

# Reimagine... Tallaght: Melt The Walls Research Report

Prepared by Engagement Officer  
Anne Kearns  
Irish Architecture Foundation  
May 2019

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Research Aims
3. Approach
  - 3.1. Overall Approach
  - 3.2. Approaches Used
  - 3.3. Contact Points
4. Findings
5. Recommendations
6. Appendices
  - 6.1. Appendix 1: results from interviews from general research days, not under umbrella activities
  - 6.2. Appendix 2: results form survey at Dance 2 Connect
  - 6.3. Appendix 3: Results from Spanish Mother Tongues Workshop Game
  - 6.4. Appendix 4: Results from Spanish Mother Tongues Workshop Game



Virtual Reality session during French/portuguese Mother Tongues workshops,  
photo by IAF

## 1. Introduction

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) Arts Office in partnership with Tallaght Community Arts (TCA) contracts the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) to use creative strategies and potential architectural interventions to find a way to better connect people, place and institutions in Tallaght town. A process of stakeholder consultation, community consultation and engagement and a public outcome will be undertaken by the IAF on behalf of the arts office, with activity beginning in summer 2018 and being completed in summer 2019. This report details the results and insights found during the initial stages of stakeholder consultation, community consultation and engagement and a public outcome. These insights will then inform a design brief circulated as an open call for the delivery of a public outcome that will happen in Summer 2019.

We used creative strategies to investigate what would be a way to better connect people, places and institutions in Tallaght town. This report will highlight the findings from the research carried out



Research in Chamber Square, photo by IAF



Research in Tallaght Library, photo by IAF



## 2. Research Aims

The aims of this research phase was to establish some answers to the below questions to help inform a brief for an intervention in the space. Firstly we had to establish how the space was currently being used, by whom. Through this we hoped to gain insights into what was discouraging people from using the space

### *Who was using the space*

Who was already using the space?

Is there ownership of the space already?

Where are the current users coming from?

Do those who live in the local apartment blocks make use of this public space?

### *What already happens in the space*

What other if any groups use the space?

What activities do people do in the space?

What if any interaction already happens between the civic spaces around chamber square?

Do visitors who use one institute use more than one?

### *What do people want in the space*

What would people like to see in the space?

What would people not like to see?

Carrying out Questionnaires with visitors to Dance2Connect festival

### 3.1 Approach

In all the IAF team have spent 40 hours of face to face contact time engaging with stakeholders and engaging with the public using these spaces. The IAF took a number of approaches when engaging with different stakeholders and communities including regular stakeholder meetings, in-depth interviews, surveys, observations, self directed activities, facilitated workshops, facilitated drop-in sessions...etc.

In many cases we took multiple approaches at the same event i.e. observations, surveys, drop-in activities such as mapping sessions or building exercises.

As part of the drop in sessions we had a number of exercises for people to join in on;

- People were invited to map where they came from and to in Tallaght, and mark their route through Tallaght town
- Children were asked to build what they'd like to see in the square.eg a space for pets to read.
- To construct from lego what they'd like to see in the space
- To use a game developed by one of the architecture teams during the Mother Tongues workshops showing which and how much of each activity people would like to see in the area.

Often while these activities were happening, particularly children participating we also conversed with the participants and their guardians/parents about what they wanted in the space and how they currently and would like to use it etc. We found this led people to really consider the space while giving detailed answers.

The number of approaches used and the type of contacts are listed below



'A place for pets to read', research in Chamber Square, photo by IAF



Research session in Tallaght Library, photo by IAF



Spanish Mother Tongues workshops, photo by IAF

## 3.2 Approaches Used:

### First hand interview sessions with local groups

- We met with representatives from the civic spaces clarifying the work they're already doing, the interaction that exists currently, what each organization saw as valuable.
- We also met with representatives from groups that regularly use the space, or were already looking at the space i.e.
  - Books for Babies, Tallaght Library
  - Creative Campus

### Specially facilitated workshops under larger activities happening in the area, in different civic spaces. Under the umbrella of:

- Mother Tongues, Rua Red  
This included facilitator walk throughs before the workshops,  
4 workshops and post briefs from each team

