



Celebrating Twenty Years in the Community

2005 — 2025

MOBILE EDITION · A COMMEMORATIVE BROCHURE

Scoil Oideachas Le Chéile Bhaile Chláir



CETNS from 2005 - 2019

— WELCOME

Twenty Years in the Community

In 2005, a small group of families in Claregalway set out to build a school. One that would welcome every child equally, whatever their background or beliefs.

This brochure is the story of how it started: twenty years of growth, change, friendship and learning, told two years at a time. Of prefabs and new buildings, Green Flags and graduations, art auctions and All-Irelands.

Mostly, though, it is the story of a community. Thank you for being part of it.



CETNS from 2019



A Poem For Our School

Our story begins down Cloonbiggen Road
a white bungalow, a tree-shaded yard
where laughter rang out as we played families, skipped, chased
to the bounce of balls volleyed over a clothesline.
In the classroom we gathered for hearthside lessons
young voices rhyming Teidí beag aláinn, teidí beag buí.
We'd huddle on the rug to hear
The Hungry Caterpillar or Handa's Surprise;
we learned to form letters, how to string them together
into words that soon became stories.
We began to mould our dreams in our hands like kinetic sand.

When we outgrew our first home
years of learning were packed into boxes and moved to
Drom na Gaoithe.
Empty walls, a blank canvas, soon filled with colour,
our footsteps beat a new rhythm in wide hallways,
in the halla our teams found new space to play
on court and stage.
In one room a forest grew - birch and hazel,
oak and elm - their branches filled with books.
In Seomra Sonas we spread a carpet
on which to build imaginary worlds,
a safe space to debate big ideas.
Outside, around the playground, wildflowers burst into bloom -
nóinín mór, biolar, slánlus, seibhirín buí.

We have grown and changed with CET,
but our values stay the same -
kindness, inclusion, respect
are encoded into our stories
with the memories of friendships forged,
teams built, games won and lost.
Like the wildflowers CET will continue to grow,
year after year, resilient, diverse and full of life.
The seeds of our learning will catch the wind and carry us,
with all we need, out into the world.



A chairde,

Twenty years ago, CETNS opened its doors with a small group of pupils and staff, a clear vision, and a determination to create something truly special. From humble beginnings in a repurposed bungalow in Cloonbiggen to the vibrant, modern school community we know today, the journey of CETNS has been remarkable.

Much has changed over those twenty years. Our school has grown from a handful of pupils and staff in 2005 to the thriving community it is today. We have embraced new curricula, welcomed new staff members, and moved into a state-of-the-art building situated within a campus of educational excellence. Yet, despite all this growth and change, the most important thing has remained the same, CETNS is, first and foremost, a community.

A very special tribute must be paid to our founding principal, Terri Claffey, whose leadership guided the school from 2005 to 2019. Through her determination, vision, and unwavering commitment, she created the strong foundations upon which CETNS continues to flourish today. It is a privilege to build on the inclusive and child-centred ethos she established from day one.

Every day, our corridors are filled with bright, creative, and thoughtful young people who possess a strong sense of fairness, compassion, and social justice, and who genuinely want to make the world a better place.

As Michael Morpurgo wrote, “It’s the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom,” and CETNS has always been shaped by the dedication and care of its staff and wider community.

As we celebrate this momentous milestone, we honour the legacy of the past twenty years and look forward with confidence and optimism to the next chapter in the story of CETNS.
Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Principal



I joined the staff of Galway North Educate Together in September 2006. It was a real privilege to join Terri and Hilary and be part of a “start-up” school.

The most striking thing I remember from those days was the sense of belonging to a community; a community who wanted something different for their children, who believed in equality and had a vision for an education system reflective of a modern Ireland.

Even though we had very humble surroundings, we always had the highest ambitions for our students and sought to provide them with all of the skills and capabilities they would need as they set out in life. It has been a journey that I am so proud to be part of. Looking back now we achieved so much with so little. I am a better person because of the students and families I met, working with colleagues who I count as friends and seeing our amazing school flourish into the vibrant place it is today.

