

**YOUNG URBAN ARTS
DRAMA RESIDENCY PILOT
PROGRAMME
2009**

**A joint initiative of CityArts, City of Dublin Youth Service
Board and Dublin City Council**

Final Report

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This report is a review of the Drama Residency Pilot programme undertaken by Young Urban Arts, whose mission is to provide and promote access to and participation in quality art forms especially for young people in a youth work context in Dublin city. Young Urban Arts grew out of an informal partnership between City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB), City Arts and Dublin City Council (2003-2007) and was formalised in 2007.

The Drama Residencies Programme was designed to explore the nature and scope of a drama residencies programme within a youth work context. In tandem it aimed to further encourage and support the development of drama in a youth work context.

1.2 Report Structure

This report is structured in a such as way as to provide a variety of perspectives on the Drama Residency programme. Chapter one introduces the report; Chapter Two outlines the background to and context of the programme; Chapter Three details the drama residencies programme in action; Chapter Four presents the perspectives of those centrally involved - young people, drama facilitators and youth workers and; Chapter Five offers key insights and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE CONTEXT OF YOUNG URBAN ARTS

2.1 The Partners

Young Urban Arts is a fledgling consortium of organisations based in and serving Dublin city, including the city's youth services board (CDYSB); an arts organisation dedicated to working with local communities and artists (CityArts) and; the Local Authority arts programme (Dublin City), each with diverse and distinctive yet complementary missions, objectives, structures and programmes. Each, as part of its overall remit, has a commitment - underpinned by policy and strategy - to support and engage young people in culture and the arts. Each has a significant track record in championing and delivering the arts and in advocating for the cultural entitlements and participation of young people through Dublin city and its environs.

CDYSB is appointed by the CDVEC to make recommendations on youth work policy, programme development, grant aid and support services required to assist in the development of youth work at community level in Dublin. It is the administering agency for three funds provided by central government:

- Special Projects for Disadvantaged Youth Fund (since 1988)
- Local Drugs Task Force Fund (since 1998)
- Young People Facilities and Services Fund (since 1999).

It provides an extensive range of services to projects, groups, and clubs and has had a dedicated art programme since late '90s. Services include in-service training, workshops and courses for youth work staff; youth worker support services; development support, mentoring and training programmes for management committee; payroll service and technical support; supports to volunteers including achievement awards and educational bursaries in youth work.

CDYSB's Arts Programme supports young people's access to quality arts experiences in youth projects and clubs through the work of its dedicated Arts Officer, Grainne Lord (who works on a part-time basis) and its strategic partnerships amongst them with Young Urban Arts which is based in CDYSB, managed by Niamh Geoghegan. The Arts Programme is long-standing and responsive to needs and requests from projects and clubs offering information and advice, training and workshops and strategic policy development. In the past CDYSB Arts worked in partnership with City Arts and Dublin City Council in delivering a module on the DkIT honours degree course in youth work and also developed (with partner organisations Youth Work Ireland and the National Youth Arts Programme) *Creating Magic*, a set of guidelines for developing art-based practices with young people.

CityArts is dedicated to working with local communities and artists in Dublin to create new high quality arts programmes in a community context. Over the past four years,

following on from the Civil Arts Inquiry (2002-04), CityArts has created a significant new matrix of relationships, critical explorations and strategic partnerships aimed at negotiating improved arts provision for those sections of society traditionally excluded from the mainstream of cultural life within the city.

In recent years CityArts has developed a new set of flagship arts projects and areas that have moved steadily away from the traditional venue-based approach towards an exploration of public contexts and particular communities of interest. The opening of the new CityArts home on Bachelors Walk in 2010 will afford new ways of engagement between the public and the arts with the building as a hub of activity connecting Dublin communities, artists and the international field of collaborative arts practice.

Dublin City Council's Arts Office provides a wide range of art facilities and services to the people of Dublin as well as visitors to the city. With Assistant Arts Officers strategically located in geographical areas across the city, facilities and services are developed in a flexible and responsive way. Dublin City Art Office delivers and supports a wide range of short and long term initiatives ranging from writers workshops, film clubs, arts in schools programmes to large-scale festivals including Dublin Writer's Festival, Northside Music Festival and Bealtaine Festival to a dedicated Youth Arts programme, an Opera in the Open season, a Public Art programme and Open Spaces, a programme of partnered events, talks and critical response through which Dublin City Council aims to stimulate dialogue, inspire new thought and suggest creative partnerships to support artists engagement with Dublin's open spaces.

In recent years Dublin City developed The LAB, a purpose built facility for the arts based in Dublin 1, which includes a gallery and rehearsal studios, used for emerging artists and companies. The Red Stables houses artists' day studios, an Irish Artists' Residential Studio and an International Residential Studio.

2.2 Forming the Consortium

Informal links between the three partners have been fostered over the last decade and various initiatives to collectively support and enrich young people's participation in the arts have been undertaken. These include:

- **Artist in residency programmes** involving young people working with artists and arts organisations. These short and long term programmes, mainly in the performing arts including film, digital media, photography and drama have been run:
 - In specific youth projects in response to the needs and interests of the particular young people in their own youth context
 - as programmes such as RUSH, REEL YOUTH or SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC which take place in several youth projects throughout the city with significant crossover in developing the artwork and a final showcase/launch/festival event involving all participating young people.

