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***Undertaken by***

***Chris Black  
&  
Alison Trim***

***February – July 2007***

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### The Researchers:

**Chris Black** has worked in the field of Youth & Community Development for over 20 years. He has worked with young people and communities in both the UK and Ireland. He is currently the Coordinator with the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force and also lectures for UCC on the Youth & Community Diploma and the Community Development Diploma.

**Alison Trim** is currently Schools and Youth Coordinator with the West Cork Arts Centre; she has been working for the WCAC for four years and has considerable experience in arts facilitation with children, young people, and schools. She is also a practising artist.

Cover Artwork - Looking at artwork by students from Shull community college, Youth exhibition WCAC 2007, image by Phil Pound

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Steering Group members	Organisations	Individuals
<b>Jessica Lauren</b> (Young person – writer / musician, Skibbereen)	West Cork Arts Centre	Justine Foster
<b>Amy O’Kane</b> (Young Person – Bantry Youth Café )	Foroige (West Cork Clubs)	Michael Crowley (Co. Cork VEC)
<b>Gwen O’Donovan</b> (Youth Worker – Beara Youth Development Project)	Dunmanway Youth Café	
<b>Jessica Mason</b> (Youth Worker - Bantry Youth Café)	West Cork Education Centre, Dunmanway	
<b>Declan Hurley</b> (Development Officer - Dunmanway Youth Cafe)	Bantry Youth Café	
<b>Caolán Gibbons</b> (WCAC – Director of Youth Theatre)	Glengarriff Youth Club	
<b>Ciara Swanton</b> (Young Person – Youth Theatre, Skibbereen)	Schull Community College	
<b>Holly Ovenden</b> (Young Person - Bantry Youth Café)	Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty	
<b>Liana French</b> (Young Person – Bantry Youth Café)	Waterford Youth Arts	
<b>Norma Roberts</b> (Teacher / Skibbereen Youth Café)	WheelWorks, Belfast	
<b>Alison Trim</b> (WCAC Youth coordinator / Researcher)	Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo	
<b>Franchesca Pisco</b> (Young Person - Clonakilty)	Coolmountain Youth Group	
<b>Marcus Prunty</b> (Young Person - Clonakilty)	Alan Foleys Academy of Dance	
<b>Tadgh Myler</b> (Young Person – Bantry Youth Café)		

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## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out to establish how involved young people in West Cork are in Arts activities and how West Cork Arts Centre (WCAC) can meet the needs of young people in terms of provision of arts programmes. The report goes further and looks at how WCAC can develop partnerships with youth work organisations and young people and through doing this recruit for, work with and offer a programme of activities that will be attractive to young people aged 12 – 21.

In order to undertake this research process, which began in February 07 and ended in July 07, two researchers were employed who have backgrounds in Youth Arts, Consultation and Youth & Community Development Work.

The report draws on both quantitative and qualitative research techniques – using focus groups, questionnaires, one to one interviews, site visits and most crucial to the report, the establishment of a Steering Group made up of young people, youth workers and artists from within the geographical area serviced by of WCAC.<sup>1</sup>

Questionnaires were circulated to approximately 90 young people and information analysed, focus groups were held in various schools and youth clubs across the area, Site Visits were made to projects that had been recommended as examples of Good Practice and individual young people who attended Youth Arts events / Youth Clubs were spoken to on a one-to-one basis.

Members of the Steering group were selected from persons currently taking parts in arts activities, persons who have an interest in the arts but not currently taking part in arts activities and youth workers or artists who are currently working with young people.

Upwards of 300 young people in West Cork have actively participated in the research or fed into the process, ensuring the report is firmly grounded and based on the opinions and desires of young people.

The report begins by giving a brief synopsis of the types of Art related activity that is offered to young people through various profit making and not-for-profit groups and shows that whilst music appears to be well catered for, other areas of the arts are poorly or sporadically serviced. WCAC appears to be the only centre where visual art is catered for, specifically for young people.

The report considers the feedback given in response to questionnaires and focus groups including the diverse views expressed by young people in terms of interests and ideas.

A sample of the findings of the questionnaires and focus groups shows us that:

Young people are involved in or undertake a wide range of arts based activities, but tend to do this on their own or with friends. There is a very positive response to having Arts activities offered in a more structured environment which would allow young people to develop specific skills or which would lead to display/performance of work.

Young people wish to be consulted and involved in the design of arts based programmes, but due to the diversity of interests it is difficult to identify specific activities, save that activities must be seen to be cool and meet up with young peoples expectations in terms of current interests, fashions and youth culture.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the aims of the Researchers in the process was to actively involve young people in the process in order to give some sense of ownership of the findings in order that they may be taken forward.

Young people and youth work organisations wish to see programmes of arts activities delivered on an outreach basis at suitable venues within the community.

Youth organisations are keen to develop a partnership approach to arts based activities, particularly where it can add value to their own programmes.

Young people primarily find out about activities via word-of-mouth and through schools and youth clubs, but are reliant to a certain extent on new technologies (texting, Bebo, etc.).

Knowledge of West Cork Arts Centre was found to be limited and a number of recommendations are made on promotion and publicity that will be particularly relevant to young people.

The report then focuses on key learning points from visits to other successful youth arts projects, for example:

The active participation of young people in programme planning

The necessary availability of equipment and resources for specific programmes (both technical and venues).

The importance of the involvement of the Arts Workers in publicising and promoting opportunities at venues and locations where young people hang out.

The importance of partnerships with Youth Work organisations.

These key findings are then noted and included in the recommendations.

Recommendations are then broken down into a series of headings, which are relevant to the different areas of work and functions involved.

Overall the report provides a grounded basis for the West Cork Arts Centre to take its Youth Programme forward and to develop and maintain a successful approach to partnership working.

In order to take the report forward, it is vital that WCAC secure funding to employ a Youth Arts Coordinator on a permanent basis in order to support and develop the ideas generated. This worker is key to ensuring that Youth Arts are developed within WCAC and has a major function to play in maintaining and developing partnerships and relationships with young people, youth work organisations, schools and potential funders, alongside the development of long term programmes.

It is also hoped that the second recommendation - the establishment of a Youth Arts Advisory Committee – will be swiftly implemented by WCAC and that this committee will be able to oversee the implementation of the further recommendations.

**Chris Black  
Researcher**

# Introduction

## Terms of reference

West Cork Arts Centre (WCAC) has commissioned a piece of research looking at youth arts in West Cork.

The Key aim of this research is to investigate how WCAC can:

*“form new partnerships at local level with organisations that prioritise youth and youth work practice, and develop partnerships with organisations that can support youth arts development, to work towards the development of our Youth Arts programme and strategy”*

With the objectives of that WCAC will:

- *establish a cohesive and effective way of delivering an arts programme that reflects youth culture, increases access and participation and challenges attitudes.*
- *develop strategic plan and policy which will form the framework for an arts programme that effectively serves the artistic needs of the young people and reflect the role of the arts centre as a support agency and centre for activities.*
- *open communication between all those involved in youth, and youth arts within the WCACs regional area through a process of consultation, including a working group.*
- *produce a document outlining the findings of the research done and recommending a strategy.*

The research process will allow also WCAC to:

- explore its role in delivering Arts activities and events targeted at young people,
- develop policy around youth arts
- develop its own youth arts programme
- provide guidance for those organisations or artists who work with, or deliver services to young people, based on good practice.

For this piece of research, we are defining young people as those in the 12 – 21 age range

Arts activities will be defined within the following broad criteria:

- **Literature-** Including poetry, prose etc
- **Film-** Including photography, video, animation, directing, editing etc
- **Music-** Including composing, performing, digital production etc through all genres
- **Visual Art-** Including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, performance art etc
- **Performing arts-** Including dance, drama, stage production, lighting and sound, directing etc



Copper workshop with Antis Copper designs, Youth Event, WCAC, 2007 image by Phil Pound

## ***Methodology***

A range of people who live within the WCAC catchment area, which spans from Clonakilty in the east to Castletownbere in the West, and goes as far north as Dunmanway were targeted to participate in the research.

Those targeted for interview ranged from young people (as either artists or as potential participants in arts based activities), those who work with young people in both formal and informal education settings (teachers and youth workers) and artists who work with young people. Interviews were conducted in schools, youth clubs, at WCAC and informally through the researchers own contact with young people.

In addition to interviews, information was collated through the use of questionnaires.

At this stage it is important to differentiate between arts work as carried out by youth services, which is often used as a means to an end in encouraging young people to develop critical thinking on an issue base, and arts as a creative activity.

The process was overseen by a “steering group” who represented the WCAC area in terms of interest (those involved in youth arts and youth workers), geography (with representation from across the area), artists and young people. Members of this steering group were identified by staff at WCAC. The role of this steering group was to provide the researchers with a range of views and questions that can be used as a basis for the wider research that took place and also acted in an advisory capacity when developing good practice guidelines etc...

It was intended that this steering group would meet on a regular basis, during the period of the research.

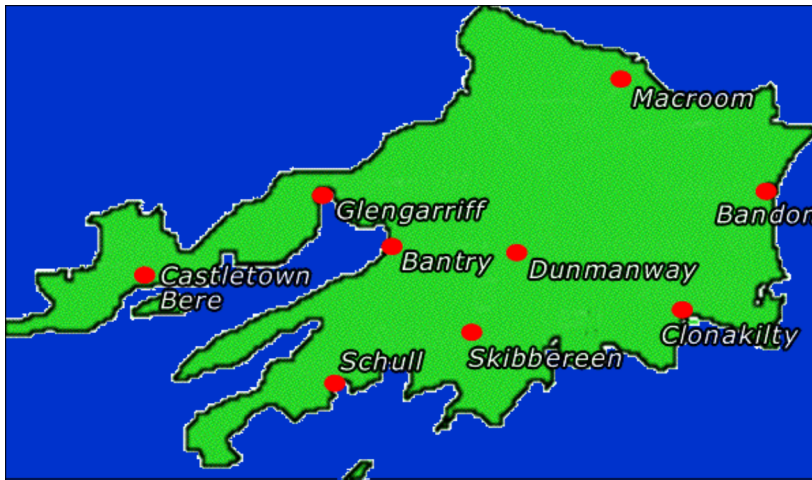


Graffiti from youth workshops with Paul Cialis, WCAC, 2006 image by WCAC

## Current Context (Youth Related)

### West Cork Arts Centre

West Cork Arts Centre is a publicly funded arts facility based in Skibbereen, serving the Skibbereen and Bantry urban and rural area which stretches from the Beara Peninsula in the west, to Clonakilty in the east, from Dunmanway in the north, to the islands of Cape Clear and Sherkin in the south



In terms of activities and support for young people, WCAC has a Schools and Youth Coordinator employed who works both within the Arts Centre itself and schools. This Development Officer is responsible for initiating a programme of Activities for young people, through the Education and Community Programme, including running workshops, working with other artists to offer short term project work for young people and in the organisation of Exhibitions of young peoples work Chooowawa (for primary age children) and a Youth Event (for secondary age).

