



Submission to Dublin City Council

Dublin City Development Plan 2016 - 2022

December 2015

Submitted by:

Rhona Dunnett
Acting Director
National Association for Youth Drama
7 North Great George's Street
Dublin1

01 878 1301

www.nayd.ie

rhona@nayd.ie

INTRODUCTION

NAYD's expertise lies within the youth theatre sector and the active participation of young people in the arts. One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with young people aged between 10 and 24 years representing 18.3% of the total population.¹

Children and young people have a right to be represented at the heart of the cultural objectives within the Dublin City Council Development Plan.

1 A COMMITMENT TO THE CULTURAL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

NAYD would like to see a commitment to the cultural participation of children and young people within the chapter on Culture and Heritage in the Development Plan. At present, there is no mention of this significant section of the community within the listed cultural objectives.

NAYD welcomes cultural objectives that focus on participation such as:

“CHC25: To support and promote opportunities for everyone to participate in the city's cultural life by facilitate the provision of effectively-managed, self- sustaining cultural infrastructure suitable for all ages at the neighbourhood level, including regeneration areas, that is accessible to all in the locality and reflects the identity of Dublin's neighbourhoods.”

However, we would be more positive about explicit commitments that supported the participation of children and young people such as recent statements from the Culture 2025 discussion document:

“Our children and young people in particular should have access to culture as part of their education and development.”²

“The value of promoting culture for children and young people in and out of school is well recognised.”³

Strategic commitments and local authority funding place value on the artistic activities of our city and its young people. If the engagement of young people with the arts is valued by Dublin City Council, then this should be reflected clearly within the cultural objectives of the City Development Plan.

Relevant National Policy Initiatives

National strategies exist which provide a framework for the development of arts participation for young people and should be considered in the evolution of the cultural objectives within the Development Plan as well as the subsequent Cultural Strategy.

National Youth Strategy

The aim of the National Youth Strategy is to enable all young people aged 10-24 years to realise their maximum potential with regard to the five national outcomes outlined in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures. This strategy was developed by the National Youth Strategy Project Team, convened by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This strategy identifies youth arts as a key contributor to cultural provision for young people and establishes the development of the youth arts sector as a priority action.

National Youth Strategy

¹ Central Statistics Office (2014) Population and Migration Estimates.

² Culture 2025 Discussion Document, P9

³ Culture 2025 Discussion Document, P15

Outcome 1: Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being

Objective 2: Young people benefit from involvement in recreational and cultural opportunities including youth work, arts, and sports.

[Listed among the National Youth Strategy Priority Actions over the period 2015 – 2017 to address the needs of young people aged 10 – 24 years are to:]

1.2 Continue to support and build on existing youth arts provision nationally and locally, and promote opportunities for young people to contribute ideas to their communities in the form of art or other media of their choice.

1.3 Identify ways in which arts, culture, sports and youth organisations can cooperate at a local level to enhance quality and developmental opportunities for young people ⁴

Government Departments, State Agencies and other stakeholders are indicated as stakeholders in the implementation of this strategy.

Making Great Art Work (Arts Council Strategy 2016 – 2025)

This Arts Council Strategy establishes the points of reference by which the Arts Council will lead the development of the arts in the decade 2016–2025. The Strategy explicitly mentions youth arts and the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain as part of the Arts Council's objective to plan and provide for children and young people.

Making Great Art Work

Priority policy area: Public Engagement

Objective 8 Plan and provide for children and young people

We will advocate for the centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels and for the provision of quality vocational training in the arts.

We will work with the Departments of Arts and of Education to achieve full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter.

We will invest in artists, arts organisations and key programmes dedicated to developing high quality work in arts-in-education and youth arts, and we will support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain.

We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government.

We will incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of our decision-making and, where appropriate, into our funding agreements with arts organisations. ⁵

⁴ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) National Youth Strategy 2015–2020 Dublin: Government Publications.

⁵ The Arts Council (2015), Making Great Art Work, Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland, Arts Council Strategy 2016 – 2025, P26

National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015 - 2020

The goal of the first National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making is to ensure that children and young people will have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives.

(<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/playandrec/20150617NatStratParticipationReport.pdf>)

Children and young people should be invited to participate in the consultation process for any cultural strategy and should be invited to review the strategy during its lifetime.

National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020

Objective 7

□ Mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research.⁶

2 SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH THE ARTS

The Arts Council reports, '*Public and the Arts*' (2006) and '*The Arts in Irish Life*' (2014) as well as the NESF Report 35 (2007) '*The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion*' all underline the accepted significance of income, education, area, age and socio-economic status in determining levels of engagement with the arts.

