



DESIGN

SKILLS IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

A YEAR IN REVIEW 2020-21: SUMMARY

CONTENTS

3

INTRODUCTION

4

POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO
ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGES
IN DESIGN

8

COLLABORATION BETWEEN
EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISE

10

DEVELOP CAREER PATHWAYS
IN DESIGN

14

DESIGN IN EDUCATION

18

CONCLUSION AND NEXT
STEPS

INTRODUCTION

This is a summary edition of the first annual progress report produced by the Design Skills Implementation Group. The Group was formed to implement the recommendations made in the 2020 Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) report, *Together for Design. Together for Design* focussed on the digital, product and strategic design skills required by enterprise over the period 2020-2025. The report issued a series of recommendations to drive the change required to address the gap between skills demand and supply during this time.

To support the implementation of the report's recommendations, the Design Skills Implementation Group was established with key stakeholder representatives from industry, education and government. The Group provides a forum for practical action and collaboration aimed at addressing the skills needs of the sector. Membership of the Group includes the EGFSN Secretariat based in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), the Design and Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI), Design Educators Ireland (DEI), the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI), the Industry Research and Development Group (IRDG), and the Service Design Network (SDN). The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DHFHERIS) also contributed to this Group through regular updates on the actions underway in their Department to support the delivery of the report's goals.

This summary highlights the objectives, achievements and progress of the Group from April 2020 to May 2021. If you would like to read about the work of the Design Skills Implementation Group in greater detail, the full report is available [here](#).

PROGRESS ON OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

The Design Skills Implementation Group has made considerable progress towards the fulfilment of the *Together for Design* report's recommendations throughout the first year of implementation. All actions are underway with many reaching significant milestones. The five meetings held to date of the Group have helped to drive greater collaboration, leadership and momentum towards achieving the report's recommendations. The membership of the Group is listed at the end of this document, following a short synopsis of each of *Together for Design's* recommendations and the key achievements of the Group to date.



**POLICY
INTERVENTIONS TO
ADDRESS SKILLS
SHORTAGES IN
DESIGN**

19,000
new places available
for upskilling/
reskilling over 3 years
from under
Springboard+ 2020
and Human Capital
Initiative Pillar 1

30 Springboard+
and HCI courses in
design available
from Levels 6-9
from 2020

€7 million
additional funding
for Springboard+ in
Budget 2021 with
design skills
highlighted as a key
consideration



i) Ensure that future Springboard+ calls are reflective of the skills needs identified in the design study.

Lead Actor: DFHERIS

DFHERIS: Springboard+ 2020 and the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 1 were announced in June 2020. Under both programmes almost 19,000 new places became available to people seeking to upskill or reskill over the next 3 years. In the call for Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1, higher education institutions were asked to assess design skills needs. Future calls will refer to the skills priorities identified in *Together for Design*. There were 30 courses in design from Level 6 to Level 9 available for applicants to apply for Springboard+ and HCI Courses in 2020. Under the July 2020 Stimulus Package two modular design courses became available. Modular skills provision provides shorter, more focused courses/modules that can be offered in a flexible manner.

An additional €7 million was provided for Springboard+ under the 2021 Budget. Proposals from Higher Education providers under the Springboard+ 2021 call were received in March 2021 with new programmes launched in the summer. Design skills were specifically highlighted as an area of consideration under this call.

Over **630** companies and **1,300** people in the design sector trained with Skillnet Ireland in 2020



Technology Skills 2022 aims to provide **3,200** additional graduates every year by 2022 to meet demand for high-level ICT skills

ii) Continue to raise awareness with employers of the subsidised upskilling and reskilling opportunities available through Springboard+ and Skillnet Ireland.