### Observation sessions

- Dance2Connect, Civic Theatre
- TCA lantern workshop
- Chamber Square
- Library

### Surveys

- Dance2Connect, Civic Theatre
- TCA lantern workshop
- Chamber Square
- Library

### Facilitated drop in activities

- Dance2Connect, Civic Theatre
- TCA lantern workshop
- Chamber Square
- Chamber Library

### 3.3 Contact points:

Stakeholder meetings with: Arts Office, TCA, Library, Civic, Rua Red occasional visits from Architects Office, Architectural Conservation Officer and independent practitioners Grainne Walker (Down to Earth Education) Sandy Dunlop

These were held every three weeks from 2 August until 6 December (7 meetings, approx 1.5 hours each)

*10 hours*

IAF carried out consultation/chats/observations/surveys at the following events:

TCA lantern workshop, Rua Red, 17 November, 2 hours

Books for Babies, Tallaght Library, 13 December, 2 hours

Dance2Connect festival, Civic Theatre, 10 February, 4 hours

#Councils4ClimateAction Public Info Event - SDCC Tues 19 February 2 hour

Portuguese architecture workshop, Mother Tongues, 2 March, 2 hours

Spanish architecture workshop, Mother Tongues, 3 March, 2 hours

French architecture workshop, Mother Tongues, 3 March, 2 hours

Bulgarian architecture workshop, Mother Tongues, 3 March, 2 hours

Chamber Square, 17 April, 4 hours

Chamber Square, 24 April, 1 hour

Tallaght Library, 24 April, 3 hours

Creative Campus 26 April, 2 hours

Tallaght Library, 27 April, 2 hours

*30 hours*

**TOTAL 40 HOURS CONTACT TIME**



Mapping sessions during Dance2Connect, photo by IAF



Observed activities, hurling and scooting in Chamber Square, photo by the IAF

#### 4 Findings

People are already using the space in a number of ways:

Parking bikes

Pushing prams (toys and real)

Walking

Gymnastics

Twirling

Dog walking

Chalk drawing

Reading

Sitting listening/watching phone

Scooting

Cycling

Reading

Smoking

Taking a break, sitting on steps

Football

Hurling

Playing

Eating Lunch

Meeting people

Running up ramps and down steps

Scooting down ramps

Coffee Break

Training

Filming

Climbing the walls

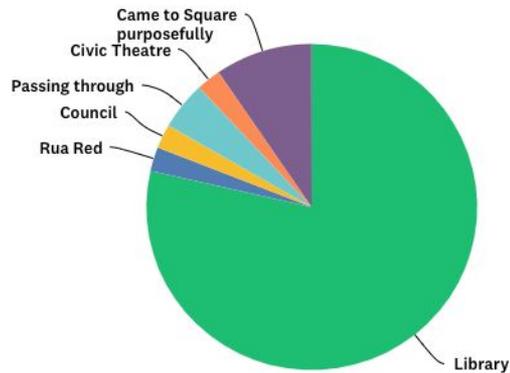
People want the space to be more welcoming or inviting but want it to remain as a space, not be fully occupied by something.

*(Appendix 1, Question 3, Response A)*. People are happy with the initial change being temporary *(Appendix 1, Question 3, Response B)*

Most of the traffic comes to the square through the library.

## What brought them to Chamber Square

Answered: 42 Skipped: 3



Responses to what brought the respondent to Chamber Square (Appendix 1 Question 1)

Visiting the library was the motivation of most of those surveyed for coming to Chamber Square. (Appendix 1 Q12). While some visitors visited multiple civic spaces this was usually for a specific purpose i.e. a show rather than spending time in library before a show.

As we established our consultation space in Chamber Square some of the people who stopped to speak to us worked in the local civic spaces. They were unaware of the project but all spoke of the need for better joined up thinking within institutes surrounding the space (Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 1)

Members of the public don't see a connection between the civic spaces. They also don't see all the spaces as being open to the public. Confusion over café opening times etc. (Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 3)



