

Chapter 6: Youth Theatre Leaders

“Youth theatre is a place where young people discover themselves through theatre. It has given me the tools and skills to become an actor.”



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6.1 Youth Theatre Leaders – Profile

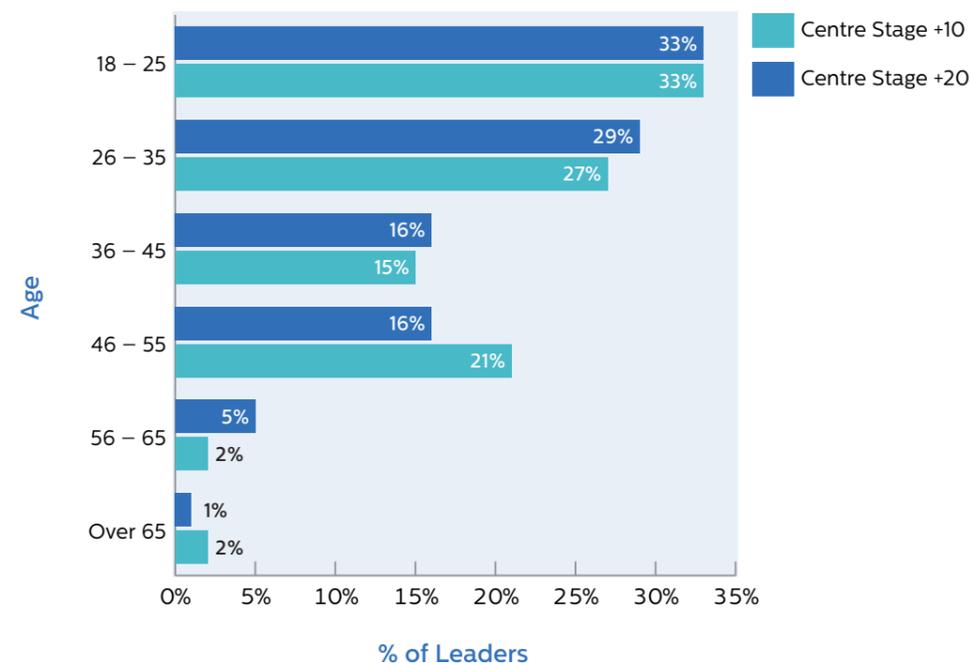
6.1.1 Age and Gender

Key Findings

- A third of leaders are aged 18 to 25 and two-thirds are aged 26 or older.
- The majority of youth theatre leaders are female (59%). However, the gender ratio is more equal in the 18 to 25 age group where 48% of leaders are female.
- On average, male leaders have more years of experience (5.4 years) than female leaders (4.8 years) due to the higher rate of women joining the sector in the older age ranges with no prior youth theatre experience.

Figure 6.1 charts the age profile of youth theatre leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires in Centre Stage +20 and Centre Stage +10 research projects.

Figure 6.1: Age Profile of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 76 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and 52 respondents from Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

Centre Stage and Centre Stage +10 both reported that about a third of leaders were Young Leaders aged 18 to 25 and about two-thirds of leaders were aged 26 or over. Centre Stage also identified young people aged under 18 as Young Leaders. However, from 2009 onwards, leaders were only categorised as such when they could take legal responsibility for others at the age of 18. In Centre Stage +10, male leaders were younger than female leaders with 71% of male leaders aged under 35. The oldest leader who completed a Leader Questionnaire in Centre Stage +10 was 67.

A gender profile of leaders was first explored in Centre Stage, where the female-to-male ratio of leaders was 2:1. This improved only very slightly over the next decade and, by Centre Stage +10, the percentage of male leaders had only moved from 33% to 38%.

Age Profile of Leaders

The age profile of youth theatre leaders has changed very little in the past decade (Figure 6.1), with Leader Questionnaires demonstrating that a third of leaders are still aged 18 to 25 and two-thirds are still aged 26 or older.

The average age of male leaders does seem to be increasing and the Leader Questionnaires show a closer alignment between the age profile of male and female leaders:

- 63% of male leaders and 60% of female leaders are aged 35 or under;
- 37% of male leaders and 40% of female leaders are aged over 35.

Leader Questionnaire responses from 76 leaders show that:

- A third of all leaders are Young Leaders aged 18 to 25.

These were the largest cohort of leaders to complete Leader Questionnaires. These Young Leaders were typically working in youth theatres where they were once a member (17 leaders out of 25). All of these leaders had experience of being a youth theatre member. Nearly half of this cohort (48%) were working on a voluntary basis and only three Young Leaders classed themselves as 'paid'. The remaining 40% balanced voluntary and paid hours.

- Nearly three out of 10 leaders are aged between 26 and 35 (29%).

The majority of these leaders (14 out of 22 leaders) did not have experience of being a youth theatre member. For those who had been members, three-quarters were still working in the same youth theatre. Of the leaders in this age group, 36% were working on a voluntary basis and 23% were being paid. The remaining 41% were balancing a mixture of paid and voluntary hours.

- Nearly one in six leaders are aged between 36 and 45 (16%).

Half of these leaders did not have experience of being a member (six out of 12 leaders). However, three of the leaders who had been members were still working in the same youth theatre. Three-quarters of this cohort were paid or were paid and doing additional voluntary hours.

- Nearly one in six leaders are aged between 46 and 55 (16%).

Three quarters of this group did not have experience as a youth theatre member and the three leaders who did, all came from Dublin Youth Theatre but were working with different groups. Half of this group were working on a voluntary basis and a third were paid, or were paid and doing additional voluntary hours.

- Only 5% of leaders are aged 56 to 65.

This group were working with the same youth theatre for between two and 22 years. Nobody in this group had experience of being a member in youth theatre. These leaders were mainly voluntary with some paid hours. Only one leader aged over 65 completed a Leader Questionnaire.

The profiles for these age ranges highlight a few particular trends:

- Leaders in the youngest age ranges were most likely to have been a youth theatre member;
- Leaders in the 36 to 45 age range were most likely to be paid for their work as a leader;
- The very youngest and oldest leaders were most likely to be working on a voluntary basis;
- The likelihood that a leader was working in the youth theatre where they were a member decreased with age.

Gender Profile of Leaders

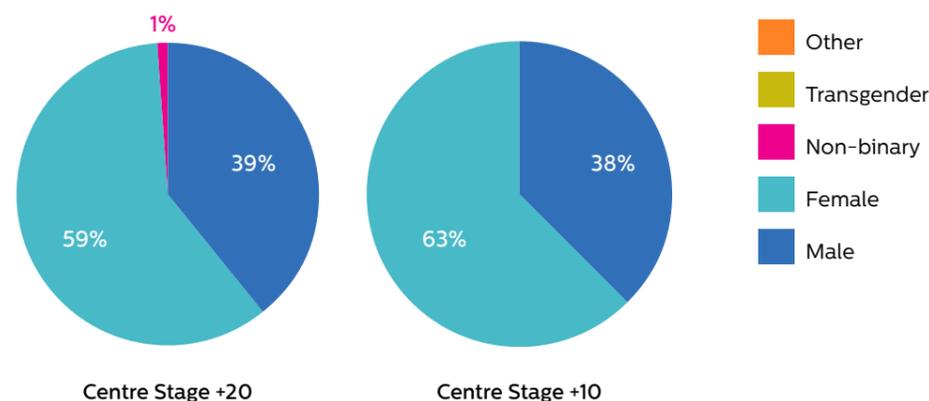
Centre Stage +20's exploration of gender is now inclusive of non-binary and transgender leaders as well as those who would choose alternative descriptors. Leader questionnaires (76) show that:

- 40% of leaders are male;
- 59% of leaders are female;
- 1% of leaders are non-binary. No leaders described themselves as transgender or chose alternative descriptions for their gender.

