

## Chapter 3: Youth Theatre Funding and Resources

*“Youth theatre is learning to express yourself through other characters and turning your thoughts and stories into theatre. It’s exploring worlds you never thought of.”*



*Gullivers Travels* by Jonathan Swift adapted by Conall Morrison, National Youth Theatre 2013. Photo: Ros Kavanagh.

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>85</b>
3.1.1	Funding Priorities and Challenges	85
3.1.2	Income Levels	88
3.1.3	Grants	91
3.1.4	Membership Fees	95
3.1.5	Other Income Sources	98
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Venues</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>109</b>

### 3.1 Income

#### 3.1.1 Funding Priorities and Challenges

##### Key Findings

- The top funding priority of Centre Stage +20 youth theatres is funding for regular youth theatre leaders/facilitators. Two-thirds of leaders ranked it as their number one funding priority and 88% of leaders ranked it in their 'Top 5' priorities. This corresponds with the number one expenditure area in youth theatre.
- Accessing core funding to support the regular costs of running a youth theatre (regular youth theatre facilitators, venue rental, insurance and aspects of annual programming) is the key funding challenge reported by youth theatre leaders.

Table 3.1 details the funding priorities of youth theatres involved in the Centre Stage +20 research project.

**Table 3.1: Funding Priorities of Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatres**

	Overall Ranking	Overall Score	Number of Leaders who Ranked statement # 1	% of Leaders who included statement in Top 5
Regular Youth Theatre Facilitator/s or Artistic Director	1	123	21	88%
Production funding (e.g., royalties, tech, set, venue, etc.)	2	72	2	69%
Specialist freelance facilitators or other creative practitioners	3	65	1	72%
Rent/Mortgage	4	64	4	59%
Project funding	5	53	2	56%
Administration support	6	30	1	38%
Insurance	7	23	0	31%
Training	8	16	0	34%
Travel costs	9	13	1	16%

Equipment (e.g., laptop, camera, etc.)	10	6	0	9%
Communications (e.g., website, mobile phone costs, etc.)	11	2	0	3%
Other	12	1	0	3%

Figures are based on 32 respondents from the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire.

### Centre Stage Context

In 2009, funding priorities and challenges were explored with youth theatre leaders during the Centre Stage +10 research period. Funding priorities highlighted by leaders at that time centred around regular youth theatre staff, improved venues for youth theatres and the annual programme. In 2009, leaders reported funding challenges such as:

- A lack of a funding ladder which enabled youth theatres to move from small project grants to core funding opportunities as they became established and had a track record of delivering quality youth theatre work;
- A lack of core funding to help youth theatres build an annual programme, plan ahead and pay for regular youth theatre leaders and activities;
- A lack of transparency: some more established youth theatres were able to access funding schemes which seemed closed to newcomers;
- Frustration with workload associated with funding applications: leaders were frustrated with the time and work involved in applying for competitive grants that they felt they were unlikely to receive and with the level of administration for small grants (under €500);
- Being unable to replace the loss of significant funding sources and youth theatre programming being overly influenced by the criteria of project grants on which youth theatres were dependent.

### Centre Stage +20 Funding Priorities

As part of the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire, youth theatre leaders identified funding priorities for their youth theatres:

1. 88% of youth theatres reported that **funding for regular youth theatre leaders/facilitators** was a 'Top 5' funding priority. Two-thirds of youth theatres ranked this as their 'Number 1' funding priority.

Skilled youth theatre facilitators/practitioners who facilitate the weekly workshops and direct annual productions/projects are the most significant expenditure item in a youth theatre and also the budget area they are least likely to receive funding for. Leaders from all youth theatre models are overwhelmingly clear on this as their key priority.

2. 69% of youth theatres reported that **funding for productions** was in their 'Top 5' funding priorities, with two youth theatres ranking it as their 'Number 1' funding priority.

Youth theatres were most likely to list this funding priority as their second or third choice. The annual production is a key element of the youth theatre programme and not all youth theatres are accessing project grants or core funding which enable them to achieve higher artistic standards. This is an issue for some youth theatres run by parent organisations whose model renders them ineligible for some project grants and fundraising activities. It is also an issue for some autonomous youth theatres who have a lower success rate with project grants due to the competitive nature of grant schemes, the availability of appropriate project grants and the skill set required to achieve success.

3. 72% of youth theatres reported that **funding for specialist theatre or other creative practitioners** was in their 'Top 5' funding priorities.

The ability to bring in other skilled practitioners to enhance the youth theatre programme is a common desire amongst all models of youth theatre. However, it is more likely to feature within a youth theatre's 'Top 5' priorities rather than be the key priority for groups.

*"The ability to bring in other facilitators and creative practitioners makes for a more innovative programme and gives a different energy to the youth theatre." Griese Youth Theatre Leader*

4. 59% of youth theatres reported that **funding for rent or mortgage payments** was in their 'Top 5' funding priorities.

This was the most important funding priority for four youth theatres that had significant issues with the suitability of their venue and autonomous youth theatres run completely by volunteers (where funding regular leaders wasn't a pressing concern). Financial assistance with venue rental was a more significant issue for autonomous youth theatres but it was also raised by a small number of youth theatres run by a variety of parent organisations.

5. 56% of youth theatres reported that **project funding** was in their 'Top 5' funding priorities.

Project funding was the 'Number 1' funding priority for a youth theatre run by a youth service and one small autonomous youth theatre. Project funding was more likely to feature third in the priorities list of the majority of youth theatres.

### Centre Stage +20 Funding Challenges

#### Core Funding

Youth theatres want to be able to access funding to help them cover their key costs: regular youth theatre facilitators, venue rental, insurance and aspects of annual programming. These key expenditure items support the heart of the youth theatre programme, enabling trained youth theatre facilitators to work with young people to build the skill levels and group dynamic, and develop work that responds to the interests and needs of the membership. Autonomous youth theatres would also like to include some of the costs of administration within core costs. Core funding was the most cited ingredient for achieving sustainability (See Section 2.6.2).

The evidence suggests that it is challenging for youth theatres that were not founded by Local Authority Arts Offices to access core funding from that source (See Section 3.1.3). It is impossible for most autonomous youth theatres to access core funding of more than €3,000 through youth work schemes, or for youth theatres run by most parent organisations to access any youth work funding. Only experienced or well-resourced youth theatres and their parent organisations are accessing Arts Council funding schemes or programmes such as Erasmus + which can contribute towards programming and core costs.

Youth theatres find applying for competitive project grants a precarious way to generate income and build an annual programme. Project grants can help create challenging artistic projects for members and enhance the annual programme of a youth theatre. However, they typically direct funding to freelance practitioners who work with the youth theatre on a temporary basis. Where no core funding opportunities exist to maintain the core programme, this presents a challenging situation for the youth theatre. Leaders reported that funders that only offer project grants still have high expectations in terms of arts practice, management, child protection, governance, etc. but don't acknowledge how difficult that is to achieve without some level of core funding.

#### Capacity Issues with Youth Arts Funding

The age profile of youth theatres accessing significant grants from their ETBs, Local Authority Arts Offices and The Arts Council would suggest that younger youth theatres (one to 15 years old) are not accessing an equal share of these grants (See Section 3.1.3). Funders of youth arts balance the needs of youth theatres against other forms of youth arts, professional arts organisations, artists, community arts and other forms of cultural participation involving the public. Though the 'funding ladder' has improved for youth theatres at agencies such as The Arts Council (e.g., the Young Ensembles Scheme, Arts Grant Funding, etc.), it is difficult to see youth theatres being able to progress past project grants without the funding capacity of these schemes being increased. It can be challenging for existing youth theatres to increase their income from grants, but it is increasingly challenging for new youth

theatres to receive grants from over-subscribed schemes which are supporting other regular recipients to deliver quality work.

#### Youth Arts Funding which suits the ‘Parent Organisation’ Youth Theatre Model

Youth theatres run by youth services, arts centres, venues, etc. have reported that paying a regular facilitator and funding the annual programme of activities is a challenge. Parent organisations of youth theatres often struggle to access funding for their youth theatre programme as part of their own core funding and their model renders them ineligible to access some other youth arts grants (e.g., Young Ensembles Scheme, Local Youth Work Grant Scheme, Local Authority Arts Act Grants). In recent times, the challenge of funding youth theatre programmes within some parent organisations has forced those interested to take on the additional administrative burden of creating an entirely new organisation, an autonomous youth theatre, simply to satisfy funding policies.

#### Fair Payment for Youth Theatre Facilitators

Youth theatres were concerned about the ongoing challenge to pay regular youth theatre facilitators as well as guest practitioners, directors, designers, etc. a fair rate of pay. Leaders would like funders to acknowledge the real workload involved in running a youth theatre by offering funding and contracts in which the expected scale of project delivery matches the funding allocated.

*“Paying theatre professionals (facilitators, designers, etc.) industry rates rather than calling in favours is hugely challenging.” Activate Youth Theatre Leader*

*“Our artistic director wasn’t paid for parts of last year in order to deliver projects that were funded but where funding didn’t cover the full, real costs.” Droichead Youth Theatre Leader*

#### Travel Expenses

Youth theatres find it difficult to fund travel expenses to support engagement with other youth theatres, participation in projects/festivals, attendance at theatre performances, etc. This is an acute issue for some rural youth theatres that need to travel to access resources.

*“There is always a shortfall in transport costs to events as it is so costly and not possible to charge the young people the full rate.” Griese Youth Theatre Leader*

#### Workload Associated with Funding Applications

Youth theatre leaders note that the workload associated with funding applications has increased and report that they find the level of administration for small grants frustrating (e.g., Local Youth Work Grant Scheme or Arts Act Grants under the Local Authority Arts Office). Leaders cite high expectations on behalf of funders in terms of annual programming, quality of artists, inclusion procedures, governance and administration, child protection, etc. in respect of small project grants of a few hundred euro.