The Education and Community Programme aims to empower participants of all ages and experience, to access and engage with the arts and the Arts Centre through sustainable high quality participation programmes. In relation to youth this programme is delivered by the centre's Schools and Youth Coordinator, whose role includes delivering a number of programmes for young people through second level schools, outreach programmes, and activities based in the centre's own workspace. These programmes run through autumn, winter and spring culminating in the Youth Event and Exhibition held in late spring each year. The youth programme also includes the West Cork Arts Centres Youth Theatre and Youth Dance including ballet, modern, jazz and hip-hop dance, in partnership with Alan Foleys Academy of Dance.

WCAC believes that there is huge potential for young people to meaningfully engage in arts experiences, and for young people to develop and articulate themselves within their chosen art form. The programmes aimed at primary schools and children have been consistently successful for some years now. Participation levels within the 13-18 age group are considerably lower and this is why the WCAC has decided to undertake this research.

In addition to the Schools and Youth Coordinator a Drama Facilitator is employed who runs a youth theatre, which puts on regular performances hosted outside the Centre as there is no dedicated Stage/Performance space in the Centre itself. The Youth Theatre itself attracts young people from a wide geographical area in West Cork<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> West Cork Arts Centre, Youth Theatre Report, 2006

It is felt that WCAC is relatively successful in organising events and involving younger children (National School age), but that once children have moved on to Secondary school, they somehow become lost to involvement in Arts activities and to the centre itself. This can be demonstrated when looking at the make up of the Youth Theatre<sup>3</sup> – Membership of Under 12's totals 42 people. Membership of Over 12's totals 16 young people (a considerable difference and loss).

WCAC is also in the position where a new premises is in a development phase and with this the possibilities of further developing youth arts activities and/or a dedicated youth arts space.

Current voluntary participation examples:	Youth Theatre over 12s : 16
	Youth Dance over 12s : 20 approx
	Artist in residence project : 4
	Youth event 6 week workshop (junk art) : 4

### **Youth Clubs**

Current youth provision across the area is patchy, with Youth Organisations such as Foroige, YMCA, KDYS and No Name Clubs operating youth clubs. The majority of these are lead by volunteers and rely on the sourcing of grants to allow them to run activities. There is also an element of competition between these organisations/clubs for funding, with no apparent coordination.

In addition to the traditional youth clubs, there is a rise in the popularity of **Youth Cafes**, which are attempting to offer a safe space for young people aged 14 upwards. Café projects attempt to encompass arts based work within their programmes. The Bantry Youth Café is a particular example of this and are already building links with the WCAC Youth Coordinator.

Arts based activities are popular amongst the youth clubs, who have engaged artists (predominantly through personal knowledge of the artist) to undertake short term projects. For example drama and video projects. Funding for these activities would be accessed through the Irish Youth Foundation, Cork County Council Artists in Residence awards and VEC Youth Clubs grants scheme.

### **Summer Camps**

There are a number of summer camps that are run across the area that have an Arts Based focus, especially in the Bantry/Beara Peninsula areas. However these summer camps are predominantly attended by younger children (6-12 years of age). It appears that teenagers and those targeted by this research are unlikely to attend summer camps due to summer work, or holiday commitments. There appears to be a feeling that Summer Camps are for young children.

### **Schools**

There are a number of schools in the region that do not offer arts as part of the curriculum. Those that do offer arts are found to be easier to liaise with as part of the research. Some schools offer a transition year, which could be used as an opportunity to engage interested young people in arts activities. Of the 11 secondary schools within the catchment area WCAC has had previous interaction with 7 of them.

### **Private or non-youth service Dance, Drama and Music provision in West Cork**

There are a small, but not insignificant number of dance, drama and music activities that are run outside of the youth work agencies, by private individuals on both a profit and a not-for-profit basis. Examples of these are:

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<sup>3</sup> ibid

- the Alan Foley Academy of Dance, which runs ballet, modern and jazz dance groups for 3-19 yr olds in Skibbereen, Bantry and Clonakilty.
- Youth Drama Groups in Glengarriff, St Colms Hall (Kealkil) and Rossmore.
- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is active across West Cork, promoting Irish Traditional Music, song and dance, and is active in involving young people in music for leisure, performance and competition.

## **Music**

Young people have recently become very proactive in organising musical events for themselves across West Cork. An active group of teenagers, “West Cork Gigs<sup>4</sup>” organise and promote local bands to perform in young person friendly venues.

West Cork Music, based in Bantry and who specialise in classical and chamber music are attempting to develop work with young people, by making links with schools and running workshops.

## **Funding Streams**

Specialised funding for arts activities is offered by a variety of funding organisations, for example – The Cork County Council Local Arts Grants programme, The National Youth Arts Programme. In addition to this, local youth groups are able to access funding for arts activities through the VEC Local youth Clubs grants scheme and the Irish Youth Foundation. However for all these funding streams there is tremendous competition



Model for junk art sculpture, from youth workshops with Peter Little, WCAC 2007, image by WCAC

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bebo.com/West-Cork-Gigs> or <http://www.myspace.com/westcorkgigs>

## Steering Group Meetings

### 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Steering Group – Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

In attendance were representatives from WCAC, Castletownbere Foroige, Dunmanway Promotions, Skibbereen Youth Café, Mercy Heights Secondary School, Bantry Youth Café and a number of young people who attend these groups and are involved in or have an interest in Arts activities.

A discussion that occurred before the formal meeting began (as people were arriving), raised a major issue: the majority of those in attendance had either not been in WCAC before, or were unaware of the activities that were carried out by WCAC with young people. In the researchers view, this will be a major issue in the development of a youth strategy, if it represents a common view, and the promotion/profiling of the centre will need to improve. This will be established as researchers meet with groups within the county.

The meeting took the form of an hour long discussion in which participants were given the opportunity to talk about their experiences of youth arts in West Cork, how they felt about them, how they saw WCAC within the overall scheme and also gave the opportunity to raise what they thought were the major obstacles to the involvement of young people in the arts.

The discussion was then to form the basis of a questionnaire<sup>5</sup> that would be circulated through the schools, via members of the Steering Group.

Issues, questions and comments raised:

*"It's gotta be cool!!!"*

*"We don't hear about what is happening."*

*"Can we make other places Arts Venues?"*

*"Do these artists travel?"*

*"We ask young people what they want to do, but they just don't seem to know."*

*"There are no arts in a number of the schools, unless you want to pay and join an after school activity."*

*"We need support in applying for funding for arts activities."*

*"Music is something that most young people enjoy, the youth café gigs always sell out"*

*"Its about how you describe things – Call it dance and only a few will turn up, call it a hip-hop workshop and it will be full in 5 minutes."*

*"Information sent to schools just isn't getting through" (referring to Artbeat magazine)*

*"What about using Bebo to get information to young people? – everyone has a Bebo page"*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Steering Group – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007

The meeting was attended by 12 people.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1

The meeting was called to discuss the initial thoughts and potential recommendations of the researchers, following on from previous discussion and reflection, and to help identify further people who could be contacted as part of the research process.

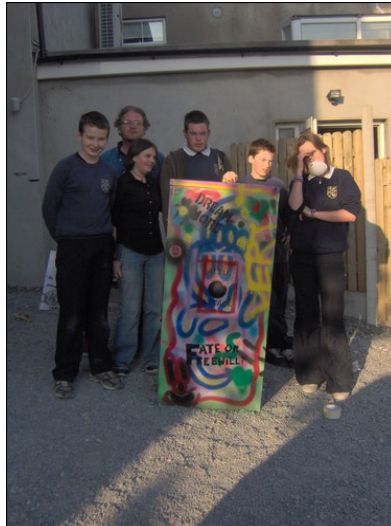
Questionnaires that had been distributed by steering group members were returned for collation.

The group discussed possible recommendations under the headings of:

- Advisory Committee
- Communication and Publicity
- Youth Culture
- Participation of young people in arts activities
- Schools

It was agreed that further and wider consultation with young people would advise and reinforce the recommendations being made.

Discussion also took place on the development of draft good practice guidelines for artists who work with young people and a number of members of the steering group agreed to input into the guidelines.



Bantry Youth Café Graffiti Workshop – BYC 2007

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Steering Group – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007**

The meeting was called to disseminate the finding of the questionnaires and circulate a draft version of the good practice guidelines.

This meeting was attended by 9 people, including 2 new identified new members from Clonakilty.

A presentation of the findings of the questionnaire was given and discussed.

New members from Clonakilty flagged up the necessity to try and identify suitable venues for Arts activities. They felt that there was probably no-where suitable in Clonakilty. The researchers agreed to follow this up in a future meeting with Clonakilty students.

Draft Guidelines for Good Practice were circulated to the group and feedback was requested.

**A Final meeting of the Steering Group was held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007** to agree the report and recommendations. This followed email discussion which had taken place throughout the summer.

## Research findings

Research was undertaken using the following methods:

1. Consultation with the Steering Group
2. Questionnaires circulated to various schools and youth groups
3. Visits to local schools and youth groups to undertake “focus groups”
4. Visits to youth arts projects, identified by WCAC.

Researchers undertook visits to, and/or consulted with the following:

Youth Group	Schools	Youth Arts Projects
Glengarriff Youth Club	Schull Community College	Waterford Youth Arts
Castletownbere Foróige	Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty	WheelWorks, Belfast
Dunmanway Youth Club		Model arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo
Drimoleague Foróige		
Coolmountain youth club		

Questionnaires were circulated to schools in the area, via the steering group members. A total of 85 questionnaires were returned and analysed and a breakdown of the statistical information gained from the questionnaires is available in Appendix 2

Questionnaires were circulated to:

Bantry Youth Cafe  
Mercy Heights Secondary School Skibbereen  
Castletownbere Foróige  
St Gobans Secondary School, Bantry  
WCAC Drama Group



Instant graffiti workshops with Paul Cialis, Youth Event, WCAC 2007, image by Phil Pound

The main findings of the research were that:

### Participation

- Young people already take part in a wide range of Arts Based activities, with a slight preference being for visual art.
- The majority of this activity occurs in a non-formal setting, either in the home or with friends.