The overall gender breakdown of leaders is similar to that of the membership (38% male/58% female/4% non-binary, transgender and 'other'). The percentage of male leaders in the sector has only increased by 2.5% since Centre Stage +10.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the gender profile of youth theatre leaders from the Centre Stage +20 and Centre Stage +10 research projects.

Figure 6.2: Gender Profile of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 76 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and 56 respondents from Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Gender Profile and Age Ranges

The gender breakdown does vary according to the age profile of the leaders. The gender breakdown of the Young Leaders group (age 18 to 25) was 48% male, 48% female and 4% non-binary. This equal participation rate between male and female leaders is similar to the gender breakdown of senior youth theatre members with four or more years of experience. Once leaders emerge into the 26 to 35 age range, the male-to-female ratio is roughly 2:3 for the remainder of the age ranges.

Gender and Length of Youth Theatre Experience

Gender also impacts on the average length of experience a leader has with a youth theatre. Table 6.1 details the average length of youth theatre experience (by years) that male and female leaders reported according to different age ranges. It is clear that the male leaders have a longer average length of experience than female leaders and this gap increases as the male leaders get older. Youth Theatre Ireland membership data shows that some of the longest serving youth theatre leaders are women, with decades of facilitation and leadership experience between them. However, the rate of new female leaders joining the sector is higher than male leaders and this lowers the average length of youth theatre experience for women. This is particularly true of the '46 & Up' age range where the tradition continues of new women from this age category joining the sector.

Table 6.1: Average Length of Youth Theatre Experience – Gender Comparison

	Average Length of Experience By Years			
	All leaders	Age 26 & Up	Age 36 & Up	Age 46 & Up
Male	5.45	7.86	10.2	10.6
Female	4.8	5.7	5.6	5.0

Figures are based on 76 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to one decimal point.

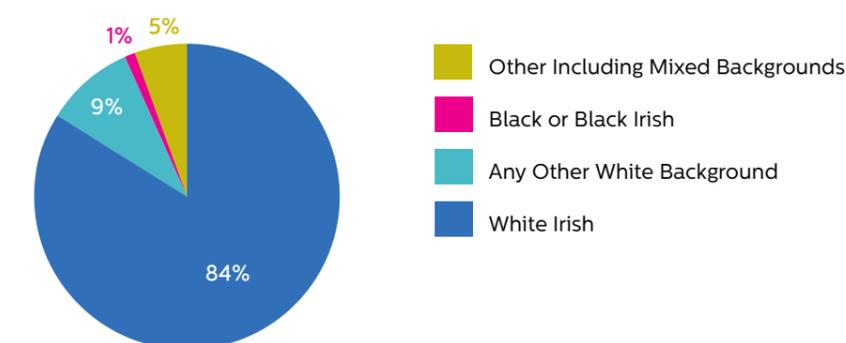
6.1.2 Ethnic and Cultural Background

Key Findings

- 16% of youth theatre leaders come from an ethnically diverse background.
- The largest cohort amongst these leaders (10%) describe themselves as having 'Any Other White Background' and come from a range of EU, American and Australian backgrounds.

Figure 6.3 depicts the ethnic/cultural background of the youth theatre leaders who completed Leaders Questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +20.

Figure 6.3: Ethnic/Cultural Background of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 75 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

Data on the ethnic/cultural background of youth theatre leaders has not previously been gathered in the Centre Stage research.

Current Ethnic/Cultural Background Profile of Leaders

Youth theatre leaders are primarily from a White Irish ethnic and cultural background, with 84% of 75 leaders who completed questionnaires describing themselves as 'White Irish'.

- 10% of leaders described themselves as coming from 'any other white background' and listed European backgrounds (Greek, Danish, French, etc.) and Australian or American backgrounds.
- 5% of leaders described themselves as coming from a range of 'Other' or 'Mixed' backgrounds and used descriptions including: 'Brazilian', 'Mixed Race', 'Mixed – Chinese and Caucasian' and 'Irish/Middle Eastern'.
- One leader described themselves as coming from 'Any other black background'.

Interestingly, youth theatre leaders currently report a slightly higher rate of diversity (16%) than the youth theatre membership (12%).

6.1.3 Why are Leaders Involved in Youth Theatre?

Key Findings

- Leaders are involved in youth theatre because they believe it can have a positive impact on the personal, social and creative development of young people and they enjoy the experience of creating theatre with young people.
- Leaders' top reason for being involved in youth theatre was 'I believe that youth theatre can have a positive impact on young people's lives'.

Table 6.2 details the key reasons why leaders are involved in youth theatre. Youth theatre leaders were asked to rank 12 statements in their questionnaire to ascertain their reasons for being involved. The text of these statements was changed for Centre Stage +20 based on feedback from leaders in Centre Stage +10, so there is no comparable data.

Table 6.2: Reasons Leaders are Involved in Youth Theatre

	Overall Rank	Number of Leaders who Ranked Statement # 1	% of Leaders who included Statement in Top 5
I believe that youth theatre can have a positive impact on young people's lives	1	24	81.9%
I like making theatre with young people and being involved in their creative development	2	13	78.7%
I enjoy working with young people and being involved in their personal and social development	3	7	78.7%
I used to be a youth theatre member and want other young people to have that experience too	4	9	44.3%
I want my community to have a youth theatre	5	3	39.3%
I like creating new theatre productions with young people	6	0	41.0%
I like the sense of community in the youth theatre	7	1	34.4%
I like facilitating youth theatre workshops	8	1	37.7%
I get valuable experience that helps build my career	9	3	24.6%
The youth theatre is supporting me to develop as a youth theatre leader/facilitator	10	0	13.1%
I enjoy the company of other youth theatre leaders	11	0	14.8%
I'm a professional drama facilitator, youth theatre is one of the settings I work in	12	0	3.3%

Figures are based on 61 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to one decimal point.

Centre Stage Context

Leaders from Centre Stage (1998) and Centre Stage +10 (2009) enjoyed working with young people and being part of their artistic, social and personal development.

Current Reasons for Being Involved in Youth Theatre

Centre Stage +20 youth theatre leaders cited the following reasons for being involved in youth theatre:

1. I believe that youth theatre can have a positive impact on young people's lives (82% rated this in their 'Top 5');

This was the most popular reason amongst leaders and was ranked first by nearly four out of 10 leaders. Leaders believe that youth theatre can achieve transformative outcomes for members and want to make a difference in the lives of young people.

2. I like making theatre with young people and being involved in their creative development (79% rated this in their 'Top 5');
3. I enjoy working with young people and being involved in their personal and social development (79% rated this in their 'Top 5');

Nearly eight out of 10 leaders are passionate about supporting the development of young people, on a personal, social and creative level through the experience of youth theatre. Though these ratings are very similar, leaders were more likely to rank being involved in the creative development of young people as their first or second preference. Due to their own experience, skills and interests, leaders have a preference for supporting the development of young people through theatre and the arts.

4. I used to be a youth theatre member and want other young people to have that experience too (44% rated this in their 'Top 5');
5. I want my community to have a youth theatre (39% of leaders rated this in their 'Top 5').

Former youth theatre members want to 'give back' to an organisation that has impacted directly on their own lives and want that positive experience to be available to the next generation of young people. Nearly four out of every 10 leaders wants their own community to have a youth theatre and give their time to building this creative opportunity for young people in their area. Nearly half (49%) of the leaders who ranked these two statements in their 'Top 5' reasons were working on a completely voluntary basis.

A quarter of leaders were working with their youth theatre because they were gaining new skills, knowledge and experience that they believed were valuable for their career. Of these leaders, 60% were aged under 25 and classed as Young Leaders.