- **Arts Network** for youth workers who have a particular interest in building networks in order to promote and produce arts programmes and events in their projects.
- **Training initiatives in the arts** – both skill based and developmental - primarily for youth workers with the aim of building capacity leading to more sustainable provision in video training, visual arts including murals, drama and digital photography. The partners also collaborated on the DKIT Youth Certificate Course from 2005. It is important to note that a set of guidelines centred around developing arts-based practices with young people – *Creating Magic* – were drawn up in 2003 by CDYSB and its other partners at the time - National Youth Council of Ireland and National Youth Federation with support from the Department of Education and Science (youth affairs) and the Arts Council. The fundamental tenets of those guidelines are noteworthy in fostering good practice in this field.

2.3 **Formal Partnership: Mission and objectives**

These initiatives together with other significant strategies and actions developed by the individual partner organisations found expression in the formal establishment of Young Urban Arts in 2007 with the aim of maximising its resources and capacity to provide and promote access to and participation in quality art forms for young people in youth work contexts. Young Urban Arts believes that arts and cultural programmes are powerful tools in tackling educational disadvantage and works in a strategic and targeted way to achieve its aims engaging youth workers and artists to deliver imaginative and effective programmes and events across various artforms. It further commits to developing strategic partnerships with other arts, educational and policy bodies as well as funders and to act as an advocate for the rights of young people to engage in the arts and to have opportunities that foster creativity and imaginative expression.

Young Urban Arts Strategy outlines a number key objectives which relate to young people, youth workers, artists and to issues of programming, organisation, advocacy and communications. The following objectives, directly relevant to the evaluation of the drama residencies programme include:

- Access for as many young people as possible - in youth work settings and where the consortium can have greatest impact – to a diverse choice of quality arts experiences and encounters with the twin desired outcomes of ownership and self-expression in both a local and wider context
- The creation of circumstances where as many youth workers as possible will have access to quality training in arts practice, planning and management and will be able to confidently use their own creativity in their work. In addition that their arts management know-how, event production skills and personal creativity will be recognised, valued and harnessed in the context of collaboration with artists and arts organisations
- The creation of circumstances where as many artists as possible be attracted to

work in a youth arts contexts and will have access to quality training/induction in progressive methods and models of participative art. In addition that artists will be valued in youth work and community contexts and work in collaboration with youth workers

- The support and delivery of a range of innovative and quality programmes in a diversity of artforms in youth work contexts; the fostering of connectivity and cooperation between the youth work and arts world
- The championing of the arts in a youth work context and an openness to the development of strategic relationships that support and enrich the work of Young Urban Arts
- The commissioning of research and the gathering of information around young people's participation in the arts with a particular focus on drama and music. (1)

2.4 Young Urban Arts: exploring possibilities

In 2007 Young Urban Arts appointed Niamh Geogheghan as its Manager with the remit of delivering on the newly developed strategy. The Manager is located within CDYSB and is part of the arts team there which also includes a part-time arts officer, Grainne Lord. The Manager works closely with the Young Urban Arts Steering Group who develop strategy and oversee the programme.

Young Urban Art's first task was to map youth participation in the arts in a youth work context across Dublin's seventy youth projects and some three hundred youth clubs. Youth projects are typically funded and supported by youth workers employed by City of Dublin Youth Services Board whereas Clubs are typically volunteer led. The profile of the young people who participate in youth clubs and projects is diverse in terms of age and activity. Young people actively choose to participate and much of the programming and activity is determined by the cultural and geographical context (including location, history of arts and cultural activity, needs and interests of the young people and the youth workers). Findings suggested that Film and Music were most popular especially in the youth worker initiated film project, REEL YOUTH, a training and screening festival for young people or RUSH, a shorts film festival/platform event for new work made by young people. SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC, a music/video project which, like the two film festivals, took place in the projects and culminated in a screen event was very popular.

The mapping also revealed a number of on-going projects in visual arts with mural and graffiti projects being particularly popular. Visual artists have tended to work in applied arts including social, community and youth contexts more perhaps than artists in other disciplines.

(1) From *Young Urban Arts: Powering the Creative Lives of Young People in Dublin. Strategic Action Plan 2008-2010*

The reasons why this may be the case vary perhaps due to the nature of the art form which may lend itself more easily to a participative context and the motivation of visual artists in making work in context; the work of the Irish Museum of Modern Art whose Education and Community programme has nurtured a whole generation of visual artists

working in context since 1991 and The National College of Art and Design is still the only 3rd level arts college with a post graduate programme in Community Arts.

A number of models of exemplary arts practice and provision exist within youth projects and community contexts in Dublin and are characterised by sustainability due to bottom up, community development rather than top down intervention, notable examples in Dublin include Fatima Groups United Arts and Culture Programme or Transition Space at O'Devaney Gardens both of which have developed dedicated cultural buildings.

Drama and theatre developed for, with and by young people in youth and community contexts was greatly enriched by the emergence of Wet Paint Arts set up by Niall O'Baoill in 1983. The work of this company over a fifteen year period defined the scope, nature and practice of drama and theatre for young people and made a distinctive contribution to arts development in youth work and community contexts. Though a comprehensive analysis of Wet Paint Art's contribution is beyond the scope of this evaluation it is useful to highlight its significance here and to suggest a re-looking at this incredible body of work. The roots of Wet Paint Arts were well planted in the lives of young people whose concerns and aspirations were explored and celebrated in the language of theatre with a visual style and a musical influence. Its strands of work included Young People's Theatre; Community Based Projects; Education and Training (professionals and young people); Summer projects in community settings. (2) Its closure in the late 90s might be said to coincide with the decline in drama and theatre provision for young people in youth work contexts. With the setting up of Young Urban Arts it was agreed to relook at drama and explore its possibilities through a residency Programme.