*a strategic review*

- A high percentage (70%) of respondents would be interested in taking part in further, organised, arts based activities.

### **Partnership**

- The idea of a partnership approach to the organisation of Arts activities was welcomed by both Young People and Youth Work Organisations. Young people feel valued when consulted about and involved in the provision of activities targeted at youth and the Youth Work organisations recognise and see the need to develop partnerships and linkages in order to expand their services and meet the needs of the young people they work with.

### **Types of Activity**

- As with the types of activity currently undertaken by young people, there is no overall preference for the types of activity that young people would be interested in undertaking in the future. However the percentages of those interested in literature and music is relatively small.
- During the face to face interviewing a number of art forms came up time and again. There was a great deal of interest in Graffiti and dance (break-dance in particular).<sup>6</sup>
- It was also apparent in the face to face interviewing that young people do not like to be told what constitutes art. They appear to welcome guidance, but are not comfortable with criticism of their work and being told “you must do it like this”. They were very strong on art being about freedom of personal expression.
- Amongst the youth work organisations and following a youth work agenda, arts activities are seen to be a means to an end and part of the informal education process, as opposed to the creation of art as a part of personal expression.
- Specific mention was made of the use of arts to promote issue based work e.g. political awareness or ecology/environmental awareness.

### **Location / timing**

- Young people prefer not to travel long distances to be involved in arts based activities.
- There is strong preference for activities to be provided within their own towns/localities. 49% of the young people who completed questionnaires stated they would prefer activities to be provided in their own communities, either in Youth Club settings or Community Halls. Whilst 36% stated they would like to attend activities in an Arts Centre (within a reasonable travelling distance).
- Those who stated they were willing to travel, were reliant on parents or others to provide the transport. There were also suggestions of linking in to “rural transport initiatives”.
- There was a strong preference for activities offered directly after school. This would make attendance for those who live out of town in rural areas easier.

### **Cost**

- Cost of activities was not felt to be a barrier. Young people spoke of an expectation to pay for “quality”.

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<sup>6</sup> The researchers feel that this specifically relates to *youth culture* and will change with current fashions. Researchers would also stress that this is why it is important to keep the involvement of young people in the planning of youth arts programmes.

- It was suggested that the optimal time for a “session” of youth arts work would be around 2 hours and that programmes should run for between 10 and 12 weeks.

### **Publicity**

- In order to find out about activities, a significant number (40%) of young people find out information about activities through their friends (“word-of-mouth”).
- The two other popular forms of accessing information are via text messaging (presumably from friends) and from school notice boards.
- A large number of young people when interviewed felt that the use of “group or web texting” to provide information on events would be useful.
- Whilst only a small percentage stated they use the internet to find out about activities, a large number of young people, when interviewed, suggested the use of a Bebo website to promote the activities of WCAC.<sup>7</sup>
- A small number of young people, particularly those undertaking art as a subject at school do go to visit galleries and other kinds of art display, but do not always find the venues welcoming. This predominantly referred to private galleries and artists in the community who open up galleries from which to sell their own work.
- Young people are keen to display their own work in their own communities and felt that arts based projects must allow them to work towards this, whether this be performance or display of visual art.



Graffiti from youth workshops with Paul Cialis, WCAC, 2006, image by WCAC

### **Knowledge of WCAC**

- When asked about knowledge of the West Cork Arts Centre, a large percentage of young people claimed not to have heard of the centre.
- Those who had heard of the centre, associate it with exhibitions and not with the wider range of activities that occur there.
- The majority of young people who had heard of WCAC knew of the Centre because of their involvement with activities taking place there, contact with the Youth Coordinator (through the Schools Programme) or because they live in Skibbereen.

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<sup>7</sup> The researchers are pleased to see that WCAC have taken this on board during the research process and have set up a Bebo web-page, linking to a range of other West Cork Youth based Bebo sites.

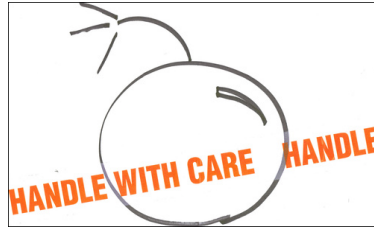
## **New Arts Centre**

As knowledge of the availability of funding for a new Arts Centre in Skibbereen became public, the researchers also questioned what facilities young people would like to see for them in such a building. The main suggestion was:

- A dedicated “youth space” for theatre and performance, including the performance of live bands. Allied to this was space for young people to display their own work, a space in which they could relax whilst viewing the art.
- This space would need to be “owned” by young people, including their involvement in the decoration and furnishing of the space.

## Good Practice

Research visits and interviews were carried out with a number of projects (Waterford Youth Arts, Wheelworks Belfast, Model Arts and Niland Gallery Sligo<sup>8</sup>) and the following were identified and felt to be good/best practice and key learning's :



Handle with Care logo for youth event and exhibition, designed by Solo Wilson, as part of the Friday night youth arts group WCAC 2006/07

- The importance of having equipment and technology available for young people to use
- Having a presence at other youth events – e.g. underage discos/gigs to create interest
- The development of a Youth mailing list/ membership
- The importance of continuity/ sustainability- both the Young Model and WAY initiatives worked on an ongoing basis with young people, which meant the youth arts became an integral, ongoing part of the lives of those involved, not just a workshop they went to once.
- Ensuring that target audience understand what you are offering ( eg many young peoples experience of drama would be speech and drama lessons at school these would be very different to getting involved in a drama group and much less appealing)
- The importance of the socialising and networking side of an involvement in a youth arts group/programme
- The use of an ongoing youth facilitator, supplemented by 'guest' artists
- The importance of going out into communities - Young people had become involved with one centre initially through the outreach programmes
- That visual art can be a group activity, as drama is, and that this type of group activity is more appealing to many young people
- Offering the opportunity for youth groups to feed into the youth events
- Young people have to be involved in the management of youth arts initiatives help identify the activities to undertake. One Project holds elections where young people who have taken part in an arts activity, elect two people from their group to sit on a management committee.
- The involvement of young people in fundraising activities. This enables the projects to pay Artists to work with the groups and creates a partnership between the young people and the arts centre<sup>9</sup>.
- The importance of creating a partnership approach, traditionally with the Youth Services, was stressed along with the need to undertake outreach work, with a view to introducing young people to the activities of the arts centre.

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<sup>8</sup> Further information on the case studies can be found in Appendix 3

<sup>9</sup> The Researchers would be cautious in involving the young people in fundraising if the monies required are particularly high. If funding required is not raised, it may damage the relationship between the young people involved and the centre.

## Conclusions

Young people across West Cork are actively involved in the Arts, however the majority of those who take part in arts activities do so in their own homes or with friends i.e. outside of the currently available arts provision.

There is an expressed interest by young people for their involvement in the arts becoming more formal and an obvious role for WCAC in facilitating this. Further to this, there is a keen interest amongst young people to have a say in and an influence over the types of activity on offer.

The existing Youth Work organisations are interested in developing further the participation of young people in Arts based activities and are keen to develop partnerships<sup>10</sup>. This falls in line with the youth work philosophy of using alternative mediums through which to educate young people on issues, but may go against the view that art is about personal expression and individual creativity “art for arts sake”.

Because of the diversity of likes and dislikes of young people it is difficult to identify the most popular arts based activities to offer, however there are current themes which appeal to young people and which were expressed to the researchers – Graffiti, Hip Hop, DJ’ing and Cartooning. Therefore, WCAC need to keep involved with young people and in touch with current trends in youth culture.

Due to the geographical size of West Cork and transport difficulties, Skibbereen is not the most accessible place for a large number of young people and therefore WCAC needs to be more involved in Outreach work, delivering programmes in the communities where young people live.

Due to the diversity amongst young people, it is difficult to identify the most accessible times for young people to take part in activities, however directly after school appears to be a time that would suit a majority.

West Cork Arts Centre itself is not well known amongst young people who live outside of Skibbereen and therefore the centre needs to develop ways of promoting itself and the activities on offer to young people.

A very recent report, which substantiates and echoes the views expressed in this report is that of the *National Economic and Social Forum*, and its report on *Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion*<sup>11</sup>.

In this report, the following are recognised:

- *role of the youth sector and its role in promoting the involvement of young people in the Arts*
- *the need to strengthen and promote the participation of young people in decision making processes*
- *the need to develop outreach services*
- *better access to, and more provision of, community based arts projects/facilities*
- *the need to develop linkages between schools and artists*

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<sup>10</sup> Interagency and partnership work has developed and improved during the compilation of this report, due to the establishment of the “research steering group”.

<sup>11</sup> NESF (2007) *NESF Report 35, The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion*, NESF, Dublin

- *closer cooperation and better policy coordination between agencies involved in the arts at a local, regional and national level*
- *the importance of “cultural expression”*



Artwork by students from Maria Immaculata Community College, Dunmanway, Youth Exhibition, WCAC 2007, image by Phil Pound

## **Recommendations**

### **Staffing**

That WCAC employ a Youth Arts Coordinator as part of the regular staffing structure and that a key function of this worker will be to develop and support a Youth Arts Advisory Committee.

That the Youth Arts Coordinator represents the views of the Youth Arts Advisory Committee in situations where the Advisory Committee is unable to represent itself.

That the Youth Arts Coordinator maintains and strengthens links with schools and youth clubs and that this is included as part of a job description.

That the Youth Arts Coordinator plays a Strategic Role in developing policy on Youth Arts within WCAC.

That the Youth Arts Coordinator maintains databases and records relating to Youth Arts.

### **Youth Arts Advisory Committee**

That WCAC establishes a Youth Arts Advisory Committee which will involve the participation of young people who are interested in the Arts, alongside Youth Workers and Artists and which will geographically represent the West Cork area. This forum can then be used as a medium to publicise events and act as a sounding board to identify possible project work with young people. (The basis for this group may well be the research steering group, with an election process being developed in the future).

That the Youth Arts Advisory Committee becomes an integral part of the structures of WCAC and that Terms of Reference are developed which recognise its functions and decision making powers.