Lead Actor: DFHERIS

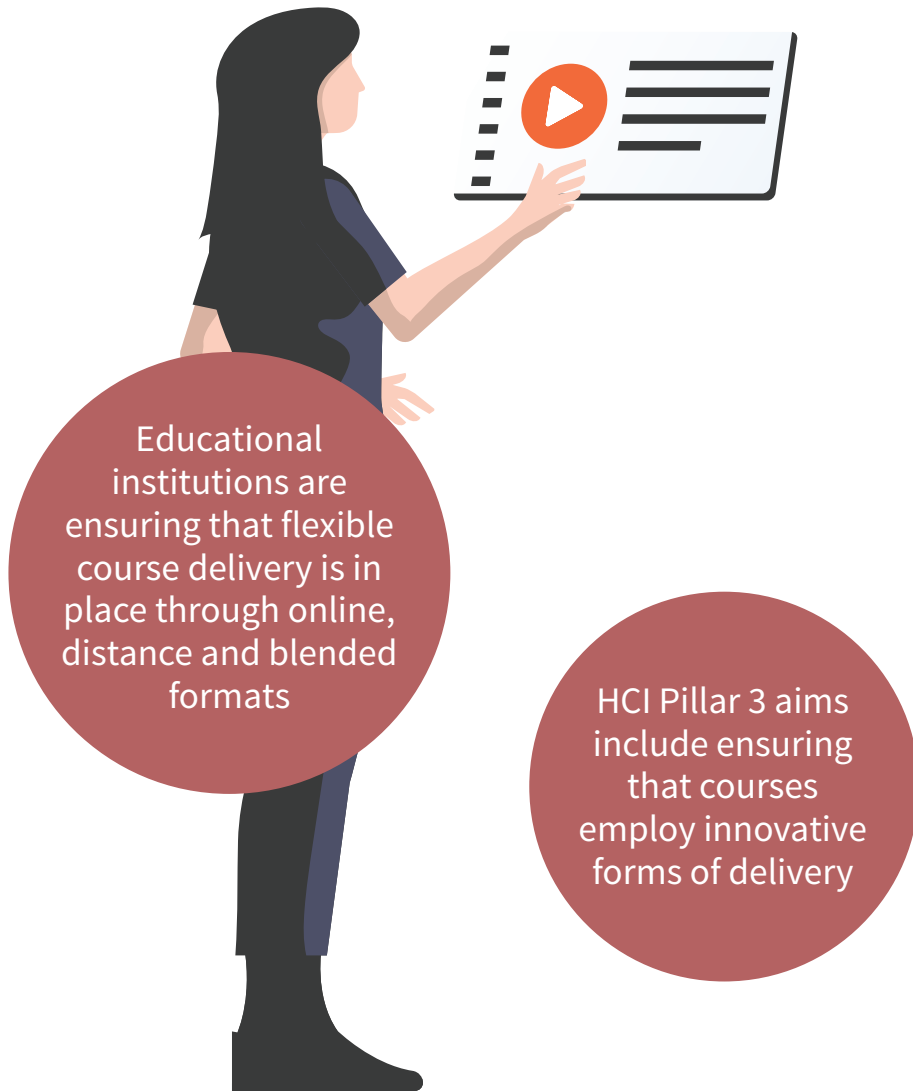
DFHERIS: There is an ongoing marketing programme underway for Springboard+ which promotes awareness among employers and the public of the subsidised upskilling and reskilling opportunities available through the scheme. End-of-year figures show that over 630 companies and 1,300 trainees undertook design-related training with Skillnet Ireland in 2020. In March 2021, Design Skillnet published their research report *Design Practice in Ireland*. This was launched at a webinar hosted by Design Skillnet, and alongside *Together for Design*, provides a foundation of quality research to shape the design skills growth agenda in 2021 and beyond.

iii) Support the implementation of Technology Skills 2022 targets to increase digital design skills provision.

Lead Actor: DFHERIS

DFHERIS: *Technology Skills 2022: Ireland's Third ICT Skills Action Plan*, was launched in February 2019 to respond to the demand for high level ICT skills in the Irish economy. It aims to provide an additional 3,200 graduates every year by 2022. The plan targets specific areas of high demand which the EGFSN has highlighted, including data analytics, artificial intelligence, robotics, animation and gaming, among others, and will enable an increase of digital design provision.