6.1.4 Employment History and Skills Acquisition

Key Findings

- Youth theatre leaders have a broad professional experience in theatre, with a specialism in drama facilitation (59%).
- Over half of all leaders also had voluntary experience in acting, facilitating and theatre production.
- Leaders are also bringing relevant skills and knowledge to their work in youth theatre from professional employment in other non-arts sectors.
- The skills leaders deem necessary to run a youth theatre have been honed through their third-level education (35%), youth theatre membership (32%), Youth Theatre Ireland training courses including ArtsTrain (29%), and other training courses (28%).

Table 6.3 outlines the professional employment and voluntary/amateur work experience of the leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +20. Leaders were asked if they had

professional and voluntary/amateur experience directly related to youth theatre and also if they had professional experience in a wide range of other sectors to explore the employment profile of leaders.

Table 6.3: Professional Employment and Voluntary/Amateur Work Experience of Leaders

Professional Employment	% of Leaders	Voluntary/Amateur Work	% of Leaders
Drama Facilitator	58.5%	Actor	65.2%
Youth Theatre Leader	46.2%	Drama Facilitator	55.1%
Actor	41.5%	Theatre Production	53.6%
Education	40.0%	Amateur Drama Group Member	46.4%
Director	38.5%	Director	44.9%
Theatre Sector (other role)	36.9%	Committee Member	42.0%
Community and Voluntary	30.8%	Youth Theatre Leader	37.7%
Youth Arts	29.2%	Arts and Culture (other role)	27.5%
Tourism and Hospitality	29.2%	Youth Arts	26.1%
Sales and Retail	26.2%	Community Development	21.7%
Youth Work	21.5%	Youth Club Leader	18.8%
Arts and Culture (other role)	21.5%	Other	10.1%
Business and Administration	16.9%		
Speech and Drama Teacher	13.9%		
Other	13.9%		
Social and Caring	12.3%		
Media and Publishing	7.7%		
Building and Construction	7.7%		
Science and Engineering	4.6%		
Civil and Public Service	3.1%		
Agriculture and Forestry	3.1%		
Medical and Healthcare	3.1%		

Professional Employment figures are based on 65 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and Voluntary/Amateur Work figures are based on 69 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to one decimal point.

Centre Stage Context

In 1997/1998, the most common way for youth theatre leaders to train was to ‘learn by doing’ – a learn by trial and error approach which was supplemented by some Youth Theatre Ireland courses. By 2009, youth theatre leaders were developing their skill set as a youth theatre leader through a combination of professional experience, voluntary work, qualifications in theatre and non-arts subjects and youth theatre membership. Of the 50 leaders who responded to the question in the Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaire, 42% had a professional qualification in theatre/drama.

Work Experience

Professional Experience

The cohort of 77 leaders who completed Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires have a broad professional history in theatre and the arts. Nearly 60% of leaders who completed Centre Stage +20 questionnaires have worked professionally as drama facilitators. Some acknowledge their employment within participative arts and theatre experiences such as youth theatre, drama facilitation and youth arts. Others have worked professionally as an actor or director, or in the wider theatre/arts sector. Nine leaders also mentioned working as a speech and drama teacher.

Leaders had also worked professionally across a range of other sectors. It is interesting to note that the most prevalent of these, were related sectors such as education (40%), community and voluntary (31%) and youth work (22%).

As might be expected, leaders who were working in a paid capacity in a youth theatre were more likely to have professional experience in facilitation, theatre and the arts sector. However, 48% of voluntary leaders had previously worked professionally as a drama facilitator so their skill level should not be underestimated because of the nature of their voluntary engagement. Voluntary leaders were more likely to have worked professionally in non-arts sectors. These were primarily leaders who were assisting with administration, management and governance and bringing a wide range of professional skills to the youth theatre sector.

Voluntary Work

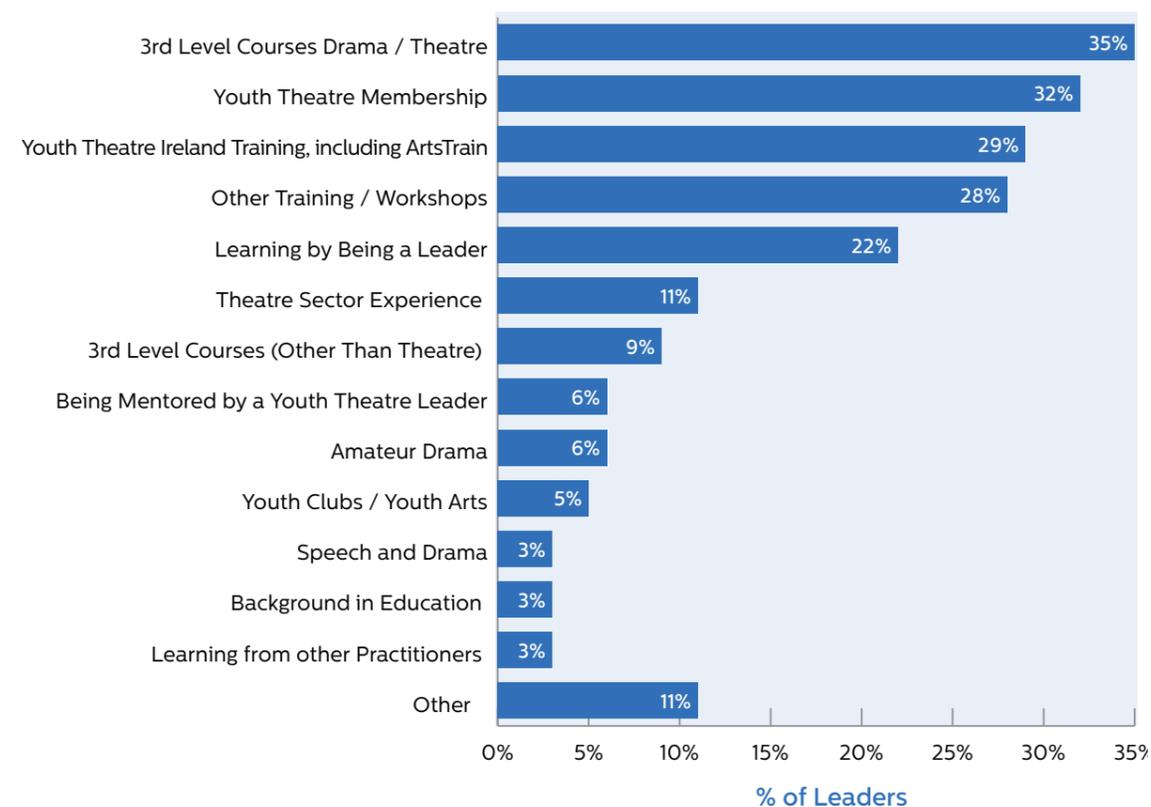
The voluntary or amateur work most commonly mentioned by youth theatre leaders as being relevant to their youth theatre roles were acting, drama facilitation, theatre production, participating in an amateur drama group, directing and experience of being a committee member. Voluntary leaders were more likely to mention having been an amateur drama group member, a voluntary youth theatre leader, a committee member or a youth arts leader. Paid youth theatre leaders were more likely to mention having been a voluntary drama facilitator or director or having carried out voluntary work in theatre production or in the wider arts sector.

Skills Acquisition

Youth theatre leaders were asked where they had acquired the skills they regularly use in youth theatre and what, if any, specific training or courses had helped. Leaders described a complex and personal mix of: education; training, experience in theatre and youth theatre; engagement in amateur drama and youth work; and learning from their peers. About a fifth of leaders (22%) cited ‘learning by being a leader’ and valued the active and experimental approach mentioned by leaders in other Centre Stage research projects. However, in 2019, leaders are now seeking to build the increasingly varied skill set of a youth theatre leader through a wide range of different experiences, courses and training opportunities.

Figure 6.4 charts the key experiences and training/courses which helped Centre Stage +20 youth theatre leaders acquire the skills they use regularly as a youth theatre leader.

