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A graphic element consisting of three overlapping, rounded shapes in yellow, pink, and blue, with a small circular inset containing a stylized figure.

Creative Youth

A systematic review of outcomes and trends
in Phase One of the Creative Youth Plan -
Insights and Implications

Interim Report

Carmel O'Sullivan and Lisa O'Keeffe
On behalf of the Creative Youth Expert Advisory Group
The Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022

May 2022

all in the same story





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We would like to state that any views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of any of the funders.

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List of Tables	III
List of Figures	III
<hr/>	
Foreword	1
Executive Summary Key Findings	2
<hr/>	
Chapter One	6
Context	7
1.1. Context of the Research	7
<hr/>	
Chapter Two	10
Scope and Methodology	
2.1. Introduction	11
2.1.1. Scope of the Review and Methodology	11
2.2. Benefits of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Investment in Creativity	11
2.3. Methodological Challenges	12
2.4. Evaluation Framework	13
2.5. Research Agenda	14
2.5.1. Literature Review	17
2.6. Limitations	18
<hr/>	
Chapter Three	19
Locating the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022) in the Context of Current Trends and Issues in Arts and Cultural Policy	
3.1. Introduction	20
3.1.1. Pillar 1 - Creative Youth	21
3.2. Vision and Strategy	22
3.2.1. Broadening the Understanding and Function of ‘The Arts’	23
<hr/>	
Chapter Four	26
Inputs, Outputs and Growth	
4.1. Introduction	27
4.2. Creative Youth Inputs	28
a) Policy	28
b) Communication	28
c) Expenditure	28
d) Hub na nÓg	29
e) Investment in Research	29
4.3. Creative Youth Outputs	30
a) Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP) CPD Initiative	30
b) Creative Schools	31
c) Creative Clusters	32
d) Local Creative Youth Partnerships (LCYPs)	33
e) Local Authorities Project Output	33
e) Cruinniú na nÓg	34
f) Growth in other Creative Youth Initiatives	34
4.4. Summary	35
<hr/>	
Chapter Five	36
Findings and Outcomes in a National and International Context	
5.1. Introduction	37
5.2. Common Trends in Creative Youth Projects and Initiatives (a)	37
5.3. Common Trends in Creative Youth Projects and Initiatives (b)	41
5.4. Summary	45

Chapter Six	46
Gaps and Challenges in the Research Findings	
6.1. Gaps and Challenges in the Research Findings	47
6.2. Recommendations made by Creative Youth Reports	47
6.3. Evaluating Engagement and Participation in Creative Activities	48
6.3.1. Voice of the Child	50
6.3.2. Summary: Measurement of Cultural Engagement	51
6.4. Sociodemographic Characteristics	52
6.5. Achieving Sustainability	53
6.5.1. Organisation Sustainability in Creative Youth Initiatives	54
6.6. Range of Creative Activities	54
6.6.2. Gap in Dance Initiatives	56
6.7. CPD and Training	56
6.8. Broadening Definitions and Policy Alignment	57
6.9. Cruinniú na nÓg	57
Chapter Seven Implications for Policy Development and Practice	59
7.1. Recommendations from the Systematic Review	60
7.2. Assessment, Evaluation and Research	60
7.3. Voice of the Child	61
7.4. Capturing Sociodemographic Characteristics	62
7.5. Building Individual/Organisational Sustainability Beyond the Lifetime of Creative Youth/Creative Ireland	63
7.6. Expanding Scope and Access to Creative Activities	64
7.7. Broadening the Definition of Creativity and Policy Alignment	64
7.8. Cruinniú na nÓg	65
Chapter Eight	66
Conclusions	
8.1. Overarching Policy Context	67
8.2. Evaluating Progress of Creative Youth Objectives	68
8.3. Conclusion	69
References	70
Appendices	81

List of Tables

2.1	Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	16
4.1	TAP Training Input	31
4.2	Creative Schools Successful Applications	31

List of Figures

2.1	The Artistic Biotope and its Domains	12
3.1	Summary of Creative Youth Key Objectives and Core Principles	21
4.1	Programme Logic Model: Systematic Analysis of Creative Youth Reports	27
4.2	CY Expenditure 2018-2021	28
4.3	Creative Youth Core Funded (9) and NCF Funded (2) Research	30
4.4	Cumulative Growth of Creative Schools Initiative	32
4.5	Growth of Creative Clusters	32
4.6	Local Authority Projects	33
4.7	Output of Cruinniú na nÓg Events	34
5.1a	Creative Youth Social Outcomes (a)	37
5.1b	Creative Youth Social Outcomes (b)	41
6.1	Recommendations made in Creative Youth Reports	47
6.2	Research and Evaluation Methods Employed in Creative Youth Evaluations and Research Reports	49
6.3	Creative Youth Participant Demographics	52
6.4	Distribution of Creative Youth Activities	55
8.1.	Summary of Creative Youth Key Objectives and Core Principles	67

Acronyms

ACE	Arts Council England
ACF	Finnish Arts Council
CAHHM	Canadian Alliance for Healthy Hearts and Minds
CIP	Creative Ireland Programme
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CY	Creative Youth
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DCU	Dublin City University
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DIEAC	Design, Implement, Evaluate Arts in Context
DIEACC	Design, Implement, Evaluate Arts in Community Contexts
DE	Department of Education
DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
EAG	Expert Advisory Group
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
ESCI	Educational Support Centres Ireland
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education Training Boards
GUI	Growing Up in Ireland
HDA	Health Development Agency
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IFACCA	International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies
LA	Local Authority
LCYPs	Local Creative Youth Partnerships
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex +
NCH	National Concert Hall
NCF	National Creativity Fund
PLM	Programme Logic Model
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RCT	Random Controlled Trial
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TAP	Teacher Artist Partnership
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
United Nations CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child

Foreword

The Creative Ireland Programme was established in 2017 to support the mainstreaming of creativity in the life of the nation. Creative Youth is one of five pillars of the programme and was identified from the start as the most significant priority.

An Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was established by the government to advise on the direction and implementation of the Creative Youth pillar. The EAG identified the need for a comprehensive overview of the Creative Youth experience over the first five years of the programme and commissioned TCD to carry out a systematic review for this purpose. It quickly became clear that while much evidence of achievement existed in the system, there was an unevenness in the quality of the data and evidence available. This proved to be an unexpected challenge for the researchers but is an important signpost for future strategy.

The report references Ireland’s international and national child rights obligations, noting the rights of children and young people to participate freely in cultural life and the arts, and to a voice in decision-making on all matters that affect them. It observes that a core objective of Creative Youth is giving children and young people a voice in decision-making in the development, operation and evaluation of all projects, programmes, and initiatives. The report investigates the extent to which this voice has been listened to, heard, and acted upon. In exploring investment in creativity, the report notes the State’s child rights obligations to invest in this domain and in giving voice to children and young people, regardless of associated social, educational or health benefits.

Most of the work captured in the report under the banner of Creative Youth has taken place within the arts, building on the achievements of the Arts in Education Charter (2013). This reflects the origins of the programme in arts-led centenary commemorations. But creativity extends beyond the arts – it is essentially about thinking and acting imaginatively, taking risks and overcoming the fear of failure. The capacity to be creative applies in all domains of living. This report addresses the significance of Creative Youth in building relationships between creativity, culture, democratic citizenship and policy formulation.

The report cites a study, commissioned by the Arts Council (Smyth, 2016), which found that gender, age, and social differences greatly influence cultural participation among children and young people. Smyth identified specific cohorts of children and young people who are least likely to engage in cultural activity. This report explores the extent to which Creative Youth programmes, projects and initiatives are focusing on inclusivity by reaching seldom heard and underrepresented children and young people and affording them the right to participate in creativity, cultural life, and the arts.

The Creative Ireland Programme and the Creative Youth pillar in particular, provide a unique opportunity for us to learn more about the process of creativity. Crucially, this report highlights both the excellent work being done and also the weakness of the current systems of research and evaluation. The next phase of the programme needs a strong research strategy to open up new fields of knowledge and understanding and with a compatible evaluation component that will provide consistent and reliable data across the range of various activities. The strategy should also develop research capacity across the research eco-system and support creative practitioners in their engagement in and with research.

This report finds that Creative Youth constitutes a major national achievement and has successfully achieved many of its goals. We are very grateful to the researchers, Carmel O’Sullivan and Lisa O’Keeffe for providing crucial points of reference for the next phase of the Creative Ireland Programme.

Creative Youth Expert Advisory Group
May 2022



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Executive Summary | Key Findings

The following interim report presents findings on creative activity among children and young people in Ireland using data from reports submitted during Phase One of Creative Youth. Using a programme logic model (i.e., linking activities with inputs, outputs, impacts) to organise data from the systematic review process, we investigated what can be learnt from the available data at the time of this study (cut off point April 2022). 26 reports met the inclusion criteria and allowed us to explore a broad selection of arts-based and creative activities. A ‘close reading’ approach was used to classify and code information extracted from reports along the following axes: inputs, activities, outputs and expected/unexpected outcomes. In addition, we undertook an extensive literature review to provide an overview of creative engagement on a national and international level, exploring its impact on individual and community well-being, social cohesion and as a strategy for economic development. We engaged with broader research studies relevant to Creative Youth, such as Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), research from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) into arts and cultural participation of young people in Ireland, and research reports from The Arts Council.

The research examines if common trends were identifiable across reports, specifically in relation to achieving the key objectives of Creative Youth. Using the data available we looked for evidence of creative engagement, the voice of children and young people, inclusivity, collaboration, innovation, increasing access to seldom heard groups, evaluation, and sustainable outcomes.

These findings detail the importance of capturing data through using robust evaluation mechanisms and flexible approaches to research in the arts and creative sectors. The data were incomplete in several areas, for example, just over 30% of reports described sample size, and in most, demographic details were limited or missing, with little/no information on gender, age or socio-economic status. In many, there was little/no detail about research/evaluation design.

Owing to a level of underreporting in most reports, ‘granular’ and extensive analyses were applied to address challenges posed. Using the data, we investigated the extent and nature of children’s and young people’s involvement in creative activities during Phase One of Creative Youth. These findings detail the importance of the Creative Youth Plan in driving personal and collective creativity, and its impact on individual and societal wellbeing and development through both sustained and one off smaller scale initiatives and larger scale projects such as Cruinniú na nÓg.

These findings present insight into informing the objectives of the second Creative Youth Plan and provide foundations for future, more in-depth research on involvement, motivations, and barriers to participation.

Executive Summary | Key Findings

Participation in creative activities was evident throughout the country with 82% reporting an increase in creative skills resulting from involvement.

Connecting creative practitioners directly to schools and communities was positively noted in 75% of reports, resulting in young people working alongside experts, such as theatre artists, writers, directors, designers and architects, to develop their art or skill.

Creativity was employed strategically to foster social cohesion (71%), well-being (58%) and improve children’s self-confidence (58%).

Cross-sectoral collaboration (67%) was effective in capitalising on skills and infrastructure already available on a national/local level, maximising use of resources through people, public spaces and/or partnerships with established organisations.

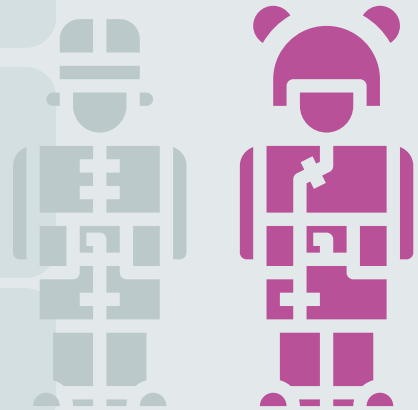
Over a third (36%) reported freedom to take risks and innovate as an outcome of participation from Creative Youth activities. Artistic integrity, problem solving, divergent thinking, risk-taking and experimentation were reported as important outcomes for teachers, children and creative practitioners who moved outside their comfort zones.

Half of reports (50%) referred to the value of adopting cross-curricular approaches as an outcome, however these were generally school-oriented with the out-of-school dimension largely underrepresented.

58% cited improved skills and employment opportunities for creative practitioners as an outcome of participating in Creative Youth activities.

63% reported ‘enjoyment’ as a positive outcome, detailing a creative ‘disruption’ of school and other routines such as in hospital settings or direct provision centres, providing novel and stimulating experiences.

While almost two thirds (63%) identified aspects of organisation sustainability as an important outcome, the study found little evidence that many of the factors which support sustainability, either within individuals (in terms of their own creative ability) or at an organisational level, were reported/present, challenging longer term sustainability and future delivery.



Executive Summary | Key Findings

A rich and appropriately diverse range of research and/or evaluation methods had been used, but issues around fidelity in presenting/applying these methods were found.

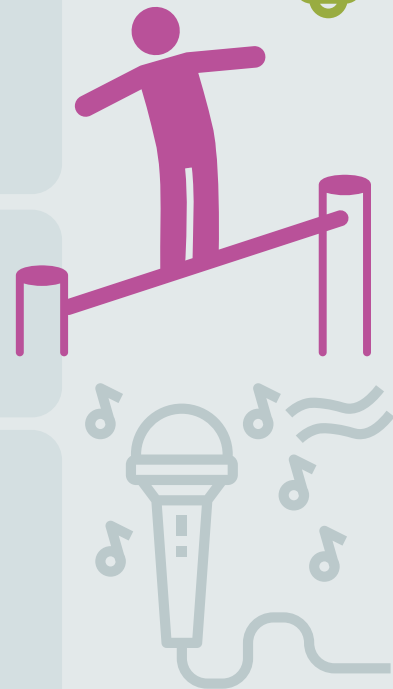
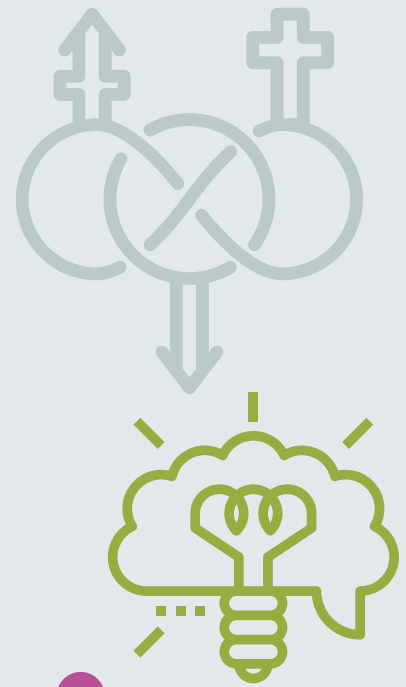
67% of reports cited expanding access to creative activities for participants in schools and in the community. However, this report finds that offering more creative activities does not always mean initiatives are successful in expanding access to seldom heard communities. Only 25% of projects were explicitly aimed at groups which can be considered outside the mainstream, and there was no reference to the LGBTQI+ community.

With initiatives such as Hub na nOg’s training to enable child voice and participation in creative activity, the lack of child voice in most reports was surprising.

31% of projects were multidisciplinary, such as poetry, printing, playmaking, and arts and crafts. 21% involved music or singing, 9% theatre, 9% storytelling and 9% Design and Architecture. However, storybooks and reading constituted only 4% of projects as did engagement with cultural institutions (4%), and creative technology (4%), and dance did not feature in any of the reports reviewed.

Activities in these reports appeared weighted more towards the arts and cultural sectors than other spheres of creative practice, suggesting a need for greater engagement with sectors outside of the traditional arts, heritage and cultural sectors to embed notions of creativity and creative practices more broadly in society.

In conclusion, the Creative Ireland Programme and the Creative Youth pillar in particular, is a breakthrough initiative, an ambitious all-of-government creativity and well-being programme which entered uncharted waters and needed time to take root in Irish society. Creative Youth has been successful in many aspects of achieving its goals. This report recognises that as Phase One comes to an end it is timely to reflect on the learning from the first five years and explore how it might be improved and expanded in the proposed second phase. Policies addressing lower levels of participation among seldom heard and at-risk groups, further embedding child voice into all projects, will expand levels of inclusive participation in arts, cultural and creative activities, responding to barriers to access in future work.





CHAPTER ONE CONTEXT

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1.1. Context of the Research

The Creative Ireland Programme (1) was established in 2017 to support the mainstreaming of creativity in the life of the nation. The Programme works in partnership with local and national authorities, youth services, community, cultural, enterprise, arts and heritage organisations, creative industries, and schools to nurture and enable the creative potential across the full spectrum of Irish society. The core proposition of the Creative Ireland Programme is that participation in cultural and creative activity promotes individual, community and national well-being.

The Creative Ireland Programme is now built around several key themes: Creative Youth; Creativity, Health and Well-being; Creative Communities, Creative Climate Action and Sustainability; and Creative Industries¹(2). *Creative Youth – a Plan to enable the creativity of every child and young person* (3, 4) articulated the Government’s commitment to ensuring that every child in Ireland had practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, arts and coding by 2022. The Creative Youth Plan is about realising this proposition and securing an opportunity for children and young people to become creative citizens. Implementation of the Creative Youth Plan has sought to enable the creative potential of every child and young person, whether within formal education settings or informal, out-of-school settings. The involvement of children and young people in decision making ensures the development of more effective policies and is a core principle of the Creative Youth Plan. Statutory and non-statutory organisations in Ireland are obliged to seek the views of children and young people and take them seriously under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989)* (5), *the United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)* (6), and *the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making (2015)* (7).

The Creative Ireland Programme is committed to conducting research that investigates creative practices, identifies factors that foster and support such practices, and explores their impact on the well-being of citizens, and on innovation in creative industries, communities, schools, and nation state. This report was undertaken by Trinity College Dublin in support of the work of the Creative Youth Expert Advisory Group (EAG). The report identifies and synthesises key findings from the available research studies, evaluations and reviews of Creative Youth funded initiatives, programmes and projects which featured measurable outcomes in the delivery of best practice for children and young people.

With 32 initiatives reporting outcomes from Phase One of the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022), the findings of this report aim to support the work of the EAG in advising the Ministers responsible for the Creative Youth Plan on the objectives of the proposed second 5-year Plan. Most of the projects included in this report are not larger Creative Youth initiatives, but smaller projects supported within the National Creativity Fund (NCF)² (see appendix 1). The final outputs from many of the larger research/evaluation projects are not yet available. It is expected that these results will also inform the objectives of the proposed second Plan.

1 The five pillars of the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022 included Creative Youth, Creative Communities, Cultural Investment, Creative Industries and Global Reputation.

2 NCF was a 2018/19 funding scheme to provide specialist and targeted support for smaller Creative Youth initiatives. Larger ‘core’ initiatives such as Creative Schools, Creative Clusters, Fighting Words, Local Creative Youth Partnerships, receive funding from the DE, DCEDIY, DTCAGSM and other sources.



Using data from 26 of the 32 reports (not all met the inclusion criteria) (see appendix 2), this systematic review:

- presents findings on outcomes and trends reported across Creative Youth initiatives, programmes and projects on the delivery of creative opportunities for children and young people in Ireland, under the implementation of the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022);
- provides a synthesis of the outcomes and trends against the available literature on creativity, culture and the arts, in addition to broader research that is relevant to Creative Youth, such as Growing Up in Ireland and research into child and youth mental health and well-being³;
- employs a quasi-systematic review approach to exploring issues surrounding the context of delivery of creative opportunities for children and young people undertaken in Ireland under the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022);
- identifies gaps in provision that emerge from the findings of the analysis, which may be addressed in future phases of the Creative Youth Programme;
- makes recommendations to assist the Creative Youth Expert Advisory Group in developing proposals to Government to inform a proposed second Plan.

3 The analysis presented in this report will be supported by a peer reviewed academic paper which examines the implications of the findings in greater depth.





CHAPTER
TWO

**SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY**

2.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the purpose, scope and context of the review of Creative Youth funded projects, initiatives and research reports. The rationale for this research is to facilitate identification of the ‘bigger picture’ outcomes from Phase One of the Creative Youth Plan, identifying gaps in provision that emerge from the findings of the analysis, thereby supporting the EAG in advising and guiding national policy in relation to the proposed second 5-year Creative Youth Plan. Recognising the scale and extent of activity under Creative Youth, the EAG identified a need to synthesise the outcomes with a view to highlighting the trends and learning across the available projects, initiatives and reports, and identify gaps/areas for future development in the provision of opportunities for all children and young people to explore their creative potential.

This review of Creative Youth is carried out in the context of:

- approval by Government in February 2022 of a proposed five-year extension to the Creative Ireland Programme;
- 11 research reports funded by Creative Youth (2 funded under the National Creativity Fund and 9 from core funding within the Creative Ireland Programme);
- direct exchequer investment in the Creative Youth Plan (by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth; Department of Education, and the Arts Council) of €6.5m annually for the last two years. Provision of an additional €1m approximately is made available each year to host Cruinniú na nÓg, and a further allocation of approx. €1m was made available on a once-off basis in 2020 as a direct response to COVID-19; and
- an ever-increasing emphasis on citizen engagement in cultural and creative activity to promote individual, community and national well-being.

2.1.1. Scope of the Review and Methodology

The scope of this review is limited to the inputs, activities, outputs, direct results and social outcomes (both expected and unexpected) of public investment in creative activities as they relate to Creative Youth. The review focuses on the period from 2017 to March 2022 involving available government reports and policy, project evaluations and research papers. Although the report focuses on Creative Youth, we draw on publications from other sources when necessary/relevant.

2.2. Benefits of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Investment in Creativity

The Creative Ireland Programme follows the current world-wide trend in which cultural, creative and artistic endeavours are increasingly viewed as vehicles of social change (8), becoming more widely established and accepted globally as health promoting practices (9). For some time now it has been maintained that cultural engagement yields many social, physical and psychological benefits for participants, ranging from a greater sense of well-being and life satisfaction (10) to the development of cognitive skills and increased self-confidence. Moreover, it is claimed that participation in creative and arts-based activities encourages social inclusion whilst fostering individual, collective and societal identity (11). As a result, cultural organisations are increasingly under pressure to demonstrate impact and legitimacy (12). The literature highlights numerous benefits in evaluating the outcomes of public investment in creativity and the arts (13, 14,15):

- to ensure that policy development and service provision is evidence-based;
- to improve the accountability and transparency of public investment in creativity and the arts, and better transmit the outcomes of that funding to the public;
- to develop an understanding of the ways in which creativity and the arts are of value to both individuals and communities and from this establish an inclusive understanding of a successful arts sector;
- to facilitate advocacy on behalf of the arts, particularly in relation to the allocation of public funding;
- to better understand the impact of investment in creativity and the arts on national and regional levels, the generation of new ideas and works, social cohesion and a wide range of other societal impacts;
- to enhance interest within the research community in creativity and the arts;
- to develop a robust evidence-base around the impact of creativity and the arts in our society, as a result of credible and realistic findings.

The fifth core principle of Creative Youth, Evaluation, corroborates the above, highlighting: “As new initiatives are developed; robust monitoring mechanisms will be put in place to capture data and ensure deliverance of best practice initiatives and value for money” (4, p4). The EAG affirm that public investment is a right and investment in creativity an obligation, in line with the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making (2015) (7) and Article 31 from the United Nations CRC (1989) (5) which acknowledges “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts” (p8).