2.5 The macro context: Arts, Drama and Young People

The last 25 years in Ireland have seen the development of a generation of professional artists and arts organisations, whose practice is centred on, or includes significantly, work with children and/or young adults. The practice is located across a wide-range of settings and contexts at national and local levels and is rich and diverse in nature and, increasingly self-confident: hence a cohort of professional artists, organisations organizations with a wide range of experience in this domain.

More artists and arts organisations, emerging and well established in their particular field of work, are becoming involved in arts work with, for and by young people and there is increased activity and experimentation across art forms by local authorities (for example through the percent for art scheme).

(2) From Wet Paint Arts, Work in Progress, by Martin Drury 1992

The emergence of new structures for young people at local and national level and the involvement of key statutory agencies, providing excellent opportunities for developing local and national partnership approaches to arts provision for young people has contributed significantly to the development of a rich range of services and initiatives.

The Arts Council, acting unilaterally and also in partnership with key statutory agencies in youth work and youth affairs have funded artists and arts organizations to work with children and young people.

This support has often been in response to the energy, innovation and quality of individuals artists, youth workers, teachers, careworkers; arts organizations; others in the arts and social/community/youth fields. The most recent manifestation of Arts Council commitment in this area has been the development of the Young Ensembles Schemes (www.artscouncil.ie).

A significant body of documentation and research has grown, in tandem with practice, mainly focused on specific initiatives and enterprises which highlights the positive impact of this practice on children and young people; describes the distinctive contribution made by artists and arts organizations in working in collaboration with children and young people in a range of contexts from youth groups to hospitals; from schools to community settings. The Arts Council recently published a research digest, *The Arts in Education, and other Learning Settings*, which contains information on 72 research reports published in relation to arts and children/young people in Ireland between 1979 and 2007, as well as, more detailed summaries of fourteen of these reports. The recording of the arts experiences and perspectives of children and young people working with artists (in Ireland at least) has been for the most part mediated by 'significant' adults. Ironically this runs counter to the developing attention being paid to children's rights and entitlements both in and out of school, as evidenced by a series of legislative and service initiatives, for example, the National Children's Strategy (2000), the Children's Ombudsman (2003) and the Office of the Minister for Children (2005). That said there is a welcome and growing commitment to plan, deliver, record and evaluate art experiences and encounters that directly involve children and young people.

Despite these developments in a relatively short period of time the practice is still largely fragmented and patchy and exists – within the arts world - almost as a counter culture to conventional arts practice, which is dominant both in terms of policy, strategy, sustainable action and resources. The Arts often remains on the margins in youth, community and educational contexts as well or can be exclusively instrumentalist. These are the key challenges at macro level (also reflected at the micro level of the arts) to be considered including sustainability; status of artists working in youth context; recognition of work made by young artists in youth and other contexts; connectivity across sectors; dissemination of information and presentation of best practice; training and professional development and the need for increased supports. These challenges prevailed in a time of unprecedented economic boom and are likely to remain challenges to be addressed in the future.

Young Urban Arts operates in this wider context of youth arts and professional arts practice and provision which involves a range of agencies and organisations whose whole or partial remit is the development and delivery of arts for, with and by young people. These include:

- **The Arts Council** - the statutory agency for the promotion and development of the arts in Ireland whose current policy, *Partnership for the Arts* articulates the overall

policy framework with current and emerging themes including the nature, scope and quality of young people's engagement in the arts; ongoing professional development for artists and practitioners in this field; cultural diversity; ethical practice and active partnership.

- **National Youth Council of Ireland** is the representative body for national voluntary youth organisations, which acts on issues that impact on young people. Its dedicated youth arts programme supports initiatives and projects which facilitate young people's participation in and appreciation of the arts, as well as engagement with arts work specifically created by, with or for young people. It manages the Artist in Youth Work Scheme, which is offered on an annual basis as a means of extending and enhancing opportunities for young people to experience and participate in the arts. The aim of the scheme is to encourage artistic collaboration between professional artists and young people. Young people have the opportunity to work with and learn from practitioners of excellence in their field. Equally, artists have the opportunity to enrich their own professional practice through the experience of working with young people. There are two awards under this scheme: *The Artist in Youth Work Residency* and *The Youth Arts Development Award*. (See www.youtharts.ie for further details).
- **National Association for Youth Drama (NAYD)** is the development organization for youth theatre and youth drama in Ireland supports youth drama in practice and policy, and supports the sustained development of youth theatres in Ireland. NAYD advocates the inherent value and the unique relationship between young people and theatre as an artform, and is committed to extending and enhancing young people's understanding of theatre and raising the artistic standards of youth theatre across the country. It supports youth drama in practice through an annual programme that includes the National Youth Theatre, National and Regional festivals of youth theatres, commissioning new writing, publications, resources, training and other services as well as research and policy development. (See www.nayd.ie for further details).
- **Professional theatre sector and young people:** The range of practice is wide and it may be useful to distinguish four main models (3):
 - A performance and/or theatre event available to the general public, young people included, for example attending a public performance in a local or national arts venue for example The Abbey Theatre