That the above Advisory Committee need not meet physically, but the use of email, web based discussion forums, dedicated internet chatroom or text messaging be considered as mediums for communication between members.

That the Youth Arts Advisory Committee has representation on the WCAC Board of Directors / Management Group (where legally appropriate), or that the Board of Directors / Management Group elect a representative to sit on the Youth Arts Advisory Committee<sup>12</sup>.

That the Youth Arts Advisory Committee has an associated budget, which can be used to facilitate attendance at meetings, or hire venues etc. if meetings are held in the region.

### **Communication and Publicity**

That WCAC develops a young person friendly website, providing information on Events, Activities and Workshops, suitable for young people.

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<sup>12</sup> This is to ensure 2 way communications and that the voice of the Youth Arts Advisory Committee/ Young People is heard by the management group and can influence future WCAC decisions – “youth proofing” of decisions.

That WCAC makes use of “Bebo”<sup>13</sup> or “Myspace”<sup>14</sup> (or both) as a web based medium for publicity of events.

That WCAC identifies the relevant teachers in schools to mail with information about events.

That WCAC circulates information to Schools Councils (where they exist) on youth events.

That WCAC promotes its activity in the local press that young people read – for example Bantry Grapevine and its Skibbereen equivalent.

That where possible information promoting events at WCAC is available at other Youth Events. e.g. Gig’s, Disco’s and that these events could also be used to display the works created by young people.

### **Youth Culture**

WCAC must recognise that Youth Culture exists, is a very distinct feature of growing up, and that because of this culture young people will avoid activities that they may enjoy if peer pressure so dictates. Therefore activities offered by WCAC must be appealing, age appropriate and be seen to be cool.

WCAC must attempt to keep in touch with youth culture; what is cool, happening and up and coming, through constant referral to the Youth Arts Advisory Committee (see recommendation 2) and be prepared to carry out and see through recommendations of this advisory group.

Artists working with young people must have a sense of what makes young people distinct from others and WCAC must seek to employ sessional artists who can not only relate to young people, but who may be seen to offer more deviant forms of artistic talent (e.g. graffiti art, hip-hop/rap, DJ’ing).

### **Participation of Young People in Arts Activities**

That WCAC initiates a programme of Outreach Work, through the existing Youth Clubs as an initial medium, for the involvement of young people in Arts based activities, and as part of an outreach programme, visits are arranged for groups to the Centre itself.

That WCAC considers the use of West Cork Rural Transport (or similar) in order to bring young people to the Centre to take part in activities, events and to view exhibitions.

### **Schools**

That WCAC develops linkages with Secondary Schools that operate a Transition Year and encourages students to undertake “placements with the centre”

That communication of youth arts activities is promoted through schools (via schools councils, notice boards etc...)

That WCAC continues to be aware of the curriculum being undertaken in Secondary Schools and continues to organise events around this – e.g. Drama performances of

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<sup>13</sup> [www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)

<sup>14</sup> [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

literature, where possible showing the performances in the School as opposed to a community venue.

### **Arts Project Work/Artists**

That WCAC ensure that an appropriate person works alongside any artist who may be working a group of young people and that cognisance is paid to Good Practice guidelines in terms of ratio of workers to young people<sup>15</sup>. This is to ensure compliance with child protection procedures<sup>16</sup>.

That WCAC ensure that artists working with young people are conscious of young people's eagerness to learn new techniques, but at the same time that young people are reluctant to take criticism of their own work, unless it is constructive and allows for self analysis. A balance must be found between encouraging creativity and stifling it.

That WCAC, where possible, will provide training, or provide details of training, that would develop skills of Artists in working with groups of young people.

### **Timing, location and content of Youth Arts Activities**

That activities offered by WCAC to young people take place at times and venues that are most suitable and convenient for the young people. Young people were particularly creative in suggesting venues, for example the beach was felt to be the type of venue that may be used during summer months.

The time that appears to be most appropriate would be immediately after school, if being offered on an outreach basis, or evening time if being offered at WCAC (in order to allow young people to make travel arrangements).

That WCAC are aware of times of the year when exams are taking place and activities are not necessarily offered at these times. (These times could be used for planning future activities, or for running activities for younger people)

That outcome based, sessional/project work becomes the focus of WCAC (as opposed to "taster sessions"), with work taking place over a 6 to 12 week period<sup>17</sup> and that responsibility is put onto the youth organisations to organise shorter pieces of work and taster sessions, with some support from WCAC.

That WCAC are aware of current trends in youth culture and that at this point in time activities such as Graffiti, Breakdance, Hip Hop, cartooning and DJ'ing are popular amongst young people. As trends change, reference can be made to the Youth Advisory Committee.

That costs of Arts activities are kept realistic and that WCAC are prepared to subsidise the cost for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who may be creative, but are unable to afford to participate.

That issues of continuity and sustainability are considered when developing an arts programme, in order to keep the ongoing involvement of existing young people and to encourage the participation of others.

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<sup>15</sup> Youth Work Ireland (formerly the National Youth Federation), recommend a ratio of 1 worker to every 8 young people plus one additional worker, in their Child Protection Guidelines 2004.

<sup>16</sup> This may well have cost/budgetary implications for activities.

<sup>17</sup> Research into the effectiveness of sessional work with young people shows that projects of this duration are likely to have a lasting effect on the young person.

## Partnership

That partnerships continue to be built and maintained with local youth work providers, schools, community organisations and local artists.

## Databases

That WCAC continue to keep and develop a database of artists who have experience in working with young people and that these databases are accessible to local youth groups and schools who may wish to engage with artists.

That WCAC develop (with consent) a specific database of young people to whom information on Arts events can be mailed/texted/emailed.

## New Arts Centre

That WCAC develop a specific youth space in the new centre– within this space allowing for a variety of youth arts activities to take place alongside space to display artwork created by young people participating in WCAC activities.<sup>18</sup> The creation of such a space would meet WCAC requirements of young people being actively involved in the centre and encourage young people to visit the centre.

That WCAC seek to involve young people (through the Youth Arts Advisory Committee) in the design of a youth space in the new building.

That WCAC seeks to ensure that appropriate equipment and technology is made available for young people to use in undertaking Arts activities. e.g. Video editing facilities, sound and lighting equipment, suitable computer packages for graphic design, kilns, etc...



Artwork by the Friday night youth arts group, Youth Exhibition, WCAC, 2007, image by Phil Pound

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<sup>18</sup> The Researchers are aware that there are a number of groups, especially in Skibbereen, who are attempting to develop spaces for young people. Therefore WCAC needs to be very specific about the type of space offered for young people and the activities offered within it, so that it does not clash with, or end up in competition with the other potential youth projects. Further research is recommended to identify what to offer young people in terms of Arts Space, which will be complimentary to other potential projects.

## Appendix 1



We are currently undertaking a review of the Arts based activities that young people are either involved in, or would consider taking part in, in West Cork.

We would appreciate it, if you could complete this short questionnaire, in order for us to make recommendations as to how Youth Arts in West Cork can be improved upon.

The research is being carried out on behalf of the West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen.

Thanks – Chris Black & Alison Trim (Researchers)

1. Do you take part in any arts based activities? – please tick or add relevant others.

Literature		Music		Film		Visual Arts		Performing Arts	
Poetry		Composing		Photography		Painting		Dance	
Prose		Performing		Video		Drawing		Drama	
Stories		Production		Animation		Sculpture		Stage	
		Sound desk		Directing		Installation		Sound & lightning	
		Recording		Editing				Tech	
								Directing	

2. If you answered yes to the above, in what setting?

Home / Organised activity through youth club / Informally with friends / Organised activity with private tuition / Arts Centre / Other (please state)

3. Would you be interested in taking part in any arts activities?

Y / N

4. What type of activities would appeal to you? Please tick

Literature		Music		Film		Visual Arts		Performing Arts	
Poetry		Composing		Photography		Painting		Dance	
Prose		Performing		Video		Drawing		Drama	
Stories		Production		Animation		Sculpture		Stage	
		Sound desk		Directing		Installation		Sound & lightning	
		Recording		Editing				Tech	
								Directing	

5. Would you be willing to travel to take part in arts activities? – if so how far  
0-5km, 5-15km, 15-30km, 30km+

6. Would you be willing to pay for arts activities if it was something that interested you? Y / N – if Y then please state maximum amount - €

7. What time of day / week would you attend arts activities?

After school / evening / weekends / summer programme

8. What kind of venue would you prefer to see Arts activities based/run in?

School / Arts Centre / Community Hall / Youth Club or Café / other

9. Where do you go to find out about activities?

Schools notice board / local newspaper / internet / library / through friends / via text message / other (please state)

10. Have you heard of the West Cork Arts Centre?

11. What happens there?

12. Are you Male / Female

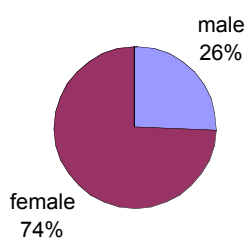
13. How old are you?

14. If there was one thing that could be happen or be introduced in West Cork in order to make it easier for young people to take part in arts activities, or that would make arts more appealing, what would it be?

