trust with families and young people.

In 2024, while our evaluation framework was being developed, Artists in the space used simple feedback slips, in order to capture children's voices and feedback on activities and engagements in the clinic, informing the work, and ensuring youth voice was kept at the centre.




2024 - Artist led, engagement feedback with Lynn Clinic participants

As mentioned in Outcome 7, plain English and translation of evaluation material was also an essential finding as part of the project. In 2025, we hired an Evaluation & Monitoring Coordinator, in order to support our Evaluation process in Helium Arts. We continue to further our understanding of evaluation in Inclusion Health Settings, working with the staff team, interpreters, the parents and families to best support this process in a transparent and safe way.






In 2025, all of our evaluation material was updated as per our new evaluation framework. In hospital settings, including Paediatric Inclusion Health settings, the use of Parent 'Bookmarks' and Children 'Comment Cards' are being piloted with a review scheduled in late 2025 to implement any changes required. We also plan to develop a youth comment card for teenagers. This material has also been translated in 11 different languages, along with the digital versions of the surveys (Outcome 7).

Please see **Evaluation Summary** section for a more in-depth report of the project, including key findings and recommendations.


**COMMENT CARD**






**Please tell us what you think about the creative activity in the clinic today.**  
**Circle your answer.**

**1. Did you have fun today with Helium Arts?**






Not at all      Not really      Not sure      Yes, a little bit      Yes, a lot

**2. Did it help take your mind off things?**






Not at all      Not really      Not sure      Yes, a little bit      Yes, a lot

**3. Would you like Helium Arts to be in the hospital the next time you come in?**

Not at all      Not really      Not sure      Yes, a little bit      Yes, a lot

**4. Did you feel included today/was it easy to get involved?**

Not at all      Not really      Not sure      Yes, a little bit      Yes, a lot

Registered Charity No. 20075200 [www.helium.ie](http://www.helium.ie)

2025 Piloted Children's Comment Card  
English Version



2025 Parent Survey Bookmarks

For use in Hospital Outpatient Department Settings, including PIH

## Output 9

**The learnings and resources developed will be rolled-out throughout Helium Arts Creative Health Programme across the country.**

---

As detailed in the various outputs of this report, there have been several significant learnings and resource developments in Helium Arts as a result of the Nurture Fund *Journeys* project. A summary of which include;

- Research and development on the provision of travel to members of refugee, asylum - seeking, migrant and other marginalised groups e.g. the Travelling Community, the Roma Community, resulting in a successful Helium Arts Bus service pilot in Summer 2025. Related policies and procedures being developed, with further roll out in other Hub locations scheduled for late 2025 / 2026
- All of Helium Arts Marketing and Communications Materials received the Plain English mark from NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency)
- All of Helium Arts posters and flyers and evaluation materials, used digitally, in Community and Hospital settings being translated to 11 different languages; Arabic, French, Georgian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Ukrainian and Urdu.
- Simplified Staff referral form for participants with lifelong physical health conditions.
- Visual Guides and Accessible Toolkits on track to being developed and implemented to respond to the need for visual aids inclusive of families where English is not first language.
- Accessible venues located near IPAS centres and Inclusion Health clinics now added to the list of criteria to assess against booking community workshop venues.

These learnings informed our work when setting up in another Paediatric Inclusion Health Clinic in the Midwest in October 2024, led by Dr. Siobhán Neville. The Midwest Inclusion Health clinics are operating from three sites; University Hospital Limerick, Limerick City, Tyone Health Centre, Nenagh, Tipperary and Ennis Hospital, Clare.

We have also successfully secured further funding from the Irish Youth Foundation to continue our work in PIH clinics in Dublin and the Midwest to the end of 2025.

These tools and resources not only benefit our work in PIH Clinics, but also our programmes as a whole in community, hospital and online settings. This allows us to continuously strive to overcome barriers to entry, so all children and young people can access their own creativity and find moments to just be a child.

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

**The project will engage children aged 8-12 years living with lifelong health conditions from underrepresented youth, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking communities.**

---

The project engaged children aged 8-12 years living with lifelong health conditions from underrepresented youth, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking communities.

Key findings and recommendations on cohorts can be read in the **Evaluation Summary**. See **Output 1** for impact of the work in the Lynn Clinic.

### Outcome 2

**This two-year project will provide access to creative practices for children so they can voice their experiences and desires on matters important to them. Children's views will be sought from the outset and they will be empowered throughout to nurture their creative passions and ignite their creative potential.**

---

This two-year project provided access to creative practices for children so they were given the opportunity to voice their experiences and desires on matters important to them. Children's views were sought from the outset and they were empowered throughout to nurture their creative passions and ignite their creative potential.