(3) From *Artist ~ Schools Guidelines; Towards Best Practice in Ireland*, edited by Martin Drury for The Arts Council (2007)

- A performance and/or theatre event available publicly and supported by complementary services and resources designed for young people from youth groups, for example, backstage tours, talks or workshops with the actors and resource tools which make specific connections between the young people and the production process for example Axis Arts Centre,

Ballymun

- Theatre experiences designed and intended specifically for young people in youth group contexts, for example youth club members work with a visiting artist such as playwright, actor, director, designer or the youth group visits an arts venue to attend a performance
- Drama or theatre experiences characterised by collaboration between youth groups and theatre makers/companies. This process leads to projects or programmes of work that are distinguished by intensive engagement between the partners, for example artist in residency or a series of visits to a theatre as part of a programme designed by the youth group and the theatre and often involving sharing or performance, for example Tower of Babel Theatre Company, Dublin (formerly part of Calypso Theatre Company).

Key Policy Arts and Culture Initiatives: Legislative and strategic changes demonstrate a shift at governmental level in addressing the needs of young people. This includes an increased professionalisation of services for young people, an expansion of the remit of a number of government departments in relation to young people and an acknowledgement of the need to build-up a substantial body of knowledge in this area in Ireland. In regard to the arts and culture four recent key documents have described, informed and made recommendation pertaining to increased participation of young people in the arts:

- *The Participation of Young People in the Arts in Ireland* (Coughlan, 2004, commissioned by The Arts Council) which describes the rationale and scope of The Arts Council's involvement in youth arts; an overview of youth participation in the arts in Ireland; the main avenues through which young people participate in the arts and developments in both formal and informal sectors. At the time it strongly recommended that the Arts Council prioritise cross-cutting measures and advance the development of a sustainable infrastructure for the youth arts sector
- *A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach* (Council of National Cultural Institutions - CNCI, Martin Drury and Susan Coughlan, 2004) which defines the practice and policy context of Education, Community, Outreach (ECO) – including that which relates specifically to young people's participation - in Ireland's ten national cultural institutions and the key governing principles and guidelines for ECO in these Institutions
- The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) report on *The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion* (2007) which draws attention to the need for a wider diversity of cultural expression in Ireland and to combat exclusion from Ireland's cultural and artistic life. In the course of the report it explicitly mentions the particular significance of young people in terms of national policy and strategy for the arts. It draws attention to the fact that formal cultural provision can be an instrument of social exclusion instead of being a source or and force for cultural democracy. One of the key reasons for this lies in the fact that decision making in the realm of formal culture is primarily vested in those with high

educational attainment and equivalent socio-economic background

- *In the Frame; Out of the Picture; A Statistical Analysis of Public involvement in the Arts* (2008) by the ESRI (commissioned by the NESF) was based on *The Public and the Arts* survey commissioned by the Arts Council in 2006 to survey the behaviour and attitudes of Irish people with regard to the arts. One of its most relevant key findings was the fact that the single biggest barrier to cultural participation by people is the lack of educational attainment and opportunity.

While the focus of this evaluation is on the nature, scope and range of possibilities of drama within a youth work context, these considerations are useful in situating the action research in the larger context of practice and provision; in providing reference points and questions in the course of the evaluation; and in supporting recommendations that broadens the scope and potential of young people's – in youth work settings - participation in drama and which have application across all artforms, not being exclusive to drama or the performing arts.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DRAMA RESIDENCIES PROGRAMME IN ACTION

3.1 Objectives

- To identify the conditions that best foster young people's participation and engagement in drama in a youth work setting
- To explore effective partnerships between the key stakeholders – young person, youth worker and drama worker/artist and assess the impact of working in drama from their distinctive perspectives
- To recommend further pathways for the development, promotion and sustainability of drama programmes in the context of Young Urban Arts.

3.2 Process of Evaluation

- Desk research to identify current arts policy and provision and to identify previous models of drama/theatre in youth work context so as to situate the drama residencies programme in a larger context
- Site visits to observe, participate (where possible) and document the three pilot drama residencies across range of issues and themes
- Interviews with young people, artists, youth workers across a range of consistent themes (see Annex I for interview questions).

3.3 Drama Residency Programme - Key Features

A drama residency programme structure was designed and a brief inviting expressions of interest was sent to seventy Youth Projects funded through CDYB. Funding was made available for three residencies to take place in youth club settings over a twelve week period between January and April 2009. Key features included:

- twinning of professional drama facilitator with a youth group interested in developing drama
- an openness to the needs and interests of the young people who would determine the form and content of the residency
- a collaborative, process based and open approach to developing the form and content of the residency
- the fostering of a spirit of enquiry, experimentation, discovery; a celebration of personal experiences and stories

- a recognition of the need for the young people to experience positive reinforcement in the drama experience
- the possibility of a final ‘showcase’/ celebration of work at the end of the residency
- support of the Young Urban Arts Manager, the Co-ordinator of the Project
- engagement of an researcher/evaluator.

3.4 Profiling three Drama Residencies

1.