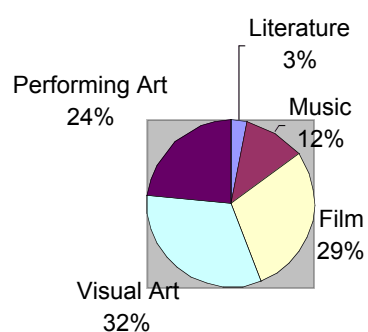
## Appendix 2

### WCAC – Youth Arts in West Cork – Responses to Questionnaire...

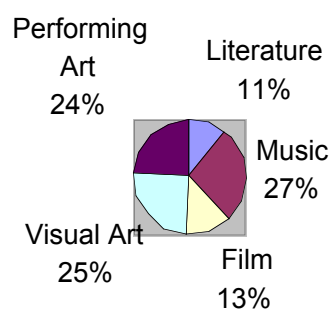
**Respondent Gender**



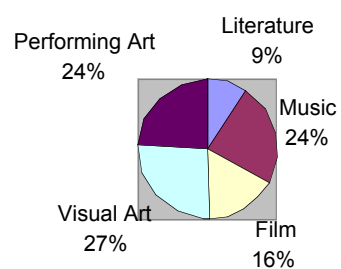
**Male - What activities do you do now?**



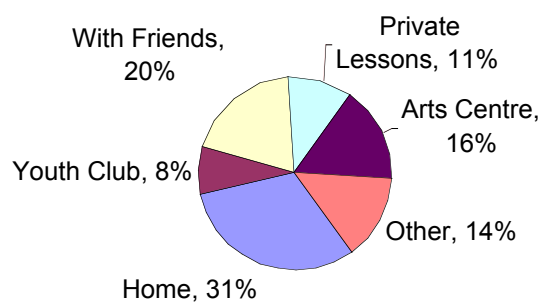
**Female - What activities do you do now?**



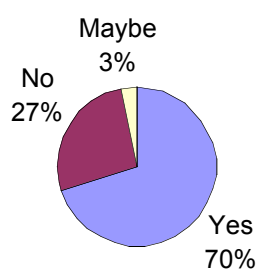
**Combined - What activities do you do now?**



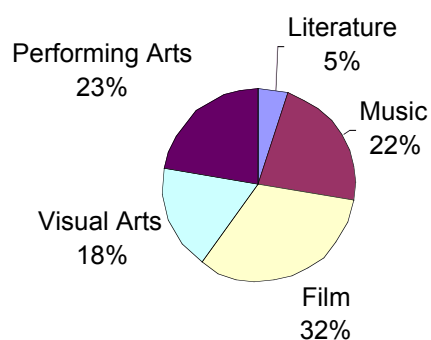
**Where do you currently undertake activities?**



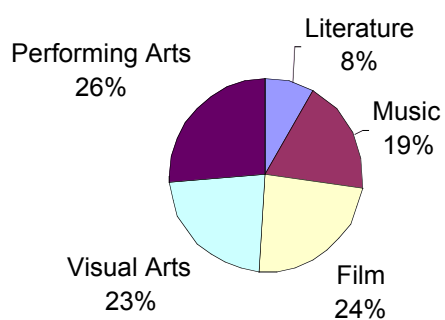
**Are you interested in undertaking further Arts based activities?**



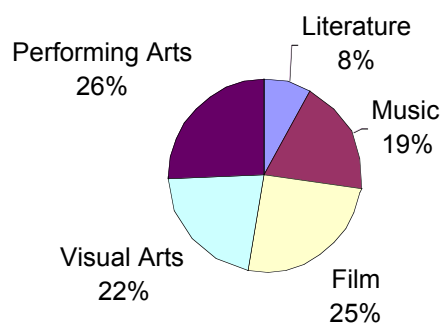
### Male - What activities appeal to you?

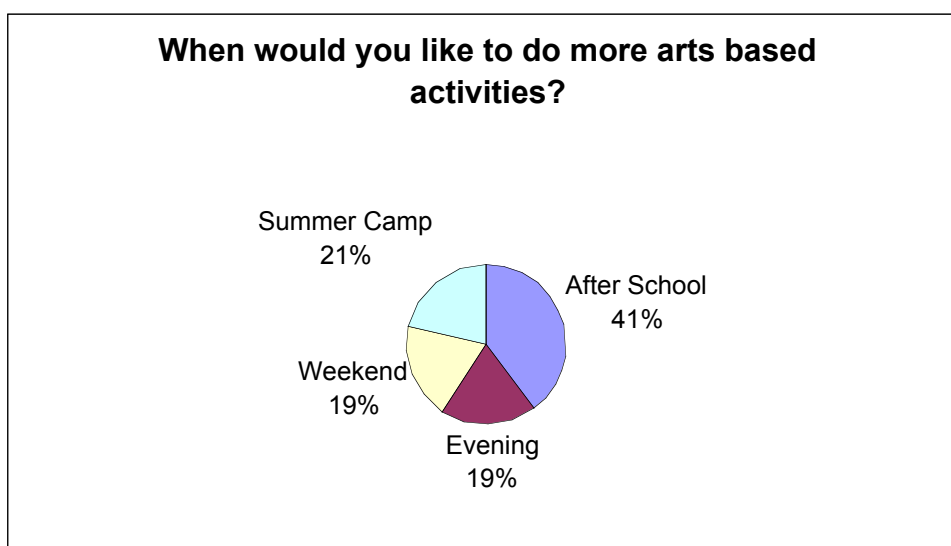
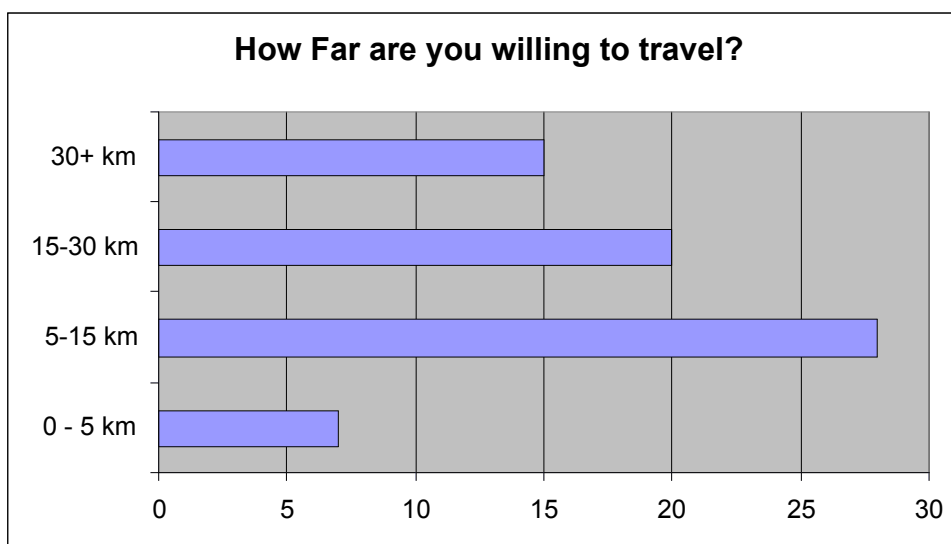


### Female - What activities appeal to you?

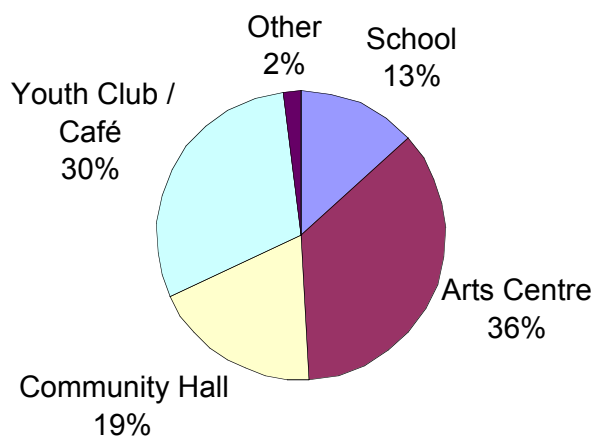


### Male & Female - What activities appeal to you?

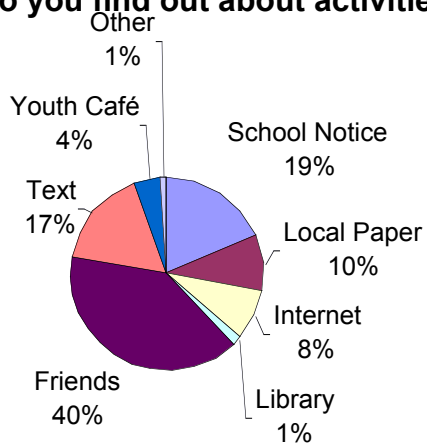




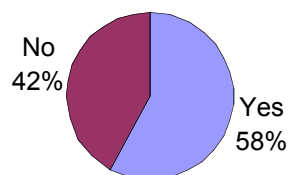
### Where would you like Arts activities to take place?



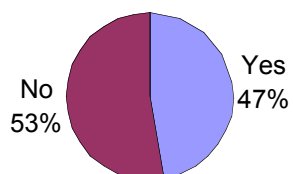
### Where do you find out about activities?



**Have you heard of WCAC? - including Skibbereen respondents**



**Have you heard of WCAC - excluding Skibbereen respondents**



## Appendix 3

### Notes taken on project visits by Researcher.

#### **Waterford Youth Arts- Case Study**

**Waterford Youth Arts** is a youth and community arts resource recognised nationally as one of the country's leading youth arts organisations. Established in August 1985, WYA, previously Waterford Youth Drama grew from the voluntary efforts of two individuals and 25 young people to a fully-structured youth arts organisation with paid staff and over 400 young people participating each week. WYA incorporates Waterford Youth Drama, WYD-Eye Film Unit and WYDMoves Contemporary Youth Dance. It employs full and part time staff, professional artists / arts facilitators and volunteers.

WYA runs drama, dance, film and creative writing workshops throughout the year for young people and children, as well as putting on regular productions. They also run outreach programmes particularly in disadvantaged areas and provide support for projects with schools and youth groups throughout the area.

Waterford Youth Drama mounts two or three major productions each year as well as smaller pieces, using the theatre facility at Garter Lane Arts Centre. Workshops in three age groups accommodate young people from 9 – 19 yrs old. WYDMoves Contemporary Youth Dance starts children from 3 upwards and produces regular performances. They have hosted a dance artist in residence programme and have also worked in tandem with the film unit to produce a dance film. The WYD-Eye Film Unit began in 97 and have since produced numerous films, entered competitions, and run an accredited course for beginners.

The workshops run each term, and cost from 25-40 euro per term. The creative writing workshops run for 13-18 yr olds and include visits from established writers, they have recently also begun visual arts workshops for 6-10 yr olds. As well as major productions all of the workshops include regular 'sharings' of work, eg performances within the workshop space, reading of work in creative writing etc.

For more info on Waterford Youth Arts see [www.waterforyoutharts.com](http://www.waterforyoutharts.com)

Some questions answered by Ollie Breslin, Director of Waterford Youth Arts

To start off I would like to ask you about funding. There is mention of both fundraising projects (like the art exhibition and the bag pack), and the corporate friend and patron scheme. I'd be interested to know more on the working of these - whether they fund specific projects or are just for general funding? How involved the young people are in these initiatives? How sponsorship is approached? How essential these sources are to the running of your organization?