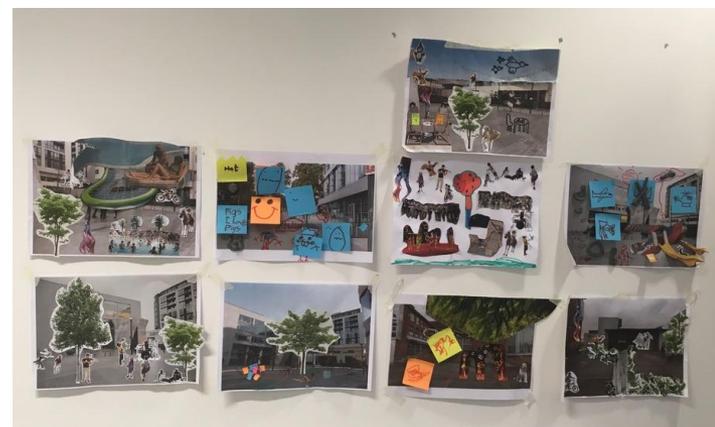
In depth interview during research in Chamber Square s in Dublin, photo by IAF

The idea of Chamber Square being used as a spill out area from the civic spaces was very popular. Suggestions included: place for shows/choirs/ensembles form Rua Red and Civic to rehearse/showcase, place to read books from the library, Arts + Crafts classes move into the space...etc

Maybe a little market or something to catch attention and make you stop. For kids, an extension of the activities that happen in the library happening in the Square...Get some of the theatre people out here on good days, rehearsing etc. Music sessions or a choir would be nice  
*(Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 6)*

In the children's activities a green space, water feature and spaces for yoga, reading, drama, play all feature highly in what children want to see in Chamber Square. *(Appendices 3&4)*

The below infographic shows the most common words in the in depth interviews with passer bys. Most often people commented that they'd like the space to be used more, particularly in smaller intervention ways; places to read, have a coffee would be nice to see some greenery, some colour...etc. Full responses can be seen in Appendix 1 Q3 responses.



Output from French/portuguese Mother Tongues workshops, photo by IAF



Word cloud from answers to the question 'What would you like to see in this space?', full answers Appendix 1 Q3

From the observations and interviews it is clear that people do in fact spend dwell time in the space;

- Taking lunch there, working in the Square come to Chamber square to eat
  - Came here for lunch break nicer than the other side of The Square more open, less 'junky' (*Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 5*)
- It is clear that for many chamber Square is an alternative to the parks nearby. Letting children run around to expend energy before/after library. The built space attracts people ie ramps for children using scooters. Closer than many other parks so good for children to run around in

Playground for small kids. Lives nearby, shops nearby, Park is further away so something here would be good. Greenery and seating. Blowing off steam and burning energy close to home. (*Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 9*)

The space is pretty good as it is; the kids come to scoot and run around before/after trips to the library. It's a more convenient open space than the park close to home, shops library. (*Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 3*)

Some of those exercise things, if they were accessible. Mine aren't little anymore so less reason to go to the park but still go to the library so would be helpful to have in the square and be accessible (*Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 4*)



Documenting observed activities in Chamber Square, photo by IAF

People did mention previous anti social behaviour particularly those who worked locally but all said this was not a reason to do nothing and the space should still be activated.

The only activity we attended in County Hall had no connection to Chamber Square. The event advertised the entrance to the building as Chamber Square but in fact the other entrance was used, further disconnecting the building from the space.

We found that when we were in Chamber Square itself, rather than one of the civic institutions, a number people approached us to see what it was about and mightn't necessarily react that much, however when passing back through the space they came to give their thoughts or add to what they'd thought originally. This also happened when we were in the library, though not in every case. This indicates that people have an interest in the space and its design.

50% of passers-by were happy to interact. Sometimes needed slight probing but many got really into the idea and most conversations were 5 mins plus.

When researching during larger events such as Dance2Connect or Mother Tongues we found participants were coming from further away than Tallaght, (*Appendix 2 Q1*). Those visitors often used more than one of the civic spaces. (*Appendix 2 Q12*) In comparison, when speaking to library visitors they seemed to be more local and using the library only in majority. (*Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 12*).

80% of those survey and the Dance event in the Civic Theatre would spend time in The Square rather than the surrounding public spaces (*Appendix 2, Q 11*).



French Mother Tongues workshops, photo by IAF

One observation made by the IAF during their research time was the presence of security at the doors of all the buildings surrounding the square; Rua Red, Civic Theatre, Tallaght Library and County Hall could be off putting to some visitors. As someone not familiar with the institutions or the space of Chamber Square itself it can feel intimidating when on arriving in Chamber Square you see security staff at every entrance but not the activities taking place within.