2.3. Methodological Challenges

Evaluation in creativity, the arts, and culture is a complex matter (16). These sectors are now expected to ‘perform’, expected to have an impact and have been progressively subsumed by the machine of performativity both within and beyond the educational system (17). Operating at the intersection of cultural, social, and economic interests, arts organisations often find themselves attempting to navigate quite fragile crossings in what the cultural sociologist Gielen calls ‘the artistic biotope’ (18) (see Fig. 2.1. below).

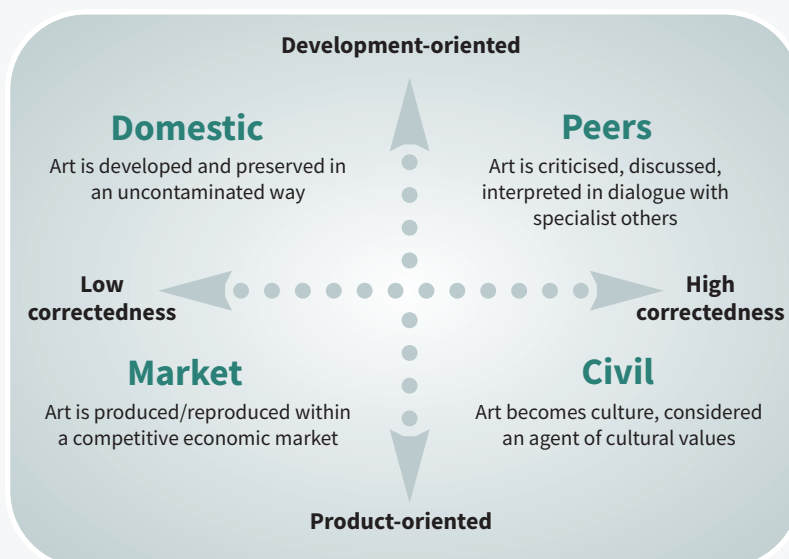


Fig. 2.1.
The Artistic
Biotope and its
Domains
(adapted from
Gielen 2010 and
Herman, 2019)

The intersection of Gielen’s domains represent a complex and tense balancing act as each domain influences and shapes the others, posing challenges in terms of measuring impact and legitimatising aesthetic, macrosociological, empirical and economic value regimes (17). However, despite an increasing emphasis on measurement, it would seem that “because of the lack of knowledge of impact and impact measurements and the lack of clear guidelines on how to measure and assess impact, cultural organisations are struggling to analyse and manage the social impact created by their cultural activities” (11 p98). In addition, some creatives and artists dislike the emphasis on evaluating the impact of their work and claim it takes up valuable time that could otherwise be directed at creative endeavours (19). In a similar vein, the ‘art for art’s sake’ movement frequently shuns any mention of evaluation, insisting on the intrinsic value of the arts and its unquestionable importance in society (20, 21). Morphing the arts into a more accessible notion of ‘creativity’ runs the risk of leaving the arts behind and creating a relativist concept of culture (22), an issue further explored in Chapter Three.

However, while pressure to produce measures of success increase, governments and public agencies may not always take account of additional costs arising from evaluation and reporting. In addition, data collection and analysis take time and outputs may not be immediately recognisable in comparison to more proximate and widely visible effects of a creative or artistic project (23). Furthermore, criticisms have been voiced regarding the a priori assumptions of ‘public good’ and ‘public value’ implicated in research around the impact of creative and cultural interventions, particularly when framed against a limited and technocratic understanding of ‘impact’ in policy fora (16). Measuring ‘socio-economic impact’ in the arts is seen as problematic when there is a requirement to instrumentally submit to ‘poorly-fit’ public accountability and audit practices (16). This can be exacerbated when, as previously mentioned, Article 31 of the United Nations CRC (1989) (5) acknowledges the freedom to participate in cultural life and the arts as a child’s right, intrinsic to their lives and therefore independent of benefits or outcomes. Aesthetes’ ‘art for art’s sake’ is perhaps nowadays more appropriately framed within a rights-based justification for investment and access to the arts. The issue is not so much with attributing social value and benefits to the arts, which is as old as artistic expression itself (24), but rather with attempts to closely map ‘impact goals’ onto policy making imperatives, particularly economic over other benefits (16). Finally, the importance of distinguishing between the outputs and social outcomes which are more broadly defined and have a wider impact beyond the arts and cultural sector is a challenging feat as outcomes are often beyond the control of any one organisation (19). These and other caveats concerning the methodological challenges of evaluation in the arts and creative sectors are reflected in the evaluation framework employed in this study and resonate with the findings and recommendations in this report.

2.4. Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework chosen for this review is the Programme Logic Model (PLM) which, in addition to defining the inputs, activities and outputs of Creative Youth also includes both expected and unexpected outcomes, as they relate to the arts and creativity sector, to wider society, and the core objectives of Creative Youth (see Chapter Three, Fig. 3.1). Programme Logic models are tools for planning, describing, managing, communicating, and evaluating a programme or intervention (25, 26, 27). A PLM offers a simplified visual representation of the relationship between various components (linking activities with outputs, intermediate outcomes and longer-term impacts) of a programme (28, 29).

Previous applications of PLMs in Ireland include O’Hagan’s (2015) (23) *Value for Money and Policy Review of the Arts Council* and Morrissey’s (2021) *Creative Clusters Report* (30). The Programme Logic Model has been recommended for use in evaluation by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (23). This type of framework can help to identify a sequence of cause and effect concerning the intended (or unintended) benefits that can be attributed to a programme. We used a logic model due to its accessible format, its ability to relate goals, inputs, outputs, and outcomes whilst differentiating between all four aspects, in addition to the generic nature of the framework and in alignment with reporting frameworks employed by the majority of reports included in this review. The model also allows for analysis of gaps and shortcomings.

Whilst the PLM provided alignment, clarity and accessibility, we note the risks involved in employing a linear model for evaluation of complex interventions such as those supported by Creative Youth. We recognise that the outcomes observed do not account for implementation context, concurrent programmes, characteristics of participants and run the risk of “overstating the causal contribution of the intervention” (31 Rogers, 2008, p34). However, more complex evaluation models such as Theories of Change or Realist Evaluations which explore causes, hidden causal mechanisms, context and so forth would have required much more detailed and qualitative data which were not available for this analysis. Creative Youth funds a diverse range of projects from small to large scale in diverse contexts and with different cohorts of the population, therefore this report emphasises that conclusions drawn are tentative and “that the cause-effect relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, arts sector outcomes and societal outcomes are not linear but are a series of complex interrelationships that are mutually reinforcing, contributing to the delivery of the strategic objectives” (23 O’Hagan, 2015, p14). Increasingly, logic models are used in secondary research to support systematic reviews (32, 33, 34), but such use is not without challenges. Whilst in the context of this study, a PLM offered a standardised approach to the analysis of data and facilitated flexibility as appropriate to the individual context of a range of different project reports, logic models involving evaluation of existing evaluations can only ever offer a limited representation of the complexity of the creative initiatives being reviewed (35).

2.5. Research Agenda

The methodology adopted was developed “in the context of the inherent challenges in measuring the effectiveness of artistic supports, and in particular the absence of established standard tools and indicators to evaluate the effects of arts related policy interventions” (23 O’Hagan, 2015 p16). In the absence of robust statistical evidence, and given that most documents evaluated in this study could be considered grey literature (i.e. a wide range of information such as government reports, policy literature, working papers, newsletters, government documents, speeches, and so on, typically produced outside of academic and professional publishing and distribution channels) (36), it was not possible to identify this report as a bona fide systematic meta-analysis, nor was it possible to follow the standard guidelines involved in an analysis of this kind. Nevertheless, we chose to employ a quasi-systematic review framework which enabled a structured ordering of literature and aligned as closely as possible with accepted standards (37, 38, 39).

The use of explicit, transparent, systematic methods ensured the minimisation of bias in the synthesis and summary of reports on Creative Youth funded programmes and projects. This provided reliable findings from which conclusions could be drawn and recommendations made (40). Systematic reviews are considered relevant to policy when they present findings clearly to highlight policy problems; challenge or develop policy statements; offer evidence about the impact of policy options; whilst allowing for diversity of people and contexts (41).

Adopting Oliver, Dickson & Bangpan’s (2015) (41) Systematic Analysis Process, adapted from Gough et al. (39), the steps below were undertaken. This approach underpins the use of a logic model in this study to map out causal pathways that help make sense of what can be learnt from the available reports submitted to Creative Youth.

1) Identifying the evidence gap

Over a five-year period, Creative Youth enabled the provision of thousands of creative activities for children and young people in Ireland. The Creative Ireland website hosts a variety of documents and project reports which provide information and data on the nature of activities undertaken and outcomes reported. A number of large-scale funded research projects are currently underway focusing on specific aspects of the Creative Youth Plan, such as Creative Schools, Creative Clusters (27), Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP), in conjunction with smaller National Creativity Funded initiatives. However, it is currently difficult to gain an overview of the impact of Creative Youth funded projects and initiatives, and what lessons learned if any, might be drawn from looking across projects. With responsibility to advise Government in informing the objectives of a proposed second Plan, the EAG identified the need to conduct a systematic analysis of available research reports of Creative Youth projects, which feature measurable outcomes in the delivery of best practice in order to establish the ‘bigger picture’.

2) Redefining the questions and the conceptual framework

As the Creative Youth (2017-22) programme draws to a close, the EAG sought to avail of the opportunity to assess its impact in terms of identifying who participated in the activities offered and explore the factors associated with their creative engagement through this rapid review (41) of largely desk-based research. The primary questions addressed by this report are therefore:

1. Do the available reports provide evidence of the extent to which Creative Youth projects played a part in initiating creative opportunities for the specific cohorts of children and young people found to have a low level of engagement in Smyth's research (42, 43)?
2. What factors are associated with enabling children and young people to have a voice in decision-making in the development, implementation and evaluation of Creative Youth programmes, plans and activities?
3. What factors tend to distinguish or differentiate levels of engagement of children and young people in creative work (e.g., gender, age, academic capacities, socio-economic environment)?
4. How effective are partnerships between schools, communities, local authorities and cultural organisations in the domains of arts, creativity, innovation, science and technology?

Following consultation with the EAG, a review of national and international literature on evaluation identified the Programme Logic Model (PLM) as appropriate (albeit limited) to commence the classification and analysis of project evaluation reports and documents. Within this, we adopted a framework analysis approach (44, 45, 46), which involved: identifying and familiarising ourselves with the available data from Creative Youth project reports; devising a conceptual framework as an initial structure for analysis, following Eikhof (47) (see appendix 3); coding the systematic reviews according to this framework and, during the process, refining the framework to suit its application to an arts-based creativity-focused analysis.

3) Identifying studies of interest

In the initial phase of the research a number of documents, reports and project evaluations were provided to the research team, and additional documents were located in the publication section of the Creative Ireland website and through consultation with relevant stakeholders. Initially, a total of 32 items were identified as relevant to the analysis. Government Reports and Policy were crucial to understanding the broad context, principal values, evolution, inputs and goals of the Creative Youth Plan. In addition, Creative Youth conferences, videos and documents received from stakeholders were also analysed. As we endeavoured to include as many reports and evaluations as possible, the inclusion criteria were broad and flexible (see Table 2.1.). A final decision was taken to eliminate several items which did not meet the inclusion criteria or were not considered relevant to the study. In the end, a total of 26 research reports met the inclusion criteria and were included in the analysis (see appendix 2). Of those 19 were project evaluations, 3 were government reports and 4 were research reports (produced by universities and/or external evaluators). It is important to note that some of these initiatives were operating under the National Creativity Fund (appendix 1), a scheme which aimed to identify, support and collaborate with a range of strategic partners on smaller scale projects. It was hoped that these projects would significantly add value and/or scale to the implementation of the Creative Ireland Programme and would help inform policy and/or cross-sectoral development in the area of culture, creativity and well-being.

Table 2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Creative Youth Research Reports (2017-April 2022)	Did not include consideration of the impact of the art-based intervention.
Creative Youth and NCF (2017-April 2022) artist evaluations, creative associate/organisation evaluations, participant evaluations	Did not contain any measurable outcomes and/or recommendations.
Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods were permitted	Did not hold any relevance for Pillar I, Creative Youth Plan

4) Describing studies in terms of interest to stakeholders

Subsequent to an extensive analysis (all documents were read several times by two researchers to reduce bias), and through employment of the PLM conceptual framework, an Excel document was created in order to classify the information extracted from the reports along the following axes: inputs, activities, outputs and expected/unexpected outcomes. This involved developing and using a coding guide, identifying outcome variables where relevant, context, the genre of activity, number of participants, sample size, research design and evaluation methods used, number of participating creative associates, reported outcomes and recommendations, if the voice of the child and/or creative practitioner was represented in the findings, etc. In total 13 categories were applied in the conceptual framework to order the data.

5) Appraising studies in terms of stakeholders' interests

After the screening process is complete, the systematic review team must assess each item for quality and bias. Several forms of bias can be detected, including language bias, selective reporting of outcomes, citation bias (48). As aforementioned, this report could not apply the standard criteria for systematic reviews. Quality appraisal was considered and extensively debated when creating the Excel classification, however the need to include as many Creative Youth reports as possible in the review overrode the need for strict quality assessment. Evidence of bias and a lack of robustness in funded project evaluations is addressed in the findings and recommendations chapters.

6) Discussing the meanings of emerging findings

Synthesis of the 'raw data' (Excel output) was undertaken using NVivo 12, in which nodes (themes) were created through thematic analysis of the reported outcomes and recommendations extracted from the Creative Youth evaluations and reports (33 nodes from the reported outcomes, and 22 from the reported recommendations were subsequently reduced to 13 principal outcomes and 6 principal recommendations) (see appendix 4). Thematic analysis was applied to the different types of qualitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups and case studies) included in this study (49). It was selected as it stays close to participants' words (facilitating secondary analysis in this study), coding responses and successively grouping them so that overarching themes could be identified. It was useful for identifying patterns in the data including similarities and differences, trends and unusual responses (50). Data obtained from the reports were cross checked several times by the research team in order to accurately combine and compare information from across different reports. Discussions between the researchers were recorded, transcribed, and analysed, the results of which informed drafting of findings and recommendations.

7) Sharing and using findings

Eight meetings with the EAG took place from January to April 2022 (four of these exclusively with the smaller research subgroup and four with the entire EAG in which findings were presented in the form of summarised PowerPoints and word documents. Input was welcomed by the research team (in the form of critical discussion, documents and extensive draft tracking) with notes taken of all points raised during discussions. Meetings also took place with several other key stakeholders, creative practitioners⁴ and members of the Creative Youth and Creative Ireland teams to ensure maximum scope and rigour. Feedback proved invaluable to the research process and enabled us to adapt vocabulary, receive input from diverse expert voices, ensure accuracy, and expand knowledge around the functioning and outcomes of the Creative Youth programme.

2.5.1. Literature Review

Notwithstanding the tight time constraints in which this study was undertaken (Nov. 2021 to April 2022), the research team engaged with literature considered relevant to the analysis, and:

- 1) conducted an extensive literature review to provide an overview of creative engagement on a national and international level, exploring its impact on individual and community well-being, social cohesion and as a strategy for economic development;
- 2) engaged with broader research studies, relevant to Creative Youth, such as Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), research into child and youth mental health and well-being (51, 52), research from the Economic and Social Research Institute into arts and cultural participation of young people in Ireland and research reports from The Arts Council (43, 53);

4 We employ the term creative practitioner as an all-encompassing name to represent individual artists, organisations and creative associates involved in Creative Youth.

- 3) explored the experience of evaluating public funding of the arts and government programmes (aimed at increasing access to creative activities) in other jurisdictions, with a particular focus on the use of performance indicators and other tools to measure the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of public investment in creativity and the arts. Approaches in a number of jurisdictions including the UK, the USA, Northern Ireland, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand were identified as possible benchmarks for comparison purposes;
- 4) reviewed international cultural programmes similar to Creative Ireland.

2.6. Limitations

The findings in this report should be considered in light of several limitations. Although challenging and requiring considerable effort when analysing secondary rather than primary data sets, assessing the validity of measures used and how/what data were collected is essential to achieving a high standard of analysis (54). Becoming familiar with the datasets in exhaustive detail (as undertaken in this study) is recommended. Internal validity refers to the strength of the conclusions drawn from a study (55), i.e., how confident are we in the data reported that outcomes observed were caused by/are related to the creative activity or intervention? Could other factors have affected the claimed outcome? External validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalised to a more universal population (56). If the arts-based or creative intervention occurred in a different context, for example, with different subjects, would similar outcomes occur? Based on the data evaluated, both internal and external validity issues emerged which limited the evidence base we could draw on to inform conclusions in this systematic review. The data were incomplete and/or limited in several categories, for example,

- just over 30% of reports described sample size, providing little or no indication of how or why their samples were chosen;
- in most documents reviewed, demographic details were limited or missing, with little or no information on gender, age or socio-economic status;
- in many cases, there was little or no detail about the research/evaluation design, for example, what questions were asked and why, when/where and of whom were they asked; where noted, the details often lacked clarity, robustness and rigour.

The researchers acknowledge that attention may have been given to these matters during individual projects, and indeed that the primary purpose of the reported data may not have been for a research purpose. However, the level of underreporting in the documents reviewed, poses challenges in terms of analysing the validity of claims made. In some reports outcome bias may have occurred in that funding was tied to demonstrating a number of outcomes, therefore prompting the reporting of certain outcomes and possible non-reporting of other outcomes or shortcomings.



CHAPTER
THREE

**LOCATING THE
CREATIVE YOUTH PLAN
(2017-2022) IN THE
CONTEXT OF CURRENT
TRENDS AND ISSUES
IN ARTS AND
CULTURAL POLICY**

3.1. Introduction

Creative Ireland was launched in December 2016 to promote engagement in creative activity in the belief that cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity with significant implications for individual and societal well-being and development. It seeks to place creativity at the heart of public policy (3, 4).

Operating in five key areas known as pillars, the Creative Ireland Programme supports direct engagement with creativity (education, institutions, industry) as well as creativity to engage broader societal issues, such as mental health, rural isolation, poverty, and intercultural dialogue. It is intended that the next plan will have a particularly strong focus on climate change and well-being. Creative Youth constitutes Pillar 1 which supports, disseminates and implements Creative Ireland’s strategy, vision and goals for the children and young people of Ireland (4). Aligning with Emer Smyth’s findings (42), in which gender, age and social differences were found to greatly influence cultural participation in children and young people, the launch of the Creative Ireland Programme highlighted the importance of inclusivity and targeting underrepresented cohorts and seldomly heard voices currently not engaging in cultural or artistic activities (see Fig. 3.1.).

3.1.1. Pillar 1 - Creative Youth

In the first half of 2017, some hundreds of meetings were held with individuals and organisations involved in the arts and in arts-in-education. A recurring outcome of those meetings was a desire that Pillar 1 – enabling the creative potential of every child, be given priority. Creative Youth was published in December 2017 confirming the Government’s commitment to ensuring that every child in Ireland has practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, arts, and coding by 2022. The plan affirms its commitment to embrace, fast-track and resource the pivotal Arts in Education Charter (2013) (57) which was central to initiating the Creative Youth Plan.

Creative Youth is about securing an opportunity for our children and young people to become creative citizens. While creativity is commonly associated with the arts, it is important to identify that creativity in the context of the Creative Ireland Programme, should be considered more broadly:

Creativity is the use of imaginative capabilities to transform thinking and produce original and innovative ideas and solutions. It involves collaboration, investigation, challenging assumptions and taking risks and there are opportunities for creativity to be expressed in not only music, drama and visual art but also in writing and learning languages, in mathematics and sciences and in designing, making and entrepreneurial activities. (4 p 4)

The Creative Youth Plan is based on a number of key principles (4 p3) and objectives (see Fig. 3.1.):

1. **The Voice of the Child and Young Person is vital:** A core principle in the Plan is that the voice of children and young people should be heard in both the development and delivery of Programmes. Through the Hub na nOg structure, this will be built in to the various elements of the Plan.
2. **Collaboration:** Working together across Government and with various stakeholders means we are increasing the impact of our individual efforts and achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
3. **Innovation:** It is important that we honour the overall commitments made in the Creative Youth Plan. We are also, however, prepared to learn and adapt as we roll out that plan, to be open to change and new ideas to progress creative practice and thinking across our education system and across the non-formal system. We are prepared to try new things, take risks and expand the Programme as we move forward together.
4. **Inclusivity:** We will ensure, as we roll out new Programmes as part of Creative Youth, that we reach as many children and young people as possible, especially those in disadvantaged areas and those seldom heard. This commitment will run through all elements of the Programme.
5. **Evaluation:** As we develop and roll out new initiatives, robust monitoring mechanisms will be put in place to capture data and ensure we are delivering best practice initiatives and value for money. These mechanisms will allow effectiveness and impact of initiatives to be measured and allow the Programme to evolve to better achieve its aims. This will be a feature of all elements of the Programme.

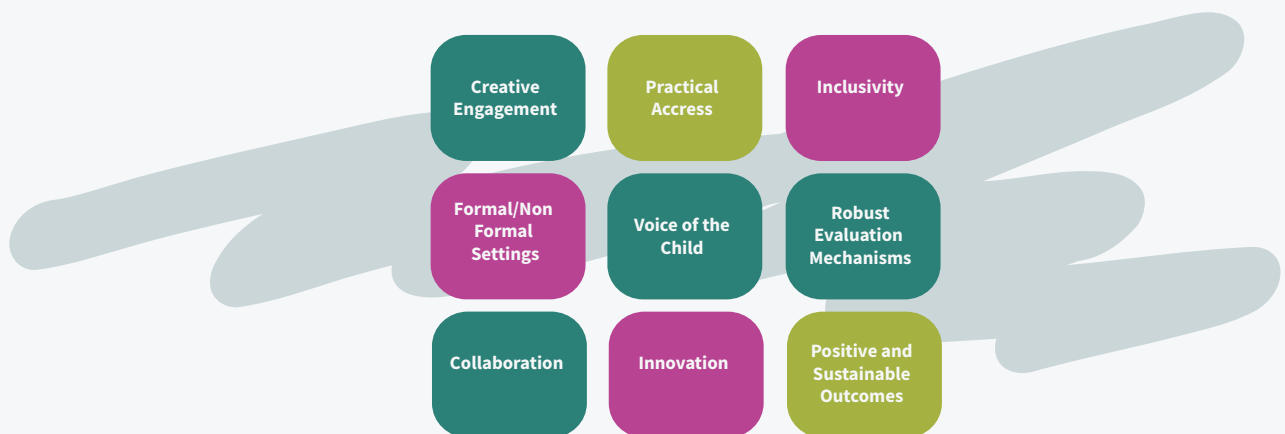


Fig. 3.1. Summary of Creative Youth Key Objectives and Core Principles (4, 58)

The EAG wishes to emphasise the voice of the child as a core objective of Creative Youth, and reiterate the fact that Ireland is one of the few countries in the world to have developed and implemented a rights-based national strategy on giving children and young people a voice in decision-making in all aspects of their lives. Ireland is a signatory to the previously mentioned United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) (5), and the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) (6), both of which give the right to children to a voice in decision-making and for their views to be given due weight. All Government departments and agencies have committed to specific actions in the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*, 2015 (7) and Ireland has developed *The National Implementation Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*⁵ aimed at putting the strategy into practice. A priority commitment in the National Participation Strategy was the establishment of Hub na nÓg by The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to support and enable implementation of the Strategy and build capacity in children and young people's participation in decision-making. On behalf of DCEDIY, Hub na nÓg provides training and support to both the Creative Schools Programme and the Local Creative Youth Partnerships in involving children and young people in decision-making in all projects and initiatives (discussed in Chapter Four).