**The organisation is independent in that we have our own board etc. and we have a working relationship with other arts organisations here in Waterford. With regard to funds we are mainly funded through the Arts Council, the Dept of Education via Waterford Youth Committee and Waterford City Council. After that we try to generate money for our work. This we call partnership work and it is basically a system where we act as a resource agency for various schools or community groups who are seeking a drama tutor etc. We supply the tutor and design a programme for them and provide insurance cover and also the guarantee that tutor is vetted by Garda to work with young people etc. The organisation then pays for the tutor's time plus 15% which we add to all partnership work and this helps to keep WYA afloat. We also need to bring in around €20K per year in sponsorship and fundraising and this we do through various methods e.g. bag pack / art sale etc. etc.**

*a strategic review*

Yes, the young people are actively involved and we let them and parents know that fundraising is part of the needs to keep this going.

Sometimes we do have fundraising for a particular aim e.g. exchange project or a piece of equipment but from a bookkeeping point of view it is just absorbed into the system.

All projects are budgeted and everyone know what the breakdown is.

Sponsorship is a big challenge - sometimes it can be successful in another way e.g. we got a local Lighting company to buy some lights for the space. We also collaborated with a local company for the St. Patricks parade - they sponsored our entry and we pushed their name etc. It is easier getting in-kind type things or adverts for shows etc. rather than straight sponsorship - also it takes a lot of time.

Then on to membership, the website mentioned 400 per week, I'd be interested to know how this figure breaks down into the different activities and also, crucially, into age groups.

**I can't give exact figures but roughly:**

- Art classes recently finished 20 in each class - 6 - 8 years and 8 - 10 years.
- Creative writing also just finished 15 in class 14 - 19 years (this was funded through a 3-way partnership with Waterford City Council via Sen Dunne literary Festival, Poetry Ireland and ourselves)
- Film Workshops about 8 - 10 in both classes - 11-13 yrs and 14-19 yrs.
- Dance Classes and numbers range from 10 - 16 per class and they number about 7 classes per week and they go through the whole age range from 4 years up 17 years. Libby the dance person believes in the idea that its a good idea to get them young and develop their abilities etc. - thats the dance world.
- Drama we have 4 workshops (about 20 in each) for 9 - 11 years / two workshops for 12 - 14 years / and one 15 - 19 years (it was two workshops but numbers godown when exams and all that come around) Also we have two drama workshops in tramore and they are 11 - 13 years and 14 - 17 years.
- We also run an adult drama class and two adult dance classes

The age range we are looking at for this research would be 12/13 - 18/19 yr olds. I notice that for drama and film you begin at 9 and for dance even earlier. Do you think it is important to get young people involved in that younger age bracket in order to keep them involved throughout?

**When we originally started we ran workshops for 14 - 19 years but we were approached and asked could we run a younger group so then we set-up an 11 - 13 year group. Then we saw the natural progression from one age group to the next. However sometimes with outreach work they find it hard to move on to a more central location e.g. if the 9 - 11 years workshop is in an outlying suburb - to get them to move in to a central location can be difficult when they get to 12 years - this can be for a number of reasons including practical ones like transport or an inconvenience for parents to get them in and collect them etc. Also they sometimes feel insecure about the idea of stepping out from their community?**

Of the older age groups have they mostly moved up from the previous years or do you get many new members joining at an older age?

**Yes, every term we push it in the local papers that we are seeking new members and the usual format is that for the first three weeks we accept new members and then the door is closed for the next 7 weeks (if the term was 10 weeks). It's important to keep getting new people which can be tough for the tutor to integrate while not letting the existing members feel that you are going over basic stuff again. We find that the young people who have been in for a while really help new people to learn fast and it pushes new people to reach a standard. Also we make sure that the existing members take on the task of helping to integrate new people - it's important to prevent cliques.**

The reason I ask this is that in our experience it is much easier to get nine year olds interested in a new project than, for example, 14 year olds.

**Not sure there are different approaches e.g. something to attract them like an exchange or new play - something where they will feel ownership is important. If you can get them to see another youth theatre then they can see that it is cool and sexy**

*a strategic review*

etc. I suppose we try and make sure that it is their space, with nothing to do with their parents, a place for them to feel safe and explore themselves. There's no right answer to this one - you have to try different approaches.

I notice that the creative writing is the exception to this, they begin at 13, how did you advertise/generate interest in this activity?

**Local papers / posters / contacting sympathetic teachers particularly English teachers / local radio etc.**

Visual art is a new area for you (it would be a core area for us). Is there a reason why this is being aimed at a younger age range than the other programmes? Do those over 10 not have so much interest in visual art?

**No, but we will try to move up the ages, but slowly - we want it to start successfully and move on from that. It is also an economic thing in that we need to have the numbers to help pay for the tutor.**

I read that you have a members committee of young people? How does this work, what sort of areas do they have input into? How do you form the committee? Would it be possible to meet with some committee members when we visit?

**Yes we did have a members committee but it's my fault it has drifted away - I'm very busy and particularly since we started doing a lot of activity at the weekends my time is very short. When it was up and running we would each year have an election within each workshop (which is good fun - they make a pitch to the group as to why they should be selected - then it is a secret ballot and no one is told what votes were given to anyone because we don't want any young person upset that they got very few votes). Two members from each workshop group are elected - only from workshops for 9 years and upwards. They then meet - usually at the weekend 11am to 1pm (about once a month) and discuss whatever we need to discuss. The role of the members committee was to look at how things are going / plans for the year or term / pr stuff / fundraising stuff / going to events etc. etc. We always try to make sure they take on achievable tasks. At a couple of times in our history we had a rep. from the members committee on our overall Board. Obviously for that to happen they need to be the right person and able to absorb and contribute to that type of meeting. It was very good for the organisation in that the adult board members learned a lot from this experience.**

Do you run workshops during the summer for the 12-19 age range, or just during the three terms?

**Just run 'normal' workshops during the three terms - we keep summer / easter and christmas for productions or projects.**

Moving on to the running of the programmes, there was some mention of outreach programmes, I would like to know more about these. Are they run separately from the ongoing programmes at the centre or do they feed into the main programmes? If so how?

**Yes, one of our 9 - 11 years workshop is run in conjunction with Ballybes special youth project and our two workshops in Tramore are run by Foroige - this means that they are in charge of getting the young people - taking the workshop subs. etc. We sit down with them and help to create the programme but with their advice re. issues they want tackled etc. Yes we try to make sure that they move-on to mainstream workshops when they move on. They also integrate for productions or sharings e.g. in two weeks we have the end of term sharing for the 9 - 11's (each term we have these for different age groups - Christmas its the 12 - 14's and Easter its the oldest age group - for the oldest age group they mostly write their own material / direct themselves / and organise costumes etc. - the leader facilitates this. Whereas for the other two age groups the leader has to direct.)**

Do you maintain links with schools and/or youth groups in the area? If so how do these links work? What benefits are there?

**Yes through partnership work or sometimes there is a particular project e.g. we have initiated a film festival for schools and youth groups.**

How do you source the facilitators that run workshops? Do you focus mainly on regular ongoing facilitators, or do you also bring in visiting artists for particular projects? Would all of your artists/facilitators be from the Waterford area?

**Yes we have always tried to develop local expertise for regular workshops - we always had the aim to pay people and make it worth their while to stay in Waterford - if you go back ten years or so it would have been normal for drama / dance / film people to have to leave to make a living. Now it is possible to make a living but facilitators need to be generalists not too fixed on one thing e.g. Directing etc. In small towns you need to be a bit of everything to survive. One of our drama tutors was previously a member (James Rockett). In general they go off to college and after a few years may come back to Waterford and then we try to integrate them in some way - which suits both sides - we are sussing each other out. We also bring in other professionals when we have the budgets and when it suits us e.g. Jimmy Fay, Pat Kiernan etc. etc. Usually we try to get someone on the way up - when they are hungry and ambitious. Also if the project went well we then have them to refer people who are now working on the scene e.g. Alan King who is coming in this summer was recommended by three different directors in Dublin. However it is hit and miss sometimes the director has everything on paper including their CV and track record but the project doesn't work out as good as others - its a gamble and the organisation needs to accept that this can happen.**

I was particularly impressed with the 'Battered Cod' film that I saw on the website, a fantastic piece. I'd like to know more about the practicalities of linking the two groups (dance and film) together, and also to get some insight into how much of the content is initiated/ directed by the adult facilitators and how much of it came directly from the young people themselves- how did it evolve?

**That dance film came about through sourcing a grant - we made a pitch and it came through. The main ideas etc. would be in the proposal. Libby then would work with the young people exploring the idea etc. and through this interaction they would arrive at a performance - this would be similar to a lot of work we do. Having the film unit in-house has been very advantageous as Ken (film worker) is very flexible and interested in whatever he is asked to work on - but again this is budgeted so that it is worth his while.**

Wednesday 6 June 2007

Visit to Waterford Youth Arts (Alison Trim and Caolan Gibbons)

We arrived in at Waterford Youth Arts at about 3pm, they have been in their new home for about a year, it is a council property given to them to use as a community group at a very low rent. The building is not too far from the centre of town, by more council housing. They have two floors, with admin offices downstairs and 'creative' offices upstairs, as well as a kitchen and their workshop space.

First of all we spoke to five girls from the 12 – 14yr olds drama group who had volunteered to meet with us, they are currently rehearsing for a production involving participants of the 12-14, 15- 19 and adult drama groups.

Initially we asked them about how they'd got involved with the drama group in the first place. One of the girls had been involved for 8 \_ yrs, one for only a few weeks, they had heard about the group either through friends or through previous involvement in summer projects run by Red Kettle. The most recent participant had joined as she had sprained her ankle and had to stop football so her parents wanted her to do something else and had seen an advert in the newspaper. All of them found it an incredibly positive experience, the girl who had been involved the longest described it as being her whole life. All of them found WYA a place where you could be yourself, unlike school where you were always afraid to be yourself. They enjoyed working in a group, making new friends (none of the five had been friends before, outside of the group), gaining confidence and not being judged. One girl said 'If you

feel like getting up and dancing, everyone will get up and join in, in school they'd just laugh at you'

Although they were all girls they told us about a third of the group were boys. They told us that the production they were working on was about death and romance, but also about being a normal teenager. They liked to work on plays that were based on real life, and experiences they could relate to. In the regular workshops they would do games and exercises at the start of term and then create a small play or performance for the end of the term, to 'share' with the other groups. These plays would come from their own ideas developed through the sessions, then scripted by the leader and improvised around. Outside of the terms larger productions are put on for those that want to get involved, these plays are already written. These happen during holiday times and they have intensive rehearsal schedules, for example one girl showed us her schedule and she would be in for between 4-8 hrs a day four or five days a week for a couple of weeks. They were quite happy to spend this much time at the centre.