Spanish Mother Tongues workshops, photo by IAF



Set up for public consultations in Chamber Square, photo by IAF

## 5 Recommendations

We have had trouble accessing the residents right next to Chamber Square. While we now have a connection, it took quite a few months of the project. To ensure these voices are heard we feel it would be a good idea to include two sessions with the designers and this groups in the brief as well as two wider engagement sessions.

Seating and green space are most common to adults and children, and both demographics asked about activities that happen in the building to spill out to the square. They all mentioned that they would only want things to be temporary, so the spaces could be adapted for different uses. As that's the case, we recommend that the brief for an intervention is circulated more broadly than architects but includes artists, theatre, music and art practitioners and facilitators, graphic designers as it could be a signage installation, as well as the architectural community.

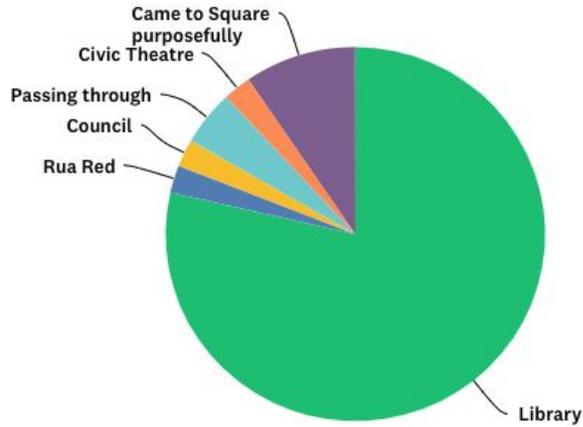
While an intervention is wanted it doesn't need to be permanent, huge or even a built thing. People want to see the space become more inviting, while still allowing the everyday activities that happen there to continue, and for it to continue to be a walk through space. From our research we believe even an effort to curate more events in the space by the civic groups would help activate the space ie. open air cinema, open air classes, open air concerts...etc. It would be our recommendation that in the open call for an intervention in Chamber Square a curated programme, complementing the current programmes in the surrounding civic spaces, would be beneficial.

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1: results from interviews from general research days, not under umbrella activities

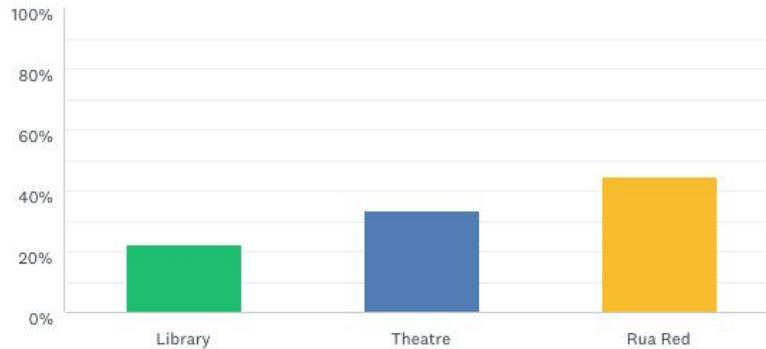
### What brought them to Chamber Square

Answered: 42 Skipped: 3



### Do they visit the other civic buildings

Answered: 9 Skipped: 36



### 3. What would you like to see in this space?

*Respondent 1* Works in the library, doesn't know why there's no seating has always thought there must be a reason behind it. finds the three institutes work separately a lot which is a pity. Does it all boil down to publicity to people know it's there

*Respondent 2* The plaza space I like, maybe some chairs

*Respondent 3* Usually go to Ballyroan Library but came to Tallaght cause had grand daughter with her who wanted to do the arts and crafts activities. Be nice to have seats or a fountain. Seating would be good. Replacing some of the paved cement with something softer for play. Could do painting classes outside. 'What time is the café over there open?' measure some of the distance out so people know their steps to encourage exercise.