I have had so many highlights down through the years; Peace Proms, Our first musical; The Wizard of Oz, Michael D. Higgins raising our Green Flag, winning the All-Ireland volleyball competition, Graduation in Claregalway Castle on a beautiful sunny June evening, Terrifest.....

Preparing for our 20 year celebration has provided me with a lovely opportunity to remember, reflect and take pride in a job well done. It was then and is now all about the people, the spirit, the community.

How lucky we are to be part of it!

Niamh Mannion

Deputy Principal



As Chairperson of the Board of Management of Claregalway Educate Together National School, it is an honour to mark the 20-year anniversary of our school.

From its beginnings in a small bungalow in 2005, CETNS has grown into a vibrant school community of over 200 pupils and more than 20 staff. Today's state-of-the-art building and facilities stand as a testament to the vision, commitment and hard work of all those who have contributed along the way.

I would like to acknowledge the vision and leadership of founding Principal Terri Claffey as well as the previous staff, Boards of Management and their members who have passed through CETNS over the years, whose dedication nurtured the school from its initial acorn into the strong oak it is today.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to recognise the outstanding work of our current principal, Aoife Winston, and her team of exceptional staff, who continue to create a warm, inclusive and dynamic environment where the Educate Together ethos of equality, respect and child-centred education thrives.

At the heart of our school community are, of course, the students themselves, both past and present. Whose energy and spirit are reflected in every corner - in their work, their achievements and the fabric of the school. The vibrant displays, photographs and shared memories all tell the story of a school alive with creativity, curiosity and joy.

Finally, I thank our parents and guardians for the trust you place in us. Your support is central to the continued success of our school community.

Here's to the next chapter in the story of Claregalway Educate Together National School.

Kind regards,

Catherine Joyce
Chairperson BOM



Celebrating our journey

A Year of Beginnings

2005–07

2005 – 06

- ◆ Grand opening in the Cloonbiggen Road premises – featured in the Tuam Herald.
- ◆ Founding Principal Terri Claffey leads the way, with Deputy Principal Hilary and a staff of just two.
- ◆ Fundraising fuels everything: tea-towels, a race night, a hair cut-a-thon, jumble sales and a duck race.
- ◆ Our first Parents' Association and first Student Council are formed; the school logo is designed by Lynn Kenny.



Photographs from 2005–06 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ A staff of two becomes a staff of six; a prefab is added in October to make room.
- ◆ The first Galway North Educate Together Art Auction is opened by Michael D. Higgins.
- ◆ After community consultation, the school is renamed Claregalway Educate Together National School.
- ◆ French classes begin, and a new bus route arrives from Dunmore.



Photographs from 2006–07 – from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- IRA decommissioning
- Ireland win the Triple Crown
- Ryder Cup held at the K Club
- Ireland's first national Culture Night

2 → 6

a staff that doubled, then trebled, in a single year



Putting Down Roots

2007–09

2007 – 08

- ◆ A staff of 8 and 64 students.
- ◆ An art auction raises over €9,000 for the school.
- ◆ The school garden takes root in Cloonbiggen.
- ◆ Our very first Green Flag is raised — by Michael D. Higgins.
- ◆ Spikeball training begins.



Photographs from 2007–08 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ CET receives permanent recognition from the Department of Education.
- ◆ The Tuam Herald visits for a feature on the school.
- ◆ A board-game day raises €99
- ◆ 6th class take a school tour to Killaloe.



Photographs from 2008-09 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Ireland enters recession
- The 'Miracle on the Hudson'
- Barack Obama inaugurated
- Swine-flu vaccination programme begins

1st

Green Flag flying over the school



OUR STORY · CHAPTER 03 OF 10

Room to Grow

2009–11

2009 – 10

- ◆ 9 staff and 69 students – the staff room doubling as a language-support room.
- ◆ Flooding hits Claregalway; an art auction at the Westwood Hotel raises much-needed funds.
- ◆ 6th class hold their first-ever graduation in the SMA Hall – four graduates!
- ◆ The 6th class team win the Ballybane Library Table Quiz.