Location	Swan Youth Project, North William Street, Dublin 1
Participants	Ten young people participated ranging in age from fourteen to nineteen years, with the majority being older boys (there was one girl) who had extensive experience in filmmaking, TV production, music and performance. The focus and interest of the group was clearly stated by the young people as focused on their own artistic and creative development and in particular on the honing of their skills in acting and performance which they saw as transferable skills for their film practice. Their interest initially also lay in devising and performing comic scenes.
Drama facilitator	Jenny McDonald. As a theatre practitioner Jenny’s work encompasses facilitation, directing, acting and writing. She has a considerable track record in leading participatory theatre and socially engaged theatre projects that address social concerns and/or reach audiences outside of traditional arts venues.
Youth Worker	Eibhlin Harrington has been working with SWAN for a number of years where the arts form a core part of her youth programming. As part of her training in youth and community work she participated in drama and loved it seeing the clear benefits of process based work. She is responsible for her groups participation in a number of arts initiatives through artists in residence programmes, training opportunities and youth arts festivals such as Young Urban Noise and Reel Youth.
Residency Focus	From the outset the young people were clear about their desire to acquire acting and stagecraft skills and in the initial sessions they agreed to explore a range of approaches to theatre making using the methodology of Boal’s <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i> , an approach to issue-based, devised theatre. Each session was sequenced carefully moving from warm-ups (to focus the group and develop skills of observation and staging) to character work, improvisation, breath and vocal work and performance. Very early on the group

choose to work with extant plays and elected to work on classical drama scripts including *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, *Juno and The Paycock* by Sean O'Casey, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Philadelphia Here I Come* by Brian Friel. They adapted scenes from a selection of these plays to a contemporary, relevant context and performed the scenes for each other at the end of residency showcase in the Lab, Foley Street.

2.

Location

Cherry Orchard Youth Project, Ballyfermot, Dublin

Participants

The group initially comprised eight to ten young people though in the course of the residency this varied and dropped off significantly. The young people ranged in age from fifteen to nineteen years and had a good gender balance. The young people were interested in preparing for the production of a play which they hoped to stage later in the year.

Drama facilitator

Niamh Dillon has a wide-ranging portfolio of working in a variety of contexts: as a theatre director in youth theatre; in drama with people with learning disability and; in drama education in formal schooling. She has training in Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Forum Theatre techniques and is passionate about the use of drama as a tool for empowerment.

Youth Worker

Paul O'Shaugnessy has been a Community Youth Worker for the last four years in Cherry Orchard Intergrated Youth Service. He has been involved with the drama group since it began two years ago. He believes that drama is a wonderful medium to work with young people and that it offers them a platform of expression and creativity which is vital when creating positive experiences for young people during the process of youth work

Residency Focus

The residency programme took place over eight sessions and was performance based with a focus on improvisational work as a way into Shakespeare's texts including *Romeo and Juliet*. Improvisational games and acting techniques includes Boal's image theatre, vocal games and exercises, verse speaking and breath work. This approach aimed to support and train the young people for performance in an upcoming production.

3.

Location

F.A.N. Finglas

Participants

The group comprising of seven girls, aged fourteen to sixteen have been part of a drama club as part of a Garda Youth Diversion Project for a couple of years and have a lot of experience in drama. The drama group meets weekly for two and a half hours and to date the girls have made two films which have been presented at a

youth film festival in Limerick. They have also been keen participants of REEL Youth film festival. In the residency pilot there was a real openness by the youth worker and the group to work with a new drama facilitator and to open up new possibilities for persona, social and skill development. Two of the young people are interested in pursuing actor training when they finish school in the coming year.

Drama facilitator Betty Duffy is a well-established drama facilitator, herself from Finglas, with a huge experience devising and directing theatre in youth and community contexts, running process based drama workshops, facilitating access workshops for young people and other groups in professional theatre.

Youth Worker Eveanna O'Meara has been with FAN for a two and a half years and working with this group in the last year and a half. She is professional actor and has performed in educational theatre and mainstream professional theatre, she is a teacher of speech and drama and has recently completed a postgraduate MA programme in Drama Therapy in NUI Maynooth. She sees drama as a powerful tool to effect change so that people can have ownership of their own lives.

Residency Focus The agreed aim of the residency was on giving the girls a new experience of drama with a new facilitator and seeing how they would engage and respond to this. The focus was of drama and theatre games to develop concentration, awareness, collaboration, confidence, coordination, observation and communication. They had initially thought they would like to create a performance but in consultation it emerged that the preferred option was in building their improvisational skills, in having fun and in developing their confidence working with a new facilitator.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 The Young Peoples' Perspectives

In conversation a number of key issues emerged with...

..the Young People

- drama is fun and develops confidence in young people in speaking up and out; is by its nature collaborative and so you get to work as part of a team in exploring interesting characters and situations and in enacting and performing these characters, their experiences, dilemmas and circumstances which young people can often identify with and connect
- clarity of purpose is essential! The critical importance of collaborative planning and development of drama projects and in particular the necessity of involving them from the very outset and as central in that process from beginning to end
- the significance of an independent drama facilitator/ theatre practitioner who can add value; introduce new ideas and ways of working and offer perspectives and opportunities for further development in the arts
- the importance of time to develop their ideas and skills in devising, writing and performing; stage craft and design; and in the technical aspects of staging (sounds and lighting); the importance of timing of the residency pilot on the youth group annual calendar
- the desirability of performing their work to a live audience in particular to their peers in the context of a end of project 'showing'/celebration involving performance, workshops and socialising
- more opportunities for theatre practitioners and artists to work with them to support their interests and needs in drama/the arts. Though at different stages of development and with a diversity of needs and interests each of the three participating groups is involved in drama and film projects on an on-going basis in their youth club. The general response was that the drama residency offered them new insights and experiences to bring to their on-going performance work
- the opportunity to see plays in a variety of settings from site specific to venue based; local to national would be very welcome as part of a residency programme
- for some the desirability of moving beyond youth club context into mentoring and placement opportunities with theatre practitioners and organisations or into youth theatre where they might develop new networks, skills and opportunities
- the 'luxury' of a dedicated youth space for the arts for them; a social and creative place for them to meet and exchange; explore and experiment; workshop and train; present and perform; to call their home for the arts.

