

creating  
**MAGIC**

Developing Arts-based Practices  
with Young People

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource is the result of a three-year collaboration between the National Youth Arts Programme, the National Youth Federation and the City of Dublin Youth Service Board.

The initial idea to develop this resource arose as a result of collective needs expressed by the Youth Arts Forum, an initiative of the National Youth Arts Programme. Many people were involved in this process and include the following: **Jim Cathcart** formerly of the National Youth Federation, **Monica Corcoran**, formerly of the National Youth Arts Programme and **Emer Mc Gowan** and **Irma Grothius**, formerly of the City of Dublin Youth Service Board.

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## **NATIONAL YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMME**

The National Youth Arts Programme (NYAP) is an initiative of the National Youth Council of Ireland and is supported by the Arts Council and the Department of Education and Science (Youth Affairs Section). The NYAP is dedicated to the development and advancement of youth arts in Ireland. It aims specifically to realise the potential of young people through good quality practice and to develop appropriate policies and activities at local, regional and national level.

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations and is a recognised social partner on behalf of young people in Ireland.

The National Youth Council of Ireland recently launched its policy on young people and the arts entitled 'Arts in their lives'. The NYAP has also recently published the 'National Youth Arts Programme Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006'.



## **CITY OF DUBLIN YOUTH SERVICE BOARD**

The City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB) is a statutory sub-committee of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee. CDYSB is appointed by the CDVEC to make recommendations on youth work policy, programme development, grant aid and support services required to assist in the development of youth work at community level in Dublin. It is also the administering agency for three funds provided by Government. The aim of CDYSB is to promote, support and co-ordinate the development of voluntary youth clubs, community based youth projects and youth services in the City of Dublin to meet the needs of young people. The position of Arts Development officer with CDYSB (part-time) is a recent phenomenon.



## **NATIONAL YOUTH FEDERATION**

The National Youth Federation is the co-ordinating and development agency for Local Youth Services in Ireland. The NYF is committed to promoting community based youth services, which are relevant, accessible and attractive to young people. For more than 40 years the NYF in association with its network of 20 Local Youth Services has assisted in the personal and social development of thousands of young people as we aspire towards an Ireland where young people are valued and involved.

The National Youth Federation has its own Arts Policy and is committed to promoting and developing arts practice with young people.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arts and youth work have overlapped since the emergence of youth as a legitimate grouping with its own identity and values. The practice of the arts within youth work is a growing sector and many tried and tested approaches and methodologies have provided a firm foundation on which to develop effective arts work with young people.

This publication is supported by a dialogue that has been taking place in youth work, which has looked at the value and importance of the arts and young people. In more recent years this dialogue has become increasingly animated and this is due mainly to the dramatic increase in the number and range of initiatives and projects by young people, artists, arts workers and youth workers across the country. These initiatives have been equally diverse in the range and combinations of art forms explored.

This document describes the processes and realities of developing an arts project with young people. In order to ensure a cost effective project, energetically and financially for the artist or youth worker with limited experience in youth arts we have tried to illustrate the many phases involved in moving from the original idea to exploring an art form through to the final completion of a project or programme. Also, this resource describes the various elements that contribute to a positive interaction between young people and an art form.

If you are currently running an arts project or you are thinking about getting started, this publication should prove very helpful. It is intended as a guide for both youth workers and artists who wish to carry out an arts project with a group of young people. It is, however, not aimed at planning and running 'once off' facilitated workshops. Rather its focus is on arts projects or programmes (large or small) which take place over a period of time.

It is important to acknowledge, at this stage, that arts projects in youth work can take many forms. There are many youth workers in Ireland and abroad, currently facilitating arts work with young people. Some have formal training in the arts, others have increased their arts skills through ad hoc and short term training and/or practical experience in the workplace or in their personal lives. In some situations, artists are contracted by youth work organisations to work on particular projects. In others, artist and youth worker will collaboratively run the arts project. Some projects may involve weekly sessions over say a 6-week period whereas others can last up to one year or more with the group meeting more frequently. Clearly, every project is unique because the elements that are involved are specific to that context.

If you decide to lead an arts project yourself, be aware of the arts skill and expertise that are required to carry it out. Know your own limitations and be realistic about what you can take on. Importantly, be honest with young people. Avoid building false hopes and expectations that cannot be realised.

In order to illustrate the key characteristics of arts work with young people and to illuminate the process involved, this document will focus on one particular type of project – when an artist and a youth worker collaborate together.



## 2. THE ARTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### THE ARTS

Today, the arts are becoming increasingly evident in settings often described as non-traditional such as youth clubs, hospitals, libraries, colleges, prisons, community centres and housing estates. Many young people, now, more than ever, have the opportunity to come into contact with art forms and artists from a variety of disciplines. For some it may be a brief engagement – perhaps a few short workshops – and for others it may be a more in-depth arts project lasting a number of months or more.

Creating an artwork is a personal experience. The young person draws upon his or her personal resources to create the result. The dynamic that is created through this interaction between a young person and an art form is perhaps more easily experienced rather than understood. It is difficult to adequately describe the value to a young person of standing in front of an audience of family and friends being seen and being applauded. How can we describe in words what it feels like for a young person to see his or her photograph on display, or to be asked about a piece of pottery, or to see his/her painting on the wall at home? What a young person can experience through the arts is a sense of where they fit in. It offers them a form of expression and a way of engaging with the world. Through having access to the arts and the opportunity to participate in the arts young people have the voice to express their true identity.

Creative expression - through the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines - has the power to nurture the development of the young person. The accessibility of particular art forms can help create a more equal playing field in particular for young people who experience a lack of opportunity. Through an art form, young people can explore and create their own image of success. They can express who they are and communicate their identity and their culture.

Engagement with an art form can provide young people with creative experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies. These experiences are real and meaningful. Through interaction with an art form, a young person is drawn to make a personal statement, to make choices, and to take a risk.

## YOUTH WORK

The essence of Youth Work<sup>1</sup> is about creating opportunities for young people to discover and develop themselves and relate to and reflect on the world around them. This is achieved through building positive and encouraging relationships between young people and the adult leaders who work with them. The use of art forms such as the visual arts, drama, dance, video, photography, creative writing, etc. are all means of achieving these goals. Youth Work supports and values participation by young people in taking decisions about their own life and the world around them.