The plan places a strategic focus on utilising the range of learning opportunities available across the education and training system to meet high-level ICT skill needs through a range of actions including by expanding provision in higher education, delivering a progression pathway in further and higher education, expanding provision of ICT apprenticeships, reskilling professionals in the ICT sector through Skillnet Ireland, and the recruitment of international talent. A high-level Steering Group is in place to monitor progress, and a review of progress towards the targets is underway.



Educational institutions are ensuring that flexible course delivery is in place through online, distance and blended formats


HCI Pillar 3 aims include ensuring that courses employ innovative forms of delivery

iv) Educational institutions should continue to be encouraged to ensure that flexible provision methods, such as online courses, are available for academic educators and design practitioners to upskill or reskill in design disciplines and that design students have opportunities for placements, mentoring, exchange visits, etc.

Lead Actor: DFHERIS

DFHERIS: Educational institutions are ensuring that flexible course delivery is in place through online, distance and blended formats in both mainstream provision and through targeted upskilling initiatives such as Springboard+. The aims of HCI Pillar 3 include ensuring that courses in areas of skills demand also employ innovative forms of delivery.

Through HCI Pillar 3, 22 projects will be delivered in Higher Education Institutions, 17 of which involve collaborations between institutions. The projects include the use of virtual laboratories in Higher Education, and the awarding of over €10 million in funding to the newly established Creative Futures Academy.



**COLLABORATION
BETWEEN
EDUCATION AND
ENTERPRISE**

i) The design community should engage directly with HEIs and ETBs, via industry liaison officers, to strengthen collaboration between academia and industry to uptake development processes. This could include sabbaticals, fellowships, industry-led projects, short course teaching, teaching exchanges, practice-based PhDs and short bursts of industry-led inputs, organised at an institutional level.

Lead Actor: DEI Supporting Actors: DCCI, IDI, IRDG, SDN

DEI: DEI has established a working group to develop working principles, priorities and targets for future collaborations between educational providers and enterprise. An audit of DEI members has been carried out to identify the nature, volume and value to their institutions of current and proposed design-related collaborations with industry. Work is also underway to identify best practice case studies.

Design-focussed inter-institutional collaborations have been developed in partnership with industry. Pilot activities commenced in the academic year 2020-21, with work on additional partnerships for 2021/22 delivery under way. DEI is simultaneously developing proposals for a series of workshops and events to capture, promote and share best practice in 2021/22.

The scale of this action is large and further work will be undertaken over the course of the next year to further embed collaboration between education and enterprise with the goal of establishing a new robust model for collaboration with industry.