4.2 The Youth Workers' Perspectives

In conversation a number of key issues emerged ...

- The centrality of the young person and their personal, social and creative development through engagement with the arts and the value of drama in particular in this
- The empowering nature of drama as an artform in building young people's self esteem; in developing a team spirit through working in an ensemble; in developing empathy through stepping into the shoes of a character and in seeing the world from his/her perspective; in finding voice and speaking up; in encouraging young people to move beyond their immediate reality and; in validating their ideas, exploring their personal experiences and performing those for a peer audience
- The significance of engaging a professional drama facilitator to support young people interested in working in drama; the openness and experience of the drama facilitator in working in youth work contexts is critical in this
- The importance of getting the right fit between drama facilitator and the young people and of setting up appropriate structures to support the young people's participation in the drama and their personal, social and creative development; someone who comes in at the level of the groups and take the young peoples' experiences as the starting point
- The opportunity of taking the group (when their confidence is built in the drama) beyond their own youth club to meet and integrate with other participating groups
- The importance for the group of having enough time to: build an ensemble; develop their confidence; play and experiment with different drama materials so as to be able to make informed decisions about the direction of their drama; meet and work with other young artist peers and see plays and theatre making processes to inform their growing skills and interest
- The options of cross mentoring opportunities and supports between the drama facilitators and the youth workers through the residency programme to share skills and practices and gain insights into each other's way of working with young people and to have fun
- The ability to respond – through Young Urban Arts - to the young people's needs and interests around further engagement with the artform.

4.3 The Drama Facilitators' Perspectives

In conversation a number of key issues emerged ...

- The excitement of working with creative young people in their own space exploring and celebrating their stories through drama and theatre and the positive impact of this on the facilitator's own creative work; the importance of placing the young people's ideas and concerns at the core of the residency and of seeing aside their own and others' agendas
- The desirability and need for more time in advance and in the initial phase of

the residency for the drama facilitator and the youth worker to meet and plan; to explore ideas and ways of working together in the best interests of the group; to clarify the nature of the work, agree roles and to build trust. Some of this might be supported by Young Urban Arts

- The need for on-going communication amongst all partners to assess and adjust the scope of the residency in response to young people's engagement
- The options of cross mentoring opportunities and supports between the drama facilitators and the youth workers throughout the residency programme to share skills and practices and gain insights into each other's way of working with young people and to have fun
- The opportunities to go to a play or site specific performance with the young people
- More long-term residencies are best to build relationships, develop an ensemble, explore an approach to drama and devise a programme that comes from the young people's interests
- The possibility of all the young people involved in the residency programme meeting regularly throughout either in person to see a play or do a workshop together or through a social network where a set of shared drama tasks are set out to be achieved by the various group along the way. A final event involving a sharing of work, performances and workshops would be more meaningful and celebratory if there has been shared moments along the way
- The ability to respond – through Young Urban Arts - to the young people's needs and interests around further engagement with the artform.

CHAPTER FIVE

KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key insights based on observation and informal discussion

- *What made the drama residencies work?*
 - **Consultation with young people:** Where the form and content of the residency was driven by the young people's interests and passions; when the young people were offered options in terms of materials, ideas, ways of working in drama and so could make informed choices about the direction of their work
 - **Acknowledgement of young people's experience:** Where the young people's previous experiences of the arts and of artmaking was acknowledged and celebrated as a starting point in developing new skills and insights to performance, improvisation and making theatre. When this happened the young people were more likely to take a risk!
 - **Having a professional drama practitioner:** Where they brought their experience, expertise and professionalism; where the drama facilitator made visible her process and her artistic work in other contexts to the young people and related to the context of a youth group/club
 - **The drama art form:** Where the drama (games and warm-ups improvisation, script work, characterisation, staging, writing and performance) engaged the young people in new worlds and with new characters allowing them to explore their own stories as well as look beyond their own reality and imagine other worlds; where they were challenged to develop acting and performance skills to inhabit those worlds
 - **The dynamic of collaborative:** Where the chemistry worked in the matching of young people, drama facilitator and youth worker
 - **Working together purposely:** Where a close working relationship was established between the youth worker and drama facilitator with clear understandings of roles; time allotted for joint planning; a mechanism for review and session by session driven by the young people
 - **Creativity and flexibility:** Where there was an open and flexible approach embedded in every aspect of the residency
 - **Future possibilities opened out:** Where young peoples' curiosities and ambitions to explore further pathways through youth theatre or into the professional arts through mentoring, training and work experience was encouraged and followed up
 - **Support and outside endorsement:** Where the Young Urban Arts Manager (and sometimes this evaluator) visited the groups from time to time to see the work as it developed, document the project through voxpops and photography and chat!