**1** The Youth Work Act 2001 defines Youth Work as follows:

'Youth Work means a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations'.

## THE ARTS IN YOUTH WORK

There is a discussion in the world of Youth Work that describes the value of the arts in two ways:

**Intrinsic** – the arts experience in its own right and for its own sake

**Extrinsic** – the arts used as a method to meet Youth Work goals

Whatever the starting point or motivation the commitment and decision to engage young people through an art form is a positive step.

Many youth workers have a commitment to arts based programmes with young people. However, many do not have the necessary arts skills to lead such a programme. On the other hand, there are artists that have had exposure to Youth Work processes through projects and initiatives with youth organisations. However, this exposure is often limited and many artists may not have the experience to fully support and motivate young people in their involvement. The primary focus of this document is to develop an arts project with an artist and youth worker working in collaboration – two sets of skills and expertise available to support young people in their artistic expression. The choice of this model is motivated by two factors: firstly it provides the opportunity to clearly describe the practicalities of planning and running an arts project with young people and secondly it is a model that has been tested and proven to work and one that benefits artist, youth worker and in particular young people.

The creative process can for some young people give expression to reactions and emotions that may not have been acknowledged previously. In some cases the exploration may be deeply personal and take the young person to a place within where they discover something about themselves. Awareness and sensitivity is required of the youth worker and artist to support young people in this exploration. In such situations, Youth Work expertise is required both within and outside of sessions as an additional support to the young person.

Young people are at a point in their lives when they are open to new experiences, to taking risks and searching for possibilities. However for many young people life experiences, cultural influences, lack of opportunity and social exclusion can impact on their ability to interact with an art form with confidence. For many young people this period in life can be difficult. There are times when young people doubt themselves and their ability and can feel separated from the world around them. For some young people, it is the relationship with youth worker and artist that supports, encourages and motivates them to stay involved. This positively challenges them regarding their perceptions of their own creative ability.

The developmental years are a time when young people are establishing their own identity and exploring the world and its possibilities. The arts create a space where this exploration can take place and where young people can be heard and taken seriously. When young people and an art form come together something unique takes place and what emerges from that interaction is also unique. There is vibrancy in the interaction, an energy, an eagerness – a magic.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Positive relationships are central to a successful arts project with young people. In many cases, the reason why young people come to a club or group is because of the positive relationship they have with the youth worker. In that relationship they find something they value and that brings them back time and time again, often to buildings and premises that are cold and uninviting. Through the relationship, they experience trust and safety and this can help them move in new and positive directions. It is an important responsibility of both youth worker and artist to continue to build on this trust. Choosing an artist who understands what is going on for young people and is truly interested in connecting with them cannot be overestimated. Within this context, young people are supported to discover and create artistic contexts in which to tell their story.

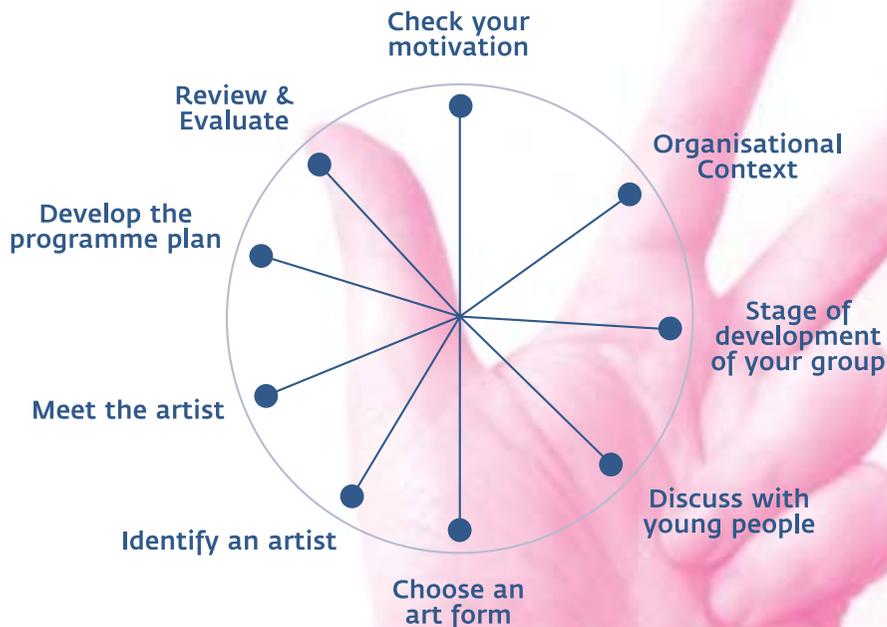
### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

In any project with young people it can be difficult to find the balance between, on the one hand encouraging them towards new challenges, offering choices and on the other hand telling them what they should do. It is inevitable that at the outset both artist and youth worker will lead the process and will need to build energy and enthusiasm around the project. It is likely also that there will be some discussion and negotiation on what can be done and what is possible within the limitations of the project. There may be times when the artist or youth worker may need to challenge the group on perhaps their over emphasis on product over process (or vice versa). This dialogue and discussion is normal and part of the development of any project. The key is that it is inclusive of young people in a way that is realistic and genuine.

Creating opportunities whereby young people can express their views throughout all stages of the project is vitally important. The most significant opportunity for young people to express their voice is through the artistic process. Their voice is the creative vein of the project.

### 3. PLANNING AN ARTS PROJECT

The nature of arts projects is dynamic. The process suggests more the appearance of a roundabout with entrances and exits rather than a linear one-way street. Therefore to present a step by step process is impossible. Rather there are stages in the process which can be identified and described and which collectively contribute to a meaningful interaction between young people and an art form.



#### PHASE 1. CHECK YOUR MOTIVATION

There are many different reasons why you might be thinking about planning an arts project with young people. The young people may have expressed an idea and an interest, you might have identified a need, funding may have become available, your organisation may be eager to develop more creative approaches, an arts centre or artist may have approached you etc. The reasons may be many, but each requires you to clarify your own motivation for beginning such a project.

- Why have you decided to plan an arts project?
- What is your own experience of and attitude to the arts?
- How do you see the arts process interacting with Youth Work objectives?
- What do you want the project to achieve for the young people who are the centre of the project?

Your responses to these questions will help you to become clear on **why** you are beginning an arts project and what the **purpose** and **goal** of such a project might be.