*Respondent 4* Pass through a lot. Definitely seating. it would be a nice to sit & read a book from the library. Would crafting outside work? Why can't the kids craft activities in the library be outside on fine days. Even if it was under a Gazebo type structure. While kids are off doing arts & crafts adults can sit and read. Some of those exercise things, if they were accessible. Mine aren't little anymore so less reason to go to the park but still go to the library so would be helpful if have in the square and be accessible

*Respondent 5* Came here for lunch break nicer than the other side of The Square more open, less 'junky'

*Respondent 6* Really liked the Christmas procession last year, fire sculpture and choirs. Be good if could do more of those type things. As an open space it really works. Like Smithfield it would be good to be used in project or festivals. Temporary playground, kids bouncing castles, concerts, markets. Works in Rua Red would be good if the three spaces were integrated more. Projection on to Rua Red as cinema screen or even having permanent projections. Could be advertising there also to pay for it.

*Respondent 7* Playground. Active play space and slightly calmer seating. Reading and library activities

*Respondent 8* The space is pretty good as it is; the kids come to scoot and run around before/after trips to the library. It's amore convenient open space than the park close to home, shops library. More seating would be good, allow the library activity to spill out

*Respondent 9* Playground for small kids. Lives nearby, shops nearby, Park is further away so something here would be good. Greenery and seating. Blowing off steam and burning energy close to home.

*Respondent 10* Play space (works in HSE with children teens with High Behavioural challenges). Freer play areas would be good. urban playground stuff in summer time. It's windy so windbreaker might be needed. Don't know what the area is like at night. Sensory play or climb space.

*Respondent 11* Maybe a little market or something to catch attention and make you stop. For kids, an extension of the activities that happen in the library happening in the Square. But you'd have to be careful of insurance. Get some of the theatre people out here on good days, rehearsing etc. Music sessions or a choir would be nice

*Respondent 12* Only use the library, doesn't like locally, can't think of anything, maybe some seats.

*Respondent 13* Benches, greenery, flowers.

*Respondent 14*

'What might make you stop here?'

'A wall'

' For what; using, sitting on?'

'Something like that'

'What else might make it a fun place to stop?'

'More colours, benches and trees'

*Respondent 15* Colour. Used the space to get to and from Library (first time there), Seating and greenery would be nice

*Respondent 16* Commemoration maybe for someone local, a small plaque or something that changes regularly so can remember different things at different times. Seating Greenery, sandbox

*Respondent 17* A stage with curtains and dress up clothes! Sandbox in playhouse. Slide from roof into playhouse (child response)

*Respondent 18* Art classes, space for pets, somewhere to get snacks (child response)

*Respondent 19* Place Space- maybe swings but mainly space to run & climb; ramps & steps are really popular

*Respondent 20* Likes the stairs, running around the ramps. Could you have a playground? Somewhere to run

*Respondent 21* Slide. Sees, like a small garden from seed bombs. Swing or two. Not too many things or wouldn't be able to get into the library

*Respondent 22* Somewhere to skateboard. Kids need to run

*Respondent 23* Craft & art & music fair- local acts & artists, youth groups performing

*Respondent 24* Benches, planters, snakes & ladders, hopscotch on the ground. Young adults like to sit under the eaves of civic theatre and hang out it would be good to give them chairs. Kids come to scoot and cycle

*Respondent 25* water feature, seating, flower beds.

*Respondent 26* Playground

*Respondent 27* Cornershop. food stalls

*Respondent 28* Get rid of cars that aren't electric in the area. a Few stalls + food things. Fill it with some attractive make it look nice

*Respondent 29* Cycling and scooting

*Respondent 30* Outdoor table tennis. Hopscotch-snakes and ladders on the ground. Something low cost that is usable but destruction proof. Water jets. Youth groups to make murals on walls

*Respondent 31* like the square as is, open

*Respondent 32* Something for kids to play on, small low impact. Scoot/cycling track with lights, teaching children of about rules of the road while playing

*Respondent 33* Playground for small kids. Lives nearby, shops nearby, Park is further away so something here would be good. Greenery and seating. Blowing off steam and burning energy close to home.

*Respondent 34* Better lighting; past 8pm it's quite dark. More colour. Likes to see the kids play' no play spaces in the nearby apartments or other square. Like the chalk drawings. More greenery. An outdoor cinema

*Respondent 35* Love it. The quiet. Coffee in the Square, few chairs. Canopy maybe, it can be cold so maybe a low shelter. The space is lovely

*Respondent 36* Seating, greenery, outdoor reading space

*Respondent 37* Fountain, seating

*Respondent 38* Seating, greenery, markets, plaything (temporary-just for the summer maybe?)