Figure 6.4: Where do Leaders Acquire the skills they regularly use as Youth Theatre Leaders?



Figures are based on 65 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Education

- 35% of leaders mentioned gaining skills through third level theatre/drama courses.

This was the most popular source of relevant training in Centre Stage +20 (a drop of 7% since 2009). There has been a significant growth in third level theatre courses in Ireland across the last decade, with Trinity College, The LIR, UCC, UCD, UCG, Mary Immaculate College, DIT, Sligo IT, WIT all offering a variety of courses at BA and MA level.

Many youth theatre leaders in the 35+ age range have also participated in part-time third-level courses such as MA's in Drama and Theatre at UCD and UCC, and Maynooth University's Certificate in Directing or Certificate in Youth Arts (delivered and managed by the Arts Programme at the National Youth Council of Ireland).

"Many years performing and learning my craft through classes and workshops has helped. I also attended university: BA Hons Drama, HND Social Care, MA in Performance Practices."
An Grianán Youth Theatre Leader

Youth theatre leaders are 10% less likely to have a speech and drama diploma than they were in 1998. Only two leaders mentioned this as relevant experience.

Youth Theatre Membership

- 32% of leaders felt being a member was an important way to acquire leadership skills and understand the ethos of youth theatre.

Being a member was deemed to be a good training ground for becoming a youth theatre leader and was the second most mentioned way of acquiring the skill set of a youth theatre leader. The importance of membership has increased 8% for leaders over the past decade.

Some leaders mentioned informal mentorship by their old youth theatre leader as being key to their development. The training cycle from membership to Young Leader to Youth Theatre Leader has existed since the early days of youth theatre, however this process and mentorship experience has been particularly effective for this cohort in the survey. Young Leaders are explored in detail in Section 6.3.

"I acquired much of the skills I use during my time as a youth theatre member. I learned a lot from my youth theatre leader"
Monaghan Youth Theatre Leader

"Through experience as a member of a youth theatre and through mentorship with the leader of my youth theatre"
County Limerick Youth Theatre Leader

Training Courses

- 29% of leaders mentioned Youth Theatre Ireland's training programme (including ArtsTrain) as a key aid to developing the skill set of a youth theatre leader.

Youth theatre leaders look to Youth Theatre Ireland's training programme for opportunities to develop the specific set of skills they need to become youth theatre leaders: facilitation skills, specialist theatre skills, welfare and child protection knowledge and skills, youth theatre management skills, etc. Eight of the leaders had completed ArtsTrain, a 'FETAC Level 6' course in Drama Facilitation offered by Youth Theatre Ireland until 2017. These leaders saw that course as invaluable in developing the skills necessary to facilitate youth theatre and become a youth theatre leader.

"ArtsTrain provided me with the tools to create a drama workshop, and the confidence and skills to deliver effectively."
Activate Youth Theatre Leader

A further 28% of leaders mentioned other kinds of training courses that have been useful. Leaders mentioned specific circus courses, international training opportunities in Stanislavski, Playback Theatre, Forum Theatre and other specialist areas as well as the Drama League of Ireland Summer School.

6.1.5 Skill Levels and Training

Key Findings

- Youth theatre leaders are confident of their workshop facilitation skills with 74% of leaders rating themselves 'expert' or 'proficient'.
- Leaders are also confident of their ability to support young people and their participation, with 70% of leaders rating themselves 'expert' or 'proficient'.
- Youth theatre leaders are least confident in administration/management skills, with 32% and 37% of leaders rating themselves a 'novice' for 'Financial Management' and 'Funding Applications and Reporting' respectively.
- Leaders are engaging in professional development activities on an ongoing basis with 62% taking part in a training course in the past two years.
- Leaders are most likely to seek out training in areas where they are most confident: theatre and facilitation, and supporting young people's participation/child protection.

Table 6.4 details the levels of expertise that youth theatre leaders assessed they had for the role they carried out in youth theatre.

Table 6.4: Self-Assessment of Expertise Levels – Youth Theatre Leaders						
	5 Expert	4 Proficient	3 Competent	2 Advanced Beginner	1 Novice	No. of Leaders
Workshop Facilitation	37%	37%	21%	6%	0%	52
Workshop Facilitation Assistant	41%	27%	11%	8%	14%	37
Directing	20%	35%	24%	10%	10%	49
Theatre Production Work	21%	43%	26%	11%	0%	47
Artistic Planning	23%	25%	38%	8%	8%	40
Project Planning & Co-ordination	23%	28%	30%	14%	5%	43
Recruitment of Members	16%	8%	42%	18%	16%	38
Child Protection & Welfare	24%	30%	22%	20%	4%	46
Liaising with Youth Theatre Ireland	18%	29%	29%	8%	16%	38
Supporting young people and their participation	40%	30%	15%	6%	9%	53
Administration	13%	26%	33%	22%	7%	46
Strategic Planning	8%	25%	28%	22%	17%	36
Managing/Mentoring Staff, Volunteers or Young Leaders	8%	36%	28%	13%	15%	39
Marketing, Communication & Social Media	11%	18%	41%	20%	9%	44
Evaluation & Documentation	3%	22%	35%	27%	14%	37
Participating in Training	27%	27%	34%	5%	7%	41
Financial Management	3%	26%	15%	24%	32%	34
Funding Applications & Reporting	6%	23%	11%	23%	37%	35
Fundraising	5%	13%	28%	23%	31%	39
Governance & Committee Member Duties	12%	24%	15%	18%	32%	34
Compliance & Regulation	9%	25%	28%	13%	25%	32

Figures are based on 63 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

Centre Stage +20 gathers data on skill levels (self-assessed) and training amongst youth theatre leaders for the first time in the Centre Stage research projects. There is no data for comparison from previous years.

Skill Levels of Youth Theatre Leaders

- 74% of leaders rated themselves as 'expert' or 'proficient' at Workshop Facilitation and a further 68% of leaders rated themselves 'expert' or 'proficient' at being a Workshop Facilitation Assistant.

Youth theatre leaders are confident of their facilitation skills, with very few leaders regarding themselves as an 'advanced beginner' or a 'novice'. Only seven leaders in the sample were not involved in workshop facilitation, with the vast majority working practically with young people to lead workshops and create theatre. This skill is at the heart of good quality youth theatre practice. Leaders are more likely to participate in training around theatre skills and facilitation (see below) as it tends to be the area of work they enjoy most. Youth Theatre Ireland in-house surveys and evaluations demonstrate that leaders consistently self-assess their skill levels in this area at a higher level. Leaders are fairly confident of their artistic planning skills, directing skills and theatre production work in general, with 48% to 64% rating themselves as 'expert' or 'proficient' in these fields.

- 32% of leaders rated themselves as a 'novice' for 'Financial Management' and 37% rated themselves a 'novice' for 'Funding Applications and Reporting'.

Youth theatre leaders were least confident of their financial management skills, with very low ratings for 'expert' in this category. In general, leaders rated their expertise in areas of youth theatre management and governance at lower levels. There were also low confidence levels for many leaders around compliance and regulation. Leaders' assessment of their skill levels in many management tasks peaked at 'competent' (e.g., evaluation and documentation; marketing, communications and social media; administration, etc.).

- 70% of leaders rated themselves as 'expert' or 'proficient' at 'supporting young people and their participation'.

Leaders are confident of their ability to support the young people who take part in their youth theatre activities. Maintaining members' interest and engagement, and supporting young people of all abilities to take part is central to a youth theatre leader's facilitation approach. Leaders were slightly less confident of their skill level when it came to 'child protection and welfare' with 54% rating themselves as 'expert' or 'proficient'. The youth theatre sector is still absorbing the statutory obligations of being a relevant service as described in Children First (2017) and gaining confidence in their understanding of the accompanying TUSLA guidance documents (2018).