Photographs from 2009–10 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ A new modular building brings two bright classrooms and a support room for almost 90 pupils.
- ◆ The Parents' Association funds an interactive whiteboard for the Infant classroom.
- ◆ A new grassy 'Castle Field' opens for play and PE.
- ◆ A snow-day closure during Ireland's coldest December on record.



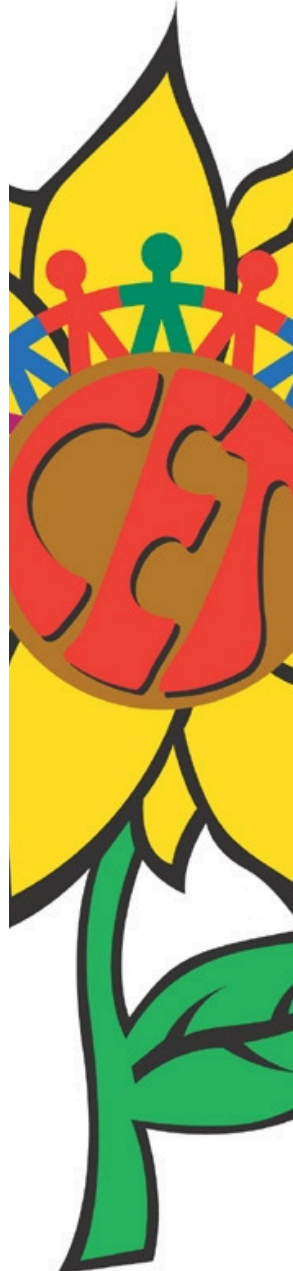
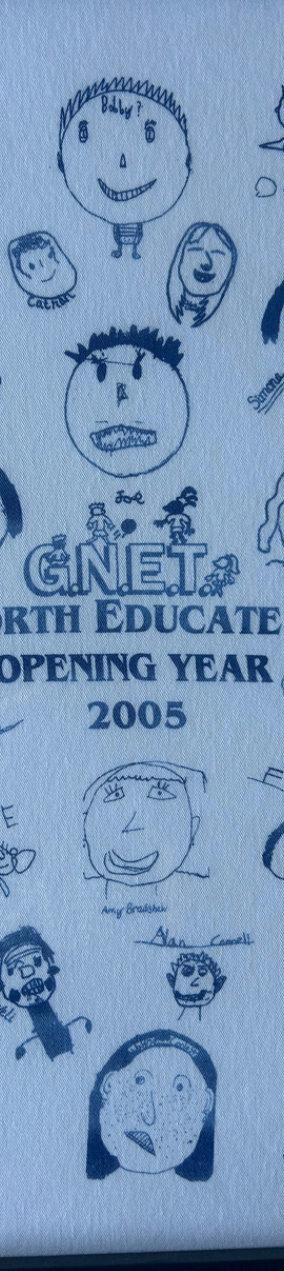
Photographs from 2010–11 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

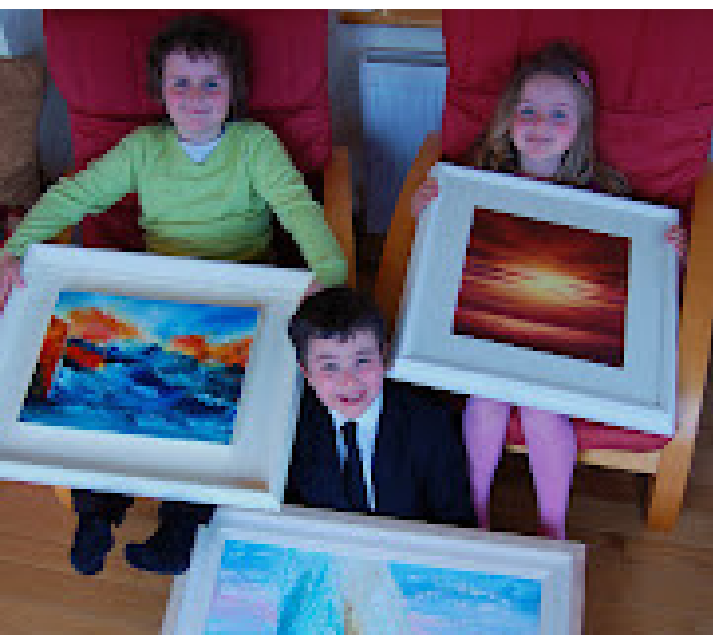
- 33 Chilean miners rescued
- Earthquake & tsunami in Japan
- Queen Elizabeth II visits Ireland
- President Obama visits Ireland