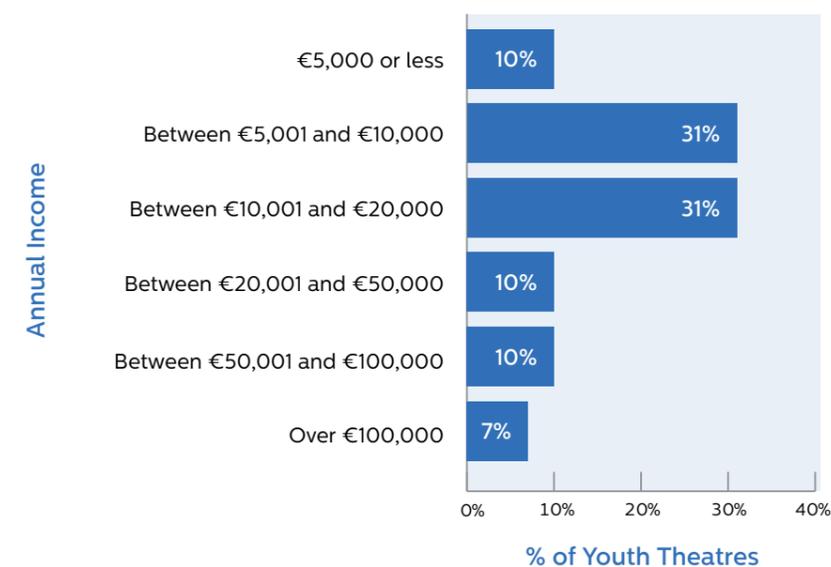
### 3.1.2 Income Levels

#### Key Findings

- Twenty-nine youth theatres recorded a combined income of €791,972 (separately, Galway Community Circus recorded further income of €472,525).
- Youth theatres in the sector have a combined estimated income of €1,502,016 annually.
- 41% of youth theatres report income levels under €10,000, with a further 41% reporting income levels of between €10,001 and €50,000 and 17% reporting income levels of over €50,001.
- The single biggest income source is formed by local, national and international grants which account for 65% of overall income.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the income levels of youth theatres that responded to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire.

Figure 3.1: Income Levels of Youth Theatres



Figures are based on 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

#### Centre Stage Context

Data was not gathered on the income levels of Centre Stage youth theatres, so there is no comparable data for 1998. Income levels amongst Centre Stage +10 youth theatres ranged between €1,958 and €181,759<sup>7</sup>, reflecting the variety of youth theatre sizes, programmes and the different levels of volunteerism within youth theatres in 2009.

#### Current Income Levels

Youth theatres were asked to indicate their total income for 2018 in the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. These youth theatres reported income levels ranging from €2,069 to €472,525. Galway Community Circus is a large youth and social circus organisation working with 500 children and young people and it reported the highest level of income for 2018 (€472,525). Its unique size and income level (€350,000 in excess of any other youth theatre) would impact on the findings for the rest of the sector, so their financial information is reported separately rather than being included in the general analysis.

Twenty-nine youth theatres provided detailed information on their 2018 income as part of the Youth Theatre Questionnaire, showing that:

- The youth theatres generated a combined income of €791,972;
- The smallest level of income was €2,069;
- The largest level of income was €117,512;
- The average income was €27,309.

If this ratio of income per youth theatre is extended to all Centre Stage +20 youth theatres, then the youth theatres in the sector have a combined estimated income of €1,502,016.

<sup>7</sup> This income was related to Galway Youth Theatre, which participated in Centre Stage +10 but is not part of the sample for Centre Stage +20 (See Section 1.3).

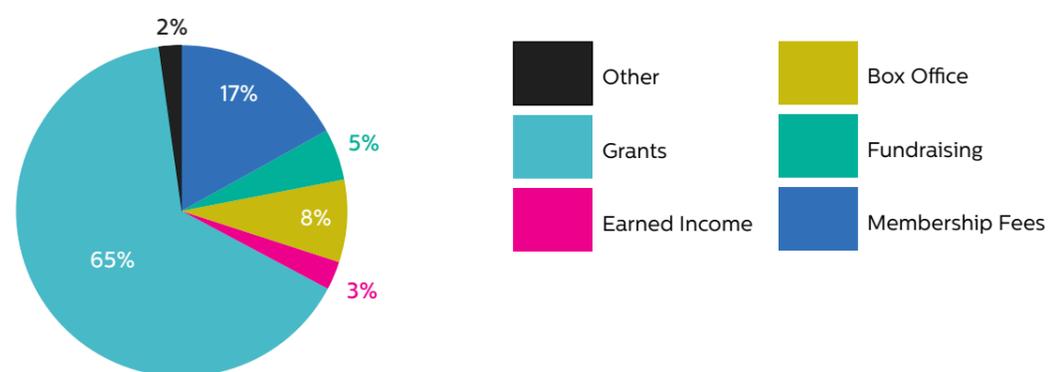
The common income strands amongst these 29 youth theatres, demonstrate that:

- 65% of income is generated through local, national and international grants (€518,071);
- 17% of income is generated through membership fees (€133,754);
- 8% is generated through box office income (€62,089);
- 5% is generated through fundraising activities (€36,254);
- 3% is generated through other earned income strands (€23,729);
- 2% is generated through other income strands (€18,075).

There was a slightly lower rate of response from youth theatres run by parent organisations (-6%). There is evidence to suggest that parent organisations do not typically prepare separate accounts for youth theatres they run as part of their programme. While they maintain records of expenditure levels and details on restricted income related to youth theatre grants, they typically will not estimate the in-kind benefit of staff, venue and other in-kind supports. Autonomous youth theatres produce annual accounts so it is easier for them to be specific about youth theatre income levels and they had a slightly higher rate of response (+7%).

Figure 3.2 illustrates an overview of key youth theatre income strands. Individual income strands are explored in detail in Sections 3.1.3 to 3.1.5.

**Figure 3.2: Key Youth Theatre Income Strands**



Figures are based on 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Total income was €791,972 and percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Galway Community Circus:** Galway Community Circus reported an income of €472,525 for 2018. It generated 70% of its income through a wide range of local, national and international grants which contributed towards core costs as well as programming and project costs. It also produced 19% of its income through membership fees, 6% through earned income for activities such as outreach workshops and performances, and 3% through fundraising.

### Profile of Youth Theatres within Income Categories

In terms of income trends amongst participating youth theatres, the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire shows that:

- Age and membership size were factors in achieving more significant income levels;
- Autonomous youth theatres were more prevalent amongst the youth theatres with higher income levels;
- Youth theatres accessing European funding schemes had significantly higher levels of income.

#### • Youth theatres with an income under €5,000 (10%)

The three youth theatres that reported this level of income were run on a completely voluntary basis, with a mix of income strands including small grants from the Local Authority Arts Office and the ETB, as well as income from membership fees, fundraising and box office receipts. These youth theatres all had small membership levels and could deliver an annual youth theatre programme with this level of income because they were run completely by volunteers.

#### • Youth theatres with an income between €5,001 and €10,000 (31%)

The nine youth theatres within this income category were a mix of autonomous youth theatres and those run by a range of parent organisations. This income level was typical of 'young' youth theatres that had been running for under 10 years (average income €8,907) and 'small' youth theatres with membership levels of 20 or less (average income of €5,613). All youth theatres with a small membership had an income under €10,000.

#### • Youth theatres with an income between €10,001 and €20,000 (31%)

Nine groups, from a wide range of models reported an income in this category. It had taken these youth theatres an average of 15 years to reach this level of income. Five of these youth theatres had a 'large' membership of over 50 young people and relied on significant levels of voluntary work or support from a parent organisation to deliver an annual youth theatre programme within their income category.

#### • Youth theatres with an income between €20,001 and €50,000 (10%)

Only three youth theatres fell into this category, both reporting 'large' membership sizes and with between 15 and 34 years of experience. These youth theatres were run by parent organisations or were run in partnership with a Local Authority Arts Office. The average income of 'medium' sized youth theatres (membership numbers between 21 and 50) was €20,342, with the average income of 'large' youth theatres increasing to €46,607. The age profile of youth theatres in this income category was beginning to increase, with the average income of a youth theatre running for between 11 and 20 years being reported as €21,950.

#### • Youth theatres with an income between €50,001 and €100,000 (10%)

Three youth theatres, all autonomous, reported an income within this category. They had 'medium' to 'large' sized membership sizes and between 13 and 22 years of experience. The average income of youth theatres aged over 20 was €52,001.

#### • Youth theatres with an income over €100,000 (7%)

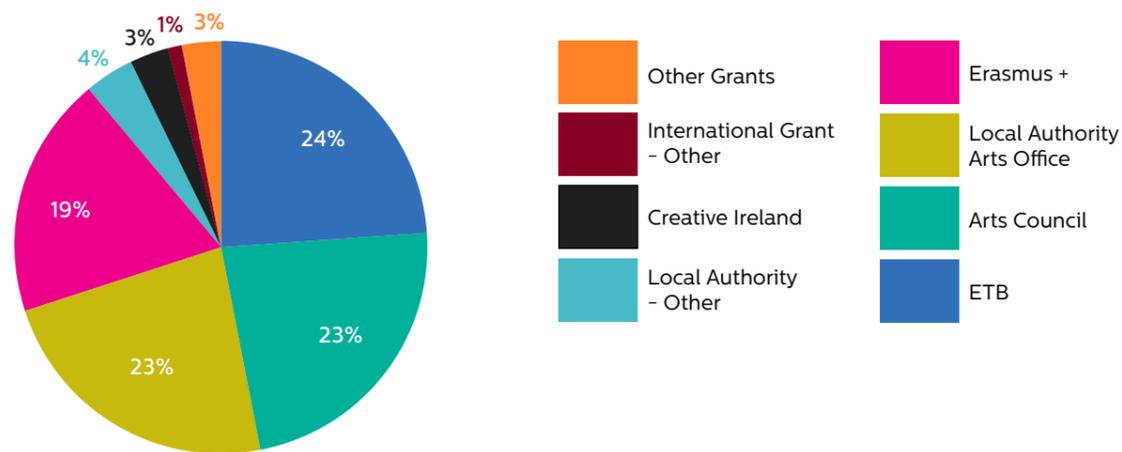
Two youth theatres reported an income over €100,000: Dublin Youth Theatre and Kildare Youth Theatre. Dublin Youth Theatre is the oldest youth theatre in the country that is still operating. It has a large membership and balances fundraising with a number of grants from The Arts Council, City of Dublin Youth Services Board and other funders. Kildare Youth Theatre has been run by a theatre company for the past 22 years and is nearly two-thirds funded through Erasmus + project grants as well as a host of other Local Authority Arts Office, Arts Council grants and fundraising, etc.