*Respondent 39* Fix the fountain! Seating, café, food market, space to draw

*Respondent 40* Anything!

*Respondent 41* Seating & flowers

*Respondent 42* Seating, trees/greenery

*Respondent 43* Seating, greenery and food stalls

*Respondent 44* Playing tag, skate ramp. 'security so none gets robbed', library van, a space for making, inventing and experiments. 3D cinema

*Respondent 45* Seating + ice cream truck. Planters with herbs that locals can use

#### *Our Thoughts*

Aideen and I thought heaters would be useful. Using the digital screens in the library to promote all the institutes programme each week. rehearsals from rua red ensemble or choir in the square

### 3. What would you NOT like to see in this space?

A) Things happen here that need space, where would they go if they didn't have this space so don't fill the whole space

B) Not sure if want something permanent, temporary interventions would be better

C) No buildings please!

D) Don't want it to be too complicated, keep it simple

E) Car parking

F) Not too full- want to be able to pass through

G) Hope not to do too much to the square

## Appendix 2: results form survey at Dance 2 Connect

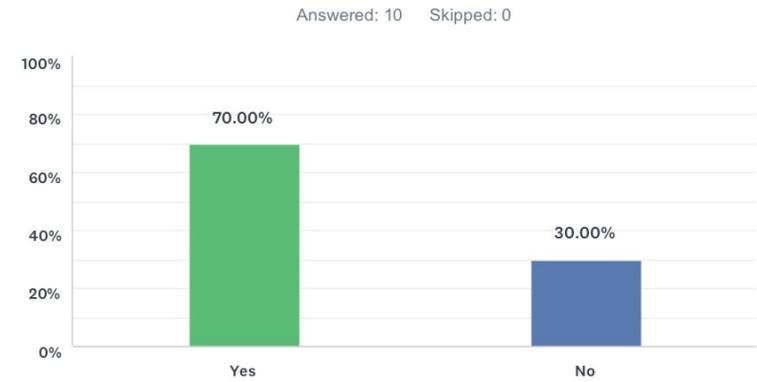
### Q1 Are you from / do you live in Tallaght?

30% Yes  
20% Nearby  
50% No

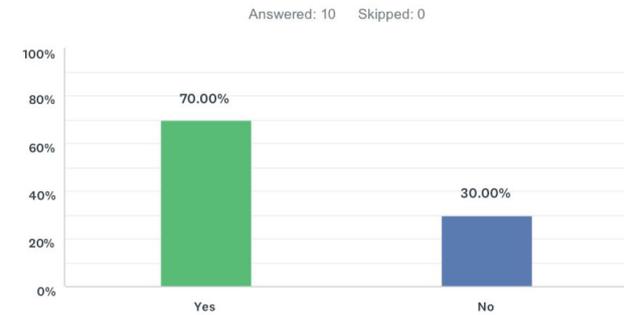
### Q2 Can you tell me / show me... where the library is?



### Q3 Can you tell me / show me... where RuaRed is?

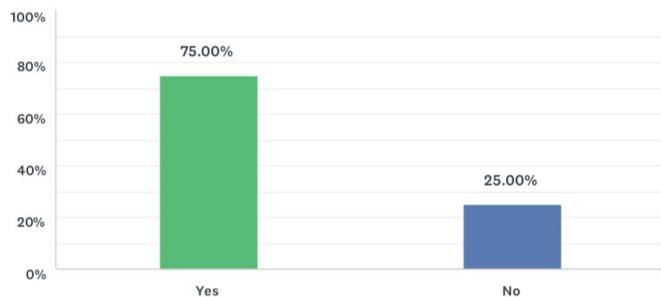


### Q4 Can you tell me / show me... where the county council buildings are?



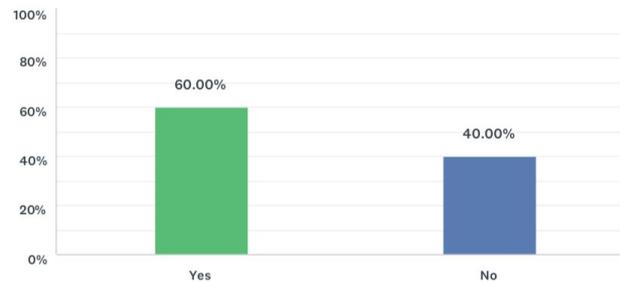
### Q5 Can you tell me / show me... where the nearest cinema is?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 2