## PHASE 2.

### ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Be mindful of the 'big picture' – your own organisation, its mission, its priorities. How open will the organisation be to planning and running an arts project? Have they been involved in arts projects previously and was the experience a positive one? How receptive are both the organisation and your colleagues to arts work? Is the use of the arts to be a once-off project to explore an issue with the group or will the arts be included in the organisations planning processes?

This provides the context for the project and clarifies what your organisation's expectations might be – both for you and for the young people.

## PHASE 3.

### STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR GROUP

In order to begin planning an arts project you need to think about the stage your group is at and how ready they are to be involved in such a project. The following questions will help to clarify this for you.

- How long has your group been together?
- What is the age profile?
- Is it mixed or single gender group?
- How well do the young people know each other and you?
- Have they been involved in arts work or creative processes previously?
- What was their experience of that activity?
- What are they interested in doing?
- How tuned in are you to the individual needs and potentialities in the group?
- What is their level of openness and interest in the proposed project?
- What is their involvement in planning and organising this project?

This information will provide a snapshot of the group and will be invaluable in taking decisions further in the process and in particular when it comes to choosing, informing and negotiating with an artist.

#### PHASE 4. DISCUSSING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Discuss with the young people their interests and attitudes towards such a project. Ownership and participation are key features of an arts project and these principles need to be integrated from the outset. Be open in your communication and take on board the ideas generated within the group. However, if your group has limited arts exposure you may need to encourage and challenge the young people to try new things, to create new experiences possibly through exploring new art forms. Your group may not be explicit about what it is they want to do and with whom they want to work. Look beyond verbal commitment alone for other indicators of interest such as consistently turning up for session's etc.

Some young peoples own lack of confidence or in particular their anxiety about what might take place within for instance, a drama workshop, can create resistance. Discuss any concerns at this stage and encourage the group to feel the enjoyment and benefit in it for themselves.

For many young people the arts are very distant from their daily experiences. Their perception of the arts may be that it is removed from their everyday reality, it is different, not the norm. Also, the experience of the arts for many young people is limited and in some cases may not be positive. This can present enormous barriers and fears for young people. Careful planning and handling on the part of the youth worker will be needed to get to the source of any such difficulty and to work with the group to overcome it. Search for what it is they are interested in. Also be aware of any resistance you may have to creative expression or particular art forms.



*"In an art group, each young person has different needs, talents, abilities and energies and the biggest challenge has been juggling the individual needs of young people and their creativity within a structured programme. We are always shifting and adapting what we do and how we do it within the session, trying to come closer to where each person is at and what gets them going."*

**Youth worker on the challenges of an arts project**

## PHASE 5. CHOOSING AN ART FORM

Before choosing an art form, you may consider running a number of once off taster workshops in various art forms and identify the practicalities of each and how the young people respond to them. At this point you are seeking to make a decision as to which art form/s or which artist/s might best suit the needs of your group at this time.

Be mindful of your groups circumstance when discussing ideas and choosing an art form. For example, some young people may feel self conscious about their body image and may be uncomfortable about wearing suitable clothing for a dance workshop.



*"An art form must relate to everything in the young people's lives,*

*to be relevant in very ordinary, everyday things/ways.*

*The way it crosses all the senses not just visual.*

*The relevance it can have to young people exactly where they are at,*

*if they can be encouraged to tap into it."*

### Artist talking about an art form



A number of factors will influence your choice of art form.

- The needs and interests of the young people you are working with
- Physical and health needs and limitations of the group e.g. certain types of arts materials may aggravate asthmatic conditions etc.
- Initial aims and objectives of the project
- Resources available
- Capacity in relation to staffing
- Timeframe that you are considering working within

Consider carefully what each art form might have to offer and what each requires. Talking to artists, arts organisations, youth organisations with experience of arts processes, local authority arts officers can all help build up a picture of the art form that will suit your group. Possible art forms could include:

- Movement / Dance
- Drama
- Creative Writing
- Visual Arts
- Music, Percussion, Samba
- Mixed media work<sup>2</sup>
- Photography / Video
- Combinations of art forms

<sup>2</sup> In this context, mixed media work is understood to be the creation of art using more than one medium, ie. mixing say, textiles and collage work.

Consider the physical resources of your centre or meeting place. Is it possible to set the room up before the session begins, is 'mess' and clean up going to cause any difficulties, is there secure space for storing art work etc.? If it is unsuitable or you feel the project might be best situated in another venue or in an arts setting e.g. a local arts centre, this should be considered.

The following are examples of the requirements of particular art forms.

- A dance project needs a lot of space and cannot be run on a concrete floor
- A clay project needs ample supplies of running water
- Most projects need access to adequate and secure storage facilities
- A drama workshop needs a large space to work in to facilitate both working in large and small groups
- A percussion workshop needs to be free to make a lot of noise without disturbing others
- Certain paints and art materials require a well-ventilated room
- A music workshop may require instruments
- Some art forms need a larger group to work with while others operate best with smaller numbers. For instance, a drama workshop cannot be run with a group of 3. A group size of approx. 15 or 16 is most suitable. Equally, video editing is best carried out in groups of 2 or 3.



*"In relation to the visual arts, materials can be consistently expensive for a youth project. In the area I work in, access to a group space for young people is an on going difficulty so getting access to an adequate art space was a challenge. Also, because it is space on loan, the room had to be set up and cleared fully. That meant that each session involved the complete set up of the space and it was difficult to find a safe place to leave work in progress or finished pieces. Ideally, access to an art studio with decent sized storage space is what was required."*

**Youth worker on the physical resources available**



## PHASE 6. IDENTIFYING AN ARTIST

One of the most important considerations when you are planning an arts project is who to choose as an artist. Getting the right balance between art form skills, the ability to work with and engage young people and the skills to deliver on a project is absolutely crucial if the project is to be successful. If you are a youth worker or arts worker deciding to run a youth arts project it is important to set out and be clear to yourself exactly how much expertise you have in each area and what you can realistically take on. If necessary seek advice from key people available to you locally such as:

- Other staff members in your youth project or centre
- Local Authority Arts Officer
- Local arts organisations, centres or clubs
- Youth Work organisations involved in arts work
- Community arts groups
- Artists
- Young people
- Word of mouth

Advice and information is also available from a number of organisations and institutions involved in arts work with young people.

See **Appendix IV** for a list of such organisations.

