

Environmental
and Social
Impact



Impact Story

35th International Geographical Congress 2024

Celebrating a world of difference

Dublin City



CONFERENCE DETAILS

WHEN

August 2024

DELEGATES

2,645

WHERE

Dublin City University

ECONOMIC IMPACT

€6.6m

Dublin held the 35th International Geographical Congress (IGC) in August 2024, and it was aligned with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Established in 1934, the Geographical Society of Ireland (GSI) is the professional representative organisation of geographers in Ireland. The GSI raises awareness of the value and impact of Geography in Ireland and beyond, through a diverse range of activities and collaborations.



Established in 1922, the International Geographical Union is an international, non-governmental, professional organization devoted to the development of the discipline of Geography. The purposes of the IGU are primarily to promote Geography through initiating and coordinating geographical research and teaching globally.

CELEBRATING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE



The event was held at **Dublin City University (DCU)** in collaboration with **Dublin City Council**. Delegates came from 74 countries and 5 continents, representing a diverse and global gathering of established and early career scholars, public sector policymakers and officials, as well as NGO's.

The theme was 'Celebrating a World of Difference' and the main objective of the event was to promote interdisciplinary research and encourage collaboration across different geographic disciplines and related fields. Throughout the five days there were 30 parallel sessions daily, covering diverse topics organised by 44 thematic Commissions. Global geographic research was showcased with over

2,500 talks and 400 poster presentations.

A cornerstone of the Congress was the Public Engagement Programme, which aimed to bridge the gap between academia and the wider public, inviting communities to engage with geographical thinking and research in ways that resonate with everyday life.

The event had a significant economic impact of €6.6 million on the local economy. Regional field trips, including peatland degradation and restoration in Wicklow and the Dark Sky Park in Mayo, enriched participant engagement with Ireland's diverse landscapes. The congress also included a cross-border dimension through a field-day in Belfast which examined and celebrated social and cultural differences on the island.

The 35th International Geographical Congress left a lasting impact on the field and a significant social impact. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Public Engagement:** The Congress included a Public Engagement Programme with events, interactive workshops, and outreach initiatives. Events like the City Climate Walk and Mapping Ireland through Time engaged almost 300 members of the public, adding societal impact to the Congress. A core goal was to bring the Congress beyond the university campus to generate wider educational benefits.
- **Diverse Participation:** The event brought together delegates from 74 countries and 5 continents, promoting global collaboration and cultural exchange.

Prof. Anindita Datta made history as the first woman from the Global South to give a keynote speech at the IGC and to be elected to the IGU Executive Committee. She presented her paper on "Worlding feminist geographies: on genderscapes beyond the anglosphere."

- **Geography Olympiad:** As part of IGC 2024 in Dublin, the Geography Olympiad for Ireland (<https://igc2024dublin.org/olympiad/>) was launched. This will now be an annual event engaging Senior Cycle secondary students with their global peers.

Sustainability was core to the event planning and here are some of the environmental highlights:

- **Carbon mitigation:** The conference was hosted in DCU which is part of the Dublin City Council de-carbonising zone. The event raised funds through an optional environmental levy for delegates, which will support carbon insetting initiatives on university campuses in Ireland as a legacy project.
- **Hybrid event:** An innovative hybrid event was co-hosted with the Royal Geographical Society in London. The keynote speaker was in Dublin and the discussants were in London enabling colleagues at another event in London to experience the event with no additional carbon impact.
- **Digital Access:** By providing digital access only through the conference app and online programme, the event eliminated the need for printing, significantly reducing paper waste.
- **Sustainable Materials:** The procurement of sustainable badges and lanyards for all delegates minimized the environmental impact of event materials.
- **Water and Waste Management:** Delegates were encouraged to bring their own water bottles, and water refill stations were provided, eliminating the use of single-use plastics. Managing food waste by requiring pre-notification if delegates did not require lunch resulted in minimal food waste. Conference menus also ensured vegetarian options as standard.



Speaking to delegates at the Congress, Conference Chair, Niamh Moore Cherry highlighted the legacy of IGC2024

“ You have seen what is central to our DNA in Ireland – the ability to convene, to network, to bring people together for positive purposes. A powerful legacy of this event would be to take the networking and dialogue that has begun this week and build on it in the coming months and years through continued engagements with individuals, with groups and with events; to use our networks for good, in the service of our discipline but also our society and planet. ”

Niamh Moore Cherry, Chair of the International Geographical Congress 2024