Recent Training

Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires asked leaders to indicate what training they had participated in during the previous two years to explore whether there was a culture of up-skilling amongst leaders and to investigate the relationship between their self-assessment of skills and their training choices.

Of the 73 respondents:

- Six out of 10 leaders (62%) attended training in the past two years;
- Just over two-thirds of leaders with between two and 22 years of experience attended training in the last two years;
- Leaders with a year or less experience were at least 50% less likely to have attended training courses;
- Leaders working on a completely voluntary basis were also less likely to have attended training.

In general, leaders are engaged in continuing professional development. There is a culture of experienced youth theatre leaders participating in annual Youth Theatre Ireland courses and the data reveals leaders with up to 22 years of experience are taking part in regular theatre specialism/facilitation courses.

Of the training courses that 44 leaders indicated they had attended:

- 45% were short courses with an artistic focus: theatre specialism, facilitation, circus, etc.;
- 22% were short courses in child protection or supporting the inclusion of young people with additional needs;
- 25% were short courses related to the management of youth theatres (first aid, fire safety, GDPR, evaluation, etc.);

- 8% were longer, certified courses covering a range of subjects including theatre, facilitation, youth arts, and supporting young people with additional needs.

Broadening out the concept of training to include mentorship and one-to-one support from Youth Theatre Ireland staff, 45 leaders also registered:

- training in child protection (62%);
- training in workshop facilitation (51%);
- training in directing (36%);
- training in supporting young people and their participation (29%).

Interestingly, these popular training areas are a good match for the highest rated skills in the self-assessment exercise and centre on working with young people through theatre. Some of the least popular training areas were also the lowest rated skills in the self-assessment exercise, typically around youth theatre management. For example, only two people indicated they had participated in training around governance or fundraising and only three had participated in training around financial management or marketing, communications and social media. It is unclear whether the low level of training in areas where leaders had low confidence in their abilities was because of a lack of interest, a lack of training opportunities or a lack of time to prioritise this learning.

Conclusions

Having higher levels of diversity amongst youth theatre leaders should contribute to a more diverse membership in terms of age, gender and ethnicity/cultural background. Youth theatre leaders from diverse backgrounds need to be supported to maintain their engagement with youth theatre.

Leaders have a good standard of training and knowledge to help them lead youth theatre activities and have a culture which supports regular participation in training. It is important to invest in training and education so as to positively impact on the outcomes of participation for young people. All new leaders need quality training opportunities to ensure they develop the skill set to deliver quality experiences for young people, specifically youth theatre facilitation training. Training should be targeted at both the key training interests and needs of leaders and delivered in a way that is accessible to a broad range of leaders (including Young Leaders and volunteers).

Youth theatre leaders are driven by very altruistic motives to be part of the personal, social and artistic development of young people in their community. Their huge commitment to young people and the level of volunteerism amongst leaders should be valued but not taken advantage of by the sector and its funders.

6.2 Youth Theatre Leaders – Participation

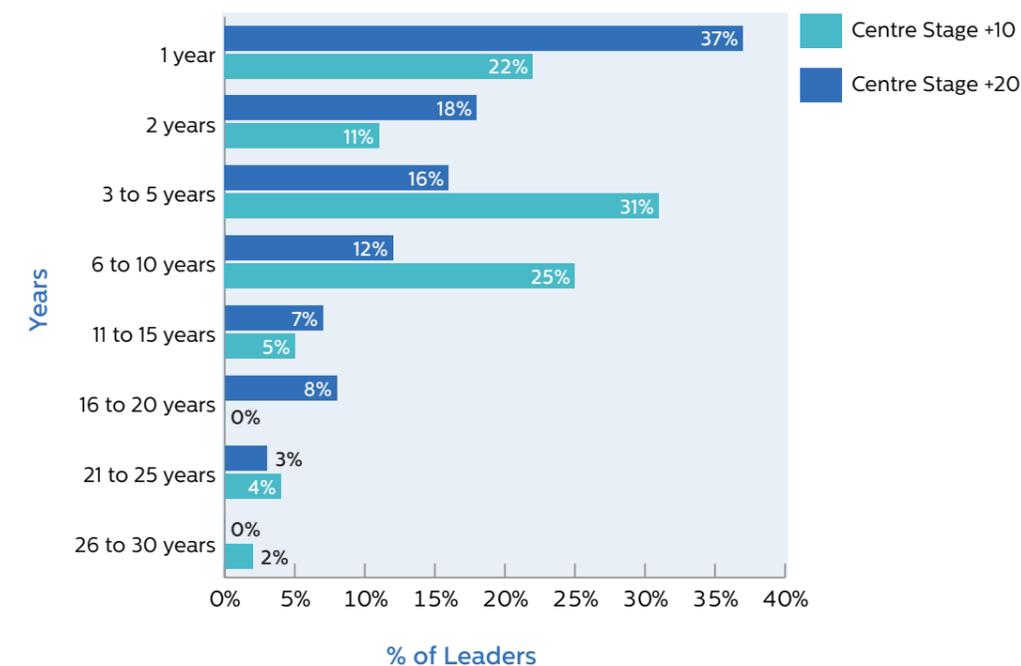
6.2.1 Leadership Experience

Key Findings

- Leaders that participated in Centre Stage +20 have a combined experience of 395 years. This includes a wide range of Young Leaders, emerging facilitators, experienced board members and expert youth theatre leaders.
- The average length of experience of a youth theatre leader is 5.2 years and the maximum reported was 22 years.
- Leaders are also building their experience in other youth theatre settings:
 - 30% of leaders had worked as a guest facilitator at another youth theatre;
 - 28% of leaders had once worked for another youth theatre on a regular basis;
 - Six leaders are working regularly with two or three youth theatres.

Figure 6.5 compares the length of leadership experience held by youth theatre leaders in Centre Stage +20 and Centre Stage +10.

Figure 6.5: Length of Experience of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 73 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and 55 respondents from Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

The vast majority of youth theatre leaders in Centre Stage (1998) and Centre Stage +10 (2009) were working with one youth theatre at a time. Many youth theatre leaders were working with one youth theatre throughout their life, however a small group of leaders began building their experience in multiple youth theatres. In 1998, only four leaders reported working with another youth theatre. A decade later, 18% of leaders were working regularly with two youth theatres and one leader was working regularly with three groups.

As the youth theatre sector was maturing in 2009, youth theatre leaders from Centre Stage +10 were becoming more experienced. Centre Stage +10 leaders had an average of 4.8 years of experience between them and one leader had worked with the same group for 27 years.

Length of Experience

The age profile of leaders explored in Section 6.1.1 demonstrates a wide range of Young Leaders, emerging facilitators and experienced leaders working within the youth theatre sector during the Centre Stage +20 research period.

The Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires captured the experience of 77 leaders from 32 different youth theatres and showed that:

- The average length of experience of a youth theatre leader was 5.2 years (an increase of 0.4 years from Centre Stage +10);
- The maximum length of time working for a youth theatre was 22 years (a decrease of five years from Centre Stage +10);
- 77 leaders had the combined experience of 395 years. If this ratio is applied to the 530 leaders in the sector, then youth theatre leaders have a combined experience of 2,719 years.

Figure 6.5 outlines some significant differences in the length of experience that youth theatre leaders have in 2019 compared to 2009. It appears that there has been a considerable growth of 15% in the number of leaders with one year's experience and a decline in those with between three and ten years' experience. Youth theatres are nurturing the development of Young Leaders who form 33% of the sample of leaders in Centre Stage +20 and attracting new leaders of all ages to assist with artistic, administrative, welfare and governance roles. Leaders do also move on from their group, retire or close the youth theatre resulting in the departure of experienced leaders from the sector. There is a possibility that new leaders are not remaining as long in the sector as they had in previous decades.