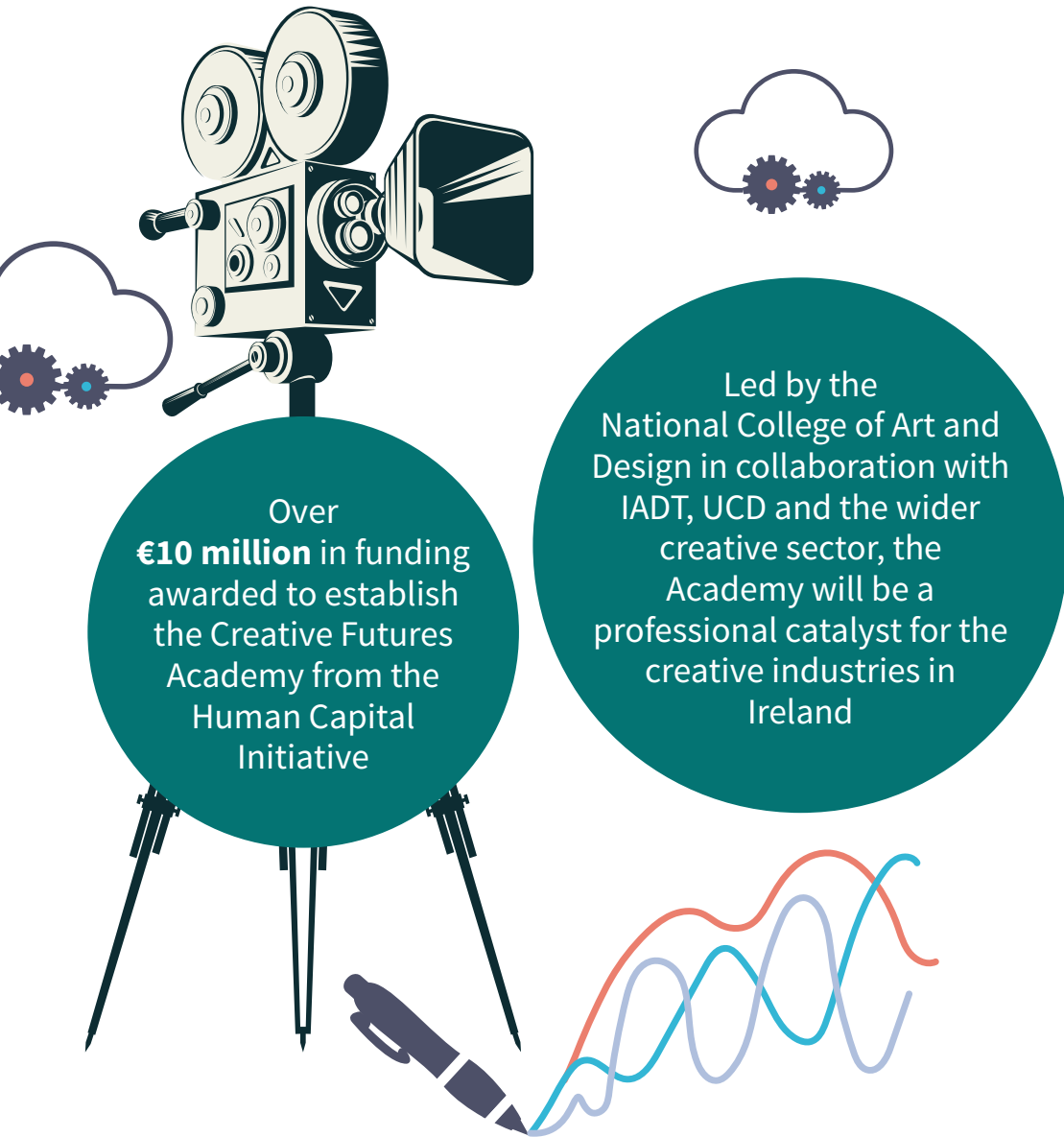
Pilots of several design-focussed collaborations with industry were held during the 2020-21 academic year

Work on additional partnerships for 2021/22 delivery is underway





DEVELOP CAREER PATHWAYS IN DESIGN



Over
€10 million in funding
awarded to establish
the Creative Futures
Academy from the
Human Capital
Initiative

Led by the
National College of Art and
Design in collaboration with
IADT, UCD and the wider
creative sector, the
Academy will be a
professional catalyst for the
creative industries in
Ireland

- i) **The design community, working in partnership with educational institutions, should exploit the various funding options such as Springboard+, Skillnet Ireland and the Human Capital Initiative to enable enterprises and individuals to upskill, reskill and engage in lifelong learning.**

Lead Actor: DEI and IDI

Supporting Actors: DCCI, IRDG, SDN

DEI: Under the Human Capital Initiative seven design focused/related proposals for funding have been awarded. Of particular note is the creation of the Creative Futures Academy, a consortium led by NCAD in partnership with IADT, UCD and the wider creative sector which was awarded over €10 million in funding. Offering a unique combination of educational and industry expertise, the Academy will act as a professional catalyst for the creative industries in Ireland today. The Institute of Designers in Ireland, Design and Craft Council of Ireland, Arts Council, Publishing Ireland, Screen Ireland and Screen Producers Ireland- are key partners in the development of the scope and content of the Creative Futures Academy.