### 3.1.3 Grants

#### Key Findings

- Local, national and international grants account for 65% of total income.
- Grants play a different role in the income profile of different youth theatres, with grants accounting for between 15% and 91% of income totals in individual youth theatres.
- The most significant funders of youth theatres represented within the questionnaires are The Arts Council (23% of grant income), Local Authority Arts Offices (23% of grant income), Education and Training Boards (24% of grant income<sup>8</sup>) and Erasmus + (19% of grant income).

<sup>8</sup> ETB income amongst the questionnaire respondents is not typical of the youth theatre sector as a whole, as it includes the only two youth theatres funded through the 'Special Projects for Youth' (SPY) scheme which account for 63% of the ETB income.

**Figure 3.3: Key Grant Providers to the Youth Theatre Sector**

Figures are based on 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Total income from grants was €518,071 and percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Centre Stage Context

In Centre Stage, youth theatres reported receiving financial support from arts resources, youth services, ETBs (previously VECs) and Local Authority Arts Offices. Where an agency had been instrumental in founding a youth theatre, it was likely to maintain formal links and provide ongoing funding. Youth theatres also received project grants such as: the AIB Better Ireland Awards; the Gulbenkian Foundation; Peace and Reconciliation Funds; Beyond Borders - Cross Border Youth Scheme; the Ireland Funds; and Children in Need.

In 2009, Centre Stage +10 youth theatres reported that the most significant funders of youth theatre were The Arts Council, Local Authority Arts Offices and Education and Training Boards. Four youth theatres reported receiving Youth in Action Grants (EU Youth Programme prior to Erasmus +).

### Levels of Income from Grants

The 29 youth theatres that provided detailed information on their income as part of the Youth Theatre Questionnaire generated a combined total of €518,071 through grants, 65% of their total income. The questionnaire data shows that:

- Well-resourced autonomous youth theatres and youth theatres that have a level of autonomy within their parent organisation are accessing the widest range of grants;
- Increased resources within a youth theatre allows youth theatres to access a larger number of grant schemes.

The percentage of grant-generated income in comparison with total income does vary across the youth theatre sector. For example, Blessington Youth Theatre (autonomous) received one grant in 2018 (ETB) which formed 15% of its total income. Limerick Youth Theatre (autonomous) received five grants in 2018 (ETB, Local Authority Arts Office, other Local Authority Dept., Arts Council, Daughters Of Charity) which formed 91% of its total income.

Youth theatres and their parent organisations take on a significant workload to adopt not-for-profit structures and achieve charitable status to comply with eligibility criteria for funding bodies. This is explored in Section 2.4.

**Galway Community Circus:** Galway Community Circus' grant income is explored separately due to its unique size and income level in the sector. GCC obtains 70% of its income through a wide range of local, national and international grants. Just over half its grant income is generated through Erasmus + grants, with local grants accounting for a quarter of income (Galway City and County Council, Galway 2020) and national grants accounting for just under a quarter of grant income (The Arts Council, Irish Youth Foundation, HSE, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

### Key Grant Providers

#### Arts Council of Ireland

Of the 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire:

- Nine youth theatres reported receiving a specific grant of between €1,000 and €36,000 directly from the Arts Council;
- Grant income from The Arts Council totalled €119,879, 23% of the total income;
- Youth theatres in the sample received grants as part of the Young Ensembles Scheme, Travel and Training Awards Scheme, Arts Grant Funding and Strategic Funding (Dublin Youth Theatre).

Youth theatres regularly apply for the Young Ensembles Scheme, a project grant offered by the Arts Council. In 2018 and 2019, six of the 14 awards were given to youth theatres, totalling €38,055 in 2018 and €54,390 in 2019.

The Arts Council also funds the parent organisations of many youth theatres through strategic funding, arts grant and venues funding, including a broad range of organisations such as Graffiti Theatre Company, Barnstorm Theatre Company, Waterford Youth Arts, Source Arts Centre, The Dock and The Glens Centre, as well as funding Dublin Youth Theatre directly.

The Arts Council supports the ongoing programmes and strategic actions of Local Authority Arts Offices through Partnership Funding. Through this scheme, the Arts Council indirectly fund a number of youth theatres which are run directly by Local Authority Arts Offices (e.g., County Carlow Youth Theatre, Clare Youth Theatre) or were founded by Local Authority Arts Offices (e.g., County Limerick Youth Theatre, Sligo Youth Theatre) and have now evolved to another youth theatre model. This category of youth theatre will typically receive core funding from the Local Authority Arts Office or, at least, funding for the key youth theatre facilitator.

#### Local Authority Arts Offices

Of the 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire:

- Twenty youth theatres reported receiving a specific grant of between €900 and €20,000 directly from a Local Authority Arts Office;
- Grant income from Local Authority Arts Offices totalled €118,038, 23% of the total income.

Local Authority Arts Offices continue to be a significant funder of youth theatre at a local level. Youth theatres in the sample received grants as part of the Arts Act Grant Scheme and other miscellaneous grants. These are typically annual applications for a range of schemes which differ in each county, including: project grants; grants for community/ voluntary art groups; youth arts bursaries; organisational support/revenue funding for regularly funded organisations. Fourteen of the youth theatres were funded through these schemes receiving 40% of the total income provided by Local Authority Arts Offices. Youth theatres funded through these schemes were autonomous or were run by a range of parent organisations. They are typically in receipt of project grants for specific activities, with the exception of Griese Youth Theatre and Kildare Youth Theatre that receive funding under Kildare Arts Office's 'Support for Arts Resource Organisations' scheme and Dublin Youth Theatre which is in the 'Revenue Funding' category of Dublin City Arts Office's Arts Act Grants.

Youth theatres are more likely to receive higher levels of funding if they are part of the programme of a Local Authority Arts Office or were founded by one. Six of the 20 youth theatres in this cohort fell into this category and received 60% of the total income from Local Authority Arts Offices.

### Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

Of the 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire:

- Seventeen youth theatres reported receiving a specific grant of between €900 and €61,223 from their local ETB;
- Grant income from ETBs totalled €121,916. Accounting for 24% of the total income, ETBs were the largest funder of youth theatre within this cohort. However, a note of caution is required when drawing conclusions about the ETB's overall contribution to youth theatre funding. The sample cohort of 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire includes the only two SPY (Special Projects for Youth) funded youth theatres in the country and they account for 63% of the total ETB income.

ETBs are statutory authorities which have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. Each ETB supports the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area.

The majority of youth theatres receiving grants from the ETB are obtaining grants under the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme (LYCGS) or the LYCGS Equipment Grant Scheme (2017 and 2019). The grants have strict national guidelines, however there is still some local variance. Grant amounts can vary between counties, with seven youth theatres receiving a combined maximum of €1,500 and a further seven receiving up to €5,215 in 2018. The LYCGS has a maximum award of €3,000, however City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB – holds the youth work remit of the City of Dublin ETB) can give significantly larger grants. The scheme supports volunteer-led youth groups carrying out activities at a local level, which typically translates into autonomous youth theatres within the youth theatre sector. However, CDYSB and Cork ETB have given funds to youth theatres run by arts centres (with voluntary boards) which appear ineligible in other ETB areas. All LYCGS applicants must participate in the National Quality Standards for Volunteer-Led Youth Groups, whether they receive €900 or €5,000. Funding for 14 youth theatres in this category accounted for 25% of the total income from the ETB.

Two youth theatres received funding under the Special Projects for Youth (SPY) Scheme which is administered by ETBs: Waterford Youth Arts and Limerick Youth Theatre. New entrants to this scheme have not been accepted for many years and the scheme has only expanded recently through tenders to develop targeted youth work provision in areas of disadvantage. SPY funded projects must participate in the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work. Funding under this scheme for two organisations accounts for 63% of total income from ETBs, with one youth theatre alone accounting for 50%.

Monaghan Youth Theatre is the only youth theatre in the country run by an ETB. Its parent organisation is The Garage Theatre, which is under the remit of the Cavan Monaghan ETB. Roundabout Youth Theatre also benefits from funding administered by CDYSB, as its parent organisation Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (BRYR) is funded under a number of schemes administered by the organisation.

### Erasmus + And Other International Grants

Of the 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire:

- Three youth theatres reported receiving a specific Erasmus+ grant of between €3,800 and €76,295;
- Grant income from the Erasmus + scheme totalled €101,081, 19% of the total income.

A very small proportion of youth theatres were accessing Erasmus + grants in 2018, however the size of the grants obtained meant that it was the fourth largest income source amongst funders. In 2018, youth theatres typically applied for grants for youth exchanges, professional development activities for youth workers, transnational youth initiatives, strategic partnerships and the European Voluntary Service. A combination of these grants can develop a significant income source for youth theatres with the resources to pursue the development of an international programme. Kildare Youth Theatre reported the highest levels of Erasmus + grants, totalling 65% of its annual income for 2018.

Youth theatres also access international funding through the European Solidarity Corps and mentioned project grants linked to participation in an international Abbey Theatre /David Glass Ensemble partnership project and grants from the National Theatre England linked to participation in its NT Connections project.