What are the conditions that best foster the young people's participation and engagement

in a drama residency programme in a youth work setting?

- **Consultation:** Where young people are consulted and actively involved in the design of the programme so as to meet with the young peoples expectations, interests and distinctive youth culture
 - **Openness to youth culture:** Where there is an openness to young people's ideas and interests and an awareness of current trends and forms of expression (that reflect not only youth culture but an ever increasing culturally diverse population) in youth culture such as Hip Hop, DJ-ing, Spoken Word, Graffiti Art and cartooning, for example
 - **Trust:** Where there is trust amongst all involved
 - **Challenging young people:** Where the leadership potential and team spirit of young people is nurtured through engagement with the arts; where young people are challenged to upskill, collaborate, invent, explore
 - **Exploration:** Where a spirit of exploration, experimentation, enquiry and curiosity is fostered
 - **Hands-on experience of making drama:** Where there are opportunities for young people to have hand-on experience in making and creating as well as presenting and exhibiting; to meet, dialogue and work with other artist peers and producers; to see plays in performance, exhibitions and other arts work as relevant to developing their personal, social and arts skills (artistic, technical, creative, producing/curating) and where these experiences are cool and happening, up and coming and celebratory of youth culture
 - **High quality materials:** Where resources such as materials, opportunities to make and see art are of high quality, eclectic and resonant with young people's needs and interests
 - **Communication that works:** Where communication and publicity is young person friendly making use of web-based media; dedicated interactive website; social networks such as *Bebo*, *My Space* and/or *Facebook*
 - **Time and place:** Where the timing and location of the arts programme is suitable, convenient.
- *And what makes for effective partnerships between young people, artists, arts organisations, youth workers and other stakeholders involved in a drama residency programme?*
 - Getting **the match/twinning** of young people, youth worker, drama facilitator right
 - **Creativity and openness**
 - **A valuing of the arts in and of themselves** and for their capacity to nurture and support the personal, social and creative development of all involved in particular young people
 - **A spirit of collaboration;** a negotiated common purpose; a shared sense of ownership in the collaborative
 - **Engagement with a diversity of varying needs, knowledge, cultural**

background, experiences, skills and working practices of all partners which can be exciting and dynamic in driving forward the programme

- **Continuity and sustainability** of vision, mission, people and initiatives
- **Agreed aims, objectives and intended outcomes** and appropriate resourcing
- **On-going planning** and flexibility in planning and implementation
- **Documentation, recording and evaluation.**

What are the challenges?

- **Finding and speaking a shared language that incorporates and respect the distinctiveness of practice and context:** While time alone allows for the development of a shared language amongst stakeholders the matching of artist to context is critical. Appropriate supports, resources and structures are required to establish and maintain mutually beneficial aims, objectives and possible outcomes. The twinning process of artist to context is of paramount importance and requires support and nurturing throughout, possibly being coordinated and monitored by YUA with structures built in to address and resolve issues arising as the project develops.
- **Adequate time for adults stakeholders to prepare and plan; to get to know the context and; to come to a shared understanding of the distinct goals and motivations of all players.** With adequate time to plan and prepare artists become aware of the ethos and workings of the youth environment and youth workers become aware of the possibilities that particular artist can bring to their project. Once a set of shared understandings emerge the adults stakeholders can better explore ideas and ways of working with the young people and so evolve a practice/residency from that basis, slowly and organically
- **Getting commitment from the young people and sustaining their interest.** Where the young people themselves choose or champion an artist residency there is more likely the chance for an encounter with art that is experimental, creative and authentic and where the young people get the opportunity to genuinely make an in-put into the process and content of the residency. In addition where artist residencies are integrated into the life of a youth project and connect with other relevant local projects and collaborative the more likely it is to sustain interest and commitment and create sustainable option for young people.
- **Sustainable arts policy and practice in youth context.** Ideally the arts are embedded in the youth context (through policy and practice) and the arts are employed to articulate and celebrate the vibrancy of youth culture. Ideally also this is a bottom up rather than a top down

process.

5.2 Recommendations

From exploration to concentration: Since its inception YUA has developed and championed a wide variety of initiatives and projects – including art programmes, workshops and trainings, networking and advocacy - in youth work contexts and has been necessarily open exploratory in its approach. This exploration which is a necessary phase of any new enterprise has been underpinned by strategy which has given rise to such diverse projects as *Big Breakfast, Reel Youth, Rush Film Festival, Sounds Like Music, Crew TV Training Project* and action research in music and drama. It may be beneficial at this time, given the strength and increased confidence of the collaborating partners, the learnings from the extensive action research undertaken and the current economic climate to move into a phase of concentration and consolidation.

A phase of concentration and consolidation necessarily gives rise to a number of questions to be addressed such as:

- How best can Young Urban Arts support young people's (in youth work contexts) engagement and participation in the arts (looking and watching; creating and performing)?
- Will it focus on a specific age and stage of the young person's development rather than ?
- How might the young people come to participate?
- What might determine the choice of artform(s), the scope and nature of the project(s)?
- Will it be artform based?
- Where will the emphasis lie - on the process and developmental? On the artistic and aesthetic? On both?
- Where will the initiatives take place? In youth clubs? In a dedicated space? In a variety of contexts?
- Is it desirable to collaborate with external partners and funders with complimentary agendas?