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graduates in our very first
6th class graduation









Building the Future

2011–13

2011 –12

- ◆ Welcome news arrives: CETNS is listed for a brand-new school building.
- ◆ A new Board of Management is elected.
- ◆ ‘Mr Bug’ visits with a selection of bugs and reptiles.
- ◆ An intergenerational mosaic project brings families of Claregalway together.



Photographs from 2011–12 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ The Department of Education announces a Whole School Evaluation.
- ◆ ‘Walk to School on Wednesdays’ begins as part of our Green-Schools work.
- ◆ Pupils complete the global Peace Crane project.



Photographs from 2012–13 – from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Katie Taylor wins Olympic gold
- Barack Obama re-elected
- London 2012 Olympic Games
- ‘Gangnam Style’ sweeps the world

listed

for a new building – the future begins



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Our early home, reimagined - from the anniversary artwork

A School of Firsts

2013–15

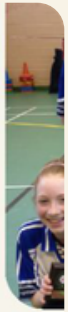
2013 –14

- ◆ Awarded a 4th Green Flag (Travel), raised by Little John Nee.
- ◆ A tribute stone is placed in the school garden for Keeva Bradshaw, founding member and parent.
- ◆ The first edition of the Student Council newspaper is published; S'Cool.
- ◆ CETNS marks World Autism Day – staff, children and parents wear blue.



Photographs from 2013-14 - from the school archive posters

- ◆ Runners-up at the Spikeball Primary Schools National Final in Mary Immaculate College.
- ◆ Sixteen iPads are bought for the school.
- ◆ The school choir, R Tunes, sings at Graduation.
- ◆ Educate Together's first secondary school opens; Knocknacarra and Tuam ETNS open their doors.



Photographs from 2014-15 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Ireland exits the EU/IMF bailout
- Ireland is the first country to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote

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iPads
1 school newspaper
4 Green Flags



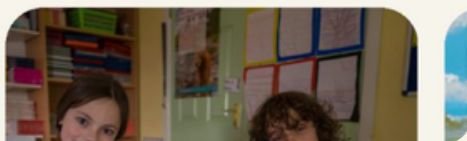
OUR STORY · CHAPTER 06 OF 10

On the Map

2015–17

2015 –16

- ◆ CETNS makes the Department of Education building list – 30 Galway schools listed for 2016–2021.
- ◆ Peace Proms for the very first time.
- ◆ The tricolour is raised to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising.
- ◆ A presentation of percussion instruments to Tuam ETNS to mark their first year.



Photographs from 2015–16 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ All-Ireland Volleyball winners, March 2017.
- ◆ The first internet-safety training for children and parents, with Zeeko.
- ◆ Conversational Irish classes for parents begin after school.
- ◆ Flood-relief construction begins in Claregalway.



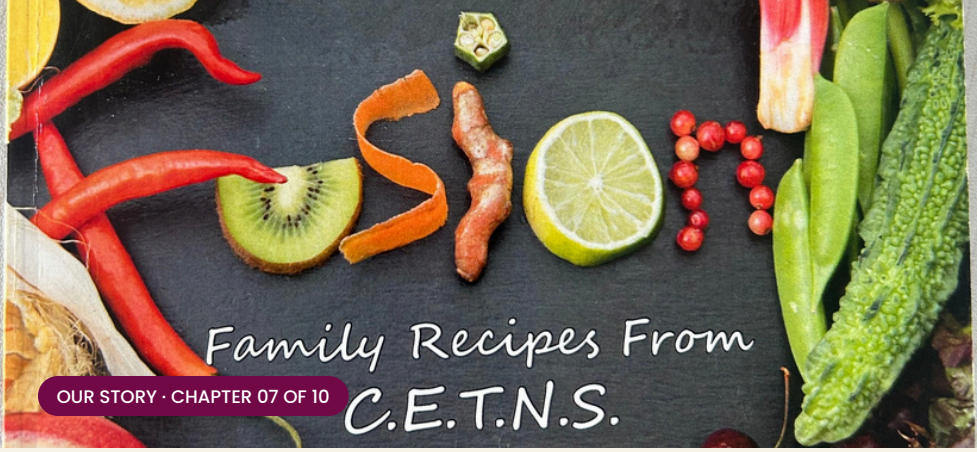
Photographs from 2016–17 – from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- The Brexit referendum
- The Paris Climate Agreement
- Rio Olympics – the O'Donovan brothers' win silver