A list of Local Authority Arts Offices is detailed in **Appendix V**.

*"I gained a huge amount of knowledge from working with an experienced youth worker and benefited from the relationship the youth worker has with the young people. Obviously the reward of seeing the young people making decisions about their work and growing in confidence in their handling and experimenting with materials was hugely important for me as an artist."*

### Artist on personal benefits of the project

*"One of the first things I realised was that you can't assume anything. It is important to take time to be open about your viewpoints and understanding of each other's roles in the project. It is crucial to acknowledge often how differently we come at things, whether from an artist or youth workers perspective or from our own personal values. It is important to take the time to explore these."*

### Youth worker on relationship with an artist

## PHASE 7. MEETING THE ARTIST

This initial meeting provides an opportunity to bring the artist and the arts expertise into the process. It facilitates both youth worker and artist to discuss how they will work together and move forward with the project. Practically, this involves understanding the perspectives and expectations of both and finding a way to hold these in the process. For both artist and youth worker this can be challenging – many artists and youth workers traditionally work alone and the challenge of integrating two areas of expertise can be difficult; both are coming from different sectors with often limited understanding of the processes and values of the other.

An initial meeting(s) could cover some of the following areas:

- Background information about the work of the youth project and the place of the arts within that
- The purpose and aims of Youth Work and arts work
- The group profile
- The importance of group work when working with young people
- Discussion on the art form and the nature and purpose of the project
- Background information about the work and interests of the artist
- Information about available resources
- Need for a 'taster workshop'
- Timeframe for the project
- Availability of the artist, youth worker and young people
- Clarification of the commitment involved
- Contract – when negotiating a contract be mindful of your organisations requirements regarding fees, tax clearance certificates etc. Sample contract is provided in **Appendix II**

The purpose of this meeting(s) is to facilitate an exchange between the youth worker and artist, clarifying individual value systems and considering how the artist and youth worker will work together. It is important to create the space within the project for ongoing dialogue and exchange between youth worker and artist. It requires openness and flexibility on both parts to create a project that is realistic and that can meet the needs of the group and the expectations of both.

At this point, both parties will have a good sense of the partnership between all of the elements of the project:

- The young people
- The artist
- The youth worker
- The ethos of the project

At this stage you may consider introducing the artist to the group perhaps through an introductory workshop to ensure that they have input into the selection of the artist. There are times when you may need to be directive in the choice of artist. This may be the case when the young people themselves may not be ready to take on such a decision.

If the young people do not 'click' with or connect with the artist and they are uninterested in working with him or her, you need to take this on board. Identify what the difficulty is and seek out a different artist to work with.

## PHASE 8. DEVELOP THE PROGRAMME PLAN

Having identified the artist and the art form, an action plan for the project needs to be developed. At this point the youth project, the young people and youth worker have been through a process of clarifying why they are undertaking this project, what art form or forms they want to explore and how in broad terms the project will be carried out. During this phase, the attention focuses on 'what' will take place and 'how' will it happen. A programme planning phase consisting of perhaps 2–3 sessions is involved in defining and agreeing the action plan for the project.

During these meetings a number of areas need to be discussed, negotiated and agreed namely:

- The values and principles which will underpin the project
- The aims and objectives
- Outcomes (what criteria will be used to check how the project is progressing and for measuring what has been achieved)
- Expectations for the project
- Discussion on the ratio of young people to artist – influenced by the art form
- Agreement on responsibilities and activities of both artist and youth worker
- Expectations around participation/involvement of young people in the project
- Outline of programme content

The youth worker needs to think about what information to give the artist about the young people. Any such information should be relevant only to the young people's participation in the project.

During the planning phase the artist should be made aware of the organisation's procedures on child protection, health & safety, handling confidentiality and handling a disclosure that may need follow up outside of the session.

Also, check your organisation's insurance to ensure that you are adequately covered to contract people to undertake pieces of work on behalf of the organisation.

Arising from this phase it is important that young people, youth worker and artist are of one mind on what the project is about, what it is striving to achieve and the nature of the process. In your planning, be prepared for the possibility that the young people may change their minds and may want to try something different. Keep in mind that the conversation with the young people is ongoing and both youth worker and artist need to respond to changing interests and needs in the group.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The project aim and objectives provide an outline of what the project is setting out to achieve.

The aim is a broad statement of why the project is being developed. An example of a drama/theatre project aim might include:

*To increase drama and performance skills and to encourage personal and imaginative development.*

**The objectives indicate how the aim will be achieved i.e. what practically will be done to achieve the aim.**

Objectives need to be:

- Clear
- Achievable
- Based on the needs of the group
- Easy to communicate
- Within a timeframe
- Measurable

### Measures of Success or Outcomes

Outcomes are measurable changes, for example, increases in skills and abilities, knowledge and understanding and personal and social development. They describe what changes are intended to occur among participants because of the project.

Skill development can relate to art form skills, level of participation, ability to communicate with adults, communication with peers, ability to complete a task.

When identifying your project outcomes, you need to consider what benefits the young people will achieve as a result of participating in the project. During the planning phase it may help to focus discussion on "what does success look like?". If we are successful in accomplishing this project, what will be the effect on the young people?". Make sure that everyone who has an interest in the project is made aware of what the project is aiming for. This includes the youth worker and artist, the young people, your own organisation, funders etc.



*"I feel that the young people really loved the hands on nature of the visual arts work, the touch and feel of it, the making and doing of it, the playing around with materials and seeing something grow.*

*I also think completing a piece that is yours and that you are proud of is important though that place can take a long time to get to."*

**Youth worker on what the young people got from the project**

## PHASE 9. RECORDING

The recording process is a means of documenting and recording what takes place in the project i.e:

- the programme content
- the process – the working process and the creative process
- the individual and group experience

Recording is the process of validating and providing evidence of what happens in a project and is built into all stages. During the planning phase, you need to consider what methods you will use to both document what happens during the project and how you will collect the specific evidence that will inform the evaluation process.

Recording has the following benefits:

- It contributes to the evaluation process by providing necessary information and evidence
- It is a means of encouraging ownership of the project and acknowledging progress made by the young people both individually and as a group
- It is a means of improving and informing practice
- It validates the work of the group
- It provides evidence of the work in particular for the wider organisation, funders etc.