See **Output 3**, **Output 5** and **Output 8** for methodology and impact on incorporating youth voice and decision making.

### Outcome 3

**The workshops will aim to support connections for children with health conditions to each other and their communities and support integration.**

---

The workshops aimed to support connections for children with health conditions to each other and their communities and support integration.

See **Output 2** and **Evaluation Summary** for a breakdown on reach to marginalised groups and key findings related to integration and referral pathways.

## Outcome 4

**Long-term relationships with new organisations will be established and deepened.**

Long-term relationships with new organisations were established and deepened. See **Output 2**, and **Evaluation Summary** for further information on impact of relationships with the Lynn Clinic Team.

In September 2024, Tania Banotti, Director of Creative Ireland, visited the Lynn Clinic, joining key members of the project Team, where Helium Arts and the Lynn Clinic shared a presentation about the partnership, the project and its progress.

This visit was a great success and a clear demonstration of the commitment of project partners and the mission of the project.



Creative Ireland site visit to the Lynn Clinic, September 2024.

(L - R) Karen Leckie PIH Project Manager, Laura Cruz de Toledo, Helium Artist, Tania Banotti, Director of Creative Ireland, Helene Hugel CEO Helium Arts, Fiona Smith, CHI Arts in Health Programme Curator, Emma McKinley, Development Manager Helium Arts.

## Outcome 5

**This project will support Helium Arts' current 'Joining the Dots' project to enhance connections to migrant organisations, increase awareness and growth of referral pathways to Helium Arts' programmes.**

---

This project supported Helium Arts' current 'Joining the Dots' project to enhance connections to migrant organisations, increase awareness and growth of referral pathways to Helium Arts' programmes.

See **Output 7** for a summary of how the Journeys project complimented the work of Helium's Outreach and Communications Officer related to travel and relationship building with marginalised communities.

## Outcome 6

**The project will ensure sustainability and legacy by potentially embedding the approach, which has been informed and co-designed by the children into the Paediatric Inclusion Health model, which is due to be replicated and transferred to regional centres in Cork, Limerick, and Galway**

---

The project ensured sustainability and legacy by embedding the approach, which has been informed and co-designed by the children into the Paediatric Inclusion Health model, which is due to be replicated and transferred to regional centres in Cork, Limerick, and Galway

See **Output 7**, **Output 3** and **Output 9** for further information on how the learning and development through the '*Journeys*' project has been rolled out to create organisational change striving towards increased access, integration and inclusion.

We successfully secured further funding from the Irish Youth Foundation to continue our work in the Lynn Clinic until the end of 2025 in PIH clinics in Dublin, Limerick, Nenagh and Ennis in the Midwest.

## Outcome 7

The dispersal of learnings and resources will innovate and improve Helium Arts' hospital and community programmes, strengthen the voices of young people, reach seldom heard groups and grow vital connections between Helium Arts and new organisations working with refugees and asylum-seekers.

The dispersal of learnings and resources innovated and improved Helium Arts' hospital and community programmes, strengthened the voices of young people, reached seldom heard groups and grew vital connections between Helium Arts and new organisations working with refugees and asylum-seekers.

See **Output 7**, **Output 3** and **Output 9** for further information on how the learning and development through the '*Journeys*' project has been rolled out to create organisational change striving towards increased access, integration and inclusion.



L - R, Dr. Aoibhinn Walsh, Lynn Clinic, David Osaseyi, project participant, Jinny Ly, Helium Artist Photo Credit: Marc O' Sullivan

## Public Engagement outcomes

### Helium Arts' 2025 'Journeys' Showcase PR and META Ads Campaign Report



#### Campaign Objectives

The key objectives of the PR and META Ads campaign were

To:

- Highlight Helium Arts' growing work in the area of inclusion health by securing media coverage for the 'Journeys' art exhibitions at Súil Gallery, Ennis, Co Clare and at the Stables at IMMA, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin in May-June 2025, which featured artwork created by children while attending inclusion clinics in the Dublin and Mid-West regions, which support children at risk of social exclusion.
- To raise awareness among the public of the 'Journeys' exhibitions to encourage attendance.
- To raise awareness of special events happening in tandem at both locations to mark Cruinniú na nÓg.
- 