Other successful proposals include a range of institutions and design fields, including four courses funded through Springboard+, namely:

- Certificate in Information Design & Development at Cork Institute of Technology
- Postgraduate Certificate in Design and Visualisation at IT Carlow
- Higher Diploma in Arts in Digital Media Design at IT Carlow
- Certificate in VFX for Film, TV and Animation at Limerick School of Art and Design

IDI and Design Skillnet are developing 'The New Now' programme to support graduates as they enter the design industry. The initiative will launch in October 2021



More broadly, DEI has been monitoring calls for design-related opportunities across the Higher Education sector and seeking to ensure that future calls identify design skills as a key objective. DEI will also assess the impact of funded provision to inform future collaborations and funding proposals.

IDI: The IDI & Design Skillnet adapted all programmes for remote delivery during the pandemic. This included scheduled programmes and an additional 24 remote training initiatives to assist designers and businesses in the COVID-19 environment. Additionally, a work ready initiative to assist 2020 design graduates to secure employment was substantially oversubscribed, and to date has delivered training to 24 graduates, and secured work placements for a further 10.

Design Skillnet has commenced work on a Career Journeys Framework. This is a strategic innovation addressing both workforce design and talent development. The objective is a workable, usable and agile career pathways and competency framework, which will enable designers to map, own and engage fully in their own career development.

Work is also being undertaken by IDI and Design Skillnet to further develop and promote 'The New Now', a mentorship and paid internship programme to support the entry of design graduates into industry. The initiative showcases the creative output from design courses across the island of Ireland.



The IDI have partnered with TU Dublin to develop a UX apprenticeship with a particular emphasis on developing career pathways for designers that may be switching careers or come from non-traditional design backgrounds

ii) The design community should explore the potential for design apprenticeship under the Generation Apprenticeship Scheme to encourage a wider potential pipeline of students towards a career in design.

Lead Actor: IDI

Supporting Actors: DCCI, DEI, SDN

IDI: IDI has engaged with its membership and SOLAS to research and better understand industry demand for apprenticeships. IDI have also engaged with Animation Ireland and Screen Skills Ireland to draw upon previous experience of apprenticeships in the field of animation.

Building on this, IDI is developing a UX apprenticeship in collaboration with TU Dublin which will marry technical skills and creativity with an emphasis on developing career pathways for designers switching careers or coming from non-traditional design backgrounds. Consultation with industry has brought a clearer picture of the challenges faced by businesses today. IDA Ireland has assisted with building connections between the IDI, the UXDX organisation, and FDI businesses in Ireland to facilitate programme development.

An outline of the approach to the apprenticeship has been drafted which identifies two potential complimentary programmes, one in strategic design and another focussed on technical skills. TU Dublin is currently considering appropriate NFQ certification for both programmes and is also engaging with the HEA. It is hoped that by March 2022, the framework for the apprenticeship will be in place with industry partners identified. Following SOLAS/HEA approval, it is hoped that the apprenticeship programme will launch in September 2022.



DESIGN IN EDUCATION

The 'Design Your Life' video and podcast series was launched in April 2021 at the Institute of Guidance Counsellors Conference to promote design careers to second-level students