### Recording Methods

In an arts project, the art form itself provides a record e.g. photographs, video piece or video clips, artwork, written pieces, diaries or poems.

Additional recording methods include:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Small group discussions
- Drama techniques
- Observation
- Drawings and images
- A video recording or series of photographs of the project in progress and of any final product
- Diaries - by the young people and artist
- Performance or display of work made during the project – drawings, sculpture
- Performance programmes and press cuttings
- Story Boards / Graffiti wall / Comment Box
- Taped recording of group discussion
- Recorded songs
- Minutes of planning meetings
- A record of the sessions kept by artist and youth worker
- Attendance record

Select the right methods that will help collect the evidence for the evaluation of your project and provide a record of what took place. Most importantly be realistic about the time required to set up and apply particular recording methods and the time needed to analyse the results.

## PHASE 10. PLANNING THE EVALUATION

When you have decided what your project will provide, to whom, and what the results will be, the next step is to develop a structure to evaluate the project. This plan is simply a step-by-step approach for measuring project impact. It shows the relationship between project activities and the effect of these activities. While it is possible to develop a plan for an existing project, it is usually most helpful to consider an evaluation plan as the project is being formed. That way, the project is designed to collect information that will help answer the project's evaluation questions.



*"In the beginning I would have worried about where the sessions were going, about planning and now I think its great to spend time playing around with materials, building up exposure and confidence and skills."*

**Youth worker**

The positive benefits of evaluation to any project are many, namely:

- It helps the project to tell its story in a way that participants and stakeholders can understand and appreciate
- It increases project effectiveness
- It provides a framework to guide the project development and co-ordination
- It assists the project in communicating the project values – to stakeholders, funders, potential funders etc.
- It can highlight areas for improvement or adjustment
- It can help young people to reflect on where they've been and where they are going

The evaluation attempts to answer the following questions:

"What did we set out to do? What did we do?  
What difference has the project made? Did the project work?"

Evaluation of an arts project has both process and outcome components:

The process component looks at the extent to which the project has impacted upon the skills, knowledge and attitudes of participants.

The outcome component gathers information on the project implementation and operation and the experience of the project.



*"The thing that I liked best from what I did in the art project was the portrait of myself because it's good. I was surprised that I enjoyed doing a map of my house. I didn't think I would but I did and I'd never done it before. I find making small clay shapes difficult."*

**Young person from a visual arts project**



*"Exposure to a new world and way of seeing, working in the visual arts made me more open to taking risks, trying different medium, exploring ideas and playing around. I've also learned new skills alongside the young people in the group."*

**Youth worker on personal benefits of participating in the project**



## 4. THE PROJECT IN ACTION

### Building Trust

As in any project with young people it is important to create an atmosphere of safety and trust within the group. Agreeing a contract with the group on how people will work together, what the boundaries are, what everyone can expect, contributes to this. It is important that both artist and youth worker discuss how they can prepare for unexpected situations that may arise e.g. an issue emerges in the group situation or a young person makes a disclosure to the artist or youth worker.

### The Importance of Relationships

The quality and depth of an arts project is often influenced by the quality of the relationship and interaction between all of the parties – young people, youth worker and artist.

For artist and youth worker it may be challenging to arrive at a partnership where each can contribute and participate in a way that is meaningful and valuable. A youth worker may be somewhat guarded about involving another adult with a group of young people he/she has worked with for some time and where a relationship has been developed. Equally an artist may be somewhat guarded about his/her work and may find it challenging to work in partnership with another professional. It can take some time to build the relationship and to work this out. The potential of the relationship is largely influenced by the personal dynamic that takes place between both individuals.



*"You need to trust each other and be willing to go with new approaches to your own work methods."*

**Artist on relationship with youth worker**

In the planning phase artist and youth worker will have worked out how they will work together and what responsibilities each will have. **Appendix I** illustrates some of the responsibilities of both youth worker and artist within and outside of sessions. A person taking on the roles of both youth worker and arts worker will have to be mindful of all these responsibilities.

It is important to create opportunities for ongoing dialogue between artist and youth worker perhaps briefly after sessions and certainly in between sessions to ensure that the project remains on track, that unanticipated issues or changes can be addressed and that all expectations continue to be met. It also ensures that the project remains focused on the needs and interests of the young people.

*"To gain their trust that you have something worth passing on to them and to maintain this trust and interest."*

**Artist on building trust with young people**

### **Encouraging Feedback**

Feedback sessions at the end of each workshop provide a means of connecting with the young people's experience of the project and of reviewing progress. It can alert the youth worker and artist to any individual or group difficulties, disappointment, unrealistic or unmet expectations. It also serves to increase the sense of ownership by the young people and provide a way of highlighting success, commitment and progress. Choose a variety of methods that will provide for both feedback in public as well as confidential responses.

*"I like clay and drawing and using plaster in the art group.*

*I like the feel of clay, the squishing and squeezing and muscle pressure!! I like drawing because I'm good at it.*

*I like drawing things like mountains and people.*

*I love putting my hands in plaster to mix it and make moulds."*

**Young person from an art group**

### **Ongoing Review**

The project was planned based on the needs of the young people. When a project begins operating, teething problems may emerge and some adjustment to the project may be needed. This may relate to the length of sessions, behavioural issues, difficulties with the venue, the level of co-operation between artist and youth worker etc. Regular review sessions between youth worker and artist will provide an opportunity for such adjustments to be highlighted and made.

### **Mid Way Review**

It is always helpful to plan a point mid-way through the project when all partners – young people, artist and youth worker can come together to review progress and to consider the original aims and objectives.

This review may examine elements such as:

- The level of group participation and the atmosphere/dynamic in the group
- Length and frequency of sessions
- Technical difficulties with equipment

Equally the mid-way review needs to look at deeper concerns such as:

- How well the project is meeting expectations?
- Identify if there are difficulties encountered with particular artistic techniques

### **Motivating your Group**

Be prepared for times when young peoples interest and motivation wanes or some group members loose the initial enthusiasm and interest. This is not unusual. Perhaps the novelty is wearing off or their initial curiosity has been satisfied. Another reality is that in any group there will be differing levels of interest. This is particularly true in a youth group or club, which is ordinarily involved in a variety of activities such as physical sports, outdoor pursuits, computers and others. Rather than a rarity, it is often a reality of working with young people. The need to keep the connection with each young person and to stimulate his or her interest and curiosity is ongoing.