All-Ireland

Volleyball Winners – 2017



Recipes & Reputations

2017–19

2017–18

- ◆ Fusion, a recipe book of family recipes gathered by pupils, wins a special award under the European Region of Gastronomy.
- ◆ The much-loved Chess after-school club begins.
- ◆ The Tuam Herald showcases school life: volleyball, Peace Proms, hurling, science and the Book of Good Deeds.
- ◆ €190 raised for 'Blue for Autism' day.



Photographs from 2017-18 - from the school archive posters

- ◆ Planning permission is granted for the new school building; the architect's plans arrive.
- ◆ March 2019 - the sod is turned on the new site.
- ◆ The Wizard of Oz Winter Celebration (3rd-6th class).
- ◆ Our first time performing in the Claregalway St Patrick's Day festival.



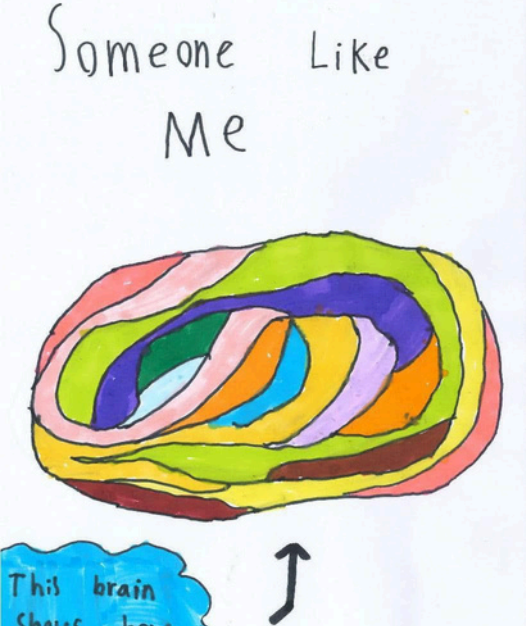
Photographs from 2018-19 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Storm Ophelia and the 'Beast from the East'
- Michael D. Higgins re-elected President

Sod Turned

on the site of our new home



Our new building – from the anniversary artwork

A New Home

2019–21

2019 –20

- ◆ CETNS moves into its brand-new building.
- ◆ Junior and Senior Infants explore Rinville Park; Aistear play-based learning takes off.
- ◆ Paul Nash sponsors a set of school jerseys.
- ◆ 12 March 2020 – the school closes for Covid-19; online learning carries on until June.



Photographs from 2019–20 - from the school archive posters

- ◆ A careful return to school – masks, ground markings, staggered entrances and sanitising stations.
- ◆ ‘Lots of Socks’ day for Down Syndrome awareness.
- ◆ A new bike shelter is installed, and Sports Day goes ahead.



Photographs from 2020–21 – from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- The Covid-19 pandemic and global lockdowns
- Vaccinations begin
- A shift to remote learning and work

a new home

in a year quite like no other



Coming Together Again

2021–23

2021–22

- ◆ The first Le Chéile class opens at CETNS.
- ◆ Pupils work with artist Joseph Hillier on the 'Elemental' artwork at the school entrance (Per Cent for Art scheme).
- ◆ Paul Nash donates a set of school jerseys.
- ◆ A socially-distanced graduation ceremony in June.



Photographs from 2021–22 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ Founding Principal Terri Claffey retires
- ◆ A second Le Chéile class opens.
- ◆ The hurling team win three group matches and reach their first Cumann na mBunscoil final.
- ◆ The inaugural Terri Claffey Cup inter-schools table quiz takes place.