Some of them had also been involved in other group such as creative writing, which one girl described as 'one of the most interesting things I've ever done in my whole life'. Visiting poets and authors would come and talk to the group about things like story structure etc. Again they would all write something to 'share' at the end of term. We asked them about visual arts and whether they thought it could be as popular as the drama workshops. At first they were reluctant, and said that people doing visual art would rather just do it on their own and not get involved in groups. When we discussed it more in terms of group activities (graffiti, sculpture/installation, costume for street theatre etc.) they were more enthusiastic. They thought it was important for it to be a group activity to build up the same sort of comradeship that they experience with the drama. They talked about how short taster workshops in schools would let people get an idea of what was on offer for both drama and visual art, otherwise people have a preconceived idea of what it'll be about that isn't so interesting. They told us that the WAY keep them informed about whats going on through a regular postal mailing list, or adverts in the local paper, but they thought the ideas of using text, email, or bebo were good too.

They also talked about using the local radio for advertising and that it would be better to hear other young people who'd already participated recommending getting involved than to hear adults telling you.

They told us about the committee for young people, where each group over 9 yrs old voted on two members and that it was useful as a go-between for the young people who might have a problem with something to tell the committee members rather than have to approach an adult leader. They also mentioned the importance of having a chance to socialise with the other members of the group, before and after sessions, and during a short break. They described the leaders as being more like friends than teachers, although they were strict about things when they had to be.

We then met with Ollie Breslin, the director of Waterford Youth Arts, who showed us around the centre, particularly pointing out their impressive display of posters from past productions. These are very high quality and obviously something they prioritise, they use local young graphic designers who are often looking for opportunities, and don't charge so much. It also showed the breadth of different directors and writers from Ireland and other cultures that have worked with them over the years. These visiting artists don't work with the regular workshops during terms, but come in to work on the larger productions. He also mentioned the New Connections programme from the National Theatre in London that they have been involved with before. With this project the National Theatre commission ten up and coming playwrights to write plays aimed at youth theatres, then the director of all participating organisations ( up to 150) choose a play to produce before a certain date. They then send someone from the NT to visit each production and the best of each play is chosen to go to the

National theatre and perform the play there. Caolan felt this was something we could consider for a few years time.

We then discussed how he ran the centre. Points that arose from this discussion included the importance of dealing directly with the young people themselves, not their parents, he hardly knew any of the parents, use of a chorus to ensure that the number of parts in a play could expand or contract to fit the number of participants, the importance of giving chorus parts to some of the stronger actors, so as it would not be seen as the booby prize and as a strong chorus can really benefit a production. He also spoke about being careful not to give false expectations to people so they would not be disappointed. He emphasised the importance of integrating new members into the group, and that the first couple of weeks of each term were allocated for new members joining. The groups are staffed by one paid professional and one volunteer. The volunteers are drawn from parents, teachers, youth workers, students or members of the adult drama group, all of whom can benefit from the experience for themselves. Each volunteer is only asked to commit for a term at a time (roughly eight weeks) and this system has worked well for them. They advertise workshops and productions through all normal avenues of local media, posters etc. They also keep what they call a sympathetic teacher list, a list of one teacher in each school that is the sort of teacher the young people respect and can talk to and that they feel will pass on information for them. This, for example, is how many of the participants in the creative writing group were found. He mentioned the importance of having a good relationship with their local VEC Youth Officer, both for funding purposes and connections to youth groups throughout the area. The Department of Education is also an important aspect of their funding. Outreach workshops go out particularly to disadvantaged areas, but he felt that WAY didn't really own these workshops they just help to provide the expertise to allow youth groups to create their own. They run workshops for 9-11 year olds in other areas, then when the young people turn 12 they hope they will begin to travel in to the centre when possible.

We also spoke briefly to Ken, who works with the film unit and described what they do. The focus is on the technical side of making films, sound, lighting, cameras, scripting, directing, editing etc. They have only one camera, and basic equipment, as well as a couple of computers available for editing. They work with groups of between six and ten young people, with regular workshops during term time producing a short film at the end of each term, and then they work on larger projects over the summer.

Overall this visit was very worth while. Both Caolan and myself came away feeling inspired with new ideas and approaches. In particular it emphasised the importance of young people feeling an ownership of our youth programme, ensuring that the new building is somewhere that young people feel comfortable and see as a social and educational resource, and not to expect young people to get involved without understanding what we are offering. Continuity and sustainability are essential in building up the trust of young people necessary to support an exciting arts programme.

## **Young Model at the Model Arts and Niland Gallery Sligo**

**Contact: Linda Hayden Assistant Education Curator**

Young Model, the Model Arts and Niland Gallery's current youth programme which has just completed for the year consisted of 3 blocks of workshops of 6 weeks per block. Workshops ran on Saturdays (or Sundays) for between 3 and 4 hours, with approx 12 young people participating in each block.

The workshops were planned to relate to exhibitions going on in the gallery, and where possible involved input from the exhibiting artists. Andy Parsons was the main facilitator present for all workshops and providing continuity to the projects, with 4 'guest' artists per block bringing different things to the projects and working with the group for one or sometimes two sessions each. The gallery has plenty of equipment and technology available for the young people to use. Lunch is always provided, the cost of this covered by Sligo leader. There was a ten euro booking fee and no further costs. Most of the cost of the programme is covered by a patron, the facilitators fees alone for the two taster days and first two blocks came to 6000 euro, with the third block costing around 1600, this is not including any advertising or management or equipment (which would have been bought with capital grants or funding). Finding the right artists to work on the programmes nearly always involved getting people from Dublin, out of 12 guest artists only 3 or 4 were from the area. All of the artists were in the early thirties age range.

The project began in August with two 'taster' sessions offered one on art + music the other on art + film. Approximately 30 young people attended these sessions from which they could then apply to join a six week session of either subject. The two blocks then ran consecutively through the autumn, first art + music then art + film, a third block in art + music then followed in the spring.

The initial art + music block worked with the Juneau/projects artists exhibiting a music installation in the gallery, the young people created the posters and advertising for the exhibition and went on to create their own cd, using tracks provided by Juneau/projects and creating their own lyrics to be recorded over the tracks. Karl Him also worked with the group, his band a=apple work with improvisation and he introduced them to these techniques resulting in the stone orchestra experiment (as featured on myspace site).

The workshops focus on giving a lot of background and examples of the area being looked at, for example in this instance they would have listened to and discussed the work of John Cage and Philip Glass, so the work they are doing is set in the context of a genre. Giving the groups access to the artists featured in the gallery helps to demystify the creation of work and allows the young people to try out the same processes used.

Art + film again worked with a number of different artists, looking at blue screen effects, the workings of the industry, talking to producers and directors and actors. In particular John O'Connell worked with them using old 35mm film found in car boot sales, cutting splicing, scratching and drawing on this to create new images then projecting this and filming it onto digital film to be edited. The resulting film was entered in the Fresh film festival and reached the finals (available to view on myspace site).

The second art + music block connected with the new music festival on at the gallery, the group worked with John Lambert, creating laptop music, looping and collecting sounds, and with composer Donal Sarsfield. Again a lot of background and context was covered, so the group by the end would have been able to discuss the difference

between for example contemporary music and electronic music, or contemporary music and classical music.

Each block started with about 12 participants, some weeks all participants would be present, sometimes only half. They are aged on average 15-16, and there is a core group of about 10 who are really dedicated and have stayed with the programme. The project was set up as a way of getting young people in the door of what can be quite an imposing building and getting them involved with the exhibition programme. Initial advertising was done through their own print, on radio in local and regional papers, and through visiting schools and youth clubs, computer/gaming clubs etc. Two events where they knew young people would be were used, a bands competition involving schools and a twisted reels opening (another youth programme attached to the gallery where approx 150 young people were present). They handed out questionnaires to young people asking about what they would like to do and, crucially, getting contact details eg email and mobile phone numbers. They then had a youth mailing list that they could use to circulate information via email and webtext. This was very important.

The programme has now finished until the autumn again, when they will be working on a project inspired by the Warhol exhibition coming to the gallery then. The workshops will be based on the ideas of the factory. The young model programme will run alongside other projects based around the Warhol exhibition in transition year in schools and online, relating to projects happening in other places where this touring exhibition has shown.

In the meantime in order to keep up the momentum and maintain connections with the young people involved a myspace site has been set up and is being managed by one of the young people, who won this year's enquiring minds competition and is interviewing Patti Smith when she comes to Dublin this summer. This site will have various functions, it will allow those involved to stay in touch with one another and find out what is going on. All the artists involved with the project have been asked to keep in touch and post up suggestions of good gigs or films or new music coming out that the young people might be interested in, it will be a critical space where discussion can be had, it showcases the work the young people have done and might want to show to their friends and family and it can be used to show prospective members what young model is all about. A mailing list of young people, and artists have been sent an email to ask them to become friends of the site. Bebo apparently has less precautions than myspace and is less widely used by artists as well as young people.

[myspace.com/sligoyoungmodel](http://myspace.com/sligoyoungmodel)

[www.modelart.ie](http://www.modelart.ie)

WheelWorks, Northern Ireland.

Contact: Lucy McCullagh

WheelWorks is a Belfast based organisation that provides arts activities to young people all across Northern Ireland. They operate as a mobile resource that can provide quality art activities to young people particularly isolated groups such as minority ethnic communities or rurally isolated communities.

An example of one of their core programmes would be the *Multiple Realities* project which began in 2003 in response to section 75 of the Good Friday agreement, about ensuring equality of access. The project aimed to target young people with disabilities, of a different sexual orientation or of an ethnic minority. This led to a demand for a similar service from isolated rural communities so since last September *Art and About* has been visiting communities like this throughout the North. They provide a series of taster workshops from the *Artcart*, a mobile, self contained unit that provides the artist, space to work and all equipment and materials for the workshops on offer. The group/community they visit would need only to provide the young people to participate (and where possible a back up venue for use of toilets etc.) Communities/groups would hear about the *Artcart*, often by word of mouth and ask WheelWorks to visit them. They would usually work with groups of up to ten young people at a time and the workshops were very successful and popular, attendance was never a problem.