The #DesignYourLife hashtag has received over **4,500** views to date



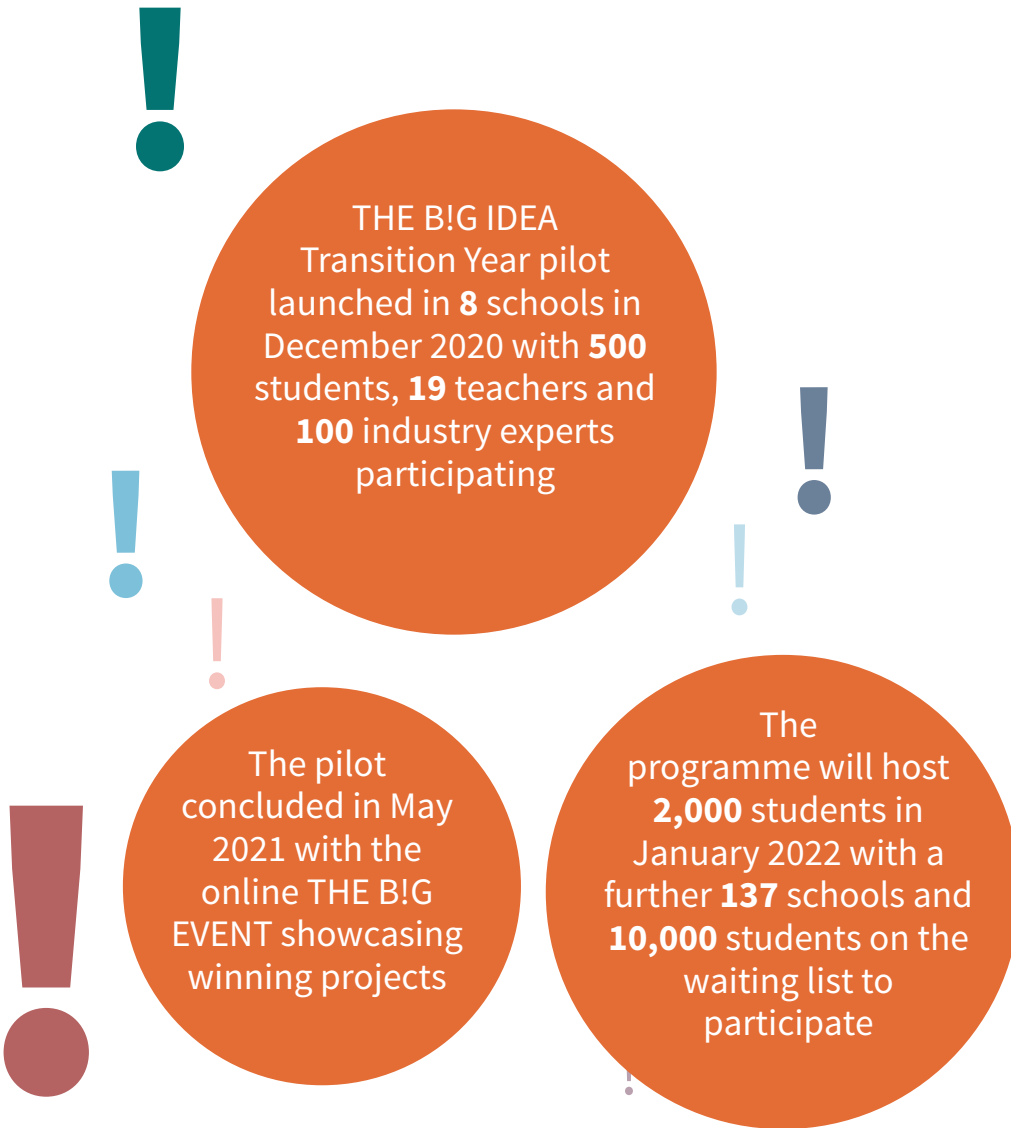
i) The design community should engage with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors to ensure that the career opportunities arising from design are well communicated to students.

Lead Actor: DCCI **Supporting Actors: DEI, IDI, IRDG, SDN**

DCCI: DCCI established a working group to identify the key challenges in respect of second-level awareness of design courses and careers, as well as identifying existing resources which could be enhanced.

The working group engaged directly with guidance counsellors at the Irish Guidance Counsellors (IGC) Conference in April 2021, at which the 'Design Your Life' video series, made in partnership with the IDI, was also launched. These videos feature five graduates who have begun working in the design sector and will focus on the story of each designer's journey from school to employment. These videos were shared widely across social media channels and are available on the IGC, Careersportal, DCCI and IDI websites. Design educators were also encouraged to share the videos along with their own materials to promote design careers with the hashtag #DesignYourLife. To date, the series has received over 4,500 views.

A 'Design Your Life' podcast series was also launched in May 2021 and features recent design graduates speaking about their career paths, interests and lifestyle.



THE B!G IDEA
 Transition Year pilot
 launched in **8** schools in
 December 2020 with **500**
 students, **19** teachers and
100 industry experts
 participating

The pilot
 concluded in May
 2021 with the
 online **THE B!G**
EVENT showcasing
 winning projects

The
 programme will host
2,000 students in
 January 2022 with a
 further **137** schools and
10,000 students on the
 waiting list to
 participate

ii) The design community should explore the development of a Transition Year Design Programme to promote the uptake of design as a career.