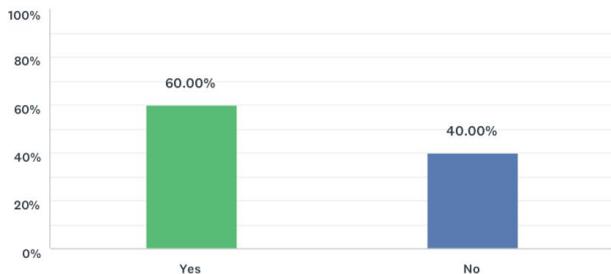
### Q8 Can you tell me / show me... where the nearest park is?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



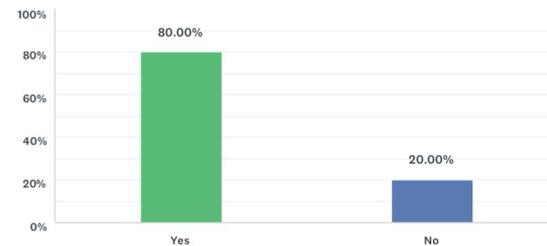
### Q6 Can you tell me / show me... where the nearest Aldi / Lidl is?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



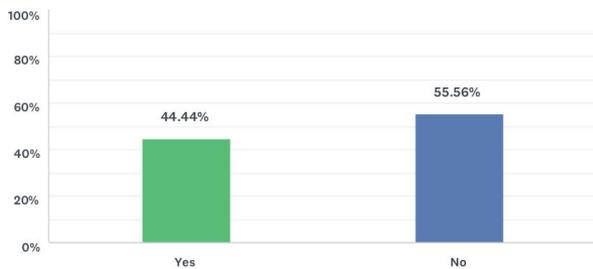
### Q9 Can you tell me / show me... where the nearest public space is?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



### Q7 Can you tell me / show me... where the nearest shop / supermarket is?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Q10 Can you give me directions of how you got here today? (ie landmarks)

**# RESPONSES**

- 1 Luas
- 2 drive past corky park
- 3 like near by so walked around that corner
- 4 got lost, drove roundabout and mcdonalds
- 5 drove, roundabout and then a mcdonalds
- 6 no just came on Luas
- 7 Luas
- 8 Luas
- 9 Belgrade South (Hospital)
- 10 IT Tallaght, same route as the 76

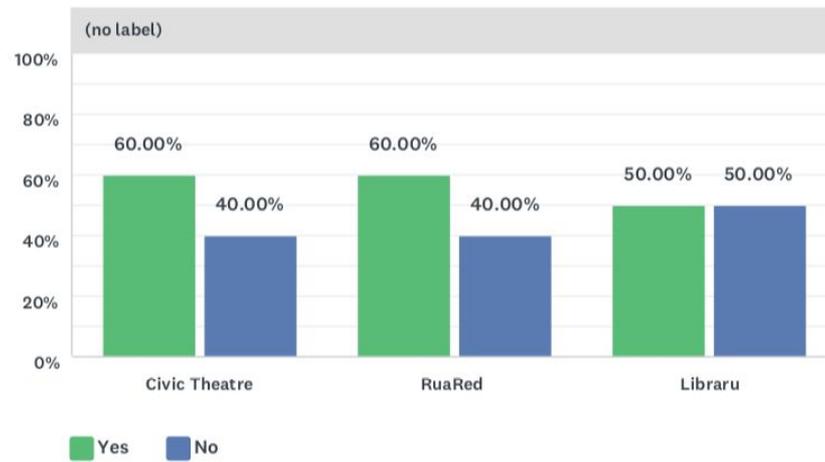
Q11 If I told you now, you'd a free 45 minutes. Where/how do you spend your time in Tallaght

**# RESPONSES**

- 1 The Square for food
- 2 The Square
- 3 playground in sean walsh or rua red
- 4 the square
- 5 the library
- 6 no maybe the square
- 7 The square
- 8 The Square
- 9 Square for food
- 10 The Square for Food