### **If the Project starts to go wrong !**

Sometimes, despite your best plans projects can go wrong. This could be caused by any number of factors – young people show lack of interest in the project or even worse, they just don't turn up for sessions; perhaps the artistic medium is just not right for your particular group; there could be personality clashes; mis-communication or misunderstandings between artist, youth worker and young people. Factors outside of the group can also have an influence, such as exam pressures etc. You may feel disappointed or indeed let down particularly if you have put a lot of time and effort into getting the project off the ground. It is worth taking time to reflect with all those involved on what went wrong and to get to the core of the problem. Only with that information and everyone's commitment can you begin to realign the project. Even if it cannot be revived, the learning from the experience will be useful in planning future projects.



*"When I'm in the art group I feel good and happy though sometimes it wrecks my head when other people mess in the group (except for me!)."*

**Young person from an arts project**

## 5. FUNDING & COSTING YOUR PROJECT

Sourcing adequate funding for an arts project can be challenging and difficult. Consider what organisations locally may be interested in working with young people and who may have an existing budget e.g. an arts centre or club. Artists also have routes to funding within their own sector and they may be pleased to come in contact with an existing enthusiastic group of young people. Consider what you have to offer them e.g. premises, existing group insurance, administrative support etc. and perhaps you can negotiate the arts expertise.

Equally you and the group may consider sourcing sponsorship, fundraising yourselves and applying for a grant.

In order to assist in developing a budget for your project **APPENDIX III**, Sample Project Costing, outlines the likely costs involved in running a short drama project with a group of young people.

The budget is based on the youth group having access to a venue suitable to run a drama project as well as a space for planning and discussion sessions at no extra cost. It is also envisaged that there are no costs involved in transporting the group to the venue. The evaluation with the group will be carried out during the final session.







## APPENDIX I RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUTH WORKER & ARTIST

### Responsibilities of Youth Worker could include:

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#### Within the Session

- Co-facilitate with the artist
- Providing practical assistance to the artist where necessary
- Offer support and encouragement to the young people
- Encourage active participation by young people
- Foster a sense of ownership by young people of the programme
- Deal with the group dynamic and deal with conflict or tension
- Respect the responsibilities and lines of communication agreed with the artist
- Prioritise the session and participate actively
- Participate in the feedback sessions at the end of each workshop
- Record attendance

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#### Outside of the Session

- Undertake organisational / administrative work to make the project happen i.e. arranging the venue, transportation (where necessary) etc.
- Keep a record of the session
- Meet with the artist to review and monitor progress
- Meet and be available to the artist
- Be available to the young people if they need support outside of formal sessions

### Responsibilities of the Artist could include:

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#### Within the Session

- Present and facilitate a programme that is appropriate to the age, experience and stage of development of the group
- Foster a sense of ownership by young people of the programme
- Encourage active participation by young people
- Be aware to what extent individual young people are engaging with the art form
- Offer support and encouragement
- Deal with the group dynamic and deal with conflict or tension
- Be flexible in the programme and be prepared to re-negotiate and to re-adjust if necessary
- Respect the responsibilities and lines of communication agreed with the youth worker
- Participate in the feedback sessions at the end of each workshop

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#### Outside of the Session

- Purchase or negotiate the materials necessary for the project – the youth worker and young people may be involved in this depending on the art form being used
- Keep a record of the session
- Meet with the youth worker to review and monitor progress

## APPENDIX II SAMPLE ARTIST CONTRACT

Much of what needs to be included in the contract will have been agreed in the project plan and through the discussions that have taken place and the agreements made. Some of that information may need to be extracted and augmented to form a contract of employment. The headings below may assist in framing such a contract.

1. **Contract between (name of group) youth group and (name of artist):**
2. **Define the Time and Duration of Work:**
3. **Outline the aims and anticipated outcomes including products or performances:**
4. **Agree artist and youth worker responsibilities: (these responsibilities include planning and preparation, organising materials/equipment, recording and evaluation, leading the arts process, etc.)**
  - **Artist will:** .....
  - **Youth Worker will:** .....
5. **Pre-project work agreements (which might include details of optional taster sessions with the group):**
6. **Confirm agreement on:**
  - Insurance requirements
  - Health and Safety considerations
  - Ownership / copyright of final product
  - Level of agreement regarding change of plans
7. **Detail all payments due:**
  - Levels of payment, timing and clarity on what aspects payment is for
  - Is payment dependent on any factors?
  - Is payment committed wholly in advance or is it linked to phases of a project
  - If so, what happens if the project does not go ahead as planned?
  - Tax and PRSI
  - Allowance for preparatory work done
8. **Signature of Youth Worker** .....
9. **Signature of Artist** .....

## APPENDIX III SAMPLE PROJECT COSTING

**Project:** *Drama workshops – 6 sessions in all*

**Venue:** Youth group premises

**Personnel:** Drama facilitator and youth worker

**Group:** 12 young people aged 14 – 16 years

The artist fee rate in this example is €40 per hour.

### Costs:

Artist fee	– 2 planning meetings X 2 hours X €40	€160
	– 6 sessions X 2 hours X €40	€480
	– evaluation session with youth worker	€40

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Documentation of the process - photographs, video	€60
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Refreshments	€40
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Celebration / ending to the project	€80
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Transport	None
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Materials	None
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<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>€860</b>
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### Hidden Costs (met by the youth project/centre)

- Time spent by youth worker - planning sessions with young people and artist, documentation, evaluation, ongoing contact and follow-up (where necessary) with the young people
- Administrative costs (minimal)
- Provision of drama workshop space
- Provision of meeting space – planning meetings with artist
- Insurance costs

## APPENDIX IV CONTACT ORGANISATIONS

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### National Youth Federation

01 872 9933  
<http://www.nyf.ie>  
[info@nyf.ie](mailto:info@nyf.ie)

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### CAFE

01 473 6600  
<http://www.communityartsireland.ie>  
[cafe@connect.ie](mailto:cafe@connect.ie)

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### Dance Theatre of Ireland

01 280 3455  
<http://www.dancetheatreireland.com>  
[info@dti.ie](mailto:info@dti.ie)

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### National Youth Arts Programme

01 478 4122  
<http://www.youtharts.ie>  
[arts@nyci.ie](mailto:arts@nyci.ie)

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### Irish Museum of Modern Art