Dublin's cultural strategy should work to remove these barriers so that everyone has an equal opportunity to get involved at a local level. The objectives contained within the Dublin City Council Development Plan (Chapter 11 Culture and Heritage) should support the creation of the next cultural strategy and guarantee each child growing up in Dublin equality of access to the arts and tackle economic, geographical and social barriers to participation (e.g., where children and young people live, their family environment, cost, transport, and the availability of local cultural infrastructure etc.). Targeting the cultural inclusion of young people during this developmental phase of life would have a significant impact on their continued participation in later life. These developmental years are a time when young people are developing their own identity and they provide a unique opportunity for culture to become part of that emerging identity.

Youth theatres are actively inclusive, both in their recruitment policies and in the ensemble nature of its drama practice. Youth theatres are not-for-profit and participation in youth theatre is not determined by financial contributions. NAYD's *CentreStage+10* research (2009) indicates that 43.5% of youth theatre members are the first in their family to show an active interest in the arts.⁷ Youth theatre can therefore be seen as a highly effective way of engaging young people in the arts for the first time and also their families through their participation as audience members at youth theatre performances.

There are many excellent examples of youth arts practice and arts education projects breaking down barriers of exclusion or disadvantage. The youth arts sector knows what works. (<http://www.nayd.ie/content/files/merged.pdf> and <http://www.youtharts.ie/content/research>).

The challenge is to make these examples of best practice in youth arts accessible to all young people. The youth arts sector needs to be resourced so that it can address social inclusion in a consistent manner on a city-wide level.

⁶ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015), National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020

⁷ NAYD (2009), Centre Stage+10, P 128/129



About NAYD

The National Association for Youth Drama (NAYD) was established in 1980 to support the development of youth theatre in Ireland.

Since then, NAYD has been supporting youth drama in practice and policy by advocating the benefits of young people's participation, promoting quality youth theatre practice and providing leadership for the sector. Now representing a membership of 60 affiliated youth theatres, the organisation has seen thousands of young lives enhanced and transformed by the experience of youth drama. Today, NAYD continues to work towards the sustained development of youth theatres in partnership with local authorities, youth services, theatres, arts centres, organisations and individuals. A commitment to young people and theatre is at the core of the work of NAYD. The value we place on this unique relationship will continue to shape the work of the organisation into the future.

NAYD promotes

- Drama as a medium for learning and as a means of expression for young people
- The advancement of the artistic, personal and social development of young people through drama and performance related skills
- Youth theatre as a medium to extend and enhance young people's understanding of theatre as an art form
- The emergence and development of youth theatres in Ireland

For more information see www.nayd.ie

Youth Arts

Youth arts practice covers the active and voluntary participation of young people aged 12-25 in all art forms within the non-formal education sector. Youth arts practice can include the work of specialist youth arts organisations such as youth theatres or youth orchestras; it can include youth arts activities within youth services, arts centres, arts companies etc.; it can also include youth-led arts activities / ensembles. The youth theatre sector alone welcomes the participation of 2,700 young people across the country every week.⁸

Young people's engagement with the arts is not simply about 'education'. Arts education within the formal and non-formal education sectors should foster an exploration and appreciation of the rich variety of art-forms practiced in Ireland. Arts education activities can also be highly effective in terms of developing future audiences for the arts in Ireland. However, we need to move away from viewing young people in the context of future artists or audiences and acknowledge young people as young artists who are active participants in the artistic life of our country.

Through youth theatre, young people can question, debate, play and re-imagine the world we live in. Youth theatre can provide an artistic and public voice for young people on stories and ideas that are relevant to their lives. Youth theatre performances can provide a positive celebration of young people's artistic and social contribution to their own communities. Youth theatre members are 'participants'. Their active participation implies agency and empowerment within our cultural sector. Dublin should value the artistic voice, the participation and the creative output of its youth.

What is youth theatre?

⁸ NAYD Affiliated Youth Theatres' Membership numbers

A youth theatre is a drama group for young people that offers a year-round programme of activities including drama workshops and performance experiences. The young people are 'members' of the youth theatre and collaborate with the leaders to develop work that is uniquely relevant to the experience and character of the group. Youth theatre is about the development and empowerment of its membership both as theatre makers and as people.

A youth theatre:

- Is an independent youth arts organisation or is run by a parent organisation (a theatre company, youth service, arts centre, local authority arts office etc.) and draws its adult leaders from the voluntary and/or professional sectors.
- Takes place outside of school. Young people choose to take part.
- Is open to all young people aged 12 to 25 (the majority focus on 12 to 18 year olds) regardless of their gender, background, race, sexuality, religion, ability or economic situation.
- Develops theatre skills while at the same time advancing the personal and social development of young people;
- Aspires to high artistic standards
- Involves young people as active participants in their youth theatre
- Is a safe and supportive space. The welfare and protection of young people is a priority for youth theatres.
- Is not-for-profit. Participation in youth theatre is not determined by financial contributions from the young people.