Leaders Working with Multiple Youth Theatres

The Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires note the ongoing practice of youth theatre leaders taking on the role of guest facilitators in other youth theatres:

- 30% of leaders had worked as a guest facilitator at another youth theatre.

However, leaders were also working *regularly* at more than one youth theatre. The percentage of leaders working regularly in multiple youth theatres has fluctuated over the years and has decreased over the past decade, particularly with the drop in youth theatres that have multiple centres or multiple youth theatres run by the same parent organisation (See Section 2.3.3). The majority of leaders still work with one youth theatre at a time and often work with one youth theatre throughout their career. In Centre Stage +20:

- 28% of leaders had once worked for another youth theatre on a regular basis;
- Six leaders (8%) were working regularly with two youth theatres;
- Four leaders (4%) were working regularly with three youth theatres.

These leaders were working between two and 30 extra hours in these additional youth theatres and were from a very broad age range, including leaders in the 56–65 category. Typically, leaders working with additional youth theatres did not live near these groups and travelled on average 50 minutes to youth theatre activities.

Leaders who were working with a second youth theatre were performing a similar range of roles as leaders working with one youth theatre: artistic, administrative, welfare and funding related roles. The roles of leaders working in a third youth theatre, were primarily artistic in nature with a focus on facilitation, artistic planning and production work.

Centre Stage +10 found that leaders working in multiple youth theatres were being paid for their time in additional youth theatres. However, the leaders in this category in Centre Stage +20, included a voluntary board member and a range of youth theatre facilitators/co-ordinators who were balancing a mixture of paid and voluntary work. The majority were working on a casual basis or were committed for up to one year.

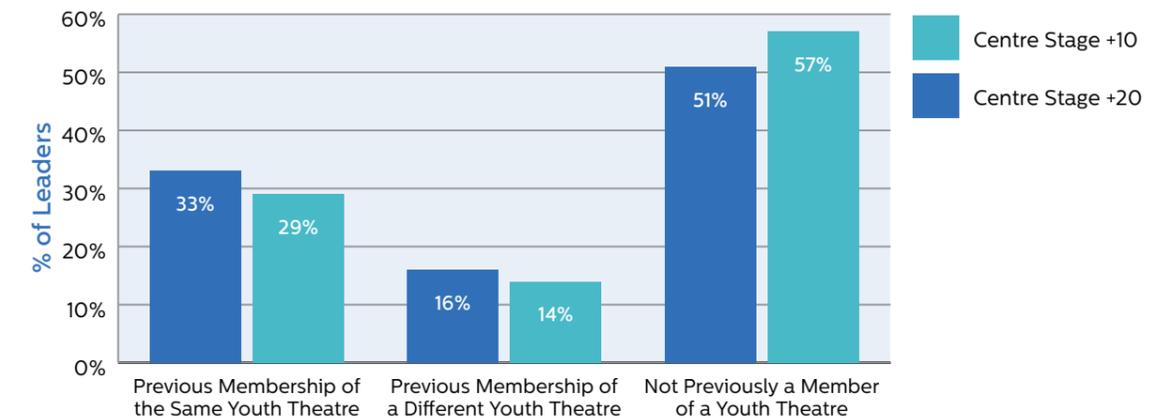
6.2.2 Previous Membership of a Youth Theatre

Key Findings

- Nearly half of all youth theatre leaders (49%) have been a member of a youth theatre.
- A third of all youth theatre leaders work in the youth theatre where they had been a member.
- The experience of membership inspires many young people to become the next generation of youth theatre leaders, contributing to the renewal of individual youth theatres and the youth theatre sector as a whole.

Figure 6.6 illustrates the percentage of Centre Stage +20 and Centre Stage +10 leaders who were previously a member of a youth theatre and provides information on whether the leader is still working in the same youth theatre or working in a different one.

Figure 6.6: Previous Membership of a Youth Theatre



Figures are based on 75 respondents from the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and 56 respondents from the Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

The cycle of youth theatre members being supported as Young Leaders and emerging as the next generation of youth theatre leaders has always been central to youth theatre development. In Centre Stage (1998), one quarter of leaders reported that they had been members of a youth theatre and this increased to 43% in Centre Stage +10 (2009). Leaders' commitment to their own local area was reflected in the 29% of Centre Stage +10 leaders who were working in the same youth theatre where they had once been a member. In 2009, with just over 30 years since the foundation of the first youth theatres in Ireland, the age of leaders with membership experience was increasing.

Membership Experience

Young people value their experience of membership and benefit from the outcomes of their participation (See Chapter 7). However, by nurturing another generation of youth theatre leaders, the experience of membership also plays an important role within the development and regeneration of individual youth theatres.

- Nearly half of all youth theatre leaders (49%) who completed Leader Questionnaires had been a member of a youth theatre (a 16% increase from Centre Stage +10).

Youth theatre membership is both a key training ground for the acquisition of a youth theatre leader's skills (Section 6.1.4) and also a key motivating factor in someone's decision to become a youth theatre leader (Section 6.1.3). A similar level of leaders (44%) rated "I used to be a youth theatre member and want other young people to have that experience too" as an important reason for their continued involvement in youth theatre.

- Nearly six out of 10 of the leaders who had once been a member could be described as 'Young Leaders' and were in the 18–25 age category.

All Young Leaders (aged 18 to 25) who responded to the Leader Questionnaire had experience of youth theatre membership. Of the 47 leaders who were aged 35 or under, 64% had previously been members of a youth theatre. The likelihood of membership decreases with the age of the leader. However, as the youth theatre sector matures, the upper age of youth theatre leaders with membership experience is increasing. Centre Stage +20 has recorded three leaders in the 46 to 55 age category who had previously been members of a youth theatre.

- A third of all youth theatre leaders (33%) who completed Leader Questionnaires were working in the youth theatre where they had been a member (a 4% increase from Centre Stage +10).

This highlights not only leaders' strong commitment to their youth theatres but also their commitment to the young people in their local area. One youth theatre leader was travelling 90 minutes each way on a weekly basis to facilitate for Fracture Youth Theatre where she had once been a member.

Leaders with no Previous Membership Experience

Half of all youth theatre leaders (51%) take up roles with no prior experience of youth theatre membership. This level of input from leaders with a different set of experiences and training is helpful in stimulating the development of youth theatre practice and ensuring that youth theatre remains an open and outward-looking community.

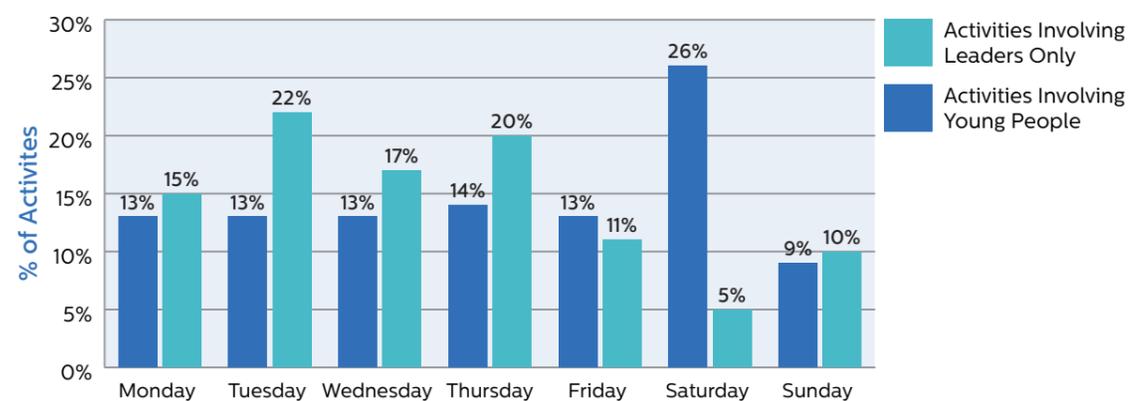
6.2.3 Work Patterns

Key Findings

- Leaders work with young people on Saturdays (26% of Census Week activities involving members) and weekday evenings (13% to 14% of Census Week activities involving members), working regularly during anti-social hours.
- Paid leaders complete the majority of their administration work during the day from Monday to Thursday while voluntary leaders are more likely to complete the work during weekday evenings and on Sundays.
- A broad range of working hours are reported by youth theatre leaders, however they work an average of 36 hours per month.
- 28% of leaders were working more than 40 hours per month. Three of these leaders were working over 100 hours per month and this number of leaders rose to nine during busy periods.
- Leaders spend 54% of their time on activities with young people and 46% of their time on management tasks associated with running the youth theatre.