3.2. Vision and Strategy

To translate the Creative Youth Plan into a workable programme which extends nationwide and involves grass roots participation, the most recently developed Creative Youth Policy Context and Briefing (2021) (4) works across:

- Schools: Enhancing arts and creativity initiatives in schools and early years settings;
- Teacher CPD: Increasing and enhancing teacher continuing professional development opportunities across primary, post-primary and early years settings; and
- Community and Out-of-School: Improving cross-sectoral collaboration to support creativity for children and young people in the community (p3).

A comprehensive plan was devised in 2017, in which the overarching vision was defined as cultural and creative education for all. 18 individual actions were underlined as the means by which the furtherance of the vision and strategies of Creative Youth would be realised. Amongst the many actions supported by Creative Youth we highlight a few key activities: Cruinniú na nÓg, Local Youth Creative Partnerships (LCYPs), Music Generation, Creative Schools, Creative Clusters, Youth Sing, Teacher CPD (Teacher-Artist-Partnership, Arts in Junior Cycle), Fighting Words, the National Creativity Fund, the Arts in Education Portal, and ACERR (Ireland's National Arts and Culture in Education Research Repository). Details about these programmes are provided in Chapter Four.

This analysis aims to synthesise the evaluations of a number of Creative Youth projects, identifying and analysing common trends and outcomes, challenges and recommendations reported. It is important to state that ongoing research into individual Creative Youth initiatives such as Creative Schools Evaluation (DCU/Arts Council); LCYP Evaluation (DE); Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP) Research and Evaluation (DE); Early Years Research (Maynooth, DCEDIY); and several others, may go some way to filling in the gaps and shortcomings identified in this report (see Chapters 5 and 6). However, as these reports were not available at the time of writing we base our findings on the available literature at the time of analysis.

3.2.1. Broadening the Understanding and Function of ‘The Arts’

Morphing ‘the arts’ into the more accessible concept of ‘creativity’ is, as aforementioned, now a trend witnessed worldwide, but particularly in Western and Northern Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Arts Council England (ACE) now refers to itself as ‘the national development agency for creativity and culture’ (59 p18) purposefully replacing the word arts by culture to widen the scope and breadth of the activities supported. Over the last five years, the arts have become increasingly central to government policy and arts councils have developed closer ties to government through funding, policy alignment and administration structures or as is the case for Creative Ireland and Creative Canada, they have been established within government departments. Creative Ireland operates as a unit within the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and is currently working with 10 other key departments. In a similar vein, the Finnish Arts Council (ACF) was converted into a performance supervised, governmental and nationwide agency, Taika, from the beginning of 2013 with renewed legislation to harness its work more tightly to government policies and social and economic outcomes.

In an era of culture democracy, creativity as opposed to ‘the arts’, now forms an integral part of the public discourse around arts and cultural policy (e.g., in UK, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland), in response to the fact that “Many people are uncomfortable with the label ‘the arts’ and associate it only with either the visual arts or ‘high art’, such as ballet or opera” (59 p9). The Arts Council England’s 10-year strategy (‘Let’s Create’ 2020-2030, 59) recognises and celebrates the creative lives of every person in the country affirming that creativity and culture when taken together can help people make sense of their lives and transform communities. Similarly, the Creative Ireland Programme acknowledges that “While creativity is commonly associated with the arts, it is important to identify that creativity in the context of the Creative Ireland Programme should be considered more widely” (4 p4), “by focusing on creativity, it generates a language that eases access to the arts for many who might otherwise think that the arts are ‘not for them’” (3 p6). The Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s ‘Ambition for the Arts Strategic Plan’ (2013 -2018) (60) adopted a comparable stance in attempting to universalise the relationship between creativity, culture and the arts making sure that everyone has greater opportunity to be creative and to experience high-quality culture.

Through reframing our understanding of the arts into more accessible concepts of creativity, culture and closer alignment with government policy, creativity can be employed to address numerous social issues and foster valuable individual and collective benefits (60, 61, 62, 63). Belief in the arts’ social and economic power now operates as a core narrative of numerous arts policies worldwide (64, 65, 66). A brief scoping review of cultural policy reveals that the Creative Ireland Programme appears to align with a growing policy trend employing creativity strategically to tackle societal questions (67, 68, 69). Evidence from the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) (70), a global network of arts councils, ministries of culture and government agencies, places the Creative Ireland Programme alongside a majority of cultural policies worldwide in broadening its definition around ‘the arts’, culture and creativity:

Creative Ireland is a culture-based programme designed to promote individual, community and national well-being. The core proposition is that participation in cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity, with significant implications for individual and societal well-being and achievement. (1 p7)

Creativity as a strategy for well-being, health and resilience is likely to be further advanced in the proposed second 5-year Plan which will establish Creative Health and Well-being as one of the pillars supporting the Creative Ireland programme. The IFACCA (70) identify the central role that creativity, culture and the arts are increasingly playing in issues affecting policy development and strategic planning in areas ranging from health to EDI, sustainable development to climate change, gender to global crises and conflicts, cultural diversity to social justice and human rights, language, heritage and intercultural dialogue to creative expression by children and young people (71). At a recent Ministers of Culture conference in Strasbourg (April 1st 2022), the role of creativity, culture and cultural heritage were identified as strategic resources for a diverse and democratic Europe, with the Ukrainian Minister of Culture and Information Policy speaking about how the Ukrainian people were facing the current aggression ‘with resilience and using their creative forces’ (72). Described as a motor for social, technological and political change, the Council of Europe confirmed a reciprocal relationship between technological developments and art and creativity, heritage and landscape in which both areas benefit each other and help shape and define our new realities:

Culture and creativity, cultural heritage and landscape lend the way to freedom of expression (on and offline), supporting artificial intelligence developments, empowering civil society, encouraging public debate and providing an education platform for democratic citizenship. (73)

The international trend towards rethinking the role of the arts, creativity, and cultural sectors, attempts to activate all people’s participation and engagement and collectively shape the future through creativity, the arts and culture. Leaders worldwide are looking to ‘carve out strategies for improved futures, with many looking across sectors to ensure public investment in arts and culture yields the greatest possible social benefit’ (74). In February 2022, UNESCO urged policy makers to integrate creativity, arts and culture into their post-pandemic recovery plans (75). Similarly, in response to challenging the deepening global inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic, the African Union organised their assembly in 2021 under the theme ‘Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want’. Echoing the Creative Ireland Programme, the Council for the Arts in Canada (2021) recently outlined that their forthcoming strategy and vision is to rebuild a more equitable, diverse, and sustainable arts and cultural sector which will place creativity, the arts and innovation at the heart of Canada’s recovery and use public investment to further advance social cohesion and development (76). Creative Canada (2017) champions creativity to foster economic growth and promote Canadian identity particularly on a global stage: “It’s about positioning Canada as a world leader in putting its creative industries at the centre of its future economy. We know that the economies of the future will rely on creativity and innovation to create jobs and foster growth” (77 p5). Creative New Zealand (2019-2029) (78) similarly champions the connection of government policy to explicit support for the arts for all New Zealanders through promoting human, social and economic capital. Northern Ireland’s ‘Ambitions for the Arts’ policy is also committed to harnessing culture, arts and leisure to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion (50). The Arts Council England’s ‘Lets Create’ programme (2020-2030) highlights challenges of inequality of wealth and opportunity, social isolation, mental ill-health, and above all, the accelerating climate emergency.

Similar priorities were recently highlighted by the Arts Council of Wales, who in 2021 announced the development of a Cultural Contract in partnership with the Welsh Government to reimagine a future where the arts and their benefits can be accessed more fairly through ensuring public investment in the creative arts sector has a clear social, cultural, and economic purpose (79).

The Creative New Zealand strategy (2019-2029) is correspondingly broadening its policies and understanding of the arts, highlighting creativity as a strategy for inclusivity through for example, increased acknowledgement and presence of their native Māori heritage. Linguistic diversity and multimodal concepts of language were also highlighted in Switzerland by Pro Helvetia (2021), a global network connecting cultural practitioners from Switzerland to other regions such as Cairo, Johannesburg, New Delhi, Shanghai, Moscow, South America, New York, Paris and Rome. In improving social security for creative and cultural professionals (a policy recently introduced in Ireland), Pro Helvetia spoke about the need for interdisciplinarity, new languages, sustainable processes, and an inverted notion where ‘the public finds culture’ rather than where ‘culture goes seeking an audience’ (80).

However, whilst the wider creative and cultural sector appear united in a belief that the arts and culture are a ‘public good’, with considerable potential to marshal social and economic transformation, the trend to broaden and meld our understanding and use of the arts and creativity is not without criticism. In this context, the EAG re-affirms the position that the arts and creativity are not synonymous (81). Working within a strongly interdisciplinary and multicultural approach, the Creative Ireland Programme may be well advised to continue playing a leading role in avoiding reductive collations which serve neither the arts, culture nor creativity. Art’s most elemental question: what is creativity has been famously described by Marcel Duchamp (1957) to reside in the ‘art coefficient’, or the difference/gap between the artist’s intention and realisation of the work (82). In Duchamp’s example of *Fontaine* (fountain), a urinal is exhibited at an art museum and art experiencers find themselves inserted into the gap between the urinal and a fountain. While it is unavoidable that the work will be interpreted independently of the artist’s intentions, the artist who actively created the art coefficient is not completely controllable (82). A belief that Arts Councils should remain detached from government intervention and governments should adopt a ‘laissez faire’ or arm’s length policy in which decisions should be left to arts experts remains strong in the literature (83). In the case of Ireland, it is noted that even though the Arts Council is a partner in aspects of the Creative Ireland Programme, it has its own mandate and operates at an arm’s length principle under the Arts Act 2003.

Criticism levelled at government funding of the arts within initiatives such as the Creative Ireland Programme allude to a negative correlation between such funding, the organisation’s autonomy, and the extent of critique allowable (84). In a similar vein, railing against utilitarian notions of creativity and culture, and a lack of autonomy and freedom to create (85), Lee (2021) (22) cautions against a relativist concept of culture wondering “what this would mean for professional artists and organisations: how can they articulate their unique roles and contributions and justify their eligibility for arts funding when every creative and cultural expression is valued equally and becomes a potential object for public support” (p63)⁶.

Debates involving the arts and creativity seem unlikely to subside any time soon, and indeed should be welcomed in a world where arts and culture as a public good are to be shaped and accessed equitably by all (86). Beyond the scope of the present analysis, further research and engagement in this discussion is required in order to explore and advance arguments beyond current dualisms, where on the one hand a functional cultural democracy approach champions the use of creativity to improve society, the economy and well-being, but accuses the arts sector’s insistence on artistic excellence and innovation, of propagating cultural division, fostering cultural elitism and favouring artistic creation over public access (86, 87). In adopting a nuanced and balanced approach, Creative Youth appears to locate itself firmly in favour of cultural democracy whilst providing space for innovation, excellence and risk-taking, necessary ingredients to support art making and the creative act. Further research and consultation with creative practitioners, organisations and participants would be necessary to explore this potential duality between instrumentalism and aesthetics in the Irish cultural, creative and arts landscape.

6 See Hadley, Collins & O’Brien (122) for an in-depth discussion on this matter in relation to Cultural Policy in an Irish context.



CHAPTER
FOUR
INPUTS,
OUTPUTS AND
GROWTH

4.1. Introduction

As noted in Chapter Two, the Programme Logic Model adopted in this study functions as a schematic representation to describe how a programme is intended to work by linking activities with outputs, intermediate outcomes, and longer-term impacts (see Fig. 4.1.). It offers a simplified visual representation of the relationship between components of a programme, project, or initiative (28, 29, 88).

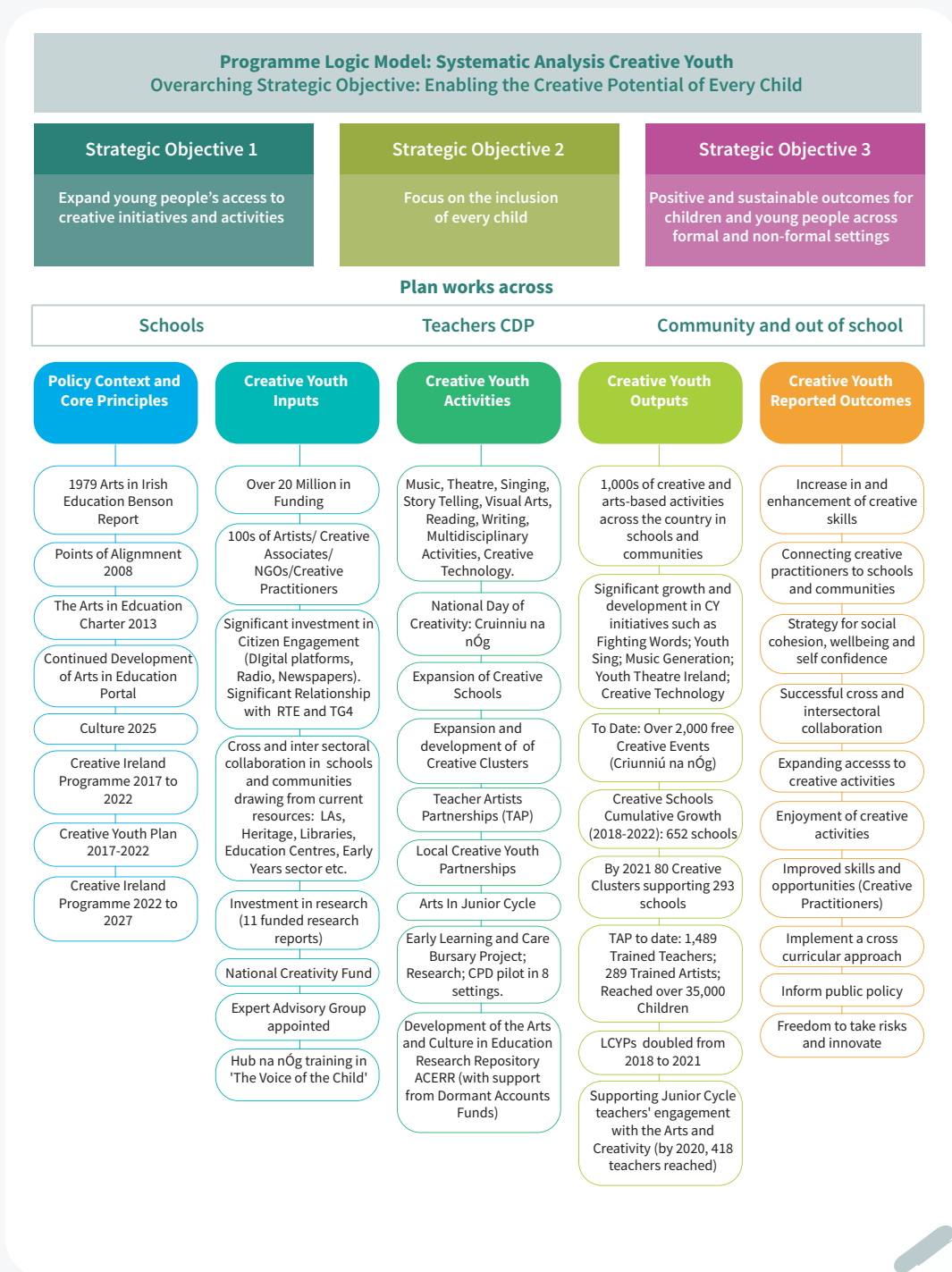


Fig. 4.1. Programme Logic Model: Systematic Analysis of Creative Youth Reports

In this chapter we look at inputs and outputs based on available data. Data were not available for all years at the time of writing nor as previously mentioned, were data from many of the larger scale research reports currently nearing completion. Input refers to the resources needed for carrying out the creative activities (time, money, expertise). Output refers to the immediate and direct quantitative result of the activity (such as the number of school children reached, social media presence, number of activities recorded, number of teachers reached, etc.). Chapter five presents the longer-term social outcomes as reported (e.g., increased self-confidence, increased creative skills).

4.2. Creative Youth Inputs

a) Policy

Creative Ireland is a 2016 legacy project, inspired by an extraordinary public response to the Centenary. In the first half of 2017, hundreds of meetings were held with individuals and organisations involved in arts education (1). A consensus emerging from these meetings was that the broad policy underpinnings for integration of the arts into education are already in place and that what is now needed is implementation. Building on previous reports and policies such as the Benson Report (89), Points of Alignment 2008 (90), The Arts in Education Charter 2013 (57), Culture 2025 Discussion Document (91), and Smyth’s (2016) report (42), the Creative Youth Plan was launched in December 2017 (1).

b) Communication

A major regional and local communications radio campaign was activated during the summer of 2017 to support and promote the publication of the 31 Local Authority Culture and Creativity Plans. An initial investment of over half a million euro in digital content and web development was undertaken, in addition to the delivery of a citizen engagement campaign (costing approximately one million euro) (1). The Creative Ireland Programme developed a significant relationship with both RTÉ⁷ and TG4 in relation to Cruinniú na nÓg and other Creative Youth activities. This included a documentary for Creative Schools called ‘Creative Kids’⁸. There was also a documentary for Junk Kouture called ‘Waking the Muse’⁹. Both of these were funded by the Creative Ireland Programme.

c) Expenditure

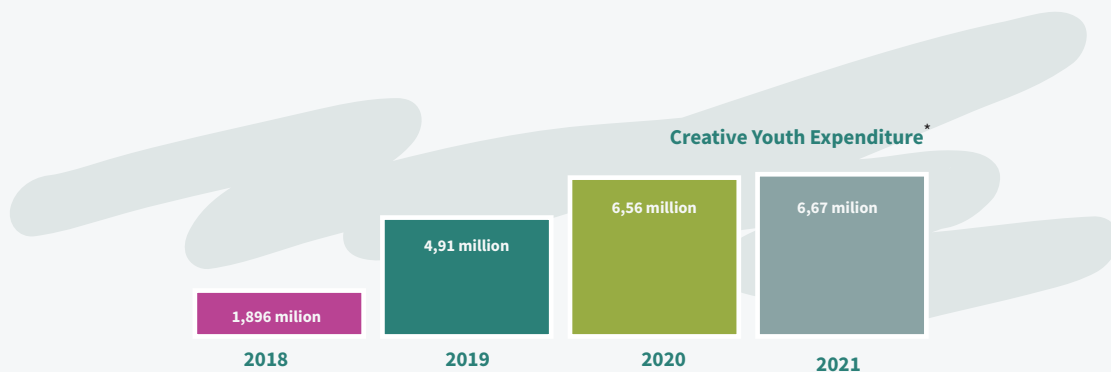


Fig. 4.2. CY Expenditure 2018-2021 (figures provided by Creative Ireland office)

* Provision of an additional €1m approx. is made available each year for the hosting of Cruinniú na nÓg. As a direct response to the COVID-19 crisis, a further allocation of approx. €1m was also made available on a once-off basis in 2020.

7 Significant support from RTÉ for Cruinniú na nÓg began in 2020.

8 <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/news/creative-kids-rte-documentary/>.

9 <https://www.rte.ie/lifestyle/fashion/2021/1028/1256444-17-year-old-filmmakers-junk-kouture-doc-to-air-on-rte2/>

Funding represents a large percentage of Creative Youth expenditure and is provided for successful applicants through Creative Youth core funding or the National Creativity Fund (NCF). To date the NCF has provided €715,470 for the funding of youth-based projects and this figure is not reflected in the above expenditure chart. The minimum level of NCF funding available per individual proposal was €10,000 up to a maximum of €70,000 (the Creative Ireland Programme Office could increase or decrease these thresholds if necessary). Funding criteria identified three thematic areas (Individual and Collective Well-being; Innovation; Connecting Communities) which reflected the broader objectives of the Programme and constituted the purpose for which funding was provided.

Funding was provided for broad cultural and creative sectors only and open to:

- Individuals
- Community groups
- Small to medium companies
- Research organisations
- Non-profit organisations
- Universities, colleges, and
- NGOs.

Qualification checks were carried out by the Creative Ireland Programme team and then by a panel of independent experts¹⁰.

Core funding for larger Creative Youth initiatives is provided through large multi way agreements involving several departments including DCEDIY, DE, DTCAGSM, in addition to the Arts Council.

d) Hub na nÓg

A priority commitment of the DCEDIY in the *National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015-2020)* (7) was the establishment of Hub na nÓg in 2017 as a centre of excellence on children's participation in decision making. The Strategy is guided and influenced by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*. The Strategy represents a significant contribution to building capacity and shared understanding among all those working to improve outcomes for children and young people and to realise their right to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. In conjunction with the Strategy *The National Implementation Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*¹¹ was developed to support and enable implementation of the objectives of the Strategy and build capacity in children and young people's participation in decision-making (appendix 5). On behalf of DCEDIY, Hub na nÓg provides training and support to both the Creative Schools Programme and the Local Creative Youth Partnerships in involving children and young people in decision-making in all projects and initiatives.

e) Investment in Research

Significant investment in research has been made, with a total of 11 major research studies funded under Creative Youth core funding (9) and the National Creativity Fund (2). Partnerships involve university engagement, the Irish Research Council, the Department of Education, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and the Arts Council. At the time of writing, four research reports were fully completed, a number had submitted a first draft and some were ongoing (see Fig. 4.3.).

¹⁰ Full details on eligibility criteria and the funding process available on request from the Creative Youth team.

¹¹ Available on request from Hub na nÓg and/or at <https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>

Investment as evidenced by Creative Youth and the National Creativity Fund in bespoke research recognises and supports the complexity and non-linear nature of research in the arts, culture and creativity sectors, and is well placed to assess research impacts that aren't always suited to a linear logic model. In writing about Government investment in innovation in the US, Larry Udell (2021) observes that investment in creativity and creative new technologies will lead to 'a better and healthier life for all mankind today and into the future' (92 p14).