01 612 9900  
<http://www.modernart.ie>  
[info@modernart.ie](mailto:info@modernart.ie)

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### Federation of Music Collectives

01 878 2244  
<http://www.fmc-ireland.com>  
[info@fmc-ireland.com](mailto:info@fmc-ireland.com)

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### City of Dublin Youth Service Board

01 668 3198  
<http://www.cdvec.ie>  
[info@cdysb.cdvec.ie](mailto:info@cdysb.cdvec.ie)

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### The National Gallery

01 676 1620  
<http://www.nationalgallery.ie>  
[info@ngi.ie](mailto:info@ngi.ie)

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### Music Network

01 671 9421  
<http://www.musicnetwork.ie>  
[info@musicnetwork.ie](mailto:info@musicnetwork.ie)

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### National Association of Youth Drama

01 878 1301  
<http://www.youthdrama.ie>  
[nayd@indigo.ie](mailto:nayd@indigo.ie)

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### National Museum of Ireland

01 6777 444  
<http://www.museum.ie>  
[marketing@museum.ie](mailto:marketing@museum.ie)

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### The Crafts Council of Ireland

056 61804  
<http://www.ccoi.ie>  
[info@ccoi.ie](mailto:info@ccoi.ie)  
042 937 3005  
[carlingford@ccoi.ie](mailto:carlingford@ccoi.ie)

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### The Arts Council/ An Comhairle Ealaíon

01 618 0200  
<http://www.artscouncil.ie>  
[info@artscouncil.ie](mailto:info@artscouncil.ie)

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### Irish Writers Centre

01 872 1302  
<http://www.writerscentre.ie>  
[info@writerscentre.ie](mailto:info@writerscentre.ie)

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### National Theatre Society (Abbey & Peacock Theatres)

01 874 8741  
<http://www.abbeytheatre.ie>  
[info@abbeytheatre.ie](mailto:info@abbeytheatre.ie)

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### The Film Institute of Ireland

01 679 5744  
<http://www.fii.ie>  
[info@ifc.ie](mailto:info@ifc.ie)

## APPENDIX V LOCAL AUTHORITY ARTS OFFICERS

### **Carlow County Council**

County Offices  
Athy Road  
Carlow  
(0503) 70300  
(0503) 41503

### **Cavan County Council**

The Courthouse  
Cavan  
(049) 433 1799  
(049) 436 1565

### **Clare County Council**

New Road  
Ennis  
Co Clare  
(065) 682 1616  
(065) 682 8233

### **Cork Corporation**

City Hall  
Cork  
(021) 492 4298  
(021) 431 4238

### **Cork County Council**

County Hall  
Cork  
(021) 434 6210  
(021) 434 3254

### **Donegal County Council**

c/o County Library  
Letterkenny  
Donegal  
(074) 72222  
(074) 41205

### **Dublin City Council**

10, Cornmarket, Dublin 8  
(01) 872 2816  
(01) 677 3887

### **Dundalk UDC**

Millennium Centre  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth  
(042) 933 5457  
(042) 933 4557

### **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Council**

County Hall  
Marine Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin  
(01) 205 4700  
(01) 280 6969

### **Fingal County Council**

Fingal County Hall  
PO BOX 174, Main St,  
Swords  
Co Dublin  
(01) 890 5099  
(01) 890 6259

### **Galway County Council**

Aras an Chontae  
Prospect Hill  
Galway  
(091) 509000  
(091) 509010

### **Galway Corporation**

City Hall  
College Road  
Galway  
(091) 536841  
(091) 563964

### **Kerry County Council**

Rathass  
Tralee  
Co. Kerry  
(066) 718 3541  
(066) 718 3613

### **Kildare County Council**

Kildare County Library  
Newbridge  
Co. Kildare  
(045) 431215  
(045) 432490

### **Kilkenny County Library**

John's Street  
Kilkenny  
(056) 52699  
(056) 63384

### **Laois County Council**

County Hall  
Portlaoise  
Co. Laois  
(0502) 64182  
(0502) 22313

**Leitrim County Council**

Aras an Chontae  
Carrick on Shannon  
County Leitrim  
(078) 20005  
(078) 22205

**Limerick Corporation**

Merchants Quay  
City Hall  
Limerick  
(061) 415799  
(061) 415266

**Limerick County Council**

County Arts Office  
79–84 O’Connell Street  
Limerick  
(061) 214498  
(061) 317280

**Longford County Library**

Town Centre, Longford  
(043) 41124  
(043) 41125

**Mayo Co Council**

Library Headquarters  
Castlebar  
County Mayo  
(094) 24444  
(094) 23937

**Meath Arts Office**

Main Street  
Dunshaughlin  
Co Meath  
(01) 824 0000  
(01) 824 0233

**Monaghan County Museum**

Hill Street  
Monaghan  
(047) 71114  
(047) 82739

**Offaly County Council**

The Courthouse  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly  
(0506) 46800  
(0506) 46868

**Roscommon County Library**

Abbey Street  
Roscommon  
(0903) 26100  
(0903) 25477

**Sligo County Council**

Riverside  
Sligo  
(071) 56666  
(071) 41119

**South Dublin County Council**

Town Centre  
Tallaght, Dublin 24  
(01) 414 9000  
(01) 414 9111

**Tipperary NR County Council**

The Courthouse  
Nenagh  
County Tipperary  
(067) 44582  
(067) 31478

**Waterford Corporation**

Arts Offices  
City Hall  
The Mall  
Waterford  
(051) 309 922  
(051) 309983

**Waterford County Council**

C/o the Arts Centre  
Dungarvan  
Co. Waterford  
(058) 41416  
(058) 42911

**Westmeath County Council**

County Library HQ, Dublin Road,  
Mullingar,  
Co. Westmeath  
(044) 32000

**Wexford County Council**

County Hall  
Wexford  
(053) 65000 ext. 279  
(053) 43532

**Wicklow County Council**

St Manntanís House  
Kilmantin Hill  
Co Wicklow  
(0404) 20155  
(0404) 66057

## APPENDIX VI PRACTICAL RESOURCES

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### **Funding Handbook (2000)** CAFE

CAFE's Funding Handbook, 4th edition is a directory of funding and support for community and voluntary work in Ireland, north and south. In addition it provides advice and information to assist groups and organisations in planning and carrying out their fundraising activities.