### Other Grants

Of the 29 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire:

- Five youth theatres reported receiving a non-arts grant from their Local Authority of between €250 and €5,000, accounting for 4% of total income. These grants were linked to community enhancement, social intervention and festivals;
- Five youth theatres reported receiving Creative Ireland grants on a local basis of between €500 and €5,000, accounting for 3% of total income. These grants were project focused.
- Nine youth theatres had received small grants through Youth Theatre Ireland's Youth Theatre Support Scheme of between €80 and €600, totalling €2,485. This micro-funding scheme contributes funding towards theatre trips, partnership projects, specialist workshops, performance rights and replacement youth theatre facilitators (temporary basis);
- Other grants included: funding from LEADER, the Artist and Youth Work Residency Scheme (National Youth Council of Ireland in partnership with The Arts Council and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs), the HSE and the Daughters of Charity;
- No youth theatre had accessed funding from a trust or foundation or mentioned any level of corporate funding.

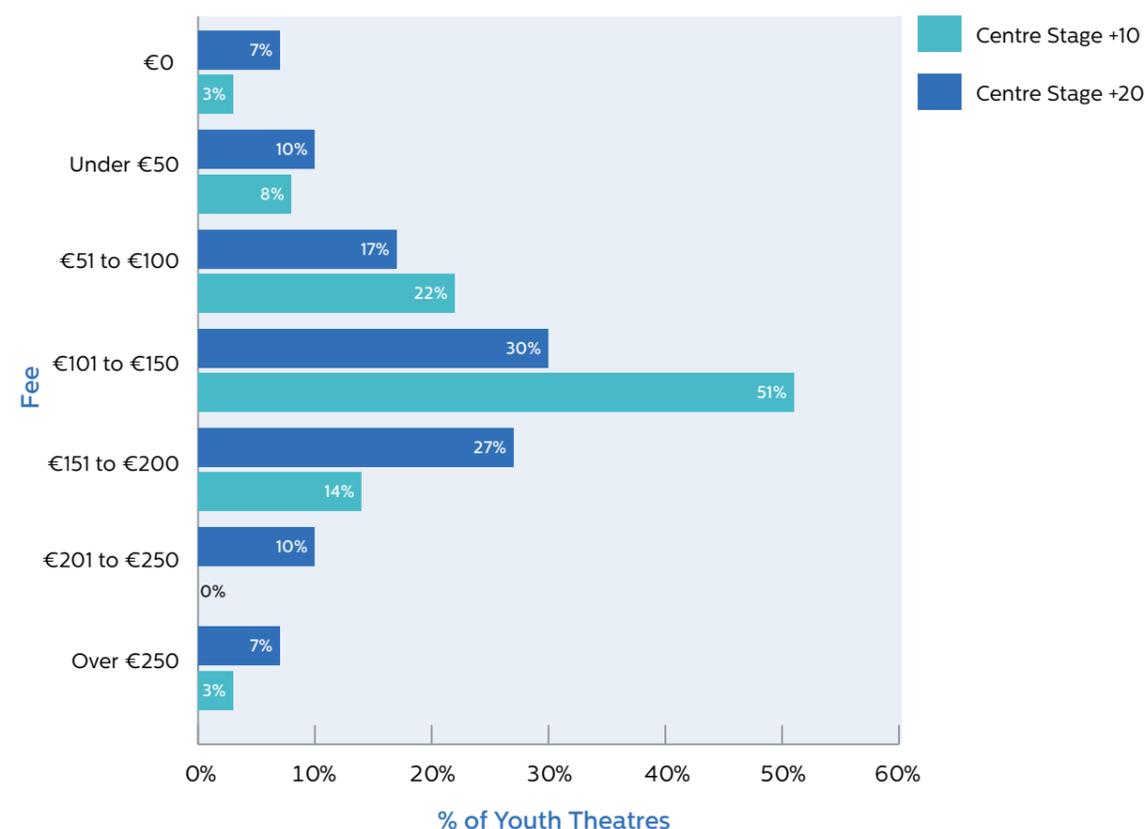
### 3.1.4 Membership Fees

#### Key Findings

- 94% of youth theatres charge a membership fee.
- The average annual membership fee is €147.
- 90% of youth theatres offer bursaries or discounted memberships to young people who are unable to pay.
- Membership fees are a key source of unrestricted income for youth theatres, particularly those with no (or low levels of) core funding and this has to be sensitively balanced with inclusion policies.

Figure 3.4 outlines the levels of membership fees reported by Centre Stage +20 youth theatres compared with Centre Stage +10 youth theatres.

**Figure 3.4: Levels of Annual Membership Fees**



Figures are based on 32 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaires and 37 Centre Stage +10 Youth Theatres. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Centre Stage Context

In Centre Stage +10, 97% of youth theatres asked young people to pay a membership fee. The average annual membership fee was €122, with just over half of youth theatres setting a membership fee of between €101 and €150. Youth theatres offered bursaries and discounts to young people who were unable to pay and youth theatres were just moving from a 'weekly subs' approach to asking young people to pay 'per term' where possible. There is no comparable data for Centre Stage (1998).

### Levels of Membership Fees

The vast majority of youth theatres ask young people to pay a membership fee. Many youth theatres feel that setting a membership fee encourages young people and their families to place a value on their participation and take the commitment seriously. However, this is balanced carefully with the desire to ensure youth theatre is inclusive of all young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Of the 32 youth theatres that responded to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaires:

- 94% of youth theatres charged a membership fee;
- Two youth theatres did not charge a membership fee: Roundabout Youth Theatre (run by Ballymun Regional Youth Service) and Mayo Youth Theatre (run by Mayo Local Authority Arts Office);

- The average membership fee was €147, an increase of €25 in the past 10 years. Over a typical 30-week youth theatre year, this amounted to €4.90 per week;
- The majority of youth theatres asked young people to pay per term to aid with administration, but offered a range of payment options, including a 'weekly subs' choice;
- Membership fees accounted for 19% of total income.

The majority of youth theatres (57%) set a fee of between €100 and €200 per year. This would typically cover a standard 30-week programme of workshops (60 hours) as well as additional hours related to rehearsals, productions, projects, social activities, etc.

Five youth theatres reported setting an annual membership fee above €200 (chiefly between €220 and €230). They were from a range of models including three autonomous youth theatres, one run by a Local Authority Arts Office and a theatre company. An average fee amongst this group worked out at €8.20 over a 30-week period.

To put these fees into context, the average membership fee in youth theatre is roughly the same as the typical annual fee in a Scout Group, €150<sup>9</sup>. Many youth clubs will also pay a small annual registration fee of approximately €20 and then pay a fee per night to cover day-to-day expenses and buy supplies for the club.

### Access Strategies and Bursaries

- 90% of youth theatres that responded to the Youth Theatre Questionnaire offered bursaries or discounted memberships to young people who were unable to pay membership fees.
- Three youth theatres (10%) did not offer bursaries or discounted fees for members. These included Roundabout Youth Theatre (no fees), Backstage Youth Theatre (€5 per year) and one autonomous youth theatre.

Some youth theatres take a structured approach to bursaries. They may have a referral system arranged with a local youth service which involves free or discounted fees, or they may have the budget to offer a set number of annual bursaries or structured discounts.

*"Four free places are given to young people from areas with DEIS schools."  
Dundalk Youth Theatre*

*"We offer 3 strands of bursaries through our Access Award Scheme. This allows young people to apply for a Full/Half or part-time bursary.*

- Full: Free
- Half: €55, €65 or €85 depending on the age group and term.
- Part Time, varies between individual and needs this can be anywhere between a 10% & 40% reduction in fees" Galway Community Circus Leader

The majority of youth theatres advertise their flexibility on fees for young people who need financial assistance to participate, and deal with each young person discretely on a case by case basis.

*"It is stated in the cover letter sent to those interested and on the website that no young person should be unable to take part in the youth theatre based on financial reasons. Each person's individual financial concerns are dealt with on a case by case basis. Also, there is no pressure on people if payments are not made. There is a €25 discount per sibling." Kilkenny Youth Theatre Leader*

*"Yes, free places for all local children in the area where we are based and also for any young person/family that can't afford it. This is all done privately and nobody in workshops would be aware who has paid." Waterford Youth Arts Leader*

<sup>9</sup> Desk research shows that most Scouts pay a typical fee of €150 which includes a €65 national subscription. Discounts are offered for more than one family member, children of volunteers within the Scout group and families who are unable to pay. Some Scout groups charge an annual fee and others include 'weekly subs' options.

### Attitudes To Membership Fees

Youth theatres with significant levels of funding or high levels of volunteerism were able to offer reduced membership fees of less than €100 per year (e.g., Backstage Youth Theatre, Blessington Youth Theatre, Roundabout Youth Theatre). The majority of youth theatres believe in keeping membership fees to encourage commitment but would be keen to reduce them to make youth theatre more accessible.

Membership fees are a key source of unrestricted income for youth theatres that do not receive any core funding or low levels of core funding. Youth theatres can find themselves in a situation where membership fees are key to being able to pay their regular facilitator, venue rental and insurance, supplemented by fundraising and box office income where possible. This is true of autonomous youth theatres without core funding as well as youth theatres run by parent organisations that do not receive programme funding which covers the youth theatre's activities. This places an unwelcome pressure on maintaining membership numbers to sustain an income source.

*“Being an independent youth theatre and having no core funding, we depend solely on our membership fees and fundraising to stay alive. We apply for grants as best we can.”*  
Mr. Sands Youth Theatre Leader

*“We have to keep our numbers up on enrolment to make the youth theatre sustainable.”*  
LYTC Carrigallen Youth Theatre Leader

Other factors which can contribute to higher fees include: insurance levels for circus and street arts; high venue rental in some areas; high numbers of bursaries which can push up the membership fees for those young people whose families can afford to pay; a longer annual programme with a wider choice of activities and projects.

Youth theatre members did discuss the level of membership fees as a potential barrier to participation in youth theatre. Of 567 respondents to a question in the Centre Stage +20 Member Questionnaire, 8% felt that finances had made participation more difficult for them and 26% perceived that finance could have been a barrier for other young people.