What might a phase of concentration and consolidation look like?

- the delivery of a year round artist-in-residency programme to youth groups with attendant supports and developmental initiatives (some suggested above)?
- the development of a dedicated space for the arts for young people in a youth work context and in tandem the development of an information portal which acts as an interactive on-line presence for young people with strong links to the arts industry and to mentoring opportunities, collaborative arts projects, training and supports which young people could access independently?
- the development of a number of joint initiatives for, with and by young people in association with arts and youth arts professionals including opportunities to create; to perform or exhibit; to meet and

- work with artists; to visit galleries, festivals, theatres and so on?
- All of the above or other than the above?

These examples are merely emblematic and obviously require further exploration governed by such issues as what's desirable for young people; the purpose and direction of the partners as individual organisations and as a collective; available funds and other resources; other partnerships and other such considerations. However it is in this context and spirit that the following recommendations are offered arising from the discussions, observations and experiences of those involved in the drama residencies programme though with broader implications for Young Urban Arts.

Strategic

- To engage young people in the design and development of Young Urban Arts policy, strategy and artistic programme through the development of a Young Urban Arts Advisory Group which is integral to Young Urban Arts and which establishes terms of reference which recognise its functions and decision making powers
- For Young Urban Arts to make a shift from the initial phase of exploration to a phase of concentration leading to consolidation and sustainable action in respect of young people's (in and from youth work contexts) engagement with the arts
- To develop a clear and coordinated strategy for relationships with the youth arts, professional arts sectors, educational and cultural sectors
- To undertake a retrospective review of arts/drama practice in the context of youth work provision (largely an unwritten story) for the purpose of informing the future and archiving the past.

Young People and Young Urban Arts

- To foster a love of the arts and of artmaking in young people
- To recognise and develop the artistic selves of young people
- To create opportunities for young people to engage in the arts in ways that are meaningful and resonant and which support and nurture enquiry, experimentation, discovery, creativity and creation
- To focus on the creative development of young people by providing a range of artistic opportunities in a supportive and welcoming environments
- To find a variety of ways for young people to contribute to all aspects of Young Urban Arts
- To create multiple points of entry to Young Urban Arts for young people
- To develop innovative strategies for reaching young people in youth work contexts to engage in the arts
- Develop opportunities for young people to work with arts practitioners of national and international significance
- Where the need arises too provide opportunities through training, placements, mentoring and apprentice level positions for young people to move towards professional status as artists, workshop leaders, actors, managers, technicians, producers.

Artists and Youth Workers working in partnership with young people

- To recognise that the artist and the youth worker offer unique ways of working and engaging with young people and in understanding the world around them
- To develop a pool of committed and engaged artists and youth workers interested in developing drama and theatre in their practice
- To create time and opportunities for the artist and the youth worker to explore how best to harness their distinctive skills, understandings and approaches to meet the needs and interests of the young people they work with
- To provide opportunities for artists, youth workers to learn alongside young people
- To provide opportunities for artists and young workers to develop their own creativity
- To foster and develop collaborative structures and approaches to planning, implementing and evaluating arts projects and initiatives and to collectively develop values and guidelines for effective collaboration (please note two sets of guidelines which offer useful practical suggestions: *Artists~Schools Guidelines: Towards Best Practice in Ireland*, developed by the Arts Council and Creating Magic; *Developing Arts-based Practices with Young People*)
- To find ways to give more opportunities for young people, youth workers, artists and other stakeholders to contribute idea and to take initiative both in their immediate areas and across Young Urban Arts as a whole.

Young Urban Arts and Drama

- *To develop a further drama residencies programmes building on the learning of the pilot and modeled on previous successful arts programme such as CREW TV, REEL YOUTH and Young Urban Noise Festival characterised by the following:*
 - Young Urban Arts partners with a theatre venue or theatre company to participate in a theatre residency programme for young people culminating in a festival of work which could be theme based arising out of the idea of the young people, for example *Generation; Stories of Now; Urban Myths ...*
 - Up to ten groups of young people selected to create and present theatre drawn from youth groups around the city
 - Theatre practitioners/drama facilitators in residence in each of the group for a period of twenty four weeks (double the time allocated in the pilot)
 - The focus on the first phase of twelve weeks would be on devising and exploring different aspects of theatre; twinning with a partner youth group and workshopping together or seeing a play together thus allowing for the opportunity to share ideas, methodologies, themes and materials. The focus on the second twelve weeks would be on

mounting the production and again could involve some cross peer mentoring and support from the partner theatre

- A programme of activity supported by the theatre venue or company to engage young people in the process of making theatre and offer them an opportunity to go behind the scenes
- Dedicated website and social networking communication tools
- A forum for theatre practitioners and youth workers to work and play together supported by a facilitator
- A mentoring programme for each of the participating groups
- A final celebration/festival where work of the participating groups is presented and which could include workshops, discussions, D-jaying event; open mics and other such events
- A further drama residencies programme would be underpinned by recommendations made in 5.3 (young people and Young Urban Arts) and 5.4 (effective partnerships).

Finally it is recommended that each of the partner organisations considers the above in the light of their own organisation's distinctive remit as well as in the context of their shared remit in Young Urban Arts.

Ends/Sharon Murphy/April 2010