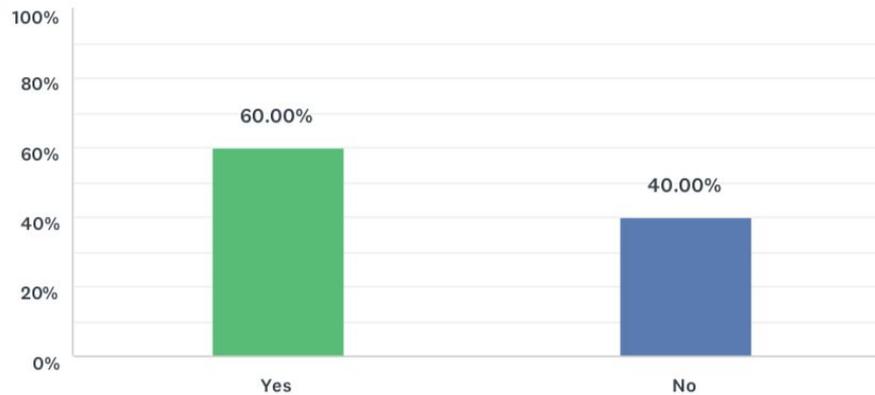
## Q12 Have you been to the Civic Theatre / RuaRed / Library before?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



## Q13 Have you been to Tallaght before?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



### Appendix 3: Results from Spanish Mother Tongues Workshop Game

	1st session	2nd session	3rd session	4th session	TOTAL
Green space	46	74	75	93	<b>288</b>
Yoga space	26	23	30	32	<b>111</b>
Reading space	15	34	34	26	<b>109</b>
Drama space	16	27	35	28	<b>106</b>
Water feature	13	25	37	26	<b>101</b>
Food space	30	9	22	27	<b>88</b>
Pet space	18	11	25	32	<b>86</b>
Play space	30	16	13	25	<b>84</b>
Sport space	18	26	18	15	<b>77</b>
Visual art space	21	11	17	13	<b>62</b>
Skateboarding	19	16	18	15	<b>68</b>

Other ideas					
Children	12	5			<b>17</b>
Swimming pool	2	5			<b>7</b>
School	3	3			<b>6</b>
Housing	2	2		2	<b>6</b>
Scooting	6				<b>6</b>
Bridge between buildings	2	1	1	2	<b>6</b>
Gallery		2		2	<b>4</b>
Beach		3			<b>3</b>
Sculpture	1	1	1		<b>3</b>
Ladder		3			<b>3</b>
Roof garden			3		<b>3</b>
Drama school			3		<b>3</b>
Airport			1	2	<b>3</b>
Music		1		1	<b>2</b>
Tesco				2	<b>2</b>
Slides				2	<b>2</b>
Flag	1				<b>1</b>
Tower	1				<b>1</b>
Big door		1			<b>1</b>
Arch	1				<b>1</b>
Train				1	<b>1</b>
Pond				1	<b>1</b>
Rock climbing				1	<b>1</b>
Tree			1		<b>1</b>
Gazebo		1			<b>1</b>
Underground parking		1			<b>1</b>

## Appendix 4: Results from Spanish Mother Tongues Workshop Game

	<b>24 April</b>	<b>27 April</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Reading space	55	105	<b>160</b>
Green space	52	82	<b>134</b>
Water feature	40	68	<b>108</b>
Play space	74	23	<b>97</b>
Drama space	62	35	<b>97</b>
Visual art space	42	51	<b>93</b>
Food space	51	37	<b>88</b>
Yoga space	29	49	<b>78</b>
Skateboarding	52	26	<b>78</b>
Pet space	19	40	<b>59</b>
Sport space	35	24	<b>59</b>
<b>Other ideas</b>			
Roof garden			
Space for birds			
Colour			
Tea parties			
Outdoor screenings			
Big swing			

# Irish Architecture Foundation

Irish Architecture Foundation,  
15 Bachelors Walk,  
Dublin 1

t: 01 874 7200

e: [info@architecturefoundation.ie](mailto:info@architecturefoundation.ie)

w. [architecturefoundation.ie](http://architecturefoundation.ie)