Figure 6.7 charts the weekly work pattern of leaders during the Centre Stage +20 Census Week in November 2017. Data is provided on the percentage of activities which involved leaders and young people or which were carried out by leaders alone on each day of the Census Week.

Figure 6.7: Weekly Work Pattern of Leaders During Census Week



Figures are based on 175 'Activities Involving Young People' and 143 'Activities Involving Leaders Only' logged during the Centre Stage +20 Census Week. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

Youth theatre leaders have always run activities for members during weekday evenings and weekends as that is when young people are available. In Centre Stage (1998), nearly a third of all activities involving members took place on a Saturday with Monday to Thursday evenings also proving popular. Due to young people's weekend jobs and other extra-curricular activities, Centre Stage +10 found that leaders were delivering less activities on Saturdays and that Tuesday and Thursday evenings were equally popular at the time.

In 1998, during Centre Stage, 227 hours of activities were logged during Census Week and delivered by 273 leaders. Leaders spent 83% of their time delivering workshops and rehearsals. During Centre Stage +10, 181 leaders completed 607 hours of activities during Census Week. They spent 49% of their time running artistic activities with young people and the remaining 51% completing administration, planning, production work, etc. which supported the running of the youth theatre. Centre Stage +10 leaders worked an average of 29 hours per month.

Typical Work Patterns – Census Week Example

A youth theatre leader's schedule is built around the times when young people are available to work together and when they themselves are available to manage the youth theatre. The majority of activities with young people take place during anti-social hours, i.e., weekday evenings, weekends and holidays. The 38% of leaders who are aged 35 and over juggle a significant amount of evening and weekend work with family life and other responsibilities. This is particularly true of leaders working on a voluntary basis who are also working full-time alongside their youth theatre role. Centre Stage +20 Census Logs show that:

- Leaders are working consistently with young people during weekday evenings. A steady 13% to 14% of Census Week activities with young people took place on these evenings;
- A significant group of leaders work with young people on Saturdays, the most popular day of the week for regular youth theatre workshops and other activities. During Census Week, 26% of activities involving young people took place on the Saturday;
- A smaller cohort of leaders work with young people on Sundays. During Census Week, only 9% of activities with young people took place on that day;
- Monday to Thursday is the most popular part of the week for completing youth theatre management activities (meetings, administration, financial management, governance, training, etc.) that do not involve young people. Leaders completed 15% to 22% of management tasks on these days;
- Paid leaders or leaders working for youth theatres run by parent organisations are more likely to complete management tasks during the day and voluntary leaders are more likely to complete these tasks in the evenings;
- As the youth theatre week builds towards a busy Saturday working with young people, Census Data shows that the level of management/administration work drops off slightly (to 5%) and then finally picks up slightly on a Sunday (to 10%) because voluntary leaders have time to catch up on this work.

Average Hours Worked Per Month

Youth theatre leaders experience a wide range of working hours per month, reflecting the variety of roles that leaders adopt and the diverse workload patterns within a youth theatre's annual programme.

Sixty leaders provided information through the Leader Questionnaires about the hours they worked, showing that:

- Leaders worked on average 36 hours a month, up seven hours per month from the Centre Stage average;
- The minimum hours worked by any leader were two hours per month;
- The maximum hours worked by any leader were 180 hours per month.

Of this cohort, 35% had specific and limited roles within their youth theatre and worked up to 10 hours per month. They included workshop facilitators, Young Leaders who were focused on assisting in workshops, leaders with limited administration, welfare or governance duties. A further 8% of leaders with a similar profile worked up to 20 hours per month.

As leaders began to balance artistic duties with youth theatre management within their role, the average hours per month grew. Leaders who were working in larger youth theatres with multiple groups or who were involved in governance and financial management as well as other roles, were more likely to be working longer hours:

- 28% of leaders were working between 21 and 40 hours per month;
- 23% of leaders were working up to 100 hours;
- A group of three leaders who fulfilled the main roles in their youth theatre were regularly working over 100 hours per month.

Youth theatre leaders typically need flexibility in their working hours to respond to the increased levels of work associated with productions, exchanges and other significant projects /events, as well as potential breaks in the annual programme of activities during the summer holidays, etc.

- When youth theatre leaders are working at maximum capacity they have an average of 51 hours work per month.
- Nine leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires worked a maximum of 100 to 180 hours per month.

Working Hours During Census Week

The working hours of leaders during Census Week are explored in Section 3.5 where 251 leaders worked 781 hours and 10 minutes. The Census logs reveal that leaders spent:

- 420 hours and 40 minutes running activities with young people;
- 360 hours and 30 minutes completing management, communications, production, governance etc. tasks without young people present;
- Within the hours spent on activities with young people, 24 hours and 15 minutes were spent on running youth theatre management tasks with young people (e.g., meetings, fundraising, member recruitment, etc.).

Leaders reported spending 54% of their time on activities with young people and 46% of their time on management tasks associated with running the youth theatre.

6.2.4 Youth Theatre Roles

Key Findings

- The majority of leaders have a broad range of artistic and managerial responsibilities within their youth theatre role (62% of leaders have between six and 21 different responsibilities within their role).
- Some leaders specialise or have a specific function in the youth theatre, most commonly solely artistic or governance roles (37% of leaders have five or less different responsibilities).
- The most common responsibilities within leaders' roles are facilitating workshops (75%) and supporting young people and their participation (74%).
- The most common titles for leaders' roles are: Artistic Director/Co-Artistic Director (15%); Youth Theatre Facilitator (13%); Workshop/Theatre/Associate Facilitator (11%); and Youth Theatre Leader (8%).

Table 6.5 details the percentage of leaders who held specific types of responsibilities within their youth theatre roles during Centre Stage +20 and Centre Stage +10. The number and type of responsibilities has continued to increase over the past decade and new categories have been included for Centre Stage +20 for which there is no comparative Centre Stage +10 data.

Table 6.5: Types of Responsibilities within Youth Theatre Roles

Type of Responsibilities	Centre Stage +20 % of Leaders	Centre Stage +10 % of Leaders
Workshop Facilitation	75.3%	81.8%
Workshop Facilitation Assistant	49.4%	-
Directing	56.5%	63.6%
Theatre Production Work	67.1%	66.7%
Artistic Planning	51.8%	-
Project Planning & Co-ordination	65.9%	69.7%
Recruitment of Members	43.5%	
Child Protection & Welfare	51.8%	47.0%
Liaising with Youth Theatre Ireland	38.8%	-
Supporting Young People and Their Participation	74.1%	-
Administration	52.9%	45.5%
Strategic Planning	41.2%	39.4%
Managing/Mentoring Staff, Volunteers or Young Leaders	42.4%	43.9%
Marketing, Communication & Social Media	43.5%	40.9%
Evaluation & Documentation	42.4%	-
Participating in Training	48.2%	-
Financial Management	30.6%	27.3%
Funding Applications & Reporting	35.3%	-
Fundraising	35.3%	30.3%
Governance & Committee Member Duties	37.6%	28.8%
Compliance & Regulation	34.1%	-
Other	5.9%	13.6%

Figures are based on 84 role descriptions from 76 Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires and 66 role descriptions from 56 Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to one decimal point.