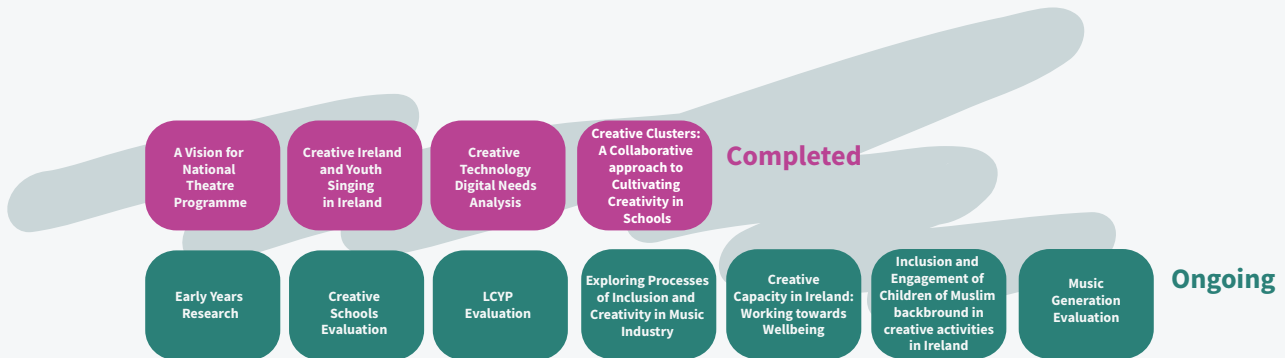


Fig. 4.3. Creative Youth Funded (9) and NCF Funded (2) Research

4.3. Creative Youth Outputs

The reports included in this analysis measured output in several ways. Some measured number of participants, some the number of new initiatives, others social media presence, or the number of counties reached, and others the number of schools applying to the programme. In general, there was a lack of consistency in terms of reporting outputs (e.g., it was not possible to say how many children, teachers, artists etc. participated as the required data were provided in only a very small number of reports). In most cases it was not possible to chart progress since 2017 as many projects were one off initiatives. Due to the diversity of activity and differing reporting methods, and as many projects did not record exact data, we highlight several flagship initiatives where there was a degree of consistency in reporting as examples, and note growth in several other larger Creative Youth programmes.

a) Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP) CPD Initiative

CPD for teachers and artists working in education is key to the implementation and development of the Creative Youth Plan. In order to infuse the educational system with creativity and culture “It is necessary to build a critical mass of education and arts professionals who are versed in the theoretical frameworks of arts and creativity education, and equipped with the skills and techniques for delivering programmes” (4, p13). Pre-dating the Creative Ireland Programme and fuelled by the momentum from the Arts in Education Charter (57), the TAP initiative commenced with a core group of teachers and artists in 2015, and now forms an integral part of Creative Youth. At present there is a fully trained and experienced panel of Teacher and Artist Lead Facilitators ready to deliver to all 21 Educational Support Centres Ireland (ESCI) network. In addition to face-to-face training, the TAP initiative has evolved and been accredited as an online programme and successfully delivered online in 2020 and 2021. TAP is now being developed as a European programme under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in innovation and sharing of best practice category with four other countries.

The following have participated in TAP to date* (see Table 4.1.).

Table 4.1. TAP Training Input (Data provided by Sweeney, DE, 2022)

TAP trained teachers	1,489
TAP trained artists	289
TAP facilitators trained to deliver TAP	85
TAP artist in-school residencies	654
Children in primary schools directly impacted by TAP	*35,733+

*The figure for children involved or impacted by TAP CPD and in-school residency is based on each teacher being involved with approximately 25/26 students in a class. The figure is a conservative estimate.

CPD features prominently in the Creative Youth Plan, and the Arts in Junior Cycle initiative supports Junior Cycle teachers' engagement with creativity, the arts and active learning in their classrooms. Partnering with such organisations as the Irish Architecture Foundation, National Gallery Ireland, Cartoon Saloon, Poetry Ireland, the Goethe-Institut, the Irish Film Institute and the Design and Crafts Council Ireland, Arts in Junior Cycle builds on such partnerships to enhance teacher creativity and reflective practice to ensure the arts and creativity are seen as integral to high quality learning environments in schools.

b) Creative Schools

Creative Schools is led by the Arts Council in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth. Each participating school is assigned a Creative Associate who works with the school to carry out an analysis of current engagement with the arts and creativity. Using this they create a sustainable Creative Schools Plan drawing on a range of opportunities within the school/centre and the wider community. Schools/centres receive a grant of €2,000 per annum for 2 years to implement plans (input). Interest in the initiative has been significant with, for example, over 970 applications to the programme over 3 rounds (2018, 2019 and 2020) (Creative Youth Briefing, 2021) which would suggest potential for further growth and development if adequately resourced to meet supply with demand. Figure 4.4. presents the cumulative totals to year end 2021.

Table 4.2. Creative School Successful Applications

Creative Schools - Round 1	Creative Schools - Round 2	Creative Schools - Round 3	Creative Schools - Round 4
149	150	164	189

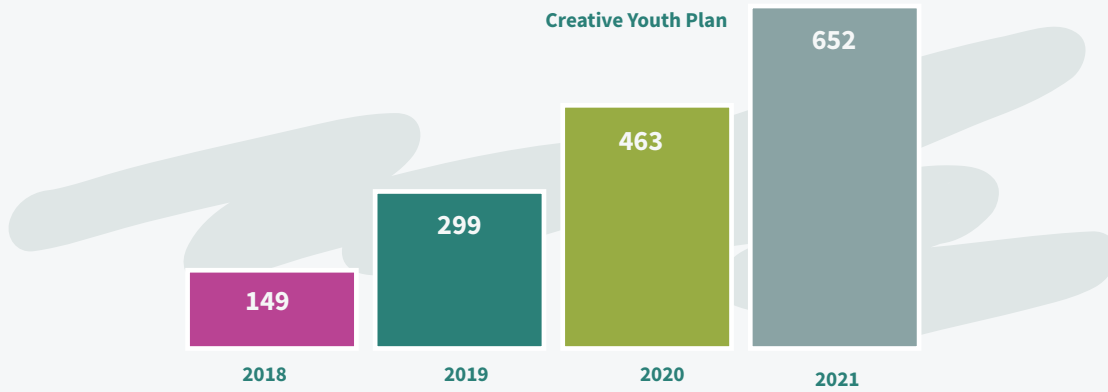


Fig. 4.4. Cumulative Growth of Creative Schools Initiative (2018-2021) (Data provided by the Creative Ireland office, 2022)

c) Creative Clusters

Launched in 2018, Creative Clusters is a pilot initiative of the Department of Education, led by and in partnership with the Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ESCI) and funded through the Schools Excellence Fund. A Creative Cluster consists of between 3 to 5 schools and can involve primary schools only, post primary schools only or a combination of both. Each cluster receives training and support from a designated Cluster Facilitator (linked to an ESCI full-time Education Centre) and is led by a teacher as lead school coordinator from a designated lead school. The pilot was designed to explore how the arts and creativity might encourage clusters of schools to work together to address common learning challenges experienced. Schools collaborate on the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of an innovative arts and creative learning project which supports them in addressing a common issue/challenge. Cluster schools are encouraged to centre the voice of the child or young people in identifying challenges (30).

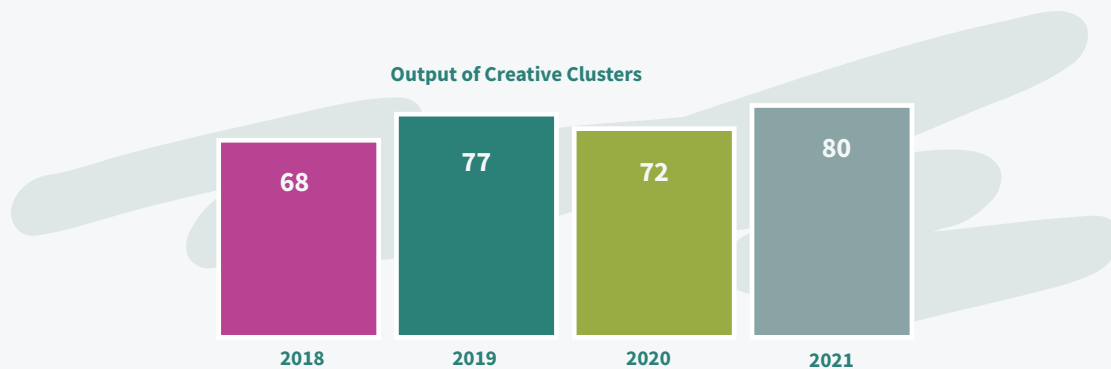


Fig. 4.5. Growth of Creative Clusters (provided by Sweeney, DE, 2022)

*Figures represent number of schools involved in clusters.

As evident in Fig. 4.5. Creative Clusters has grown steadily. A snapshot provided by Morrissey’s report in 2021 (30) highlights the variety of projects and activities undertaken by clusters. In a sample of 49 projects over a two-year period (2018-2020), 19 related to well-being, the environment, and the arts, eleven to STEM/STEAM, nine to local history, six focused on multidisciplinary arts, and four did not fit into any broad category. Aligned with the aims of the Creative Ireland Programme and Creative Youth Plan, Morrissey (2021) found that the Planning Model Documents demonstrated a ‘range of creative activities’ and planning for the arts ‘not just as curriculum subjects but as instruments for education more generally’ (30 p37).

d) Local Creative Youth Partnerships (LCYPs)

Action 14 of the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022) specifies that Local Creative Youth Partnerships will be established on a pilot basis within the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Providing ‘out of school’ activities for children and young people with particular focus on marginalised cohorts, their remit goes beyond the arts, and includes culture and creative activity in all spheres. The partnership brings together the local infrastructure of Youth Officers, Local Authorities, Education Centres, representatives from the early years sector, and local cultural resources such as arts centres (4). Growing from an initial three pilot partnerships to six, demonstrates their success. The work of the LCYPs is supported by Hub na nÓg to ensure the voices of children and young people remain core to the partnerships.

e) Local Authorities Project Output

Collaboration between Local Authorities (LAs), the Creative Ireland Programme and creative practitioners has been central to the delivery and success of Creative Youth (83). LAs are uniquely positioned within the community to provide access to cultural and creative experiences across Ireland. 5,350 creative and arts-based projects have been delivered by the 31 LAs to date (signifying 4,669 unique events as some were run a number of times), addressing issues around people, place and identity, and social, economic and environmental challenges. Many projects have been directly provided for children and young people, and the LAs oversee the roll out of the National Day of Creativity for children and young people, Cruinniú na nÓg, presented next.

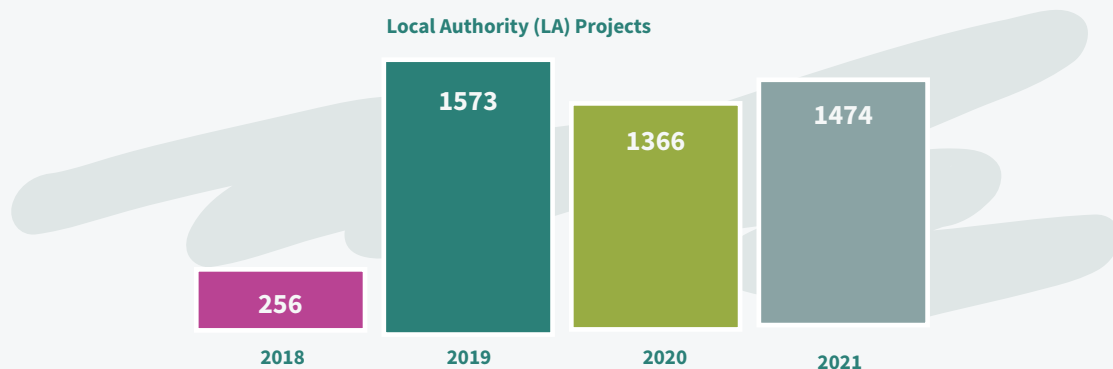


Fig. 4.6. Local Authority Projects (Data sourced from Creative Ireland Progress Reports, 4, 58, 93, 94)

e) Cruinniú na nÓg

Cruinniú na nÓg is the National Day of Creativity for children and a flagship initiative of Creative Youth. Run in partnership with the Local Authorities and supported by RTÉ, Cruinniú organised almost 2,300 events between 2018 and 2021, featuring 20 genres including Music, STE(A)M, Theatre, Dance, Biodiversity, Architecture, Crafts, Literature and so on. This reflects the cultural democracy approach identified in Chapter Three. (A more detailed analysis of Cruinniú na nÓg’s activities is presented in Chapter Six.)

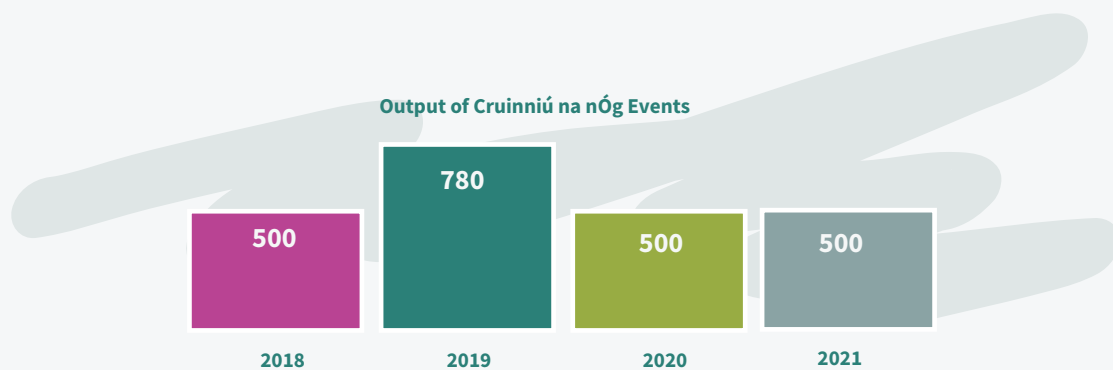


Fig. 4.7. Output of Cruinniú na nÓg Events (Data sourced from CI Progress Reports 58, 93, 94, 157)

*Cruinniú was moved online in 2020 and 2021, with the number of events reduced to offer more meaningful and impactful activities.

f) Growth in other Creative Youth Initiatives

Evidence suggests that Creative Youth is investing in innovative and diverse creative activities from large scale projects such as Music Generation and Fighting Words to smaller scale initiatives like the Lullaby Project. Innovative leadership is shown in the range of projects funded, from Le Chéile’s contemporary ways of music making, to multidisciplinary arts projects and storytelling initiatives like Narrative 4’s project with Roma and Traveller communities (see Chapter 6, Fig. 6.4. for distribution of the range of Creative Youth funded activities). Substantial growth in the diversity and expanse of initiatives in both formal and non-formal settings since 2017 demonstrates the success of the Creative Youth Plan in its second and third objectives: collaboration and innovation (see Chapter Three). Through strategic support and funding by the Creative Youth Plan, the growth and development of well-established organisations (see below) illustrate the value of cross-sectoral partnership and capacity building within a ‘joined up thinking’ approach to creativity.

Music Generation is now a key action within the Creative Youth Plan in the belief that it is every child and young person’s right to have the choice of access, and the chance to participate as a musical citizen. Music Generation expanded from 11 locations in 2017 to 29 in 2021.

Fighting Words has expanded, and now operates in 12 centres nationwide prioritising working with DEIS schools in each region. Young people from almost 250 schools and youth groups across Dublin, Cork city, Limerick city, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Drogheda, and Co. Louth will have new creative writing opportunities.

With the support of the Creative Ireland Programme, **Youth Theatre Ireland** (YTI) can roll-out a new nationwide expansion programme, providing a new group in Dublin as well as in Offaly and Westmeath – two counties where there had previously been no formal youth theatre. YTI will provide a structured training programme (including QQI accredited training in youth drama facilitation practice) to support the development of high-quality youth theatre practice.

YouthSing Ireland Phase 1 of this project was undertaken in 2018 in which a piece of research was commissioned (included in this report) to consult and build the case for sustainable engagement with singing and choral music for young people as articulated in Action 9 of the Creative Youth Plan. In 2019 Sing Ireland with the support of Creative Youth and funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media commenced YouthSing Ireland. The project supports teachers through enhanced CPD, new resource material in Irish and opportunities such as Sing Space which brings together teachers, musicians and children to work collaboratively.

4.4. Summary

The Creative Ireland Programme is described as a 2016 legacy project, which has been “inspired by the extraordinary public response to the Centenary: the thousands of events, largely culture-based, and unprecedented public participation that brought us together in shared reflections on identity, culture and citizenship that combined history with arts, heritage and language” (1, p6). Underpinned by the values and principles of Culture 2025 (91) and previous arts and cultural policies and reports¹², the insights and expertise reflected in these documents can be considered a significant input into the Creative Ireland Programme’s policy development. Although heavily descriptive owing to a lack of empirical data, the evidence here supports that the Creative Ireland Programme has invested significantly in Creative Youth since its launch and continues to do so. In terms of citizen engagement, digital content, and academic research, investment is substantial. Creative Youth has grown significantly in schools and youth centres through the LCYPs, Creative Schools, Creative Clusters and TAP. Teacher CPD has also expanded through several of these initiatives, supported by Hub na nÓg’s training to enable child voice and participation. Creative Youth has also grown in the community (non-formal settings) since its launch, demonstrating its commitment to expand access to creative activities in both formal and out of school settings. The available evidence strongly supports successful cross-sectoral collaboration with Local Authorities through funding local projects and collaboration with previously established organisations such as Fighting Words and Music Generation.



CHAPTER
FIVE
FINDINGS AND
OUTCOMES IN A
NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXT

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter we take a closer look at the commonalities and trends evident in the Creative Youth reports analysed (i.e., the findings and outcomes they reported). In summary, an increase in ‘creative skills’¹³ is reported in most, and an increase in creative activities throughout the country is evidenced. The experience of enjoyment is highlighted, as is the importance given to connecting creative practitioners with young people both in and outside formal educational settings. The success of cross-sectoral collaboration in maximising resources and encouraging learning is another key finding. We also see evidence of how creativity is being employed strategically to foster social cohesion, well-being and improve self-confidence. For ease of reading, the major findings are presented across two figures (5.1a and 5.1b), with each followed by a brief commentary.

5.2. Common Trends in Creative Youth Projects and Initiatives (a)

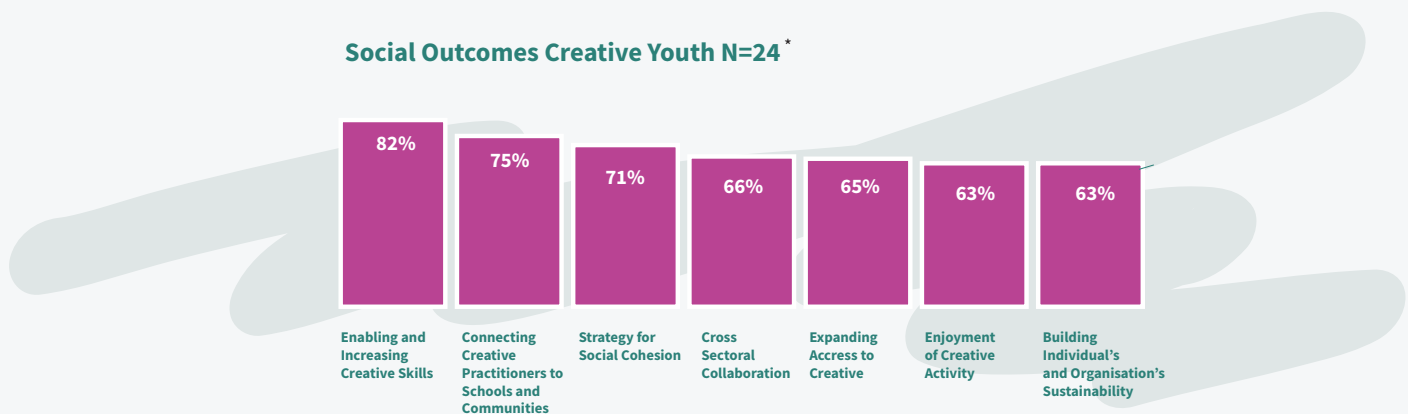


Fig. 5.1(a). Creative Youth Social Outcomes

*N=24 (1 report was a National Vision for the Future; 1 report was a Needs Analysis, neither met the inclusion criteria for this section)

Enabling and Increasing Creative Skills

82% (n=20) of Creative Youth reports included in this study, rate enabling creativity and increasing creative skills as an important outcome of their project. Given that engagement in arts activities can foster child social development, enhancing prosocial skills and socio-emotional development (42, 43, 95, 96), enabling and increasing creative skills in young people is a valuable outcome. In a recent Adobe skills assessment of creativity in the workplace (97), the role of creative skills in shifting priorities and making changes when unexpected events occur (such as the pandemic), prepared respondents to undertake creative changes in their projects, empowering positive change in incorporating real-world issues and developing creative projects with positive societal impacts. 81% of respondents (n=2,516) reported that the events of 2020 had reinforced more than ever the necessity to expand creative skillsets. In a previous Global Creativity Gap survey in 2016 (n=5026), Adobe found that while global respondents believed being creative was valuable to society (70%) and to the economy (64%), only 41% percent described themselves as creative and 31% percent reported they were living up to their creative potential (98). Respondents recognised that businesses who invest in creativity are more likely to foster innovation (83%) and be financially successful (73%). They reported

13 Creative skills were interpreted somewhat differently in each project, e.g. musicianship, storytelling, arts appreciation, song making, theatre skills, etc.).

that governments and schools have a creativity imperative, perceiving that a government which invests in creativity is more likely to foster innovation (82%), increase productivity (79%), be competitive (78%), and have happier citizens (76%). About two-thirds (65%) believed that creativity is being stifled by their educational systems and to foster creativity, education should prioritize:

- Learning by “doing” versus direct instruction (84%)
- Creativity over memorization (75%)
- Time for creative activity versus a fully structured school day (74%)
- Developing a wide variety of student skills (72%).

The Creative Youth data compare favourably with international comparators in this regard, and were evidenced in numerous projects such as a youth orchestra where young people commented on how much they had learnt about music and instruments played; a visual arts project where children considered they discovered artistic skills they didn’t know they had; a theatre project where participants claimed to have developed theatre and creative skills; and a multidisciplinary initiative which reported enabling and fostering creative skills in hospitals.

Connecting Creative Practitioners to Schools and Communities

75% (n=18) of reports cite connecting artists to communities as an important outcome. During initiatives, young people worked alongside experts, such as theatre artists, writers, directors, designers and architects, to develop their art or skill. Over the past decade, interest has grown in such resources (or ‘assets’) within communities and how they foster health and well-being (95). This method of sharing knowledge, aptly identified as an apprenticeship model by several of the Creative Youth projects, proved a useful way of capturing the approach to learning adopted by different vocations. It reflects social interaction with significant others in which the important pedagogical role of the significant other contributes to Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (99). Morrissey (2021) also highlighted the value of linking specialised expertise in schools: “The inclusion in Creative Clusters of the informal education sector, the arts and cultural sectors, artists and broader creative subject specialists serves to reinforce the importance of creativity in schools and in the wider community” (30 p96). In a visual arts project students reported listening and learning from the artist as being significant for them; in a theatre project children marvelled at the chance to work with real actors; in a traditional music initiative, organisers highlighted the importance of linking master and apprentice musicians; in an arts appreciation project bringing school children into direct engagement with artists, creative writers and leading galleries across Ireland, linking artists and cultural institutions with children was reported as an important outcome.