### 3.1.5 Other Income Sources

#### Key Findings

- 8% of youth theatre income is generated through box office receipts.
- 5% of youth theatre income is generated through fundraising and sponsorship.
- 3% of youth theatre income is generated through 'other earned income' such as fees earned through performance rights and outreach work as well as small levels of contributions from members for outings.
- As a group, youth theatres were unable to place a financial cost on the level of in-kind benefits they received.

#### Centre Stage Context

Youth theatres in Centre Stage and Centre Stage +10 were running their own fundraising initiatives to enhance their income levels and generate core funding for their annual programme, with autonomous youth theatres being more active at fundraising. Centre Stage +10 youth theatres discussed box office income and set full-price tickets at between €8 and €20 to generate significant box office receipts in relation to the overall income of some youth theatres. The majority of youth theatres in both studies also identified sources of benefit-in-kind: discounted or donated venue hire; voluntary hours of leaders and facilitators; storage, heat and lighting costs; advice and assistance from skilled personnel; use of equipment and materials.

### Box Office Income

The 24 youth theatres who provided information on their 2018 box office takings as part of the Youth Theatre Questionnaire raised a combined total of €62,089.

- The average box office receipts totalled €2,957.
- The smallest box office receipts totalled €250.
- The largest box office receipts totalled €6,900.
- Box office income accounted for 8% of the total income.

Youth theatres that had the resources to manage a longer production run, hire a significant regional venue or stage multiple productions during a year were most likely to generate a larger box office income. These youth theatres included Waterford Youth Arts, Limerick Youth Theatre, County Limerick Youth Theatre, Backstage Youth Theatre and Dublin Youth Theatre that all generated over €5,000 in box office takings. Backstage Youth Theatre is an interesting exception and its experience is explored in the case study below.

Some youth theatres have a straightforward venue hire in which they accrue all box office income while others negotiate discounts in venue hire in return for box office splits. Youth theatres run by arts centres and theatres have a more complex relationship with box office receipts, depending on the extent to which youth theatre income and expenditure is isolated from that of the overall organisation.

*“All receipts from shows are put back into the core costs of the running of the youth theatre and covers our members that cannot afford to participate.”*  
Glengarriff Youth Theatre Leader

#### Attitudes to Ticket Prices

Youth theatres are keen to price tickets at a level which values the creative work and achievements of young people but at the same time, they report that they need to be aware of their community and price tickets at a level which is inclusive of young people's families. Many youth theatres will make clear that the ticket price is being used to help run a not-for-profit youth theatre for local young people.

#### Case Study: Backstage Youth Theatre

Backstage Youth Theatre produces the annual pantomime in Longford and the six performances it stages at the Backstage Theatre (212 capacity) generate a significant level of income which sustains the activities of the group at other points in the year. The youth theatre is run completely by volunteers and has a large membership of 60 young people who are at the heart of the writing, design and staging process. They also stage a production in the summer (two to three performances), in partnership with Backstage Theatre and typically with the support of a professional director. Alongside grants and other income sources in 2018, they generated €6,635 from box office income (the second highest level of box office income amongst Centre Stage +20 youth theatres) which amounted to 44% of their income.

#### Fundraising or Sponsorship

The 24 youth theatres who provided information on their 2018 fundraising income as part of the Youth Theatre Questionnaire raised a combined total of €36,254.

- The smallest level of fundraising income was €37.
- The largest level of fundraising income was €23,000.
- The majority of youth theatres raised under €500 through fundraising.
- Fundraising accounted for 5% of the total income.

Youth theatres typically organise fundraising events which involve the membership, such as: flag days;

cake sales; raffles; bag-packing in supermarkets, etc. Youth theatres that are registered as charities can fundraise directly from the public, but no youth theatre cited street collections as a fundraising method. Youth theatres with lower levels of resources were typically returning to the same community members for fundraising activities who were also paying membership fees and buying tickets for youth theatre productions. Some leaders reported that they felt there was a capacity limit to the level of fundraising they could undertake:

*“We would like funding for our main show. We don’t want to charge too much for tickets but want the members to have a quality performance. We go out to an already over-stretched community to seek sponsorship” Blessington Youth Theatre Leader*

Youth theatres with more significant resources were able to undertake more substantial fundraising projects which are key to the annual income of the youth theatre (E.g., Galway Community Circus raised €12,896 and Kildare Youth Theatre raised €5,000). Dublin Youth Theatre raised €23,000 (one fifth of the youth theatre’s annual income), chiefly through the ‘24 Hour Plays: Dublin’ event which is an annual fundraiser in aid of Dublin Youth Theatre.

Fundraising is not a viable option for some youth theatre models, for example those run by Local Authority Arts Offices.

#### Case Study: Dublin Youth Theatre

*The 24 Hour Plays: Dublin* is produced as a benefit for Dublin Youth Theatre in association with, and under license from, The 24 Hour Company. The format originated in New York in the mid-90s and is now an annual gala benefit on Broadway, as well as around the world. Six short plays are written, rehearsed and presented all within 24 hours by the best of Irish writing and directing talent and over two dozen of Ireland’s most recognised stars of stage and screen. A team of over 30 theatre technicians, including producers from The 24 Hour Company facilitate the work.

The first Irish incarnation of *The 24 Hour Plays* was in aid of Dublin Youth Theatre in 2012 at Project Arts Centre and went on to win a Special Recognition Award for Best Event at the Irish Fundraising Awards that year. In January 2013, the show moved to the Abbey Theatre where it has played every year since. BNP Paribas Real Estate has been the title sponsor for the event since 2015, along with many other sponsors, allowing for the ticket sales to go directly to the fundraising effort.

Funds raised by *The 24 Hour Plays* helped facilitate Dublin Youth Theatre’s move of premises in 2019 and ensures the continuation of their programming such as the annual One-Act Festivals; as well as newer activities such as the playwright-led Writers’ Group and DYT Young Critics Programme. The support of *The 24 Hour Plays* means DYT can continue to grow, build on its success and continue to help young people discover, create and participate in the arts.

#### Other Earned Income

The 24 youth theatres who provided information on other earned income from 2018 as part of the Youth Theatre Questionnaire raised a total of €23,729, 3% of the total income.

- Less than half of the youth theatres included income in this category.
- The smallest income level in this category was €75.
- The largest income level in this category was €6,000.
- The average in this income category was €818.

On a small scale, youth theatres were accounting for contributions from members for outings, sales of Youth Theatre hoodies or DVDs within this income category. Some youth theatres were earning small levels of income from the performance rights to scripts they had included in the Youth Theatre Ireland ‘Playshare’ collection<sup>10</sup> (e.g., Griese Youth Theatre, Droichead Youth Theatre). The youth theatres that were earning more significant levels of earned income were engaged in higher levels of outreach

<sup>10</sup> Youth Theatre Ireland’s Playshare collection is a curated compilation of scripts which have been produced by youth theatres in Ireland and include those written by professional writers, youth theatre leaders, young people and scripted versions of devised youth theatre productions. Youth theatres can generate very small amounts of income when other groups stage their scripts and pay performance rights.

work with school, youth and community groups (e.g., Kildare Youth Theatre, County Limerick Youth Theatre). Galway Community Circus raised substantially greater levels of earned income (€26,849) through outreach work and performance fees than any other youth theatre.

#### Benefit In-Kind

Youth theatres receive significant levels of in-kind support through voluntary work, the discounted fees of creative practitioners, venue discounts and donations, and the contributions of parent organisations to the management of youth theatre programmes. In general, however, youth theatres find it difficult to assess the financial cost of these in-kind benefits and very few youth theatres itemised this category of income through the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Of the youth theatres that attempted to put a cost on their in-kind benefits:

- A youth theatre run by a theatre company estimated €9,000 in terms of venue, admin, staff, use of performance space/equipment, etc.;
- A youth theatre run by a small arts centre estimated €2,000 in terms of reduced venue rate, administration support, audit and accounts;
- An autonomous youth theatre estimated a total of €2,090 in terms of donated resources, voluntary hours and reduced/donated venues.

The level of voluntary work in youth theatre is explored in Section 3.4 and the donation of venues is explored in Section 3.3.

#### Conclusions

Youth theatres are accessing a significant proportion of their income through grants and undertaking considerable levels of work to create the structures, policies and governance which make them eligible for such schemes. Local policy and local interpretation of national schemes means that the location of a youth theatre can effect its income potential significantly. There is not an even playing field in terms of opportunities for newer youth theatres (under 15 years of operation) to access more significant Arts Council grants or Special Projects for Disadvantaged Youth (SPY) Funding through the ETB or core funding grants from Local Authority Arts Offices. It appears that capacity issues with youth arts funding could be preventing funders from extending grants beyond the regular recipients that are already delivering excellent work. This has implications for youth theatre development strategies designed to increase youth theatre provision.

Youth theatres need to be supported to engage with as wide a range of grant providers as resources allow to ensure diversification and sustainability. Youth theatres with lower levels of resources need particular support with this. This includes supporting youth theatres to fulfil their potential in terms of fundraising and generating other types of earned income.

Core funding opportunities that suit a variety of youth theatre models are key to the sustainable development of youth theatre. The sector is in critical need of funding opportunities that match youth theatres’ key areas of expenditure and support their core activities with youth theatre members. Currently, there is a deficit of open grant opportunities which support the viability of the type of excellent youth arts programmes and organisations that funders want.