Photographs from 2022-23 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Russia invades Ukraine
- Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin
- The coronation of King Charles III

2

Le Chéile classes, and a first hurling final



OUR STORY · CHAPTER 10 OF 10

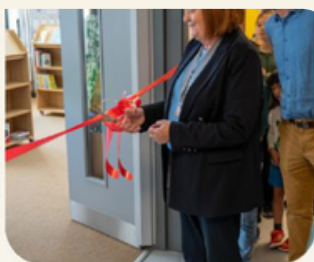
Weathering every storm – from the anniversary artwork

Champions & Changemakers

2023–25

2023 –24

- ◆ The official opening of the Woodlands Library by Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde.
- ◆ The first Toy Swap event; the chess team defend their County Championship title – and win again.
- ◆ MEP Maria Walsh and Hildegard Naughton TD visit to talk about the European Parliament.
- ◆ The Triple Crown and Six Nations trophies visit CETNS; 6th class visit the Ombudsman for Children and the Dáil.



Photographs from 2023–24 – from the school archive posters

- ◆ Winners of the SuperValu Football Tournament, with Coolarne NS.
- ◆ 5th and 6th class take part in Peace Proms in UL.
- ◆ Junior Infants and Dean Rawlinson win the 'Someone Like Me' Neurodiversity Art Competition.
- ◆ SNA Appreciation Day, an International Pot Luck, and the 2024 Bake Sale.



Photographs from 2024-25 - from the school archive posters

Meanwhile ...

- Ireland's population passes 5 million for the first time since the Famine
- Two constitutional referendums are held

champions

of County Galway chess -
defended and won

Twenty Years Strong

Our twentieth year has been one to remember – a fresh new identity, a clutch of sporting honours, and a community in full voice.

- ◆ A brand-new identity – a new school logo and brand for our next chapter.
- ◆ The girls' football team, with Coolarne, win the SuperValu Cup final.
- ◆ A mixed team reaches the Volleyball All-Ireland finals in UL – narrowly beaten in the final.
- ◆ The chess team come third in the Galway NS Championship.
- ◆ An extension to the Astro area at the front of the school.
- ◆ CETNS takes part in the local Claregalway St Patrick's Day festival.

Meanwhile ...

A new President of Ireland, Catherine Connolly.

To every child who played, performed, competed and created this year – and to the staff, coaches and families behind them – thank you.

You have given us a twentieth year worth celebrating.

A Special Welcome

We are honoured to welcome Hildegarde Naughton, TD, as our guest of honour today.

A local Teachta Dála and a long-standing supporter of Claregalway Educate Together, Hildegarde has followed the school's journey for many years. In 2024 she visited CETNS alongside MEP Maria Walsh to talk with pupils about the work of the Dáil and the European Parliament – a visit our school still remembers well.

It means a great deal to have her here to help us mark twenty years in the community.



Wonder Years

— WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Wonder Years

Right at the heart of our school community, Wonder Years is where many of our youngest children take their very first steps in learning.

Offering both pre-school and after-school care, Wonder Years gives children a warm, playful and nurturing place to grow – building friendships, confidence and curiosity long before, and long after, the school bell rings. For many Claregalway families, it is where the CETNS journey begins.

Pre-school

After-school care

Breakfast Club



LOOKING FORWARD

Here's to the Next Twenty

We've spent these pages looking back. Now we look forward – to the next twenty years of Claregalway Educate Together, and to the children who will live them.

leaders creatives doctors artists
dancers singers scientists
footballers makers carers
dreamers neighbours

Whoever they become, our hope is the same: that they carry inclusion with them, that they respect one another and the world around them, and that community and environment always make room for each other.

The first twenty years built the school.
The next twenty are for them.





*Scoil Oideachas Le Chéile
Bhaile Chláir*



This mobile edition was made to be read, shared and kept – twenty years of Claregalway Educate Together, in your pocket.

Be Inclusive · Be Innovative · Be Yourself

www.claregalwayet.ie

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY · 2005–2025