**Publisher:**

CAFE  
10–11 Earl Street South  
Dublin 8

New edition soon to be printed.

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### **Partnerships for Learning – A guide to evaluating arts and education projects (Woolf, 2000)** THE REGIONAL ARTS BOARDS AND THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

This well produced and flexible guide aims to help people involved in arts education projects to understand evaluation clearly and to evaluate effectively. It acknowledges that evaluating the quality of the creative process is open to argument and interpretation and suggests a range of measures of success for creative projects. The pages are photocopiable with key concepts, ideas and questions highlighted for use at meetings or training sessions.

**Publisher:**

The Arts Council of England  
14, Great Peter Street  
London  
SW1P 3NQ

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### **Another View (2001)** An Introduction to using Video in Working with Young People

This is a practical manual for developing and using video when working with young people. It specifically takes the reader step by step through the video making process in a simple and straightforward manner, exploring why and how to use video in working with young people, introducing video to the group and the different stages in the process from pre to post production.

**Publisher:**

National Youth Arts Programme  
National Youth Council of Ireland  
3, Montague Street  
Dublin 2.

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### **Awards 2003** THE ARTS COUNCIL/ AN COMHAIRLE EALAÍON

A guide for individuals and organisations to Arts Council bursaries awards and schemes.

**Publisher:**

The Arts Council  
70 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2

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### **Evaluation – A guide designed to support the Arts Council of England's Artist in Sites for Learning scheme (Mosley)** THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

This guide is designed to provide encouragement and practical suggestions to artists, project co-ordinators and participants who might be unfamiliar with evaluation practices as well as a fresh approach to experienced evaluators.

**Publisher:**

The Arts Council of England  
14, Great Peter Street  
London  
SW1P 3NQ

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### **Dramattack – Practical Manual for using drama in Youth Work (Stewart, 1999)**

This book is an essential manual for all those interested in using drama in youth work. The book introduces the concept of why and how to use drama in youth work, practical integrated workshop plans, and an introduction to performance. It is very user – friendly for the novice and full of new ideas for the more experienced practitioner.

**Publisher:**

Russell House Publishing  
4, St. George's House  
The Business Park  
Uplyme Road  
Lyme Regis  
Dorset DT7 3LS  
U.K.

## CASE STUDIES

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### **The Irish Youth Theatre Handbook:**

A guide to good practice in youth drama (2001)

#### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR YOUTH DRAMA**

206 pages of useful advice, information and contacts in relation to Youth Drama. The book is divided into two parts: the Manual and the Directory. The Manual is designed to set and articulate artistic, administrative and ethical standards for new and established youth theatre groups. It contains detailed information on the administrative aspects of running a successful group. The Directory contains contact details of relevant organisations and training, education and funding opportunities in Ireland, North and South.

#### **Publisher:**

National Association for Youth Drama  
34 Upper Gardiner Street  
Dublin 1

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### **The ACE Project Case Studies (2000)**

THE ACE (EU INTEGRA) PROJECT

A collection of case studies that detail the action based learning programmes of ACE. These programmes aimed to develop the capacities of youth workers in using arts based methodologies in their work. A final project report is also available.

#### **Available from:**

The National Youth Federation  
20 Lower Dominick Street  
Dublin 1

&

City of Dublin Youth Service Board  
70 Morehampton Road  
Donnybrook  
Dublin 4

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### **The Sparkling Seven**

– The Art Group, A Study (Perry 2000)  
THE IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

This report describes the background to a partnership project between the Education and Community Programme of the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and St. Michael's Parish Youth Project, Inchicore. A description of the project, an analysis of the and an evaluation all contribute to a report that is a useful resource for youth workers, arts workers or organisations.

#### **Publisher:**

The Irish Museum of Modern Art  
Royal Hospital  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8

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### **Mapping Hidden Talents**

– Investigating Youth Music Projects  
(Ings, Jones and Randell, 1999)  
NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY

A resource for practitioners interested in establishing or developing youth music projects. It includes eight case studies of projects rooted in the youth service and voluntary sector and assesses the impact of these projects on young people and their communities.

#### **Publisher:**

National Youth Agency  
17–23 Albion Street  
Leicester LE1 6GD  
United Kingdom

## JOURNALS & PERIODICALS

### **in2** NATIONAL YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMME

Targeted at both the youth service and the arts sector, in2 is fashioned to act as a resource for anyone interested in developing the arts in youth work. It includes news, information, opportunities and resource details, case studies and analysis.

**Publisher:**  
National Youth Arts Programme  
National Youth Council Of Ireland  
3 Montague Street  
Dublin 2

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### **Arts Connect – Arts Newsletter** CITY OF DUBLIN YOUTH SERVICE BOARD

Includes information on arts funding and training opportunities relevant to the sector as well as news on arts work in CDYSB projects and groups and opportunities for young people to engage or participate in arts activities.

**Publisher:**  
City of Dublin Youth Service Board  
70 Morehampton Road  
Donnybrook  
Dublin 4

### **stARTup – Arts Newsletter** NATIONAL YOUTH FEDERATION

stARTup is an initiative of the National Youth Federation. It is a newsletter dedicated to promoting, informing and improving arts practice with young people.

**Publisher:**  
National Youth Federation  
20 Lower Dominick Street  
Dublin 1

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### **Upstart – Magazine** YOUTH CLUBS UK

The quarterly magazine of the UK Youth Arts Network. It provides case studies, ideas and information on a variety of topics relevant to youth arts work, albeit with a UK focus.

**Publisher :**  
Youth Clubs UK  
Kirby House  
20–24 Kirby Street  
London EC1N 8TS

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### **Youth Drama Ireland** NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH DRAMA

This annual publication focuses on national youth drama/theatre practice informed by international awareness.

**Publisher:**  
National Association of Youth Drama  
34 Lower Gardiner Street  
Dublin 1

### **Art Matters** THE ARTS COUNCIL / AN COMHAIRLE EALAÍON

This newsletter provides updates on new initiatives and opportunities and grant decisions made by the Council.

**Publisher:**  
The Arts Council  
70 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2

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**The Federation of Music Collectives newsletter is available on the website:**  
[www.fmc-ireland.com](http://www.fmc-ireland.com)

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## VIDEO & AUDIO

Please contact the National Youth Arts Programme for information on sourcing video and audio material and resources.