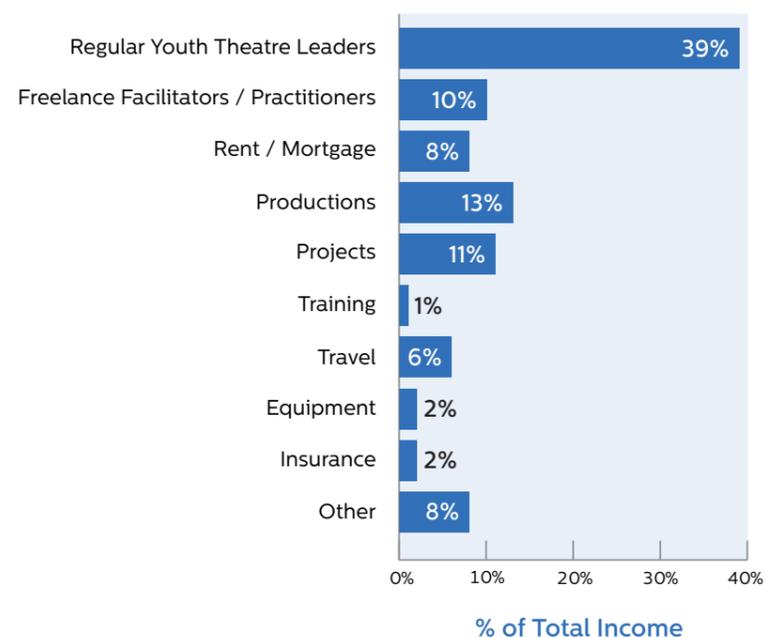
## 3.2 Expenditure

### Key Findings

- Twenty-eight youth theatres recorded a combined expenditure of €729,336 (separately Galway Community Circus recorded further expenditure of €483,220).
- The single biggest item of expenditure is regular youth theatre leaders (youth theatre facilitators, Artistic Directors, administrators, etc.) who account for 39% of overall expenditure.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the key expenditure lines of youth theatres who provided detailed expenditure information through the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire.

Figure 3.5: Youth Theatre Expenditure



Figures are based on detailed expenditure provided by 28 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Total expenditure was €729,336. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Centre Stage Context

Centre Stage did not do a complete assessment of expenditure costs but gathered some general data which shows that two-thirds of the 33 participating youth theatres spent: £184,000 (Irish punts) on staff; £40,000 on rent; £37,000 on the workshop programme; and £76,600 on productions.

A group of 26 Centre Stage +10 youth theatres provided detailed expenditure information in 2009, totalling €571,644. Fees for regular youth theatre leaders were the single largest expenditure item (37%), with a quarter of all expenditure being spent on productions and a further 6% on freelance facilitators/practitioners and 9% on projects. Rent accounted for 4% of expenditure in 2009.

### Current Expenditure Levels

Youth theatres were asked to indicate their total expenditure for 2018 in the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. These youth theatres reported expenditure levels ranging from €1,363 to

€483,220. Galway Community Circus reported the highest level of expenditure for 2018 (€483,220). Similar to Section 3.1.2, Galway Community Circus's levels of expenditure (€375,220 in excess of any other youth theatre) would impact on the findings for the rest of the sector, so their financial information is reported separately rather than being included in the general analysis.

The levels of expenditure of individual youth theatres are closely aligned with their levels of income and these are explored in Section 3.1.2.

**Galway Community Circus:** As a large organisation focused on youth and social circus, Galway Community Circus reports more significant expenditure levels than other Centre Stage +20 youth theatres (€483,220). Galway Community Circus spends about 40% of its expenditure on staffing costs (which is in proportion to other smaller youth theatres) and another 15% on freelance facilitators/practitioners. Due to its circus practice, its spend significantly more on equipment (8%) and insurance (3%) and also supports a higher level of training (1%). A European aspect to its partnerships and programmes contributes to spending on travel (1%) and other costs (20%) which include significant partner funding allocations under EU funded projects.

### Key Expenditure Items

#### 1 Regular Youth Theatre Leaders

The single biggest expenditure line amongst the Centre Stage +20 youth theatres was regular youth theatre leaders:

- Regular youth theatre leaders accounted for 39% of the overall expenditure.

These youth theatre leaders worked on a regular basis for the youth theatre and held a variety of roles including Youth Theatre Facilitator, Artistic Director, Administrator, General Manager, etc. which maintained the core services of the youth theatre. The vast majority of youth theatres run by parent organisations did not allocate a percentage of general staff costs to the youth theatre expenditure, so this level of spending may underestimate general staffing costs.

#### 2 Productions and Projects

Centre Stage +20 youth theatres spent similar amounts on delivering youth theatre projects and productions:

- Productions accounted for 13% of the overall expenditure;
- Projects accounted for 11% of the overall expenditure.

Production costs can include royalties, venue rental, technical support, design, set construction and costumes, etc. Reflecting the wide variety of artistic aspirations, resources and youth theatre models, production expenditure ranged from €60 to €18,000.

Project expenditure was limited for the vast majority of youth theatres and included film projects, mini-festivals and exchanges. A significant proportion of the overall project expenditure was spent by Kildare Youth Theatre in its extensive European exchange and volunteering projects, and strategic partnerships (€55,030).

#### 3 Freelance Facilitators

Centre Stage +20 youth theatres spent a portion of their budget on freelance facilitators, directors and other creative practitioners to enhance the youth theatre programme:

- Freelance facilitators accounted for 10% of the overall expenditure.

The facilitators and practitioners were contracted on a short-term basis to deliver specific workshops or projects and included theatre facilitators, directors, dancers and choreographers, writers, designers, dramaturgs, etc.

#### 4 Operational and Other Costs

Youth theatres reported a number of other core costs within this expenditure category, specifically operational costs such as: bank charges and accountancy; communications; electricity and internet; marketing; documentation; fundraising; affiliation fees, etc.

- Youth theatres spent 8% of the overall expenditure on a range of other costs (€61,381).

As well as operational costs, youth theatres included a limited number of items such as: theatre tickets for youth theatre outings; refreshments for young people; and project-related accommodation for youth theatre leaders and members.

#### 5 Rent/Mortgage Payments

- Youth theatres spent 8% of the overall expenditure on rent or mortgage costs.

Centre Stage +20 youth theatres reported a wide variety of venue rental costs. No autonomous youth theatre was making mortgage payments during the research period. Annual rental costs ranged from €400 to €15,000 (Kildare Youth Theatre) and represented a more considerable percentage of annual expenditure for some youth theatres (e.g., lease payments for M.A.D Youth Theatre account for 42% of its annual expenditure).

#### Other Expenditure Items

Youth theatres also spent:

- 6% of their expenditure on travel costs. Though it must be noted that, 93% of these travel costs were spent by two youth theatres alone (County Limerick Youth Theatre and Kildare Youth Theatre) that have significant European exchange programmes funded through Erasmus+. Therefore, the total average expenditure on travel costs for youth theatres is considerably lower;
- 2% on equipment. Just under half of youth theatres reported spending on equipment of between €10 and €4,763. Youth theatres had been purchasing technical theatre equipment, film and camera equipment as well as laptops and mobile phones (to assist with child safeguarding and GDPR compliance). Recent Local Youth Club Grant Scheme Equipment Grants (2017 and 2019) had increased levels of expenditure on equipment;
- 2% on insurance costs. The majority of youth theatres were paying between €200 and €500 for insurance costs with a significant number paying approximately €200 (Youth Theatre Ireland Insurance scheme for affiliated youth theatres). However, three youth theatres reported insurance costs of between €2,500 and €3,500 for extended programmes, larger memberships and building/contents insurance;
- 1% on training costs. Evidence suggests that many youth theatre leaders paid for relevant training courses from their own money and did so on a voluntary basis.

#### Conclusions

The key expenditure areas reported by youth theatres support the funding priorities they recorded. It is clear that youth theatres would benefit most from funding schemes that can support the cost of engaging youth theatre leaders on a consistent basis.

The expenditure review highlights that some youth theatres have acute needs that are particular to their situation or model rather than being typical of the sector (e.g., expenditure levels on venue hire).

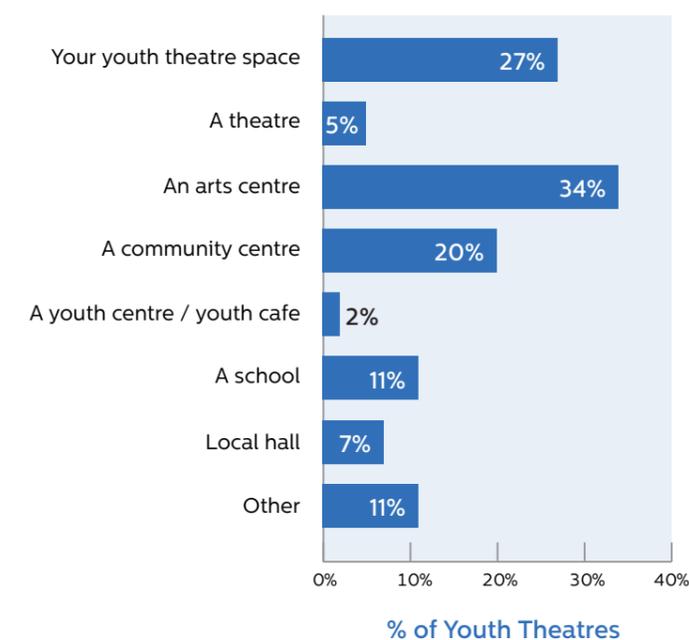
### 3.3 Venues

#### Key Findings

- Arts centres are the most popular venue for youth theatre activities (34% of youth theatres) with youth theatres reporting their own 'youth theatre space' as the next most common (27%) and community centres as the third (20%).
- Nearly a third of youth theatres (31%) are benefitting from the stability provided by their parent organisation's lease or ownership of a suitable venue, while a further 37% are still renting their venue on a casual or weekly basis.
- Though some youth theatres have acute needs related to venue use, the sector is satisfied overall with the standard of venues it is using. Only 1% of members report that the choice of venue made it difficult for them to take part in youth theatre and 88% of youth theatres feel their space is suitable for activities with young people.

Figure 3.6 depicts the type of venues used by youth theatres for artistic activities with young people.