#### Summary of the PR Results Achieved

##### Media Coverage & Audience Reach:

- **15** pieces of media coverage were achieved, with a total audience reach of **669,429<sup>1</sup>** viewers, readers and listeners.
- Coverage highlights included:
  - **Two pieces of national media coverage**, namely a feature item on **Ireland AM on Virgin Media Television**, which took place out-of-studio at Helium Arts' exhibition at the Stables at IMMA and included interviews with Helium Arts CEO Helene Hugel, exhibition curator and Helium Artist Jinny Ly, and a Helium Arts participant whose work featured in the exhibition with his father; and a blog post was also featured on the Culture page on [RTÉ.ie](https://www.rte.ie/culture).
  - **2 local radio pieces** on stations Clare FM (an interview with Helene Hugel) and Phoenix FM (an interview with Jinny Ly).
  - **4 local/regional print** pieces in the Clare Champion and The Clare Echo.
  - **7 local/regional online pieces** on websites covering counties Clare, Tipperary and Dublin, including on ClareLive.ie, Ireland-Live.ie, ClareHerald.com, TipperaryLive.ie, DublinGazette.com and Clare.FM.



<sup>1</sup> Reach figure does not include Phoenix FM which carried an interview and is not monitored by Rue Point.

**Other Coverage:**

- Interview on local radio station Midlands 103.
- Feature in Trinity College Dublin’s Alumni magazine.



**META Ads Results**

**Campaign Type; Awareness:**

Reach	Impressions	Link Clicks
387,161	529,423	206



### Clare, Limerick and Tipperary

- **Reach:** 192,767
- **Impressions:** 257,286
- **Link Clicks:** 70
- **Amount spent:** €174.09
- **Areas targeted:** Clare, Limerick and Tipperary

### Performance per platform:

- **Facebook Reach:** 164,847
- **Instagram Reach:** 22,754

### Dublin:

- **Reach:** 194,394
- **Impressions:** 272,137
- **Link Clicks:** 136

### Performance per platform:

- **Facebook Reach:** 161,969
- **Instagram Reach:** 30,851

**Conclusions:**

- The campaign reached more men (58% ) than women (37%).
- Facebook outperformed Instagram in terms of reach and engagement, as META's algorithm prioritised Facebook for this audience. This suggests that Facebook remains the more effective platform for Helium Arts' target demographic.

## Summary of Project Evaluation

The below is an excerpt from Lynn Clinic Project Evaluation Report by Helium Arts nominated external evaluator Dr. Helga Sneddon from Outcome Imps Ltd. It outlines strengths and challenges in delivery, key finding and recommendations.

Please refer to Output 8 for details on child and parent evaluation summary.

### **Helium Arts: Evaluation of the Creative Ireland Lynn clinic July 2025** **Dr Helga Sneddon, Outcome Imps Ltd.**

#### **About Outcome Imps**

Outcome Imps supports organisations use evidence to improve their outcomes. Our aim is to help organisations make the most of the knowledge they have within their teams, as well as integrate the best available evidence of what works. Based in Northern Ireland, we work across the UK and Ireland.

We help improve effectiveness by troubleshooting issues with strategic planning, implementation, evidence base, evaluation and communication. Outcome Imps is led by Dr Helga Sneddon who has 30 years' experience of undertaking evaluations, and helping policy makers, commissioners and service providers to use evidence to improve outcomes.

#### **Overview**

This evaluation examined Helium Arts' Creative Ireland-funded project delivered at the Lynn Clinic in Dublin from 2023–2025.

The project aimed to support the wellbeing and happiness of children from refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant, and marginalised backgrounds through high-quality participatory arts experiences within a paediatric inclusion health setting.

#### **Approach used in the evaluation**

A qualitative evaluation approach was used to explore:

- Implementation processes and challenges
- Perceptions of what worked well and why
- Impacts on children, families, and the clinic environment
- Strategic learning and recommendations for future development.

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders who were familiar with the project including programme managers, artist and clinic staff. Each interview explored:

- Participant role and familiarity with the project
- Reflections on what went well and what had been challenging
- Observed impacts on young people, families, and the clinic
- Suggestions for future improvement and sustainability.

The evaluation also reviewed project documentation and administrative data collected by Helium Arts.

## Summary of Strengths in current delivery

The evaluation identified multiple strengths in the delivery of the Helium Arts Creative Ireland project at the Lynn Clinic.

### Summary of strengths in delivery

- Children readily engaged with the artist and creative activities
- Activities were child-led and individualised for each child
- The artist was seen as highly skilled in engaging young people
- The activities complemented and strengthened the clinic's holistic approach.
- Immediate, voluntary engagement
- Wide choice of high-quality, age-appropriate activities
- Trauma-informed, culturally sensitive practice
- Relationship building and continuity of care
- Enabling emotional expression and disclosure
- Upholding child rights and agency.