Strategy for Social Cohesion

71% (n=17) of reports cite social cohesion as an outcome. This was evident in feedback, interviews and case studies reviewed. The essential features of social cohesion can be defined as “(1) the quality of social relations (including social networks, trust, acceptance of diversity, and participation), (2) identification with the social entity, and (3) orientation towards the common good (sense of responsibility, solidarity, compliance to social order)” (100 p20). Research suggests that engagement with the arts may contribute to the development of social relationships, networks and a heightened sense of community (101, 102). Factors highlighted were bringing young people together from different backgrounds and geographical areas, making new friends, initiating creative networks, and fostering a sense of belonging. Singing projects in Direct Provision centres, storytelling techniques in the traveller community and music instruction for people with disabilities are some of the novel initiatives reporting outcomes in this category. It is noteworthy however, that seldom heard voices did not feature prominently in the reports.

Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

67% (n=16) of reports cite cross-sectoral collaboration as an outcome. The policy considerations from the recent scoping WHO Health Review (2019) notes the importance of “strengthening structures and mechanisms for collaboration between the culture, social care and health sectors, such as introducing programmes that are co-financed by different budgets” (51). One of Creative Youth’s core principles is collaboration across government and with stakeholders in schools and community settings. Creative Clusters’ teachers signposted a range of collaborations with the informal education sector as important, including local artists working across a range of art forms and media, links to cultural institutions, local arts organisations, museum curators and subject specialists (30). Numerous initiatives valued cross-sectoral collaboration as an effective way in which to bring together knowledge and skills and take full advantage of already existent infrastructures. Examples included teachers in one report who acknowledged the benefits of connecting with museums; young people cited training alongside theatre experts as a ‘real’ opportunity in another report; others cited the excitement of learning directly from artists as the highlight of the project. In the Creative Communities Interim Report (2021) (103) the composition of the culture and creativity teams facilitated a collaborative approach across local authority departments in terms of project design, evaluation, and outcomes. Findings confirm the role and significance of cross-sectoral collaboration as an important outcome in Creative Youth funded projects and initiatives.

Expanding Access to Creative Activities

67% (n=16) of reports rated increasing access to creative activities as an outcome of their projects. Expanded access was also reported in the output section (see Chapter Four), demonstrated by substantial increases in Local Authority projects, expansion of Creative Schools, Creative Clusters, LCYPs, Cruinniú na nÓg, Music Generation, Fighting Words and Youth Sing. From design thinking to working with contemporary art, from playwriting to music tuition, from multi-sensory learning to hospital based creative activities, the available evidence suggests that access has been expanded both in schools and in the community.

Expanding access through Creative Youth initiatives is a crucial aspect of the Creative Ireland programme. However, as discussed later in this report, offering and expanding access to creative activities does not necessarily mean initiatives are successful in reaching/targeting all communities. A recent study by Nolan & Smyth (2021) (52) based on the GUI data from children born in 1998 and 2008 revealed social patterning across several dimensions of health and well-being, “In particular, young people from more disadvantaged social backgrounds were more likely to display poorer health behaviours and to report poorer mental health and well-being” (p6). This is significant in terms of the well-established correlation between health/well-being and participation in creative and arts-based activities (51, 95, 96), albeit acknowledging that well-being does not provide sole rationale for an arts programme. As the data included in this systematic review did not provide robust demographic data, further analysis is required in order to ascertain the extent to which access has been expanded to seldom-heard/disadvantaged communities. However, in March 2022 the Creative Youth team made us aware of 81 projects which had taken place across Local Creative Youth Partnerships in 2021, involving 4,830 participants which were explicitly aimed at disadvantaged and seldom heard cohorts, such as travellers, migrants and early school leavers. Communication with coordinators of Kinia and the TAP initiatives also highlighted projects and training specifically targeted at disadvantaged communities.

Enjoyment of Creative Activity

63% (n=15) of reports cited enjoyment as a positive outcome of their interventions. The evidence supports that Creative Youth initiatives introduced something ‘novel’ and ‘exciting’ into participating children and young people’s lives. Activities were reported as being fun, enjoyable, alleviating boredom, breaking school routine and providing a stimulating experience. Remarks from parents of children in hospitals were insightful in this regard, commending interventions which eased boredom and helped with long hospital hours. In other instances, they commented on how aesthetically pleasing and relaxing interventions were and how they captivated and engaged their child during a hospital stay. In singing and theatre programmes the ‘feel-good factor’, fun and enjoyment were mentioned, and as with the hospital programme, children from direct provision centres remarked on how Creative Youth projects eased the boredom and tedium of their lives in the centres. In many situations happiness appeared to come from building relationships and friendships as a consequence of participation in the project. Morrissey’s (2021) (30) report on Creative Clusters cited numerous comments from children and teachers in which enjoyment, fun, making new friends and connecting with different schools were rated highly.

Enjoyment is unequivocally linked with creative engagement, happiness and well-being among children and young people (104). Well-being (discussed in more detail below) includes emotions such as a sense of competence or belonging, and satisfaction with life, and is positively correlated with mental health and happiness (104, 105).

Building Individual’s and Organisation’s Sustainability Beyond Creative Youth

63% (n=15) of reports identified aspects of organisation sustainability as an outcome. Some discussed plans to sustain and expand initiatives. While many projects mentioned expanding collaboration across geographical boundaries, modifying their programme and/or integrating it into the school curriculum, only a few had secured alternative sources of funding to ensure viability and sustainability beyond Creative Youth.

However, research shows that sustainability should be a concern for creative practitioners, associates and/or organisations in Ireland, with around 40% of all such programmes terminating in the first few years after initial funding is discontinued (106, 107) leaving not only community needs unmet but creative practitioners and associates potentially redundant. Many factors support project/programme sustainability, including a strong programme theory with clear objectives, demonstrable effectiveness, flexibility, human and financial resources, and robust programme evaluation (108). Most projects analysed in this systematic review were lacking in several of these, challenging sustainability of the organisation and future delivery. This issue is further explored in Chapter Six.

While most evidence relates to sustaining the projects through funding and resources, the issue of sustaining the effect/impact within individuals themselves (i.e., participants, artists, teachers, and creative practitioners) did not feature in the data, and arguably should be targeted in the future. Identifying ways to sustain and develop both the activities in question, and also the effect/impact on participants/leaders post-project is key to building creative potential and capacity in Irish society.

5.1.2. Common Trends in Creative Youth Projects and Initiatives (b)

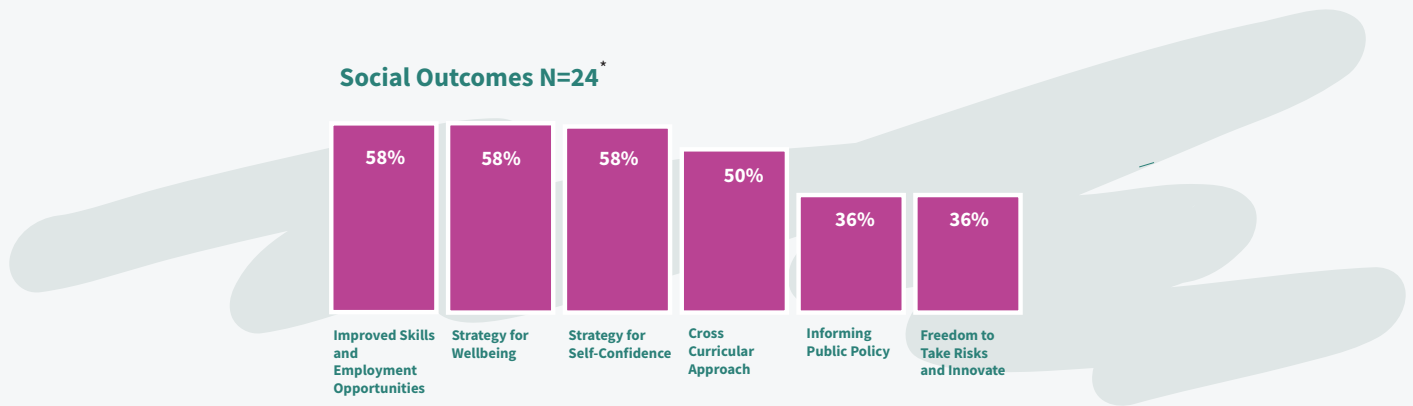


Fig. 5.1b Creative Youth Social Outcomes

*N=24 (1 project was a vision for the future; 1 project was a needs analysis, neither fitted inclusion criteria for this section)

Improved Skills and Employment Opportunities

58% (n=14) of reports cited improved skills and employment opportunities for creative practitioners as an outcome. In general, the arts tend to be globally subsidised. Towse (2014) identifies an emerging trend of state owned and managed organisations entirely funded by taxation and revenue (e.g., national museums and galleries) (109). Many countries such as the US and Japan follow this model. The UK, Australia and Ireland however operate an intermediate model whereby the state provides grants and tax relief to private not-for-profit arts organisations, who must also raise funding from their own revenues (23). Until recently exchequer funding had been delivered primarily though not exclusively through The Arts Council in Ireland (23). Evidence from this analysis suggests that the Creative Ireland Programme is providing additional key funding to the sector and creating employment opportunities for artists, art organisations and the creative community more broadly.

Creative practitioners cited improved skills as an outcome, identifying improved knowledge and skills in working with children, growing professionally and emotionally; others felt it developed and strengthened their arts practice. Additional data and research would be needed to fully mine the extent and significance of this finding.

Strategy for Well-being

Just over half (58%) reported increased well-being as an outcome of their intervention. Well-being can be understood “as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole” (104 p6). Health and well-being feature prominently in the current Creative Ireland Programme, and are likely to be further reinforced through the proposed Creative Health and Well-being pillar in the second 5-year Plan: “Creativity is being put at the heart of public policy because we understand that participation in cultural and creative activity promotes the well-being of the individual, the community and the nation at large” (2 p1).

An expanding body of evidence supports the view that cultural engagement contributes positively to health and well-being (51, 104, 105). The aesthetic and emotional components of arts activities afford opportunities for emotional expression, emotion management and stress reduction (110). For those experiencing disadvantage or isolation, such as residing in direct provision centres, hospitals and young people with disabilities, creative activities as reported in this systematic review provided a valuable lifeline connecting children to the ‘outside world’, alleviating issues and contributing to maintaining good mental health. In a society in which positive mental health is prioritised, and particularly as we emerge into a post-pandemic world, health and well-being are significant concerns for governments and policy makers. A recent report (March, 2022) from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) in the US revealed devastating results from the impact of Covid-19 both economically and on people’s mental health and well-being. However, the report finds that the arts sector was still stronger in 2020 than many other sectors such as transportation, mining, or agriculture. The report’s authors highlight this as a reminder of how underappreciated the contributions of arts and culture are to the economic health of the US (111). It found that despite enormous levels of stress during this period, artists, creatives, and arts organisations were inventive and resourceful, a finding also reflected in other studies (112, 113). The report concludes that despite three major economic set-backs this century so far (post 9/11 recession, the 2008 recession, and Covid-19), artists regrouped after each crisis, drawing on their resilience and creativity to build new audiences, source new funding, and do “what they do best—use their creativity to make sense of a shared trauma” (112). Against this evidence, Ireland’s Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022) can be viewed not only as a significant policy strategy but a workable practical programme which is contributing to happiness and well-being, with potential to lead to resilience, innovation, and ingenuity in the younger population, when addressing challenges in their lives and in wider society. With a little over half (58%) reporting increased well-being as an outcome of their intervention, it could highlight the need to prioritise this area in the second Plan.

Strategy for Self-Confidence

58% (n=14) reported increased self-confidence as an outcome. Self-confidence is a primary contributing factor to well-being and good mental health (114). Levels of self-confidence in the early years of life are positively associated with self-esteem in later life. Self-esteem is regarded as crucial to the social and cognitive development of children (115). Research suggests that building a good foundation for self-esteem is key to supporting children through adolescence, an important life stage during which self-esteem can easily decline due to peer pressure and social comparisons (116). Data from GUI flags an additional concern here, finding the decline of socio-emotional health steeper in young women throughout adolescence, as is their participation in sports activities, also associated with enhanced physical and mental health outcomes (43). Nolan and Smyth (2021) found that young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds in Ireland are more likely to display unhealthy behaviours and poorer mental health (52), with consequent implications for levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. These findings may merit further consideration as possible policy priorities in the proposed second 5-year Creative Youth Plan.

Several studies positively correlate engagement in the arts with self-esteem (114-116). Mak & Fancourt (2019) posited two explanations why the arts may support self-esteem in young people. Firstly, in terms of self-identity, the arts validate individuality fostering a feeling of self-accomplishment and self-worth, providing healthy challenges to improve skills which can support the empowerment of young people. Secondly, engagement with the arts can cultivate feelings of social identity and social cohesion, help to improve pride, encourage goal-directed behaviours, and enhance social resilience which allows individuals to solve other social issues and establish self-esteem (115). In the reports included in this systematic review, there were many such instances cited, for example, children involved in theatre and making plays talked about self-pride from witnessing their words put onto

paper, how much more confident they had become speaking and how much more sociable they felt. In an initiative involving a young people’s orchestra, growing levels of confidence and a positive sense of identity at a critical transitional point in adolescent lives was noted. Teachers commented on how an Objects-Based Learning programme allowed students viewed as ‘not academic’ to flourish.

Cross-Curricular Approach

Half of the reports (50%) referred to adopting a cross-curricular approach as an outcome of their projects. In a small number of cases, they reflected a broader range of projects beyond school-based ones only. UNESCO (2021) (118) define the importance of cross-curricular learning and cooperative learning stating “Interconnectedness and interdependencies should frame pedagogy. The relationships that exist between teachers, students and knowledge are located in a wider world. All learners are connected to the world and all learning takes place in and with the world” (p60). Arts integrated approaches support student learning in meaningful ways, developing critical perspectives and fostering critical thinking (119, 120). For example, musical vocal interaction promotes infants’ language learning (121), and music training improves phonological awareness and reading skills in children with dyslexia (122). Both dance and cultural engagement are associated with higher verbal scores and music training can enhance literacy development because of changes in brain mechanisms which support music and language cognition (123, 124).

Creative Clusters, Creative Schools, LCYPs, TAP and Arts in Junior Cycle are the principal strands of Creative Youth which tackle cross-curricular approaches to learning. While valuable data from an extensive report on Creative Clusters is included in this analysis, Creative Schools, TAP and LCYPs are currently under evaluation and their findings will be published in due course. Nonetheless several projects in this analysis cite the importance of cross-curricular learning. For example, 93% of teachers asserted that the Creative Cluster model had generated a cross-curricular impact and 86% felt Creative Clusters had enabled creative pedagogies, such as adapting their teaching to accommodate the inclusion of pupils as decision makers, collaborative learning, incidental learning, context-based learning, exploratory learning and so on. In a singing project teachers valued engagement with song-making and song-singing as meaningful pathways to sacraments or equivalent events in the school calendar. Bridging the gap between the arts and education was cited as a significant outcome in a theatre project, and in an arts appreciation project, critical pedagogy provided children with collective ownership of knowledge and activities undertaken.

References to cross-curricular work emerged as being largely school-oriented in this study, and the out of school dimension appears underdeveloped. This represents somewhat of a missed opportunity as the benefits of cross-curricular activity in out of school settings could enable identification of patterns between different activities, and a creative way to stimulate knowledge, interest and curiosity in areas such as sustainability and the societal/ethical/moral dimensions of learning (125, 126, 127).

Informing Public Policy

Informing public policy was reported as an outcome in 36% (n=9) of reports analysed, however it was not clear in all cases how or to what extent their findings could feed into policy making. The Creative Communities Interim Review (103) report noted that a more strategic approach to creative and cultural planning had been adopted and that creativity had been embedded at policy level. Other projects remarked on how they provided bottom-up perspectives and new knowledge to inform policy, with one initiative mentioning they had invited policy makers to key events to encourage them to embrace, reflect and value the voice of the child. The Creative Clusters Research Report (2021) (30) identifies that the programme is well placed to influence and implement public policy. Oliver & Cairney (2019) (128) suggest that to inform or influence policy, evaluation and/or research reports must be of good quality, relevant, readable with clear and synthesised messages. They recommend

project leaders understand policies and policy context, make themselves accessible to policy makers whilst actively seeking to build relationships with them, but ensure boundaries are in place. Recognising that many actors make, shape and influence policy, and different norms and rules apply to different institutions (128), data from the Creative Youth funded projects represent a valuable opportunity to present new ideas and voices which are infrequently ‘heard’ in policy development. It is therefore advisable that research and evaluation of Creative Youth projects do not forego quality in the name of ‘convenient accountability’ measures but draw from their research and evaluations to influence and contribute to shaping future policy in the area. It would be useful to determine if the projects had maintained contact with the Creative Youth team during and after delivery, and if they were familiar with Creative Ireland policy and objectives. There is little evidence provided to suggest they were.

Freedom to Take Risks and Innovate

Just over a third (36%) reported freedom to take risks and innovate as an outcome. Art and creativity have never been just about conforming to the status quo (129). Creativity as defined by the Creative Ireland Programme is “the use of imaginative capabilities to transform thinking and produce original and innovative ideas and solutions. It involves collaboration, investigation, challenging assumptions and taking risks” (4 p4). Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that not more reported this as an outcome. However, those projects who did, signalled artistic integrity, problem solving, divergent thinking, risk taking and experimentation as important aspects of their initiatives. Employing new music technologies, exploring contemporary issues, or focusing on the artistic process and not the finished product were cited as important in this regard. Creative Clusters (30) also highlighted the importance of risk taking in the creative process and teachers reiterated the benefits of moving outside their comfort zones. The evaluation highlighted how clusters went beyond the arts with many topics selected outside of traditional art forms.

In his review for the Arts Council O’Hagan (2015) (23) highlights the importance of funding to promote experimental and innovative creative work: “The subsidised art sector should in a sense be the test laboratory for artistic talent, which provides the ‘life blood’ for the much wider commercial sector” (p112). One of the central roles of art in society has consistently focused on art as social criticism, as O’Hagan and Zieba (2010) note “Functioning as agents of social disruption and change, the arts may intrude rudely upon our everyday sensibility, force us to consider the most extreme possibilities of the human condition, and prod us to think more profoundly than is comfortable about ultimate matters of life, death, and our own contingency” (130 p156). However, the ability to take risks and innovate in an all-of-government initiative may be affected by a number of issues. Policy alignment, going through the motions of ticking boxes for evaluation and policy purposes may limit creative freedom (129). The creative ‘wastage’ O’Hagan (2015) (23) refers to, which in an increasingly cost conscious and accountability culture in which subsidised art resides, can be difficult to justify. Other risks involved ‘taboo’ issues which some of the projects alluded to: a delicate balancing act which can prove restrictive for the intrepid artist/creative associate, but too risky for schools and/or teachers involved. Moving out of comfort zones may not suit or indeed be appropriate for everyone. The importance of prior training, briefing and debriefing must be emphasised to ensure everyone is on board and comfortable with the intervention.

5.2. Summary

In summary, the data indicate that the Creative Youth initiatives included in this analysis increased and enabled creative skills in young people. A strong contributory factor was found to be connecting creative practitioners directly to schools and communities, capitalising on the skills already available on a national level, in other words mobilising community assets (reported by 75% as an outcome). Employing creativity as a strategy to address social challenges was also reported, with 71% linking Creative Youth initiatives to social cohesion and an equally strong 58% of projects reporting an increase in well-being and self-confidence as outcomes. A cooperative ethos was represented in 67% of projects who identified cross-sectoral collaboration as a valuable outcome, maximising resources through people, public spaces and/or partnerships with established organisations. While several projects involved participants from seldom heard cohorts in society such as children in hospitals, direct provision, and young people with disabilities, explicit attention to principles 1 and 4 of the Creative Youth Plan, notably the voice of the child and inclusivity did not feature strongly, and most reports were surprisingly silent in this regard. This is discussed in the following chapters.



**CHAPTER
SIX
GAPS AND
CHALLENGES
IN THE
RESEARCH
FINDINGS**

6.1. Gaps and Challenges in the Research Findings

This chapter discusses the main outcomes and policy implications from the findings reported in Chapter Five. A number of gaps and challenges identified in the data are considered in light of relevant national and international research. At the outset, 25 out of 26 reports presented a number of recommendations arising from their creative activity. These were analysed to determine if common concerns had emerged across the datasets, and to identify future priorities highlighted. Setting these out first, many of the recommendations broadly converge with the findings drawn from this systematic review and frame the discussion of the gaps and challenges which arise from the findings reported in Chapter Five, and are discussed here.

6.2. Recommendations made by Creative Youth Reports

All recommendations outlined in the Creative Youth reports were analysed and classified using NVivo to identify common themes and trends across the reports. A total of 22 codes were identified, later collapsed to six main themes (see Fig. 6.1.). Recommendations were read several times and cross checked by both researchers. As presented in Fig. 6.1., 52% (n=13) of projects recommended sustaining or increasing funding levels, which highlight challenges around organisation sustainability of the activity beyond Creative Youth. 40% (n=10) recommended improving planning in the organisation, to support medium- and longer-term sustainability. 52% (n=13) made recommendations about maintaining or increasing levels of teacher training and CPD. The importance of agency and amplifying the voice of all stakeholders during the creative process and evaluation stage was recommended in 44% (n=11) of reports. Cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership is viewed as an important aspect of Creative Youth and 40% (n=10) recommended maintaining this approach. Finally, 40% (n=10) recommended improving inclusivity and expanding access to creative activities.

Recommendations Reported by Creative Youth Initiatives and Research Reports N=25*

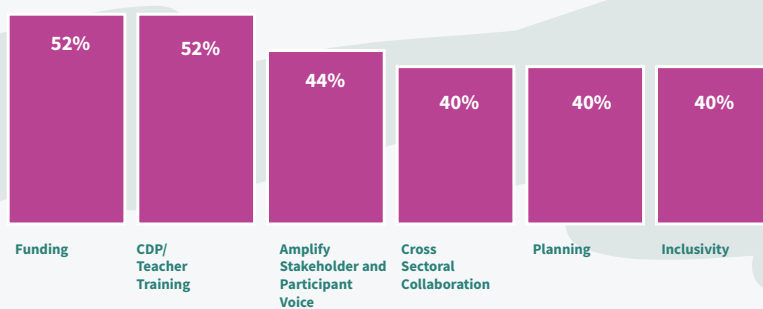


Fig. 6.1. Recommendations made in Creative Youth Reports

*N=25 (1 report did not identify recommendations and therefore did not meet the inclusion criteria for this category.)

It is interesting that most recommendations fell along the axis of planning for future delivery of projects, identifying areas both of strength and need, such as collaboration, planning, CPD and increasing levels of inclusivity. Although not explicitly stated, several recommendations can be mapped to the Creative Youth objectives and principles, although no recommendations about ‘robust evaluation mechanisms’ or to well-being were made, despite the presence of these in the Creative Youth Plan. While amplifying the voice of the child is implied, it is not articulated in a rights-based way as set out in the Creative Youth objectives and principles and national Strategy imperatives (see Chapter Three). This may suggest a lack of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) about the requirement that statutory and non-statutory organisations in Ireland are obliged to seek the views of children and young people and take them seriously under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989, 2006) (5), the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* (2006) (6) and the *National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making* (2015) (7). It also suggests a lack of awareness of the National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth 2021), which provides practical guidance on how to involve children and young people in decision-making in both the development and delivery of programmes.