Figure 3.6: Types of Venues used by Youth Theatre for Activities with Young People



Figures are based on 44 youth theatres that provided information as part of Census Week, Centre Stage +20. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

#### Centre Stage Context

The majority of Centre Stage youth theatres rented or leased premises in 1998, including arts centres, local community centres and halls, youth service premises, school halls and designated 'youth theatre spaces'. In Centre Stage, just over three quarters of all activities that took place during Census Week were considered to have taken place in suitable venues and that rose to 95% in Centre Stage +10. In 2009, youth theatres were working in a similar mix of venues but were more likely to speak of having a 'home'. Large autonomous youth theatres either owned (Dublin Youth Theatre) or leased venues on a long-term basis (Sligo Youth Theatre) or were in residency at an arts centre at the time (Limerick Youth Theatre, Galway Youth Theatre). The rise in the number of youth theatres run by parent organisations meant that a more significant percentage of the membership described a sense of

stability in the venues they were accessing. For example, youth theatres being run by arts centres and theatre venues, theatre companies, youth services and educational institutions were all secure in their residency in these spaces. Over half of the autonomous youth theatres were still renting different local spaces on a casual or weekly basis.

### Profile of Venue Use

Centre Stage +20 youth theatres were accessing a similar range of venues for their weekly activities as the Centre Stage +10 groups a decade ago.

Of the 44 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire:

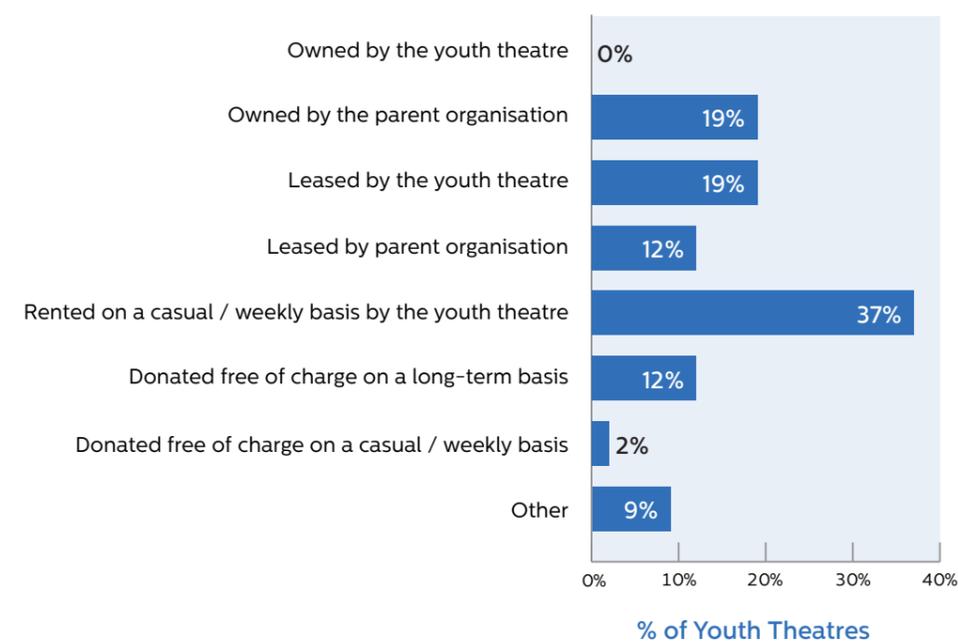
- 27% of youth theatres said their weekly activities took place in their ‘youth theatre space’. These youth theatres included autonomous youth theatres with long-term leases on venues (e.g., M.A.D. Youth Theatre) and those run by parent organisations with a venue (e.g., Activate Youth Theatre);
- 34% said their weekly activities took place in an arts centre. These youth theatres included those run directly by arts centres (e.g., Free Radicals Youth Theatre), those run by Local Authority Arts Centres (e.g., Clare Youth Theatre), and other models of youth theatre who had rental or partnership arrangements with a local arts centre (e.g., WACT Youth Theatre);
- 20% reported their weekly activities took place in a community centre. These youth theatres included primarily autonomous youth theatres (e.g., Explore Youth Theatre) and those run by amateur drama groups (e.g., Ardclough Youth Theatre);
- 11% reported their weekly activities took place in a school. Again, these were primarily autonomous youth theatres accessing school halls for their weekly workshops (e.g., East Galway Youth Theatre).

### Venue Use: Terms and Conditions

Youth theatres experience a wide range of terms and conditions related to their use of venues for workshops and other activities. The prevalence of youth theatres run by parent organisations with their own venue lends a stability to the sector, however, there are still 37% of youth theatres renting on a casual or weekly basis.

Figure 3.7 illustrates common terms and conditions which apply to youth theatres’ use of venues.

Figure 3.7: Terms and Conditions of Venue Use



Figures are based on 43 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

- The biggest group of youth theatres rented their venue on a casual or weekly basis (37%). These included autonomous youth theatres renting local community centres, school halls, etc. (e.g., Gonzo Youth Theatre) as well as some youth theatres run by parent organisations renting space at local arts centres (e.g., Roscommon County Youth Theatre).
- 14% of youth theatres were using a venue that was donated free of charge on a long-term or casual basis. These youth theatres were from a range of models and included a youth theatre run by an amateur drama group (Ardclough Youth Theatre) whose venue is donated on a casual/weekly basis and an autonomous youth theatre whose venue is donated on a long-term basis (Tallaght Youth Theatre). These were typically local partnership arrangements for community-driven youth theatres.

*“Our Rehearsal Venue was provided free of charge by Leixlip Parish Centre”  
Explore Youth Theatre Leader*

- 11% of youth theatres leased their own premises and were likely to call it ‘their youth theatre space’. These are primarily older, established autonomous youth theatres (e.g., Sligo Youth Theatre) and slightly younger youth theatres with large membership levels (e.g., M.A.D Youth Theatre). A further 12% of youth theatres benefitted from premises leased by their parent organisation. This was common amongst youth theatres run by theatre companies (e.g., Kilkenny Youth Theatre) but was also reported by a youth theatre run by a new Dublin arts centre which leases a city-centre venue (Complex Youth Theatre).
- No Centre Stage +20 youth theatre owned their own space, but 19% of youth theatres benefitted from the stability of venues owned by their parent organisations, particularly arts centres. Dublin Youth Theatre was the only youth theatre which owned its own venue. Centre Stage (1998) noted that their building was in poor repair and was too small for activities and the youth theatre has recently managed to sell its building and move to a more suitable leased space.

### Suitability of Venue

Of the 43 respondents to this question in the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire:

- 88% felt the venue they used for activities with young people was suitable, a decrease of 7% in the past decade;
- Five youth theatres reported that their venue was not suitable, citing heat, size and cost as the key reasons they were not satisfied with the venue. One venue was deemed to be in bad repair.

Though there is a decrease in satisfaction with youth theatre venues over the past decade, the vast majority of youth theatres continue to be satisfied with the quality of the venue they use. The youth theatres that were unhappy with the suitability of their venue were primarily autonomous youth theatres (four out of five). The larger youth theatres were frustrated with the quality of space they were able to lease on a long-term basis in terms of the size of workshop space available and dealing with damp and cold. The smaller youth theatres were frustrated with the quality of local spaces they could rent on a casual/weekly basis for workshops. Cost was the prohibitive factor for all five in terms of finding a more suitable venue.

Rent or Mortgage payments were the key funding challenge for four Centre Stage +20 youth theatres and this issue was included in the ‘Top 5’ funding challenges for 59% of Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire respondents.

*“Space hire is our main funding issue” Lightbulb Youth Theatre Leader*

Young people were very positive about the venues where youth theatre took place, with only 1% finding that the choice of venues made it difficult for them to take part in youth theatre. It was also the lowest rated barrier to participation that members perceived other young people might have experienced.

The Youth Theatre Ireland Youth Board consulted with members from youth theatres based in venues and arts centres in 2018<sup>11</sup> and found that, of the 61 respondents, 97% were positive about the venue

<sup>11</sup> ‘A Youth Perspective on Venues for Youth Theatres’, Youth Theatre Ireland Youth Board, 2018. Prepared for the ‘Youth At The Centre’ Seminar, February 2018.

where they were based and 92% felt ‘relaxed’ in that space. Young people did feel that their relationship with their venues could improve. They advised giving members more input into decision-making which effected their participation at the venue, and asked that venue staff support and engage with their work. Members felt that venues would benefit from involving young people in their activities, with one member stating that this approach would “show that [the] venue is for all members of the community”.

#### Location of Administrative Work

The venue profile relates primarily to the facility where youth theatres engage in direct work with members, however leaders spend 46% of their working week carrying out administrative work in other types of venues. Of the 44 respondents to this question in the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire:

- 66% carried out administration work at the homes of youth theatre leaders;
- 16% carried out administration work at the office/venue of the youth theatre;
- 18% carried out administration work at the office/venue of their parent organisation;
- 14% carried out administration work at an arts centre/community centre.

#### Conclusions

Though the vast majority of youth theatres are satisfied with their venues, some have urgent problems which need to be addressed.

There is some evidence to suggest that venues make a considerable, yet un-measured in-kind contribution to youth theatres and there exists potential for this to be formalised and replicated.

## 3.4 Human Resources

#### Key Findings

- The 55 Centre Stage +20 youth theatres report a total of 530 leaders who contribute to the running of their groups, an average of 9.6 leaders per youth theatre.
- Human resources have had to expand within youth theatres to cope with changes in management and governance. Nearly a quarter of leaders are now described as board/committee members and 60% of leaders are working on a voluntary basis.
- Paid youth theatre leaders are central to the provision of youth theatre having been paid to deliver 458 hours of activities during census week, (55% of all activities) even though they represent 40% of youth theatre leaders.
- The human resources narrative in youth theatre is complex due to the mix of voluntary and paid leaders as well as the number of voluntary hours contributed by paid leaders.

Figure 3.8 depicts the number and type of leaders reported by Centre Stage +20 youth theatres through the Census Questionnaire.

Figure 3.8: Number and Type of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 530 leaders reported by 55 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire.