Many of these taster workshops then had the knock on effect of prompting the community or group to ask WheelWorks to return with a longer term project, or to apply for their own funding to run a longer term activity. The project has been a catalyst for creating partnerships throughout the region.

WheelWorks also run more conventional outreach projects, where the artist and traditional and digital resources are provided to run issue based activities within groups or communities. Sometimes the initiative for these comes from the communities themselves approaching WheelWorks with an idea, sometimes WheelWorks will target specific communities with their own funding and ideas.

The workshops would cover a variety of popular art forms depending on the group and the length of the project. Digital music and digital imaging are particularly popular choices for the taster sessions. For the more sustained issue based projects film is always popular but also fusions of different art forms - eg: traditional sculpture & interactive imaging.

They use a core group of artists who have experience in delivering WheelWorks projects, bringing in new/emerging artists as appropriate, using artists near to the participating community wherever possible, bringing them in from elsewhere if need be.

Although this organization works in a different way to WCAC in that they are fundamentally an outreach programme I think this example is useful in terms of how an outreach programme can work successfully. The issues we are addressing of lack of participation is not as relevant to them as participants are organized by the community they are visiting. The use of travelling taster sessions raised awareness of the programme very effectively and proves the usefulness of word of mouth. Interestingly all of the art forms mentioned as popular involve some form of new technology, so perhaps investment in equipment for this type of workshop should be a priority.

## Appendix 4

### Basic guidelines for running a youth arts project

#### What makes a successful high quality youth arts project?

- A clear plan for the project that takes into account respecting both the artist/facilitators own artistic integrity and the interests and personal expression of the young people they will be working with. A successful youth arts project would strike the right balance between the two.
- A sense of ownership and participation amongst young people, created by involving them in every aspect of planning, carrying out and evaluating projects.
- An emphasis on the process of creating, rather than the end product. This allows more personal creative development for the individuals involved.
- A format that is flexible enough to respond to the needs, interests and abilities of the participants as they arise, not according to what the artist/facilitator or organiser initially may have envisaged.
- An outcome that allows the young people to feel proud of their achievements

#### What do the youth organisation, the young people and the artist expect from this project?

- Consider what the aims are for the project:
  - to have fun?
  - to give young people an outlet to express their ideas?
  - to develop new skills in a certain area?
  - to produce a definite outcome (eg a performance or art object)?
- Remember that within each area of the arts there are many different approaches, make sure that you are clear about what the young people involved are interested in. For example someone working in the area of music could be doing anything from teaching classical violin, to creating soundscapes on computers or recording live bands. Often young people may not know what they would like to do, or may think that arts projects are not for them. Finding an artform and idea that they find relevant and interesting is essential.
- Involve the young people in all aspects of planning, running and evaluating the project and they will benefit from feeling ownership of the project from start to finish.

#### Who can facilitate the project?

- Artist/facilitators should have the relevant artistic skills needed for the project AND an ability to relate well to young people, preferably with some experience of working with young people.
- Artist/facilitators may be sourced through WCACs database, the artists included on our database are not all people we have experience working with, ask for references and check them out for yourselves. You might also enquire in any local gallery or arts venue in your area, or ask other local schools or youth groups who they have worked with. Personal recommendation is often best. [www.corkarts.ie](http://www.corkarts.ie) is a website with listings of artists, arts organisations, venues and other resources throughout county Cork, however it is not a comprehensive list.
- Subject artist/facilitators to the same selection procedures as you would other members of staff or volunteers according to your child protection policy (eg. ID, interview, references, declaration etc). In some situations it may be possible to get Garda clearance for those working with young people, if you have this facility available then use it.

- Come to an agreement with the artist/facilitator about what they are expected to provide/be responsible for and what you will be expected to provide/be responsible for. Formalise this in a signed contract if necessary.

### **What will it cost to run the project?**

Costs of a project may include any of the following:

- **Artists fees:** VEC part time teaching rates are currently €38.01 per teaching hour, you should not expect to have to pay artists for their time spent preparing for workshops if you are paying this rate. If you are expecting the artist to spend a lot of time meeting with you, to plan or feedback on the project, you could offer to pay them for this time at a lower rate. Alternatively, you may wish to offer a complete fee for the project rather than an hourly rate, based on roughly the amount of time you consider it will take to complete the project as a whole.
- **Equipment/materials:** Many arts projects will require equipment or materials, some may be provided by the artist/facilitator and some you may need to provide. Decide on a definite budget at the beginning of the project, and be clear about who provides what, and what documentation of costs is needed (eg invoices, receipts etc.), to avoid misunderstanding later on.
- **Travel:** Will the project involve taking the group out to visit an arts venue? What costs might any such trip incur? Unless the artist is travelling from a long distance to work with the group and has specifically asked you to contribute to their travel costs there is no need to do so normally.
- **Insurance:** Will the activities you are planning be covered by your usual insurance? Does the building you are using have its own insurance that covers your activities?
- **Advertising:** Will the project itself need to be advertised to get the young people involved? Or will the end product need to be advertised? Eg a performance night. How will you go about advertising it? This could involve printing posters, placing adverts in local papers etc.
- **Staffing:** The artist/facilitator should not be left to be responsible for a group of young people on their own. You can either, provide funds for an assistant, or provide a member of staff/ volunteer from your organisation to be present throughout the project.
- **Venue hire:** In certain situations it may be necessary to pay for use of a venue.
- **Documentation:** There may be costs involved in documenting the project using photography or video, for display or evaluation purposes.

### **How will we fund it?**

There are a number of different ways to cover the costs of a project, usually a combination of one or more of the following:

- **Income:** this would include any charge that participants may have to pay to be involved in the project, or charges for tickets for a final performance/display resulting from the project.
- **Sponsorship:** An example of this would be if a business loans equipment or provides a venue in exchange for advertising as a sponsor of the project, when applying for funding, this kind of sponsorship can be given a monetary value.
- **Benefit in kind:** This would be when a need is covered by somebody who does not want anything in exchange, for example donated materials, or use of the artists own equipment. This can also be given a monetary value when applying for funding.
- **Grants/funding applications:** There are various grants and types of funding that can be applied for to help run youth arts projects a list of places to look

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for these is included below. You can never guarantee you will be successful in applying for funding however following these basic guidelines will hopefully improve your chances.

- Initially make sure your project fits the criteria of the grant or you will be wasting your time and energy with the application form. Emphasise the aspects of the project that they have stated they are looking for in your application, but do not compromise your ideas to fit their criteria.
- Provide clear objectives for the project, what are you aiming to achieve, what will the benefits be.
- Show that you have thought through ALL the practicalities of running the project.
- Provide clear financial information including all costs and other sources of funding, sponsorship, benefit in kind and any income can all be given estimated monetary value to show that you are providing a portion of the costs.

### **Planning your project**

- Listen to what the young peoples own ideas are, and never underestimate their ability to pick up new ideas.
- Be innovative, not predictable.
- Choose an artform that suits the interests, needs, and size of the group, and the space, resources and timeframe available.
- Fully prepare the artist/facilitator for working with the group by providing them with copies of any child protection policy or code of behaviour that you normally adhere to. They should be clearly informed of procedure should there be problems or difficulties that arise. Inform them of information about young people in the group only where it is relevant to the workshop.
- For longer courses (rather than one off workshops) consider drawing up a group contract so that everyone knows what is expected of them (established youth groups may already have such a thing in place). This contract could include things like, not coming to the session with drink or drugs taken, not needlessly criticising or damaging other peoples work, arriving on time and attending regularly etc. This approach gives the young people an investment in what happens within the session and anticipates any problems that might occur. This contract can also be used to establish the aims and objectives of the project
- Participating fully in a workshop/project should always be encouraged. Try to implement a policy of always trying something once. If a young person really feels uncomfortable with an activity do not force them to participate, or make them feel wrong for not doing so. Try to find an alternative that they are comfortable with rather than leaving them out altogether.
- Include in your plans a process for recording and evaluating the project. This could include photos, videos, recordings, comment books, diaries, attendance records etc. Evaluation of the project should include input from all involved young people, youth workers, and artists.

### **Resources:**

#### **Art Materials:**

Cork Art Supplies,  
Princes Street  
Cork

021 4277488

[www.corkartsupplies.com](http://www.corkartsupplies.com)

The Art Shop,  
New Street  
Bantry  
027 50236

Art by the Lee  
U14 Westlink Business Park,  
Sarsfield Road, Wilton,  
Cork.  
Tel 021 4312858

DBI (Clay Supplies)  
Blackrock, Cork.  
Tel 0214292888

Cathal O'Donovan  
Main Street,  
Skibbereen, Co Cork.  
Tel

Coughlan's  
11 Rossa St,  
Clonakilty, Co Cork  
Tel 023 33068

**Funding Bodies:**

- Cork Co.Council provides Arts Grants (for community based arts projects) and Artists in Schools Schemes annually. Applications for 2007 were due in by December 2006 so look out for next years deadline. Details can be found on [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie)
- The Arts Council provides funding twice yearly through its Artist in the Community scheme, managed by Create. This years deadlines were in March and June. See [www.create-ireland.ie](http://www.create-ireland.ie) for more info.
- The Ireland Funds, supports education and arts and culture projects. See [www.irlfunds.org](http://www.irlfunds.org)
- The National Youth Arts Programme offers an Artist in Youth Work Residency Scheme and a Youth Arts Development Award ( which funded this research). Deadlines last year were in September, check out [www.youtharts.ie](http://www.youtharts.ie) for more details.
- The Irish Youth Foundation targets disadvantaged or at risk young people and has small and medium grants available which sometimes include arts projects. See [www.iyf.ie](http://www.iyf.ie)

**Other contacts/resources**

- [www.yifm.com](http://www.yifm.com) Young Irish Film Makers
- [www.youthdrama.ie](http://www.youthdrama.ie) National Association for Youth Drama
- [www.freshfilmfestival.net](http://www.freshfilmfestival.net) includes Irelands Young Filmmaker Awards
- [www.SpunOut.ie](http://www.SpunOut.ie) Ireland leading youth website run with by and for young people
- [www.firstmusiccontact.com](http://www.firstmusiccontact.com) information resource for aspiring bands and musicians.

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- [www.frameworksfilms.com](http://www.frameworksfilms.com) Cork based film production company with outreach programme
- [www.youtharts.ie](http://www.youtharts.ie) National Youth Arts Programme, includes the publication 'Creating Magic - Developing arts based practices with young people' to download.