6.3. Evaluating Engagement and Participation in Creative Activities

Participation in cultural and creative activities is often measured in quantitative terms such as the number of participants involved, the number of audience members, or more recently the number of hits or likes on social media (11). However, increasingly participation in cultural activities is also measured in terms of social impact (16, 131). This shift towards cultural democracy, increasing access, development of strong cultural government departments and policy, has resulted in shortening the previous ‘arm’s length’ approach to the arts. Consequently, managerialism alongside a metric culture which encourages the use of business plans, performance indicators, audits, and measurements are being progressively introduced (132).

Currently there is extensive research providing evidence on social outcomes acquired through cultural engagement, however, evidence supporting such benefits is heterogenous in methods, expanse, and precision (96). The literature indicates several shortcomings in research involving the arts: criticisms centre on the lack of rigorous measurement methods, failure to measure longer term impacts and over dependency on expected and assumed impact and benefits (24, 133). The latter continues as a common criticism directed at cultural organisations and governments whose premise for investing in culture can often be based on expected benefits and assumed impact rather than real outcomes (16, 24).

Canadian Alliance for Healthy Hearts and Minds (CAHHM) commissioned a report on evaluation practice from the Health Development Agency (HDA). The report (Angus, 2002) found that although most people working in community-based arts for health appreciated the need to evaluate their projects, they struggled to find appropriate methods for doing so. Evaluations were frequently inadequate, and many did not articulate clear aims (134). On a similar note, the UK Creative Health Inquiry (2017) (95) asserted that research into community-based arts is commonly based on small samples and not gold standard random controlled trial (RCT) groups routinely expected in medicine, therefore claims about the health benefits of art-based interventions can often be disregarded as anecdotal or lacking substance. Positioning the arts within a culture of RCTs signals an alarming failure to understand the nature of arts processes and engagement, and inappropriately elevates one research methodology above all others. The literature is replete with concerns about a culture of

scholarship in health which bases its claims on limited forms of analysis. Hodges and Garnett (2020) (135) found that the evidentiary basis of health claims can reveal quite different and complex perspectives when different methods drawn from the medical humanities are employed, such as close reading and scrutiny, ‘reading against the grain’, and fine-grained analysis. Small sample sizes are not an issue, and qualitative social science research can draw successfully on case study data to build, develop and test empirical and theoretical claims (136). Attempts to denounce arts-based research on methodological grounds are becoming jaded and have lost currency as the field of research methods celebrates a promising future for arts-based research and research in and about the arts (137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142).

As can be seen from the distribution of evaluation methods in the Creative Youth reports included in this review (see Fig. 6.2.), mixed methods were employed in all evaluations, with many employing several evaluation tools such as general feedback, surveys, interviews, and observation notes. (numbers below represent the use of multiple methods in each report). The majority relied on arts-based methods (e.g., respondents feeding back through collage, poetry, music), and on uncontextualized anecdotal participant quotation to evidence findings. Three projects used external researchers to evaluate outcomes (Helium Arts, Business2Arts, and National Youth Theatre). Literature around evaluation of engagement with the arts and creativity generally supports a mixed methods approach, to insist on solely quantitative methods “may not do justice to the character of arts-based interventions” (95 p34) as the difference they make to people’s lives may well go beyond economic or other quantifiable values.

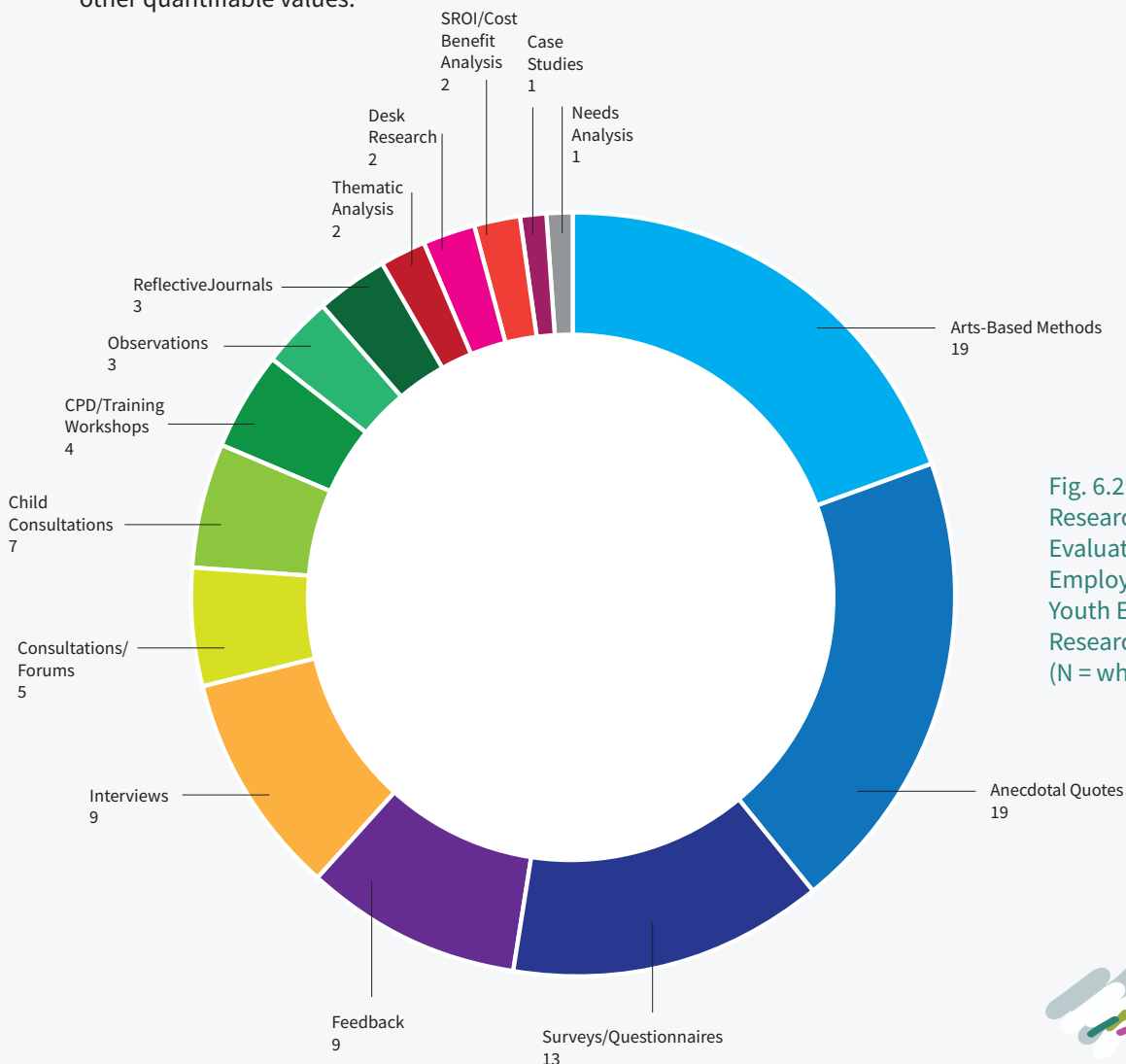


Fig. 6.2. Research and Evaluation Methods Employed in Creative Youth Evaluations and Research Reports (N = whole numbers)

As Creative Youth is part of an all-of-government programme and benefits from public expenditure, all fundees are bound by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in which they agree to report outputs, outcomes, findings, and recommendations. This analysis found a rich and appropriately diverse range of research and/or evaluation methods had been used, but issues around fidelity in presenting and applying those methods surfaced. In many cases, little or no detail about the evaluation tools used led to difficulties identifying the outcomes or effect of projects. Extensive analysis (at a granular level) was required to locate and extract findings in most cases, consequently reducing the report's impact and accessibility. One project gathered insightful baseline (pre-project) data, and four commissioned external evaluations. Respondent sample sizes were presented in just over 30% of cases and within a number of these, information provided was incomplete/limited. Very few presented a clear evaluation strategy or design, nor could one be gleaned from reports submitted. Distinction between outputs and outcomes as required under the terms of the SLA was not clear, nor was there a discernible connection between the objectives of the organisation and outcomes reported, or an explicit alignment to the objectives and policy of Creative Youth. These issues reduce the reliability and validity of data reported. A number of projects reviewed fell under the NCF, and while expected to report outcomes with respect to the principles of the Creative Youth Plan, the level of detail required may not have been clear, to the same extent as projects in receipt of core Creative Youth funding (see appendix 6).

6.3.1. Voice of the Child

A key point throughout the reports analysed was the insufficient presence of the voice of children and young people. This potentially limited the evidence base and prioritised other voices. Article 12, of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) asserts:

State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (5 p4)

The Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022) as part of an all-of-government programme and partly embedded in the DCEDIY, champions the voice of children and young people in both the development and delivery of programmes. Amongst the infrastructural resources promised by Ireland's first National Strategy on *Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* (2015) (7) was the development of a hub (now Hub na nÓg) to provide information, guidance and practical support to Government departments and agencies in delivering commitments outlined in the strategy's Action Plan. In Creative Youth, Hub na nÓg provides bespoke training for teachers, organisations and creative practitioners through Creative Schools, Creative Clusters and the LCYPs (data on two of these initiatives was not available at the time of writing but it's expected the voice of the child may feature in these evaluations). However, this systematic review identified a lack of child voice in the reports included for analysis. Only four projects report elevating the voice of the child as an outcome. Seven incorporated child voice in the evaluation, but not to a significant extent (e.g., one project records an 8% response rate from children, but the sample sizes involved are unclear). Evidence suggests that smaller scale projects under Creative Youth may need support in how to centralise the voice of the child in planning, implementation and post-project/evaluation stages.

The data demonstrate that other voices are also under-represented in the data, such as the voice of artists and creative associates.

6.3.2. Summary: Measurement of Cultural Engagement

Chapter Five highlighted that cultural engagement yields many social, physical and psychological benefits for participants, ranging from a greater sense of well-being and life satisfaction to the development of cognitive skills and increased self-confidence. While research asserts that participation in arts-based activities encourages social inclusion whilst fostering individual, collective and societal identity, measurement of cultural engagement remains hotly debated. On the one hand the cultural sector is seen to have adopted a strategy of what Clive Gray (143) describes as ‘policy attachment’, whereby the arts, notoriously underfunded, have ‘attached’ themselves to economic and social agendas to receive larger budgets and influence public policy (16, 24, 144). However, increased funding and support of government policy means increased accountability and evaluation, a shortening of the ‘arm’s length’ approach traditionally applied to the arts, and alignment with “the broader trends in policy, such as the rise of the ‘new public management’ and the ‘instrumentalisation’ of culture” (145 p125).

Analysis of Creative Youth evaluation methods echo many of the issues raised about a lack of rigour in arts-based research and evaluation. However, evaluation is not just about outcomes or performance, it can facilitate understanding of how and why an activity can be linked to certain outputs and outcomes, strengthening in this way the evidence-base around the benefits and impact of art and culture in society (50). In addition, both formative and summative evaluation can help improve artistic practice (50). It should also be noted that organisations funded by governments can vary greatly in size, capacity and ability to carry out evaluations and frequently “Lack of knowledge of impact and impact measurements and the lack of clear guidelines on how to measure and assess impact” (11 p98), means that some cultural organisations (especially smaller ones) or creative practitioners may struggle to analyse and manage the social impact generated by their activities. Furthermore, where impact is only measured by ‘squeezing’ the arts into quantifiable boxes runs the risk of missing important findings (24). A one size fits all approach is inappropriate for measuring creativity and arts interventions (95). To influence policy, creative practitioners and organisations should remember that evidence is only one of the ingredients in policy making and in fact may not be the most important (87). Many actors make and influence policy, and dominant ideas may prevail which will determine the direction of future research or if new ideas are heard at all (128). Adopting the one size fits all method also runs the risk of advocacy-based evaluation and research, resulting in a counterproductive reaction where policy makers actually doubt the validity of findings and overlook the real impact of creativity and the arts.

In conclusion, this systematic review confirms the need to put in place more robust and accessible evaluation mechanisms which facilitate analysis both during and after projects. Indeed, innovative frameworks which recognise the value of embedding research and evaluation design into the overall planning of projects from the original conception and design to implementation and evaluation might serve to better elicit the rich and multi-layered outcomes from creative and arts-based projects¹⁴. It is advisable that research and evaluation do not forego quality in the name of accountability. Discussion with all involved is paramount for successful ‘buy in’ and decisions around evaluation toolkits and research instruments should involve both bottom up and top-down participation. “Consultation with commissioners, funders, health partners, arts organisations, staff, project managers, artists, and service users will identify resources and support shared understanding and agreement about evaluation aims, priorities and methods” (50 p8).

14 See O’Sullivan et al. (2018). The wonder project: an early years arts education project with Traveller mothers and their children, *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, DOI: 10.1080/1350293X.2018.1522773

6.4. Sociodemographic Characteristics

As noted in Chapter Five, 67% of reports cited expanding access to creative activities for participants. Several organisations mentioned that free access meant offering creative activities to groups who would otherwise not have participated. In the Creative Communities Interim Report, 91% of directors agree that the Creative Ireland Programme provided opportunity to all citizens to become involved in exploring creativity in a very broad range of areas which would not be supported by other funding streams. The Creative Counties report (146) also affirms that the Creative Ireland Programme has furthered the scope of access to creative opportunities in regional communities. However, offering more creative activities does not necessarily mean initiatives are successful in expanding access to seldom heard communities. Following the educational principle of equality of opportunity, providing equal access does not guarantee equal participation, and ultimately, equal achievement.

Inclusion and expanding access to every child in Ireland form part of the five core principles of Creative Youth. However, data from this study, record mixed results. Fig. 6.3. presents findings on the demographic data captured in reports. However, 34% presented no demographic indicators, and only 25% were explicitly aimed at groups which can be considered outside the mainstream (e.g., seldom heard communities, in hospitals, direct provision).

Somewhat surprisingly, as aforementioned, inclusivity as an outcome was not specifically identified and only 40% included it in their recommendations suggesting that it was not seen as a significant concern. In light of its poor presence in the data reviewed, greater clarity on how projects understood ‘inclusivity’ would be helpful, as would more accurate reporting on participants and exactly who projects are working with. Embedding the Creative Youth inclusivity policy more explicitly into projects may enhance both project leaders’ understanding of inclusion in the context of Creative Youth, and also wider public awareness of what Creative Youth is and what it hopes to achieve in terms of reaching disadvantaged, marginalised and seldom heard communities. The evaluations provided little or no information on participants’ age groups or gender, and the absence of any reference to the LGBTQI+ community is notable.

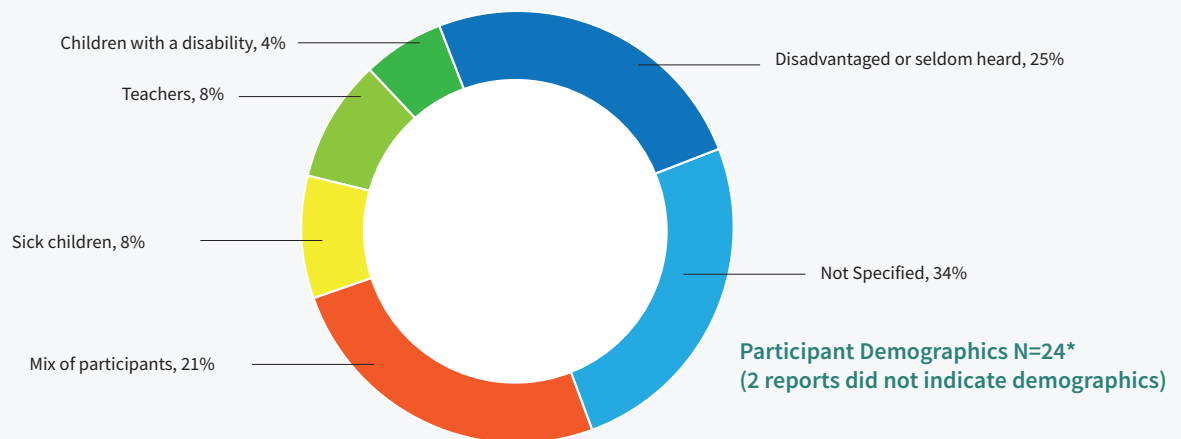


Fig. 6.3. Creative Youth Participant Demographics

Considering the correlation between socioeconomic status and health (95), and participation levels in the arts (as discussed in Chapter Five), the findings here are concerning. It appears that those children and young people who might most benefit from prohealth gains associated with participation in arts, cultural and creative activities, might not be participating to the same extent as other groups.

The economic success of the Celtic Tiger transformed Ireland from a relatively homogenous population characterised by high levels of emigration to a more heterogeneous population in which by 2021, 12.9% of the population were considered non-Irish nationals¹⁵.

Most of the available literature has found that ethnicity, minority status and poverty act as barriers to child participation in structured activities (148). In Ireland a similar pattern has been detected showing that children born outside Ireland, who are non-Roman Catholic or on social benefit (specifically unemployment benefit) have different participation rates in structured activities (147). Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data confirm that cultural engagement among nine and 13-year-olds varies by gender, family background and school experience (42). Smyth (2020) (43) notes a significant decline in arts involvement between 13 and 17 years, but particularly in boys, calling for added attention to this age group. In addition, young people who spent three or more hours playing computer games had consistently poorer outcomes at 17 (lower grades, lower self-esteem, greater socio-emotional difficulties, lower life satisfaction) and GUI data demonstrate that computer gaming is more prevalent amongst boys, particularly those from lower income families. Smyth's (43) report shows evidence of a marked social gradient in which "young people from professional/ managerial or graduate families were found to be more likely to read, make music and attend music/drama lessons and less likely to play computer games or watch TV/films (at least during the week)" (p67). The low incidence of projects (25%) explicitly targeting groups outside the mainstream in this review supports Smyth's (42, 43) earlier findings and raises concern about the sustainability of an all-of-Government creativity programme failing to tackle barriers to inclusion, equality and diversity for all children and young people.

6.5. Achieving Sustainability

A number of organisational factors should be taken into account when considering sustainability and development of arts-based programmes (106). This is particularly important for creative practitioners and organisations operating in the non-formal sector as they inhabit a well-documented unstable and fluctuating space outside of formal education. Estabrooks et al. (2011) (108) observed in their study on programme sustainability in community and healthcare settings in the US, that sustainability was much more likely to occur when a financial plan had been established, when the programme was championed by key stakeholders and when engaged partnerships were in place. Evaluation is also linked to sustainability in that mobilising resources required to sustain a programme beyond its initial grant, means it is not enough that the programme attains its objectives. The programme must be able to document its success and disseminate the evidence among stakeholders (149, 150, 151). Some studies confirm that advertisement of a programme's effectiveness not only to its stakeholders but also to the general public serves as a meaningful predictor of its sustainability (152, 153) in that it enhances and leverages community support (106).

This type of capacity building can take time however, and arts organisations worldwide observe that demonstrating cost effectiveness is increasingly prevalent in evaluations required for funding (154). They also comment on the difficulties involved in demonstrating longer term impact such as changes to health or well-being (154). Eligibility criteria employed by independent panels of experts typically include consideration of the medium- to long-term sustainability of proposals in terms of development/scalability, inclusivity, or future partnerships. Chapter Five reported that a number of Creative Youth projects appeared to lack evidence of several of these support factors, implying sustainability may become a problem for the future delivery of these initiatives.

15 Population and Migration Estimates, April 2021, Central Statistics Office
(<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2021pressreleases/pressstatementpopulationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/>).

6.5.1. Organisation Sustainability in Creative Youth Initiatives

52% of Creative Youth reports recommended increasing, maintaining, or seeking additional sources of funding as important to sustaining their work. For example, Creative Clusters (2021) (30) recommended that the DE provide continued funding, and the Creative Communities Interim Report (2019) (103) similarly recommended continuity and clarity around future funding. International literature from the US, Israel and UK (106, 108) echo related funding concerns.

There is no evidence that Creative Youth is actively encouraging sustainability, especially in smaller organisations. Creative Youth could be in danger of being perceived as a ‘funding pot’ only, potentially leading to a dependency model, and curtailing further growth, innovation and development in the medium- to longer term. Organisations need guidance and support in embedding sustainability into projects. The Creative Ireland Programme could play a leadership role here. Sustainability is not just about funding; sustainability is best understood perhaps as an ecosystem, involving sustainability at an organisational, activity, and individual level. Other fundamental elements which support sustainability are identified as efficient leadership, talented and dedicated staff, ability to demonstrate impact, deep knowledge of community, and aligning priorities with those of the funder (108).

6.6. Range of Creative Activities

As previously stated, 82% of Creative Youth projects reported enabling creativity and increasing creative skills as an important outcome, and the range of activities through which this was achieved is presented in Fig. 6.4. 31% of projects were multidisciplinary, such as poetry, printing, playmaking, and arts and crafts. 21% involved music or singing, 9% Theatre, 9% storytelling and 9% Design and Architecture. Storybooks and reading constituted 4% of projects as did engagement with cultural institutions (e.g., the intercultural programme at the Chester Beatty). Although children and young people were offered rich and diverse range of creative events, this analysis detected a dearth of activity in the areas of dance, reading, and technology. Previous research in Ireland suggests that participation in structured cultural activities impacted positively on children’s literacy and maths skills (147), with Smyth (43) reporting that reading for pleasure improved vocabulary levels and academic performance over time, and participation in music or drama was also associated with higher Junior Certificate grades. Supporting additional provision in promoting storybooks and creative activities in reading for example, may yield beneficial results for children and young people. Appg (2017) (95) suggests that reading aloud to children stimulates progress in linguistic abilities, narrowing the attainment gap that persists across the social gradient.