*“Kids come in and their eyes light up... it's like a little haven for them.”*

*“They come straight to her without even being asked. They want to see what's out that day. It's something special in a place that can feel very clinical otherwise.”*

*“These are kids who have very little – they're living in hotels, some don't have toys, their childhood is on pause. But with the art, they're just kids again, even for a little while.”*

*“They're not just a medical file number when they're with [the artist] – they're artists, creators, kids with ideas. That's priceless.”*

*“They choose what they want to do. They're not told ‘this is what you're making today’. That sense of choice and agency is huge for children who have so little control over their lives.”*

*“We've seen children who are non-verbal or traumatised still join in. [The artist] never forces it, she just creates the space for them to come over when they're ready.”*

*“She just gets down to their level, even when there’s no shared language... it’s that relational safety that makes the difference. Children who arrive very shut down can soften once they see her.”*

*“It calms them down so much. Children who are usually climbing the walls will sit for ages doing clay or stickers. It’s incredible to watch.”*

*“They’re more settled going into their appointment if they’ve had time with the artist first. Less agitated, less resistant.”*

## **Summary of challenges in delivery**

Stakeholders identified the following challenges and useful areas of learning from the implementation of this project so far. These provide useful insights for informing future delivery, particularly when scaling up to any new sites.

### **Summary of challenges in delivery**

- Challenges in referral pathways to community programmes due to transient family situations
- Misalignment with Helium’s core lifelong physical health condition cohort, raising strategic questions
- Limited artist coverage in all clinic sessions affecting continuity and reach
- Space constraints reducing visibility and immersive impact of creative setups
- Need for clear early communication about artist role boundaries and expectations
- Sustainability considerations given resource intensity versus target group fit
- Longer-than-expected set-up timelines highlighting the need for built-in exploration phases

*“They’re in hotel accommodation; they might be moved to the other side of the country with very little notice. It’s hard to build continuity when you can’t even keep a stable address or phone number.”*

*“We’d love to refer more on, but families move so quickly... sometimes we just lose contact completely.”*

*“It’s hard because we see the difference the art makes here, but we can’t always give them the chance to continue that journey in the community. It’s frustrating.”*

*“We need to be clear – are we working with lifelong physical health conditions or with socially excluded kids more broadly? Because they’re different needs and require different models.”*

*“We had to clarify that – it’s not appropriate for them to be in the medical consultation space, and it’s not their model. That took a bit of working out, but everyone’s clear now.”*

## Key Findings

Key findings from the independent evaluation are that:

- The approach used in the clinic has been successful in improving children’s and family’s experiences in the clinic.
- Improvements were also seen in how smoothly the clinic operates.
- The programme was highly valued by staff, families, and children, described as “transformative”, “calming”, and a “game changer” for clinic atmosphere. The approach is highly valued by stakeholders who would like to see it continue.
- Children engaged readily with the creative activities, with or without shared language, and responded to the artist’s trauma-informed approach.
- Many Lynn Clinic attendees had complex social needs rather than diagnosed lifelong physical health conditions. Although the creative arts approach used in the clinic is effective, this raises some alignment challenges with Helium Arts’ core mission of supporting children with lifelong physical health conditions
- To maximise ongoing impact, there is a need for clearer referral pathways into community programmes, and for flexibility in delivery models to suit diverse settings.

The *Journeys* project has demonstrated the transformative impact of creative engagement for children living with lifelong physical health conditions who are also experiencing extreme social exclusion. Delivered in partnership with the Lynn Clinic, CHI Arts in Health Programme, and the HSE Refugee Health Clinic, this two-year initiative placed professional Artists at the heart of healthcare settings, offering children vital opportunities for self-expression, play, and connection in otherwise clinical and intensive environments.

By embedding a trauma-informed, culturally responsive approach across every level of delivery—from Artist supervision and reflective practice to translated communications and accessible venues—the project not only created meaningful moments for individual children but also built long-term capacity within Helium Arts’ national programmes. The wraparound supports, professional training, and inclusive practices piloted and refined through *Journeys* have laid a strong foundation for future engagement with marginalised communities.

The exhibition *Journeys – For a Better Tomorrow* at IMMA, showcasing the voices and creativity of participating children, marked a powerful culmination of the project, elevating their experiences and perspectives into the public sphere. Most importantly, *Journeys* has catalysed lasting partnerships and organisational growth, equipping Helium Arts to better meet the needs of children and families often left unseen in traditional care systems—ensuring creativity, dignity, and inclusion remain central to their journey.