Lead Actor: DCCI / THE B!G IDEA **Supporting Actors: DEI, IDI, DFHERIS**

DCCI: DCCI established a working group following the publication of *Together for Design* in June 2020 to identify the key design skills to be developed in a Transition Year programme, and to evaluate existing design programmes and resources available to TY students. During this period, THE B!G IDEA TY Programme was being developed by Kim Mackenzie-Doyle, a member of the IDI. The Programme was identified as meeting the DCCI working group’s objectives for cultivating the design skills needed for the future, and THE B!G IDEA took ownership of this action following this.

THE B!G IDEA: THE B!G IDEA matches schools with industry experts to undertake 15-week design projects. It is aimed at students of all learning abilities and involves top creative professionals as mentors. The projects employ creative thinking to tackle a range societal issues such as homelessness, racism, health pandemics, ageing and health and wellbeing. The programme launched in 8 schools in December 2020 with 500 students, 19 teachers and 100 industry experts participating during the first year. Students’ final projects were showcased at an interactive exhibition in May 2021. Feedback from both learners and teachers has been very positive. Currently, 137 schools and 10,000 students are on the waiting list to participate in the programme.

An online event targeted at HEIs and ETBs took place in March 2021 to showcase the value of incorporating strategic design into non-design courses



Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) opened the event which attracted **275** registrations from **104** organisations

iii) The design community should engage directly with HEIs and ETBs to explain the importance and relevance of strategic design so that it is included as a module in non-design courses.

Lead Actor: IRDG

Supporting Actors: DCCI, DEI, IDI, SDN

IRDG: Key institutional contacts were identified and an audit of current strategic design modules in non-design courses in HEIs and ETBs was carried out. Contacts were invited to an online event on March 11th, 2021. The event attracted 275 registrations from 104 organisations. It was opened by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Three case studies were presented to demonstrate how strategic design was integrated into non-design courses. Two of these case studies were Irish (UCC and Dolmen Design) and one was international (Hasso-Platner-Institute, Berlin). The presentations were followed by an audience Q&A to assist with knowledge building and information sharing.

A survey of current strategic design modules in non-design courses in HEIs and ETBs was distributed in March/April 2021 and analysis of this data is currently taking place, with recommendations arising from the survey to be made in September 2021.

The scale of this action is challenging as there are a large number of HEIs and ETBs who would benefit from the incorporation of strategic design in their modules. However, there remains a low level of awareness of the importance of strategic design and how it can be applied in existing modules. The strong level of interest displayed at the event evidences there is good potential to drive this action forward further.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Design Skills Implementation Group has reached significant milestones during its first year. Thanks to the dedication and collaboration of its members, great progress has been made in implementing *Together for Design's* recommendations. During this time, the Group showed strong commitment in the face of challenges, including the delay in the report's publication due to the change of Government following the 2020 General Election and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Design Skills Implementation Group will continue to meet, with administrative support from the EGFSN Secretariat until March 2022, in pursuit of fulfilling the recommendations of the *Together for Design* report. The Group have identified the key next steps required for each action to drive forward implementation over this period. Following March 2022, it will be the decision of the Group if there will value in continuing to meet upon review of the progress of the recommendations.

MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership of the Design Skills Implementation Group

Andrew Bradley (Chair)	Bradley: The Brand Agency
Ruth Morrissy	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)
Rhodri Lloyd	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)
Aisling Clancy	Design and Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI)
Alex Milton	Design Educators Ireland (DEI), National College of Art and Design (NCAD)
Denis Hayes	Industry Research and Development Group (IRDG)
Charlotte Barker	Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI)
Kim Mackenzie-Doyle	Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI), THE B!G IDEA
John Lynch	Service Design Network (SDN)

The Design Skills Implementation Group will continue to meet, with administrative support from the EGFSN Secretariat, until March 2022, in pursuit of fulfilling the recommendations made in *Together for Design*. If you would like to provide feedback or engage further with this report, please contact info@EGFSN.ie.



DESIGN

SKILLS IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

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