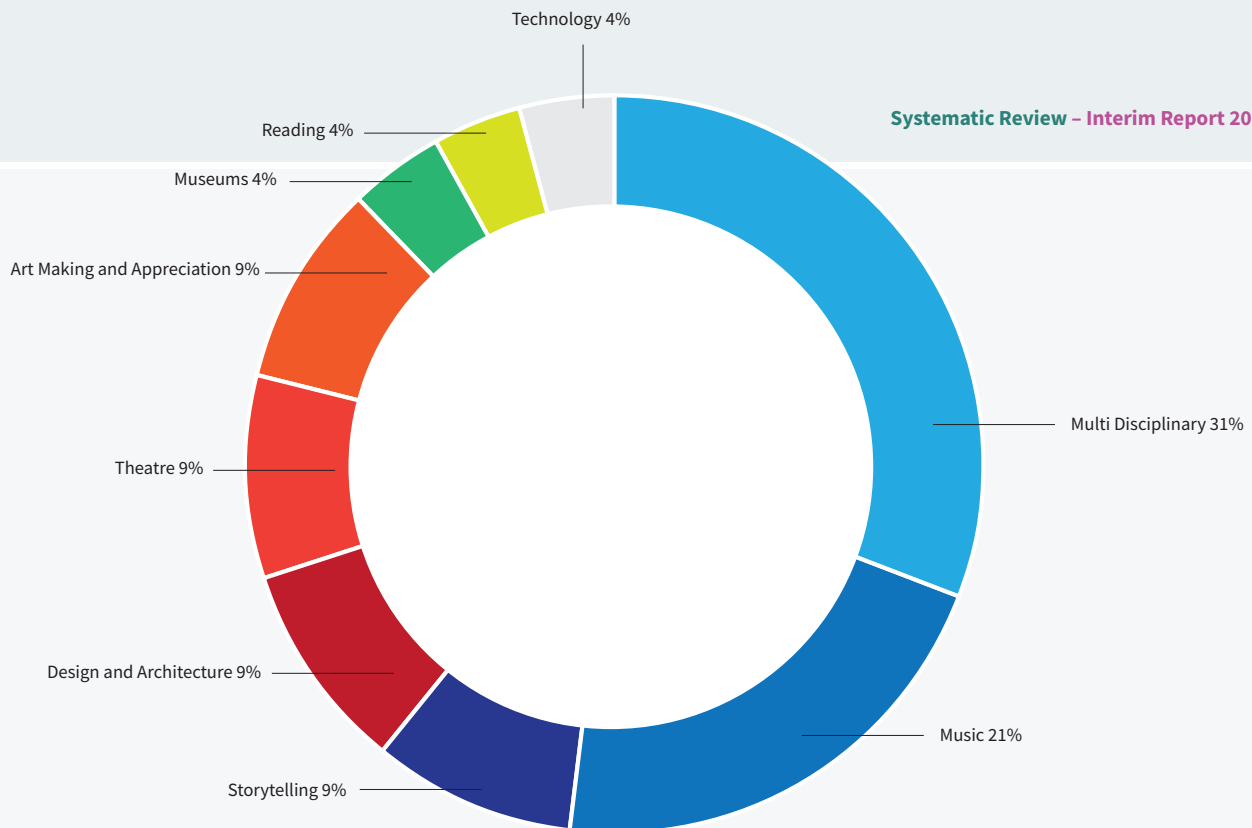


Fig. 6.4. Distribution of Creative Youth Activities

*N = 25 (one report was a vision for the future and did not meet inclusion criteria for this category)

Fig. 6.4. highlights that activities appear weighted towards the arts and cultural sectors more than other spheres of creative practice, which is perhaps less surprising when examined in the context of Irish history and the Government's commitment to embed artistic processes in education through the Arts in Education Charter (2013) and Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022). Explicitly engaging potential fundees, participants and wider society around concepts of creativity and their relationship to arts and culture could prove beneficial. Recognising and embedding differences between artistic and creative ability may increase output and project/programme provision in the creative domain, and decrease tensions associated with conflating or perceiving creativity as synonymous with the arts (see Chapter Three).

The analysis also implies a lack of engagement with cultural institutions which may represent a missed opportunity to capitalise on national cultural resources and build pioneering partnerships. This trend was similarly reflected in Cruinniú na nÓg which from 2018 to 2021 offered only 37 heritage related projects and 12 activities promoting the Irish language. There is a considerable amount of work being done in cultural organisations nationally so understanding why they have not been captured within the Creative Youth frame is important. In a dataset of 26 projects, only one took place in a museum, one involved a museum visit, and one included visiting an art gallery.

Similarly, creative engagement with technology was under represented in the data, with only one initiative explicitly engaging with technology. A possible lack of understanding around use and application of creativity in technology is being addressed by the Creative Ireland Programme working in partnership with Kinia. Based on the findings of a digital needs analysis conducted by Kinia (2021)¹⁶, a comprehensive programme supporting the delivery of creative technology projects in out-of-school settings is being currently being rolled out in partnership with Tusla, Children and Young People Services Committees (CYPSCs) and the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). Kinia's apparent strategy of adopting a triangulated approach (i.e., conducting a needs analysis, building appropriate partnerships, and national implementation) with adequate resources is likely to lead to significant improvements in the sector.

16 See appendix 3 for link to the Needs Analysis Report.

6.6.2. Gap in Dance Initiatives

We were surprised to find that none of the Creative Youth initiatives included in this review explicitly engaged with dance. Although Cruinniú na nÓg’s programme has offered a number of dance workshops (102 out of a total of 2,119 activities/events offered between 2018-2021), the lack of dance projects echoes a wider concern surrounding provision of dance training in Ireland. Roche (2013) (53) in the Arts Council Dance and Education Report, asserts that over the years, several positive initiatives supported training for students outside the country, but there has yet to be a focused strategy establishing a professional training programme in Ireland with the institutional support required to compete at an international level. This gap in educational provision is anomalous among developed countries and arguably has a negative impact on the development of the art form in Ireland (53). A critical factor cited is the importance of ‘advocacy’ and ‘champions’ in securing and sustaining funding (106), which in Ireland’s case has resulted in an underdeveloped national infrastructure, patronage and support for dance (53). In the UK’s Let’s Create Strategy (2020-2030) the Arts Council is supporting dance through the national sector support organization One Dance UK. One Dance UK “advocates for the value and place of dance in education due to its unique position as a curriculum activity that combines creativity with physicality” (155 p4). They highlight the importance of dance in whole school improvement, mental and emotional well-being, improving physical health and enriching cultural experience. Similarly recognising its contribution in the lives of its citizens, Creative New Zealand (78) conducted a review in 2014 and consequently increased the value of dance fellowships (to upscale research and innovation in the sector), improve funding and improve post tertiary professional development opportunities.

In an increasingly sedentary world, dance provides a unique opportunity in the cultural ecosystem to combine arts practice, creativity and physical activity. Championing this through giving dance greater visibility in the high-profile Creative Ireland Programme and Creative Youth Plan may help to redress the significant gap found in this study.

6.7. CPD and Training

Just over half (52%) of reports recommended continued training and/or teacher CPD. Research suggests the quality of staff and good leadership are critical to programme sustainability (108). A lack of adequately trained personnel is presented as a major barrier to the sustainability of community programmes. Providing adequate staff training for effective programme actions’ delivery, supports programme longevity (106). According to Johnson, Hays, Center, & Daley (2004) (156), staff training or expertise building in a range of areas, including strategic planning skills, knowledge of needs assessment, logic model construction, leadership skills and fundraising expertise, are fundamental to programme sustainability. As previously noted, the Creative Youth Plan (3, 4) considers the development of a critical mass of creative practitioners and teachers as central to implementation and mainstreaming.

Coordinator competence is also considered important and was highlighted in reports from numerous Creative Youth programmes such as Creative Clusters, Narrative 4, Helium and Kinia. Programmes which include staff preparation and training, especially training in creative and flexible problem solving, achieved greater sustainability than programmes that did not (151).

Large scale teacher training programmes such as Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP) and the Arts in Junior Cycle are not represented in our data, therefore the 52% of initiatives who valued and recommended further training requires additional analysis. Soon to be released reports on TAP, Arts in Junior Cycle and Creative Schools is likely to shed light on teacher CPD in creative, cross-curricular programmes and their effect not only on schools and students but teachers, artists and creative associates as well.

6.8. Broadening Definitions and Policy Alignment

The Creative Ireland Programme wishes to mainstream creativity by highlighting the cross-curricular and interdisciplinary reach of the arts both within and beyond the traditional arts sphere. Creativity is also employed as a strategy contributing to individual and community well-being, social cohesion and economic development. As discussed in Chapter Three, we have identified that ‘broadening’ and possible fusing of the arts into the more generic concept of creativity is an accepted focus of cultural policy worldwide. “Through the Creative Ireland Programme, we are helping schools to embrace creativity as an activity in itself and as supporting the holistic development of future generations” (93 p22).

An important component of the eligibility criteria when allocating funding within Creative Youth is whether candidates’ proposals meet and support the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme. This was either unclear or not articulated in the projects reviewed. Only two projects communicated an understanding of creativity, albeit in quite broad terms. The others were silent in this regard. It may well be that understanding was implicit (and qualitative research would help determine this). However, given the importance of aligning a fundee’s project aims to Creative Youth’s vision and stated objectives in order to coherently advance and progress this ambitious programme, it may be beneficial for Creative Youth to further clarify and elucidate what it means by creativity and creative practices in the Creative Ireland Programme and across government policies. Expounding its understanding of the relationship between arts and creativity and their respective/collective role in health and well-being, social cohesion, economic development, cultural infrastructure, the creative industries, climate action and digital technologies is likely to lead to greater alignment with the Creative Youth Plan; largely missing currently in submitted reports.

6.9. Cruinniú na nÓg

Run in partnership with Local Authorities Cruinniú na nÓg is the National Day of Creativity for children and young people, and a Creative Youth flagship initiative. Commencing on 23rd June 2018 with over 500 events around the country, the initiative aimed to encourage as many children and young people as possible to try new activities in their own community and give them a flavour of the types of creative activities they could get involved in locally (157).

As a one-day event, the range of experiences on offer to meet demand suggests that Cruinniú is a successful initiative. It serves as an important vehicle for public engagement, raising awareness of creativity and Creative Youth, and has increased access to and participation in creative activities within an enormous geographical spread around the country. Cruinniú grew from offering 500 free events/activities in 2018 to over 780 in 2019 across all local authorities and counties. The re-imagining of Cruinniú na nÓg as an online event during the pandemic saw the Creative Ireland Programme team take on a producing role offering some 500 events online in each of 2020 and 2021, with new

collaborations and partnerships developed with a range of national bodies to place young people at the centre of the event as co-creators. Since its inception, children and young people have been consulted annually on what activities they would like included in their local Cruinniú. This consultation has been conducted through surveys developed by children and young people. Surveys are issued to each Local Authority for dissemination to children and young people in libraries and other spaces such as schools and youth clubs. Based on limited available data, there is tentative evidence that the views of children and young people inform the content of the Cruinniú programme in many Local Authority areas.

From 2018 to 2021 the festival has offered 2,119 projects spanning 20 genres, with strong representation from Visual Arts (347 projects), Music (343 projects), STEM (185 projects), and a noted presence from Dance (4%) representing 102 projects. 74 projects took place in public libraries, a positive indicator of engagement with national resources. However, a lack of engagement with cultural institutions was again detected. Only 37 projects over three years were heritage related, with 13 events taking place in museums (arguably Covid 19 may be implicated here), and 12 events involving the Irish language from 2018 to 2021. This may suggest failure to capitalise on an opportunity to promote our national heritage and stimulate interest in the use and appreciation of the Irish language amongst children and young people. Or it may represent a low level of applications from these sectors to host an event. It is noted that there was a well-funded partnership with TG4 in 2021 to promote the Irish language and whilst there may not have been a huge number of activities in the language area, the partnership involved national usage of Irish across all media campaigns.

31 local authorities have been the main delivery partners for Cruinniú, concentrating on the development and delivery of activities in their local area, traditionally presented as “in-person” events using local authority facilities. The Creative Ireland Programme supports Cruinniú with an investment of circa. €1m annually. This one-day event has potential to feed into larger Creative Youth projects in a purposeful way, providing increased public awareness of Creative Ireland and Creative Youth. It also provides a unique opportunity to share Creative Youth policy with potential project architects, encouraging and supporting policy alignment through the open call statements distributed by the LAs.



CHAPTER SEVEN
IMPLICATIONS FOR
POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND PRACTICE

7.1. Recommendations from the Systematic Review

This report offers a first look at a small sample of Creative Youth funded projects, initiatives and activities with children and young people in Ireland, covering participation from 2018 to 2022 (we note that the majority of reports included in this review were smaller NCF funded initiatives and that evaluations of the larger Creative Youth projects will be published later this year). 26 reports met the inclusion criteria and allowed us to explore a broad selection of arts-based and creative activities in the context of research and evaluation, the voice of the child, social demographics, the impact of creative activity on health and well-being, sustainability, inclusivity, expanding the scope of creative activities, increasing CPD and policy alignment. Drawing from the learning extracted from the first phase of Creative Youth, this chapter makes a number of recommendations related to the main outcomes and policy implications from findings, identifying future directions for development of Creative Youth research, policy and practice.

7.2. Assessment, Evaluation and Research

This report acknowledges the ongoing debate around differences between research and evaluation (158), and indeed recognises that teachers, teacher artists and creative practitioners may also engage in assessment of participants' arts and creative processes and outputs. They are related concepts but operate at different levels. In broad terms assessment relates to measurement and processes to improve the quality of participants' learning and experiences. Operating at the micro level, assessment is one of the elements feeding into evaluation.

Evaluation reflects the entire process of collection of evidence and its interpretation, leading to a judgement about the value or merit of a creative educational endeavour or strategy, which goes far beyond indicating whether something has succeeded in reaching its goals, but reflects and makes judgements on the goals themselves. The process of evaluation is undertaken with 'a view to action' (leading to better policies and practices). Whereas evaluation is essentially a tool to improve an existing programme for a target population, research is generally intended to explore a theory or hypothesis and/or address primary questions around a well-defined topic.

Based on the evidence from this review, and accounting for differences in capacities and scales of Creative Youth initiatives, this report recommends:

- Research and evaluation be scaled up in the second five-year Creative Youth Plan, adopting flexible and varied but appropriate, robust and valid approaches to research and evaluation to substantiate/underpin claims made. This will support transparency, making findings more accessible to a wider audience. Research design could include a mixed methods approach, pre- and post- quasi experimental design involving baseline data, reflective practitioner action research, arts-based methods using visual sociological and embodied approaches, etc.
- Initial consultation with stakeholders (including children and young people), creative practitioners, experts and the Creative Ireland team on how best to incorporate robust and appropriate evaluation mechanisms into Creative Youth projects (achieving maximum buy-in is key).
- Engagement with all stakeholders to discuss and explore 'the evaluation cycle' and a wide range of methods (e.g., through workshops/seminars in which organisations and creative practitioners discuss and plan how best to build evaluation into their project mentored by experts in the field). Evaluation needs to be universally accessible, and easily digestible in order to draw out conclusions.

- Development of a comprehensive evaluation toolkit which targets different types of outcomes, understands the complexity of evaluation in creativity, culture and the arts, and allows for diversity in methods. Examples include:
 - Arts Council England – Advocacy Tool Kit website
 - Arts Access Australia – Advocacy Tool Kit website
 - Creative New Zealand (2019-2029) community evaluation toolkit
<https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/community-arts-toolkit>
 - Arts Council England - The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society
 - The Warwick Commission on the future of cultural value – research and policy documents
 - Arts and Health Australia – Advocacy website
 - IFFACA Good Practice Guide on Arts Advocacy (January 2014)
 - Americans for the Arts – Advocacy website
- Research and evaluation bands (as employed by Arts Council England), could be introduced to reduce the administrative burden on organisations receiving lower levels of public investment, while making clear what is expected from those receiving the highest levels of public investment.
- Recognising the importance of risk and innovation in creativity across all sectors of society from the arts to climate action, creative technologies to medical advances, novel projects which do not necessarily align with mainstream policy but explore original and unique avenues of enquiry and creative endeavour should be nurtured, funded and appropriately evaluated.
- Adopting a closed loop research and evaluation framework such as the DIEAC (Design, Implement, Evaluate Arts in Context) and DIEACC models (Design, Implement, Evaluate Arts in Community Context)¹⁷, which position planning for research and evaluation at the outset of a project rather than at completion stage.
- Embedding research and evaluation explicitly into funding agreements identifying clear objectives, goals and strategies.
- Developing and incorporating an accessible and age-appropriate ethics policy into the structure of Creative Youth to guide and inform evaluation and research issues such as participant permission, recording of data, GDPR, etc.
- Commissioning a systematic macro-evaluation of the Creative Ireland Programme and Creative Youth Plan for the duration of the proposed second phase. The research could be developed into a longitudinal 5/10/20 year study.

7.3. Voice of the Child

The National Participation Strategy is underpinned by a rights-based model of participation developed by Professor Laura Lundy. In collaboration with Professor Lundy, a revised version of the model was developed for *The National Implementation Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making*¹⁸. It provides decision-makers with guidance on the steps to take in order to give children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making. Against the findings in this study where child voice was noticeably absent in most reports, we recommend:

- Required participation in targeted and certified CPD/training on child voice for applicants and/or successful fundees.
- Potential fundees are required to demonstrate in their applications how child and young person voice is built into project design at all stages (planning, implementation and evaluation).
- Child and young person voice is embedded into funding agreements identifying clear objectives and goals to be achieved, supported by practical strategies identifying how child voice will be rooted in the funded project.

17 Developed by Carmel O’Sullivan and Sarah Tuck, the DIEAC model is proposed on the basis of providing an adaptive and flexible tool to be used by creative practitioners, teachers, funders, communities (and others) in the planning, implementation, evaluation and resourcing of collaborative arts in social, educational and community contexts. See Hayes et al., 2017.

18 <https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>

- Research and evaluation mechanisms need to measure the effective involvement of children and young people in decision-making. Stakeholders could follow guidance from the National Strategy for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making (2015) (7), using Lundy’s voice model checklist for participation (see appendix 5) to measure the involvement of children and young people in all projects and programmes.

7.4. Capturing Sociodemographic Characteristics

This review found evidence that consultation and/or partnership with Local Authorities and community services in each county could enhance Creative Youth’s targeting of disadvantaged, marginalised and seldom heard groups. Recording of appropriate sociodemographic data and characteristics will facilitate meaningful insight into the effect/impact of individual projects in achieving this goal, and support wider evaluation of data when looking across projects on a regional/national basis. This report recommends:

- the need to consult with children and young people to discover why certain cohorts of children do not engage in creative, cultural and artistic activity (42, 43, 52, 148) and what measures can be put in place to encourage engagement.
- Establishing ambitious targets for Local Authorities and other partner organisations/individual projects to redress gaps in provision of access/participation in creative activities for marginalised and underrepresented groups identified in this study, such as very young children, adolescent boys and those experiencing social and economic disadvantage.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the extent to which seldom heard voices and those in marginalised and disadvantaged communities have participated in Creative Youth activities and projects.
- Cross pollination of data (e.g., GUI and ESRI) could contribute to understanding not only the needs of disadvantaged communities but cultural participation across youth in general (with a particular focus on gender and age). Overly broad recommendations in policy implementation should be avoided where possible, and more purposeful targeting executed.
- Develop and embed an age-appropriate EDI policy into the core structure of Creative Youth.
- LGBTQI+ were not represented in the data analysed, and this needs to be addressed through targeted provisioning. Other groups such as the early childhood sector and those with disabilities who were significantly underrepresented in the data should be prioritised in future provisioning.
- Where appropriate to do so, sociodemographic data (basic and/or more in-depth depending on the project) should be included in all evaluations and reports.

7.5. Building Individual/Organisational Sustainability Beyond the Lifetime of Creative Youth/Creative Ireland

To support and expand creative activities in non-formal and formal settings as set out in the Creative Youth Plan (2017-2022), research into different facets of funding and factors required to support individual/organisational sustainability needs to be undertaken in order to create necessary structures and resources to embed and sustain creative practices in both *people* and *activities* post-funding. Therefore, this study recommends:

- Promoting and facilitating formal conversations and actions enabling sustainability early in the funding process. Targeted and certified CPD training could be developed to induct fundees into the principles and practices underpinning sustainability, such as developing a strong programme theory with clear objectives, demonstrable effectiveness, flexibility, managing human and financial resources, and developing robust programme evaluation.
- Identifying effective ways to sustain and develop the creative activity, and embed the effect/impact on children and young people, teachers, artists, creative practitioners and others, both during and post-project, to build long term sustainable creative capacity in Irish society.
- Creating a dedicated ‘one-stop’ resources hub for (potential)/fundees on the Creative Youth website to house key practical resources such a short practical guide highlighting factors implicated in sustainability, and other resources recommended above (e.g., age-appropriate ethics and EDI policies).
- Ongoing engagement about funding, resources, and sustainability at the commencement of and throughout each project with the Creative Youth team, to ensure those funded have the best chance of delivering their programmes and continuing beyond the life cycle of funding if they so choose.
- The Creative Ireland Programme should ensure that information on available funding, including evaluation requirements, are clear and easily accessible. Funded organisations/individuals should be regularly informed about additional funding streams and potential partnerships/collaboration, and how best to advocate for their programme.
- Practical strategies to support sustainability are included in the application and funding processes (where relevant), and as part of both interim and final project evaluation.
- Previously successful organisations/individuals be invited to act as mentors for new creative practitioners. Best practice case studies could be included in the resources hub (proposed above).
- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment could offer support for business development through training workshops for creative practitioners and organisations. Sharing of lessons from international best practice should be encouraged, such as Northern Ireland’s ‘Ambition for the Arts’ (2013-2018) (60) which aims to build a sustainable sector through:
 - Providing regular cross-sectoral networking and collaboration events to take advantage of new opportunities presented by the growth of creative industries;
 - Delivering business development support and skills base; through training, coaching and workshops;
 - Building capacity in key areas such as audience engagement and utilising digital platforms and web-based technologies as a driver for growth (p17).

7.6. Expanding Scope and Access to Creative Activities

The report highlighted while that cultural and creative engagement yields many personal, social, psychological and cognitive benefits to children and young people, there was insufficient evidence to support that access and participation were evenly distributed throughout the population. Equality, diversity and inclusion did not feature prominently (or at all) in most reports, and gaps in scope of provision, such as in dance, reading, Irish and other languages, and creative technology were identified. The report therefore recommends:

- Consultation with dance communities and relevant stakeholders, including the DE and HEIs, particularly those who have expertise and a strong tradition in dance, in order to determine how the Creative Ireland Programme/Creative Youth can support the development of a transparent and robust road map for professional dance training.
- Expanding teacher CPD and other specialised training, with particular focus on the digital sector where a knowledge/skills gap appears to exist in relation to its potential to develop creativity.
- Engagement with cultural organisations and resources including libraries, galleries and heritage buildings who were under-represented in the data, to understand what might be going on; exploring ways to increase alignment between their work and Creative Youth.
- Youth setting providers and teachers (at all levels) require an awareness of the opportunities that exist in using creative technology to support educational outcomes. Continued support and engagement with technology partners is recommended.
- Development of creative partnerships with technology companies to support internships, webinars, training and build public awareness of the role that creativity plays in the technology sector (e.g., using case studies, a Creative Tech Fest, school visits, workshops).