#### Centre Stage Context

Many youth theatres from the 1980s and 1990s were driven by the commitment and passion of an individual youth theatre leader. Centre Stage (1998) presented a picture of most youth theatres emerging from “small, *ad hoc* beginnings and were usually the vision of just one person.”<sup>12</sup> These founders often assembled small teams to help develop the programme of activities as the youth theatre grew and became established. As Section 2.3.4 discusses, older youth theatres had quite informal structures and approaches to governance. In general, leaders were focused on delivering youth theatre activities for members and that is where human resources were focused.

By 2009, Centre Stage +10 had witnessed a growth in the number of paid leaders (61%) who were working in the youth theatre sector working in partnership with voluntary leaders (29%) and those who were receiving token payments. Volunteerism was still sustaining the viability of many youth

<sup>12</sup> Centre Stage, Marieva Coughlan, Youth Theatre Ireland (previously NAYD), 1998, Page 20

theatres with 58% of leaders contributing voluntary hours. Centre Stage +10 also marked a shift in where human resources were directed within youth theatre management, with 51% of work carried out during Census Week (2007) being categorised as administration (including planning and other management activities) to support the direct work with young people.

### Human Resources Profile

The Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaires demonstrate that:

- The 55 Centre Stage +20 youth theatres were run by 530 leaders.

Youth theatres broke down these leaders into different types:

- 152 youth theatre leaders worked regularly with the youth theatre (29%);
- 64 Young Leaders, aged 18 to 25, worked regularly with the youth theatre (12%);
- 128 board/committee members (24%);
- 88 occasional staff/volunteers who worked on specific projects/events, etc.(17%);
- 48 staff/volunteers from the parent organisations that ran youth theatres such as arts centres, theatre companies, youth services, etc. (9%);
- 50 'other' leaders, including third level student placements and some 'once-off' freelance facilitators (9%).

Through the Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaire, youth theatres reported that amongst 440<sup>13</sup> leaders:

- 60% were volunteers (263 leaders);
- 40% were paid leaders (177 leaders).

*“People are our greatest resource.” Blessington Youth Theatre Leader*

### Increase in Voluntary Leaders in the Sector

There has been a significant increase in the number of voluntary leaders as autonomous youth theatres have formalised their structures and governance over the past decade. Youth theatres record between two and 14 board/committee members and 24% of all leaders were in this category. This expansion of human resources to cope with changes in the management and governance of the youth theatre is the key change in the past decade.

The highest numbers of volunteers are found in autonomous youth theatres (particularly those with a completely voluntary ethos such as Explore Youth Theatre or Blessington Youth Theatre) and youth theatres run by amateur drama groups (e.g., Mosttrim Youth Players). Sixteen youth theatres registered eight or more volunteers and had a total of 171 volunteers. This concentration of volunteers in particular youth theatres meant that 65% of the volunteers were concentrated in 29% of the youth theatres. The highest number of volunteers was reported by County Limerick Youth Theatre with 18 volunteers. The roles of voluntary leaders are explored fully in Section 6.2.5.

### Paid Leaders in the Sector

The 40% of youth theatre leaders who were paid were typically regular youth theatre leaders, occasional staff/volunteers who contributed to the youth theatre programme and staff of parent organisations. There tend to be smaller numbers of paid regular leaders within youth theatres and larger numbers of paid, freelance practitioners who are working on an occasional basis. Leaders report difficulties in securing core funding to develop regular paid roles for youth theatre leaders (See Section 3.1.1). Many of these paid leaders who work on a regular basis with the youth theatre are the key drivers of their group but now need to be supported by a much wider team of leaders to cope with changes in regulatory and legislative compliance which have impacted on youth theatre management and governance over the past decade (See Section 2.4). The average number of paid leaders amongst the 53 youth theatres who reported on this issue was 3.3 whereas the average number of volunteers was

<sup>13</sup> In some cases, youth theatres did not report on the voluntary or paid status of all leaders so the sample size is different.

five. The exception to this case was Limerick Youth Theatre who described 30 different paid roles for leaders who contributed regularly to the youth theatre. The roles of paid leaders are explored fully in Section 6.2.6.

Youth theatres run by parent organisations generally report significantly smaller teams of leaders than other models.

### Case Study – Celbridge Youth Drama

Celbridge Youth Drama is an autonomous youth theatre (unincorporated association) that was founded in 2002 and has a small membership size. Its annual income is in the €0 to €5,000 category and its programme of activities usually runs throughout the year, with occasional summer breaks.

Celbridge Youth Drama is run by five committee members who work on a completely voluntary basis to programme and deliver all artistic activities, including facilitating workshops, directing and producing youth theatre productions and organising trips. The committee members also provide governance, strategic direction and financial management for the youth theatre as well as taking responsibility for child protection, communications, marketing and other youth theatre tasks. One of the committee members is a Young Leader. The youth theatre will also contract guest facilitators/practitioners for individual workshops or projects when funding allows.

### Case Study – Limerick Youth Theatre

Limerick Youth Theatre is an autonomous youth theatre (an unincorporated association with charitable status) that was founded in 1997 and has a medium sized membership. Its annual income is in the €50,000 to €100,000 category and its programme of activities runs throughout the year.

The youth theatre has two part-time staff:

- An Artistic Director who designs the annual programme; appoints the creative teams and crew; manages the personnel; and oversees the creative, educational and financial aspects of the organisation.
- An Administrator who oversees all aspects of administration, including financial management, report writing and drafting funding applications.

Limerick Youth Theatre is assisted by two art support workers through the Community Employment Scheme run by the Umbrella Project CLG.

The delivery of the youth theatre programme of workshops, projects and productions is supported by up to 30 contracted practitioners who work on specific aspects of the programme and include facilitators, directors, designers, choreographers, technicians, etc. The youth theatre has two Young Leaders and approximately five occasional staff/volunteers who support the delivery of work.

The board of Limerick Youth Theatre has five board members who are responsible for governance and overseeing the strategic direction of the youth theatre.

### Analysis of Human Resources within Census Week

The Centre Stage +20 Census Week captured a busy week for leaders and members, with 321 different activities taking place in the 42 participating youth theatres.

- Leaders delivered 172 activities which involved young people (54%) and supported this work with 149 other managerial tasks (46%) to ensure the smooth running of the youth theatre.

The percentage of administration/management work was just below that of Centre Stage +10, but still accounted for 360.5 hours. Leaders were able to achieve greater hours of direct work with young people in this Census Week (419.5 hours) through longer rehearsals and project activity work, as well

as day-long exchange programmes. Interestingly, young people were also involved in contributing just over 24 hours in administration/management tasks to support the running of their youth theatre.

Census Week 2017 provides a snapshot of the human resources necessary to deliver this level of activity on a weekly basis:

- 251 youth theatre leaders from 44 youth theatres worked to deliver youth theatre activities during Census Week, an average of 5.7 leaders per youth theatre;
- Of these leaders: 39% were regular youth theatre leaders; 19% were board/committee members; 16% were occasional staff/volunteers; 10% were Young Leaders; and 9% were staff/volunteers from a parent organisation.

The Census Week data demonstrates the complex relationship between paid leaders, voluntary leaders and paid leaders donating additional voluntary hours to deliver this level of frontline work with young people and behind-the-scenes administration.

- Leaders volunteered their time in 64% of Census Week Activities (207 activities) or for 432 hours.
- Leaders were paid for their time in 55% of Census Week Activities (177 activities) or for 458 hours.

Paid leaders are working longer hours and form only 40% of the overall number of leaders in the sector. Paid leaders are also donating their time on a voluntary basis to varying degrees, with 31% of leaders describing themselves as 'paid with additional voluntary hours'.

Table 3.2 details the number and percentage of different types of youth theatre activities in which leaders were paid for their time or have volunteered their time. The data from Census Week shows that:

- Leaders were slightly more likely to be paid for contact hours with young people and artistic planning;
- Leaders were slightly less likely to be paid for the behind the scenes work which makes activities with young people possible: administrative tasks, membership recruitment, theatre production tasks, taking part in training and attending events on behalf of the youth theatre.

**Table 3.2 Analysis of Census Week Activities by Nature of Leader's Engagement**

	Leaders volunteered their time		Leaders were paid for their time	
	%	Count	%	Count
An activity involving youth theatre members/ young people	54.6%	113	65.5%	116
An administrative task (e.g., finance, membership forms, project admin, policies, reporting & compliance)	16.9%	35	18.1%	32
An artistic planning session (e.g., for workshops, reading scripts)	7.7%	16	14.1%	25
A meeting (e.g., with funders, with a venue, with staff from parent organisation)	2.9%	6	2.8%	5
A board/committee meeting	1.0%	2	0.0%	0
Fundraising & funding applications	1.9%	4	3.4%	6
A training activity	1.9%	4	0.0%	0
Membership recruitment	0.5%	1	0.0%	0
Mentorship for Young Leaders	0.5%	1	0.0%	0
Communications (e.g., with members, social media YT promotion)	8.2%	17	11.3%	20
Theatre production (e.g., set construction, sourcing materials, programmes)	9.7%	20	4.0%	7
Attending an event on behalf of the youth theatre	1.5%	3	0.6%	1

A child protection or welfare task (e.g., dealing with a concern, seeking advice)	1.5%	3	1.7%	3
Travel	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Documenting work of the youth theatre	1.5%	3	3.4%	6
Evaluation	1.0%	2	1.7%	3
Other	2.4%	5	4.0%	7

*Figures are based on 321 activities which were logged during the Centre Stage +20 Census Week and described 414 types of activities/tasks. Some administrative activities incorporated multiple tasks. Paid leaders and voluntary leaders worked together on many activities. Percentages are rounded to one decimal point.*

## Conclusions

Youth theatres need to be supported to deliver their services effectively to young people, by clarifying and streamlining approaches to youth theatre administration and offering training which simplifies this area of work.

The training and support needs of voluntary leaders need to be taken into account by Youth Theatre Ireland and other bodies when planning development, training and programme activities.

The scale of human resources needed to run a youth theatre needs to inform development strategies with new youth theatres and advocacy with youth theatre stakeholders, policy-makers and funders. The terms and conditions of facilitator contracts and grant agreements should match the scale of human resources needed to carry out the work.