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Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

10 October 2023

Dear Chair,

Welsh Government response to CYPE Committee 2022-23 Draft Budget report:

Recommendation 24: The Welsh Government must provide the Committee with 6 monthly updates on the progress of the implementation of the ILE programme, including information on how the Welsh Government is promoting the programme to learners in Further Education.

Over the past six months, Taith has seen further progress in relation to the implementation of the programme. Since I last wrote to you, a further 7.2m has been allocated to this year's successful Pathway 1 projects, hundreds more learners have taken part in exchanges, and we have come to the end of the first full year of project activity.

Since launching the programme in February 2022, Taith has run a total of four funding calls: Pathway 1 2022 and a second call for the FE/VET sector, Pathway 2 2022, and Pathway 1 2023. The 2023 Pathway 2 call opened on 5 October and will close on 30 November.

Over the four funding calls to date, £18.7m has been allocated to 142 projects, involving 163 different organisations – including all Further Education colleges in Wales. This is expected to create international learning exchange opportunities for over 11,000 people. The most recent data available indicates that by 30 June, 1120 participants had completed their mobilities, with much more activity having taken place over the summer.

Feedback from those that have taken part in Taith-funded exchanges has been overwhelmingly positive, with many saying it has been the best experience of their life, and something they wouldn't have had the opportunity to do otherwise. I would encourage members to visit the [Taith website](#) to read about the inspiring stories from young people who have taken part – for example Ferndale Community School's trip to Singapore to learn about engineering and aquaculture, or students from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David rekindling their partnership with the Madog Center for Welsh Studies in Ohio.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Pathway Funding Call Outcomes

Pathway 1, which focuses on the mobility of individuals and groups, and accounts for the majority of Taith's activity, was open for applications between January and March, with £7.2m available. Details of the 2023 Pathway 1 funding call outcomes, and funding allocated from all calls to date are shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Pathway 1 2023 outcomes by sector.

Sector	No. of applications	No. of projects funded	Total funding allocated (£)
Youth	19	14	1,012,467
Schools	36	28	1,758,987
Adult Education	6	4	231,441
FE/VET	11	9	1,190,191
HE Education	8	8	2,498,031
HE Research	6	6	499,054
Total	86	69	7,190,171

Table 2: Outcomes from all funding calls to date by sector.

Sector	Number of projects funded				Total funding allocated to date (£)
	Pathway 1 2022	Pathway 2 2022 ^(a)	Pathway 1 2023	Total	
Youth	12	4	14	30	2,222,933
Schools	15	7	28	50	4,329,443
Adult Education	6	3	4	13	610,236
FE/VET	7	5	9	21	3,024,831
HE Education	8	.	8	16	6,632,884
HE Research	6	.	6	12	1,915,215
Total	54	19	69	142	18,735,542

(a) Higher Education is not eligible for Pathway 2 due to the sector's desire for funding to be concentrated on Pathway 1.

As shown in table 2, there has been an increase in applications from the 2022 to 2023 Pathway 1 calls. This has included more direct applications from schools and Further Education colleges: 30 from schools as opposed to 18 in 2022, and 8 from colleges as opposed to 4 in 2022. This is encouraging to see, particularly when considering these sectors' engagement with Erasmus+ and the Turing Scheme, which was and continues to be primarily through third-party organisations.

Governance

Taith is in the process of implementing a number of changes to strengthen the governance of the programme and ensure that there is sufficient diversity of expertise and range of views represented at all levels of the governance structure:

- In June, Piet Van Hove and Ben Coates were appointed to the ILEP Board as independent non-executive directors.
- New, open stakeholder groups, including one for the Further Education sector, have been established, to ensure that any individual or organisation with an interest in Taith has the opportunity to input into the programme's development.

- The Advisory Board is being refreshed, and Taith is now inviting applications for new members; details are available on the [Taith website](#). I would welcome committee members' support in highlighting these opportunities to their networks.

Strategy

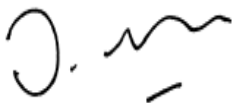
Now that Taith is a year and a half into delivery, it is clear that what was initially established as a replacement for Erasmus+ has transformed into a distinct, uniquely Welsh programme. It has been developed in partnership with the education sector and with learners and young people in Wales at its heart. With that in mind, I announced on 3 October that Taith is publishing a refreshed strategy to better reflect the programme's core aim of creating life-changing opportunities through international learning exchanges, and refocus on its three main objectives, which are to:

1. Ensure exchanges provide the greatest impact.
2. Fund high-quality learning exchange projects.
3. Support educational innovation in Wales.

A renewed focus on creating life-changing opportunities will ensure that support is targeted towards organisations working with learners from underrepresented groups, who often have the most to gain from taking part in international learning opportunities. Taith supports these organisations in several ways, including through the recently appointed Taith Champions – Diverse Cymru and Welsh Centre for International Affairs – who will be encouraging and supporting organisations working with learners from underrepresented groups to consider how Taith funding could benefit them.

Taith has come a long way since the announcement of the ILE programme in March 2021, and I am confident that the next six months will see even more success, and lives being changed as a result of this programme.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Miles AS/MS

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