7.7. Broadening the Definition of Creativity and Policy Alignment

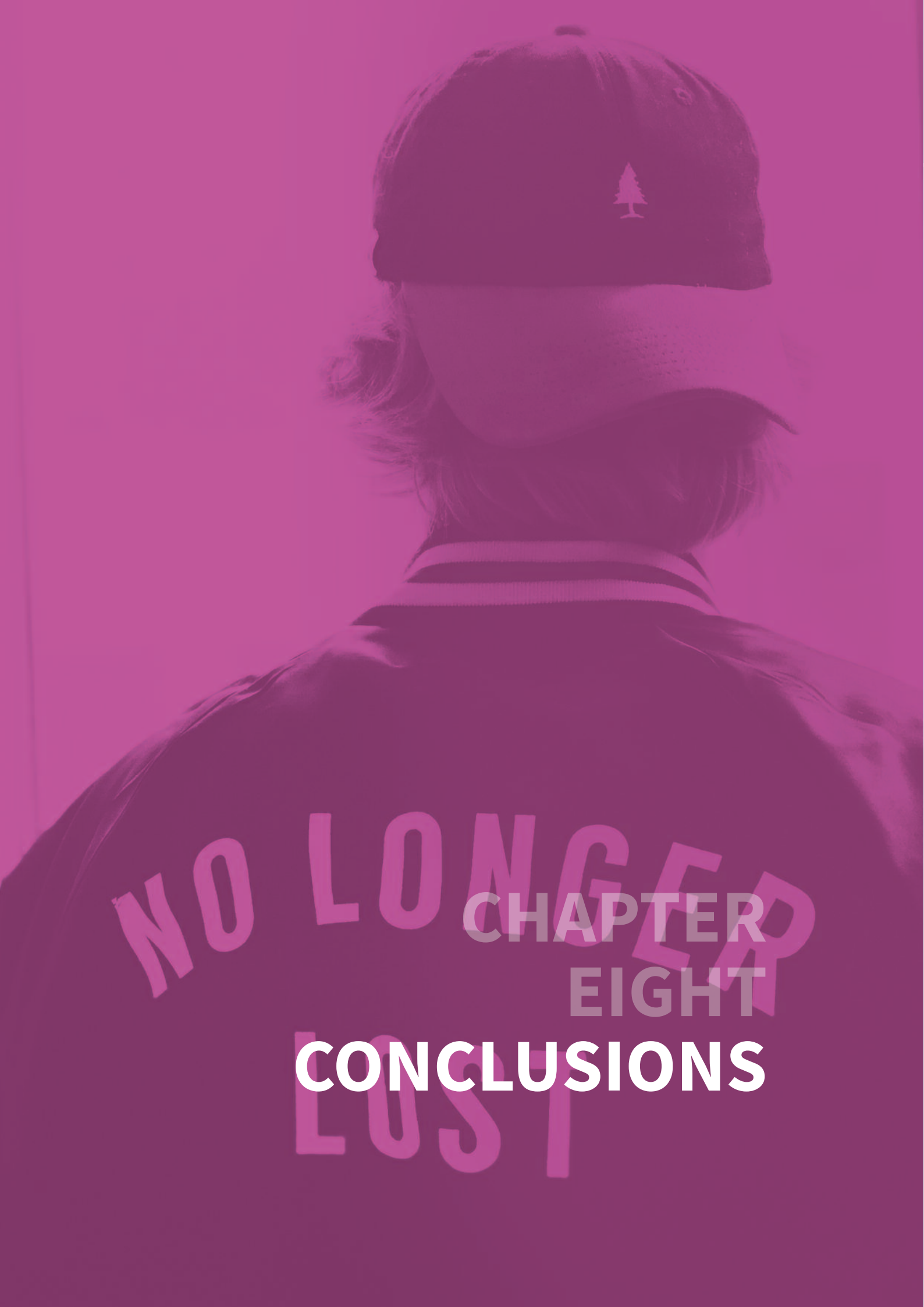
As findings demonstrate that only two reports communicated an understanding of creativity in the broader sense, and most projects were explicitly located in the domain of the arts, and within formal/informal educational contexts, the following recommendations are made.

- Clarify/further expound the interdisciplinary understanding and construction of creativity in the Creative Ireland Programme/Creative Youth Plan, and its aesthetic, artistic, creative and strategic relevance across government departments and policy in areas such as health and well-being, social cohesion, economic development, cultural infrastructure, the creative industries, climate action and digital technologies in the proposed second 5-year Plan.
- Funded projects should maintain contact with the Creative Youth office team during project delivery to support and ensure policy alignment.
- Targeting and engagement with broader sectors of society in areas such as agriculture and fishing, industry, housing, finance, retail and hospitality, to encourage pilot initiatives involving children and young people in diversely embedding the principles of Creative Youth in sectors beyond the traditional remit of arts education and arts-in-education.
- Fundees should be encouraged to build public awareness of Creative Youth and the Creative Ireland Programme into their projects/activities through creative means and outputs, including use of more conventional approaches such as social media messaging, banners, acknowledgments, publicity.

7.8. Cruinniú na nÓg

As an important vehicle for public engagement, raising awareness of creativity and Creative Youth, this study found that Cruinniú na nÓg has increased access to and participation in creative activities throughout the country. Therefore, the report recommends:

- Continuing to fund and develop Cruinniú na nÓg throughout Ireland.
- Continuing to support a wide diversity of projects, representing all forms of creative activity and targeting underrepresented groups.
- Providing detailed information to fundees around the policy and objectives of Creative Youth.
- Participation by successful applicants in compulsory workshops/seminars on evaluation, and collaboration with Local Authorities to assist in contributing to the ‘bigger picture’ evaluation of Cruinniú na nÓg events annually.
- Investment in research exploring the outcomes of Cruinniú na nÓg during the last five years and establishing an evaluation plan for the second five-year strategy.
- Evaluation of the extent to which short bursts of creative activity as typically experienced during Cruinniú na nÓg events impact participants in comparison to more sustained and longer-term Creative Youth projects.



CHAPTER
EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Overarching Policy Context

This chapter summarises the main outcomes and policy implications suggested in this report, and identifies future directions for research. As aforementioned, the overarching objective of Creative Youth is to give every child practical access to tuition, experience and participation in art, music, drama and coding by 2022. The key objectives of Creative Youth as expressed in The Creative Youth Plan – Policy Context and Briefing, July 2021, (4) are to:

1. **Expand young people’s access to creative initiatives and activities;**
2. **Focus on the inclusion of every child;**
3. **Support positive and sustainable outcomes for children and young people through creative engagement across formal and non-formal settings (p3).**

In alignment with the United Nations (5, 6) and the *National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making* (2015) (7), Creative Youth identifies the **voice of the child** and young people as central to this programme. The other four core principles are **collaboration**, a **commitment to take risks** and try new things; inclusivity meaning the programme must reach as many children as possible (especially those in disadvantaged areas); and lastly, a **robust monitoring mechanism** which will capture data and ensure delivery of best practice and value for money (58).

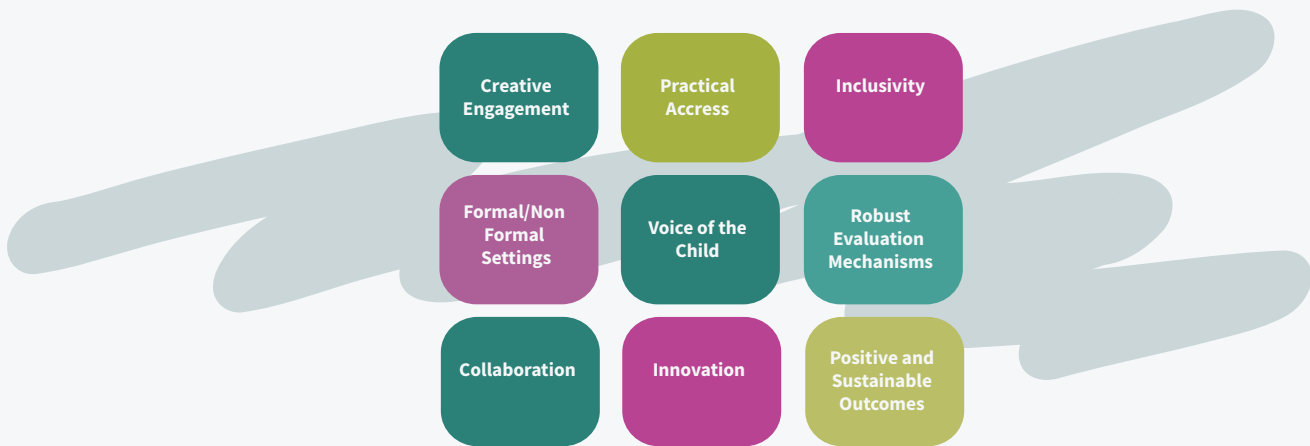


Fig. 8.1. Summary of Key Objectives and Core Principles of Creative Youth (5, 58)

8.2. Evaluating Progress of Creative Youth Objectives

From evidence provided in this systematic review we conclude that the Creative Ireland Programme is a breakthrough initiative by definition, an ambitious all-of-government creativity and well-being programme which entered uncharted waters and needed time to take root in Irish society. Creative Youth has been successful in many aspects of achieving its goals. This report recognises that as Phase One comes to an end it is timely to take stock of what occurred during the first five years and explore how it might be improved and expanded in the proposed second phase.

1. Expand young people’s access to creative initiatives and activities.

Regarding the first objective, available data support that Creative Youth initiatives increased and enabled creative skills in young people and children. Data suggest that a strong contributory factor was connecting creative practitioners and associates directly to schools and communities, capitalising on the skills already available on a national level: in other words, mobilising community assets. This cooperative ethos was also represented in productive cross and inter-sectoral collaboration, maximising resources through people, public spaces and/or established organisations, and was rated highly in reports. As regards innovation and risk, the wide range of creative activities offered is testament to this principle, however the lack of dance, technology and reading activities requires attention. Furthermore, engagement with cultural institutions and heritage related activities is recommended, as is an increase in activities related to the Irish language.

A significant caveat has to be drawn however in relation to the achievement of the first objective. Owing to data collection/reporting issues in most projects reviewed, it is not possible to mine the data adequately to determine ‘who’ was accessing ‘what’ creative initiative, when and for how long, and what their prior baseline levels of engagement were. This may assist in determining whether participants were routinely accessing creative and arts-based initiatives, or if access had been significantly enhanced through Creative Youth. In addition, as discussed earlier, accessing creative activities does not necessarily equate to meaningful participation and achievement. More robust research and reporting mechanisms involving both quantitative and qualitative data could contribute to understanding more about the objective of providing ‘expanded access’.

As previously mentioned, in terms of the core principle around robust evaluation measures, difficulties identified in this report where extensive analysis of results (at a granular level) was required in order to locate and extract findings, reduces the impact of individual reports and their accessibility to a wider audience. More robust, transparent and generic evaluation mechanisms are required to answer the questions which need to be asked.

2. Focus on the inclusion of every child.

With respect to inclusivity, the evidence suggests that Creative Youth has extended access to creative activities across the country and continues to support initiatives explicitly aimed at marginalised and disadvantaged groups. A large percentage of Creative Youth projects flagged increased access to creative activities as an outcome, with a much smaller number reaching seldom heard cohorts such as children in hospitals, direct provision, members of the traveller community, Irish language speakers, and young people with disabilities. While less than half of reports (42%) note inclusivity as a recommendation, none reported it as an outcome. This suggests that clarity is needed around how these projects understand inclusivity. The Creative Ireland Programme should explicitly embed EDI into funding calls. This study referenced other research which highlights significant gains accruing

from engagement in creativity, the arts and cultural activities for disadvantaged and marginalised groups, but such benefits did not appear to be available to all children in this study. Although the reported outcomes highlight expanded access there are issues with the scope and depth of the evidence base. Through a ‘close reading approach’, the evidence suggests that this objective has been partially achieved, but not with respect to seldom heard cohorts of children and young people. The lack of child voice may have exacerbated challenges around how to engage and include all children and young people.

3. Support positive and sustainable outcomes for children and young people through creative engagement across formal and non-formal settings.

Regarding the third objective, there is evidence of positive outcomes for children and young people as a result of participating in creative engagement in both formal and non-formal settings. It is difficult to determine if outcomes have been sustained, as the data preclude this assessment. As previously mentioned, longitudinal studies which cross pollinate data could assist in evaluating to what extent the outcomes of Creative Youth have permeated the fabric of Irish society. If the proposed second five-year Creative Youth Plan align programme objectives with an appropriate research design from the outset, it could facilitate addressing such questions. Achieving sustainability (particularly in relation to non-formal settings) is an issue which needs to be tackled directly. Organisations/individuals require technical guidance and support to embed sustainability into projects, not least of which is to build capacity in people and encourage further creative growth/development. This may serve to prevent limiting notions of Creative Youth as ‘a funding pot’, inadvertently leading to a dependency culture, which by default could mitigate against creativity. Encouraging greater alignment between fundees’ and Creative Youth objectives may serve to support more sustainable practices in the future.

8.3. Conclusion

One of the key goals as stated in The Future of Creative Ireland (2022) (2) is: “Influence Policy to engage with decision makers and embed creativity in key policy areas” (p9). Erisman et al. (2021) (159) identify several key strategies in this regard, including direct engagement and seeking of evidence from researchers, and participatory and transdisciplinary research approaches through robust research partnerships. Through this systematic review, and the completed and ongoing research funded by Creative Youth, effective mechanisms are being built and supported to achieve this goal. Our objective as researchers has been not only to summarise the trends, outcomes and challenges faced during Phase One of Creative Youth, but we hope that the research carried out, the insights gained through contact with stakeholders, and the invaluable input from EAG members will provide a set of recommendations which can inform ‘what comes next’ in Phase Two of this ground breaking, national creativity programme for the children and young people of our country.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. National Creativity Funded Projects

Dr Denise White/Royal Irish Academy of Music/Ulster University/Creative Ireland Programme: *Le Chéile – Final Report. How ALL children, young people and adults can access and create high quality music.*

Narrative 4/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Empathy Project Final Report (2018-2019).*

Narrative 4/Creative Ireland Programme: *Story Exchange Facilitation Training for Traveller and Roma Youth Workers (an extension of the Empathy Project) (2020).*

Chester Beatty: *Embracing Cultural Diversity in the Classroom. Building an Intercultural Schools Programme.*
https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/02/Chester_Beatty_RD_Intercultural_Schools_Project_Report.pdf

Helium Arts Creative Health Hub. *Social Return on Investment Study.*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/05/Helium-Arts-SROI-Evaluation-Final-Report-May-2021-1.pdf>

TENDERFOOT MOVING FORWARD: *Bridging the gap between the arts and education (2020).*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/07/Tenderfoot-Moving-Forward-Bridging-the-Gap-Between-Arts-and-Education.pdf>

The Ark/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Ark-Right Here Right Now. Creative Ireland Programme Scheme Report (2019).*

Irish Chamber Orchestra: *Irish Chamber Youth Orchestra. Final Report for the Creative Ireland Programme.*

Glucksman/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Classroom Museum – Creative Ireland Report (2018-2019).*

Kenny, A. (2020) *Song Seeking: A study of a singing project within Direct Provision.* The Creative Ireland Programme.
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Galway Childcare/Groundswell Arts/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Lullaby Project Creative Ireland Report (2019).*

Design and Crafts Council of Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *DESIGNSKILLS Final Report (2018).*

Business2Arts/Creative Ireland Programme: *Shining a Light on Artist Residence (AR) Programmes (2020).*

EVA International: *Better Words Creative Ireland Report (2018-2019).*

Youth Theatre Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *A Vision for National Youth Theatre 2020-2023.*

Kath Gorman/Youth Theatre Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *Evaluation Report. National Youth Theatre Programme (2018-2019).*

Saolta Arts: *A Deeper Shade of Green. Final report on an Arts and Health programme and strategic research supported by the National Creativity Fund from Creative Ireland*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/Creative20Ireland20final-6.pdf>

Children's Books Ireland: *Small Print Project Final Report.*

Appendix 2. Sources included in the Systematic Review

a) 19 Creative Youth Reports

- 1) Youth Theatre Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *Evaluation Report. National Youth Theatre.*
- 2) Helium Arts Creative Health Hub. *Social Return on Investment Study.*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/05/Helium-Arts-SROI-Evaluation-Final-Report-May-2021-1.pdf>
- 3) Children’s Books Ireland: *Small Print Project Final Report.*
- 4) Kenny, A. (2020) *Song Seeking: A study of a singing project within Direct Provision.* The Creative Ireland Programme. www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/publications
- 5) TENDERFOOT MOVING FORWARD: *Bridging the gap between the arts and education (2020).*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/07/Tenderfoot-Moving-Forward-Bridging-the-Gap-Between-Arts-and-Education.pdf>
- 6) The Ark/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Ark-Right Here Right Now! Creative Ireland Programme Scheme Report (2019).*
- 7) Galway Childcare/Groundswell Arts/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Lullaby Project Creative Ireland Report (2019).*
- 8) Dr Denise White/Royal Irish Academy of Music/Ulster University/Creative Ireland Programme: *Le Chéile – Final Report. How ALL children, young people and adults can access and create high quality music.*
- 9) Design and Craft Council of Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *Design SKILLS Final Report (2020).*
- 10) Irish Chamber Orchestra: *Irish Chamber Youth Orchestra. Final Report for the Creative Ireland Programme.*
- 11) Kinia/Creative Ireland Programme: *Kinia Interim Report (2021).*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2022/04/Kinia-Interim-Report-2021.pdf>
- 12) Glucksman/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Classroom Museum – Creative Ireland Report (2018-2019).*
- 13) Business2Arts/Creative Ireland Programme: *Shining a Light on Artist Residence (AR) Programmes.*
- 14) Narrative 4/Creative Ireland Programme: *The Empathy Project Final Report (2018-2019).*
- 15) Narrative 4/Creative Ireland Programme: *Story Exchange Facilitation Training for Traveller and Roma Youth Workers (an extension of the Empathy Project) (2020).*
- 16) EVA International: *Better Words Creative Ireland Report (2018-2019).*

- 17) Saolta Arts: A Deeper Shade of Green. *Final report on an Arts and Health programme and strategic research supported by the National Creativity Fund from Creative Ireland*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/Creative20Ireland20final-6.pdf>
- 18) Embracing Cultural Diversity in the Classroom: *Building and Intercultural School’s Programme. Chester Beatty/ Creative Ireland Programme.*
https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/02/Chester_Beatty_RD_Intercultural_Schools_Project_Report.pdf
- 19) Irish Architecture Foundation/Creative Ireland Programme: Reimagine: *Making Place Better (2020).*
https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/IAF-Reimagine_FINAL-COPY.pdf

b) 3 Government Reports

- 1) Department of Education: *Inspectors’ Report on TAP Online Summer Course 2021.*
- 2) Creative Ireland Programme: *Creative Communities Interim Report.*
https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/02/Chester_Beatty_RD_Intercultural_Schools_Project_Report.pdf
- 3) Creative Ireland Programme: *Creative Counties Review Four Counties Six Venues One Network.*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/Final-Report-CC.pdf>

c) 4 Research Reports

- 1) Youth Theatre Ireland/Creative Ireland Programme: *A Vision for National Youth Theatre 2020-2023.*
- 2) Dr Dorothy Morrissey (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick): *Creative Clusters: A Collaborative approach to Cultivating Creativity in Schools. School Excellence Fund – Creative Clusters Initiative Research and Evaluation Report (2021).*
- 3) Department of Children and Youth Affairs /Dr Triona Stokes (National University of Ireland Maynooth): *Early Years Research- Preamble to the Draft Principles for Arts Facilitation in Promoting Play and Creativity in Early Learning and Care Settings.*
- 4) Kinia/Creative Ireland Programme: *Creative Technology - Digital Needs Analysis Report (2021).*
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/06/Creative-Technology-Needs-Analysis-for-Irelands-Youth-Settings.pdf>

Appendix 3. Excerpt from the Framework Analysis Approach*

Name of Project	Organisation	Research/ Evaluation/ Ongoing/ Completed	Objectives	Inputs: Intentional	Output: No. of Creative
Creative Co CIP	Governmer	Complete	Creative Ireland Programme and the County and City Management Association, this interim review examined the effectiveness to date of Creative Communities in embedding creativity within public policy at local level, and in research findings then presented in this report aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform policy, practice and research directions to ensure inclusion, relevance and access for arts and cultural participation in challenging contexts. • Gain insight and 	Know Laois: DP centre. In Fingal, the 'STEM Saturday' initiative brought together the IT department, Building Facilities, Events Section, Libraries Section and the Culture and Creativity Team in developing taster sessions for young people to sessions took place over the course of the project across 6 Direct Provision centres. . 10 sessions in each centre were led by a choral facilitator. In total, 5 SingIn events were held during the months of April and May 2019. It involved approximately 200 Sing	Target Audience No. Projects: 1207 Children/Young Adults 723 Disability Groups 26 67 Artists/C
Song Seekir Mary Imma	End of Proj	Complete	and	31 coordinat at the DP centres, reflective logs kept by the choral facilitators and composer (5), focus group interviews carried out with both adult and child singers (27), musical outputs (audio and audio-visual recordings), Adult surveys at the SingIns (86), Obser	100 singers in the DP Centres. 200 singers at the Big Sing Provide inc

*All data from reports, projects and research were extracted and transferred to the Excel sheet categorised under the framework analysis. A number of additional categories were employed such as: Voice of the Child, Voice of the Creative Practitioner, Reported Recommendations.

Appendix 4. Excerpt from NVivo Analysis

Nodes

Name	Files	Referenc
Provided Cross Curricular Approach	1	11
Access for Disadvantaged or Hard to Reach Commun	1	7
Broader definition of Creativity	1	4
Building Sustainability	1	14
Built Awareness of Arts Provision	1	3
Connecting Artists or Creative Associates to Commu	1	17
Cross Agency Collaboration	1	15
Enjoying Creative Activity	1	15
Expanded Access to and Understanding of Creative A	1	19
Facilitates Pride of Place	1	3
Freedom to Take Risks and Innovate	1	8
Harnessing and Enabling Creativity in Young People	1	17
Highlights Cultural Assets in Ireland	1	4
Important Source of Funding	1	5
Improved capacity to cope with one's condition	1	1
Improved Relationships	1	2
Improving Skills and Employment Opportunities of A	1	15
Inclusivity	1	8
Increase Empathy and Understanding	1	7
Increase in Creative Skills	1	19
Informing Public Policy	1	8
Literacy Skills	1	7
Organisation Development	1	3
Pushing Boundaries and Exploring Sensitive Issues	1	2
Raising Awareness of Community Issues	1	3
Reduces Social Isolation	1	5
Sense of Self Pride and Self Confidence	1	13
Strategy for Economic Development	1	1
Strategy for Social Cohesion	1	15
Strategy for Wellbeing	1	14
Teacher CPD	1	5
Voice of Child	1	4

Appendix 5. Model of Participation

3.3 VOICE MODEL CHECKLIST

As part of the development of the present strategy, Professor Lundy, in consultation with a strategy development sub-group comprised of representatives from Government departments and agencies, has developed a checklist for participation (see Figure 3). This checklist aims to help organisations, working with and for children and young people, to comply with Article 12 of the UNCRC and ensure that children have the space to express their views; their voice is enabled; they have an audience for their views; and their views will have influence.

Although developed to assist in the implementation of Article 12 of the UNCRC, Lundy's model and checklist are applicable to participation of young people up to the age of 24.

Figure 3: Lundy's Voice Model Checklist for Participation



Source: Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) *National Strategy on Children and People's Participation in Decision-making 2015-2020*. Dublin: Government Publications (7).

Appendix 6. National Creativity Funded Projects - Guidelines on the Final Report

The Department will require a final report (the “Report”) from XXX. Final drawdown of funding will be a conditional on this Report being received and accepted. This Report must include the following information:

- 1) Executive Summary;
- 2) Introduction/background;
- 3) Outline of team and key participants;
- 4) Outcomes and Outputs (as per Sections 4 and 5 of SLA);
- 5) Public Engagement Outcomes e.g., levels of audience engagement and participation (if appropriate), media coverage, social media analytics, etc;
- 6) Provide a selection of high-quality images (with permissions in place) and/or digital video content for promotional purposes by the Creative Ireland Programme Offices;
- 7) Findings, evaluation and recommendations;
- 8) Breakdown of costs;
- 9) Conclusion.



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