Centre Stage Context

In Centre Stage, leaders said they carried out multiple tasks in their youth theatres. During that Census Week, the report categorised the work carried out as workshop facilitation, production work and administration. By Centre Stage +10, leaders were asked to indicate the different aspects of their role in youth theatre using 13 different categories, demonstrating the expanding responsibilities of a youth theatre leader. Of the 68 youth theatre roles which were reported in the Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaire, 46% involved a wide range of artistic and management responsibilities (between six and 12 responsibilities) with 28% specialising in artistic activities or administration/governance tasks (between one and three responsibilities).

In Centre Stage, three-quarters of leaders described themselves as 'in-house' leaders and recorded titles such as 'teacher', 'trainer', 'tutor', 'group/general leader' and 'helper to the drama tutor'.

A decade later, youth theatre leaders were using titles that had reflected the professionalisation of the sector including ‘Artistic Director’, ‘Youth Theatre Director/Facilitator’, ‘Workshop Facilitator’, ‘Assistant Facilitator’ and also reflected more specialised roles in youth theatre such as ‘Treasurer’ and ‘Welfare Officer’.

Roles of Youth Theatre Leaders

The majority of leaders had a broad range of responsibilities within their youth theatre role which incorporated artistic work and administration, child protection, finance and communications tasks. Though many leaders fulfil a broad remit within their youth theatre role, some specialise or have a specific function in the youth theatre. Leader Questionnaire respondents described 84 different roles, indicating that:

- 7% had one responsibility and a further 6% had two responsibilities;
- 14% had three to five responsibilities;
- 44% had six to 15 responsibilities;
- 24% had 16 to 20 responsibilities with a further four roles carrying the maximum 21 responsibilities within their youth theatre.

The leaders who were fulfilling one or two functions within their role were primarily focused on facilitation with mentions of project planning or supporting young people’s participation. Two leaders focused specifically on governance with mention of fundraising.

The majority of leaders who were fulfilling between three and five different functions were carrying out artistic jobs with a limited mix of administration, finance or governance.

The leaders who responded to the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire were very invested in the artistic side of managing a youth theatre. Only seven leaders in the sample were not involved in workshop facilitation. Section 3.3 demonstrates a higher number of leaders now supporting youth theatres behind the scenes in terms of governance, administration, child protection, fundraising, etc.

The most common responsibilities amongst the leaders who responded to the Questionnaire were:

- Three quarters of leaders were facilitating workshops;
- Nearly three quarter of leaders (74%) were supporting young people and their participation;
- 67% were involved in theatre production work;
- 66% were involved in project planning and co-ordination.

Supporting young people and their participation is at the heart of youth theatre and good facilitation practice, so it features in the roles of the vast majority of leaders who are working directly with young people in workshops. The other most common responsibilities are those which involve teams of leaders: production work and project co-ordination.

Roles of Leader Working in Multiple Groups

As reported in Section 6.2.1, leaders who were working with a second youth theatre held a similar range of responsibilities as leaders working with one youth theatre. However, the responsibilities of leaders working in a third youth theatre, were primarily artistic in nature.

Roles of Young Leaders

The roles of Young Leaders are explored fully in Section 6.3.

Role Titles

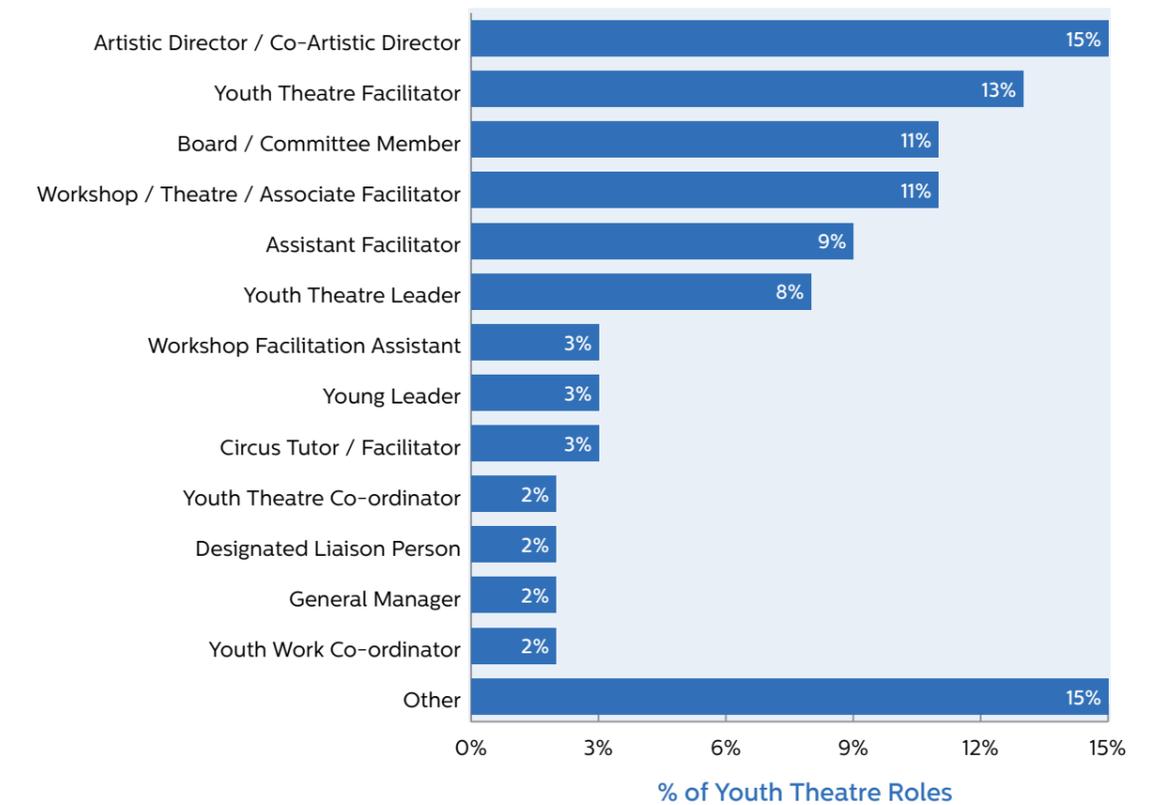
Youth theatre leaders have continued to develop the vocabulary they use to describe their roles. In general, they have sought to differentiate between positions within their youth theatre, moved away from the ‘all-rounder’ titles for leaders that existed in Centre Stage (1998) and reflected the

status and level of responsibility held by senior leaders within role titles such as ‘Artistic Director’. The most common titles for general roles were:

- Artistic Director/Co-Artistic Director (15%);
- Youth Theatre Facilitator (13%);
- Workshop/Theatre/Associate Facilitator (11%);
- Youth Theatre Leader (8%).

Figure 6.8 illustrates the most common role titles reported by youth theatre leaders as part of the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires.

Figure 6.8: Role Titles of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 92 Youth Theatre Roles described by 74 respondents from the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

The rise in leaders describing their title as ‘Board/Committee Member’ highlights the strengthened focus on governance in youth theatres. The number of Committee/Board roles reported in the Questionnaire has doubled since Centre Stage +10. Half of the Young Leaders (18–25) chose titles such as ‘Workshop Facilitation Assistant’, or ‘Young Leader’ but the remaining ones who had much wider responsibilities chose a range of titles similar to other leaders. Smaller numbers of leaders chose a broad range of titles which reflected the specialism of their role (e.g. Designated Liaison Person), the artistic practice of their youth theatre (e.g. Circus Tutor), or the approach of their parent organisation (e.g. Youth Work Co-ordinator).

In the past decade, the exchange of practice between youth theatres has meant that specific role titles are no longer typical of specific models of youth theatre. ‘Artistic Directors’, ‘Youth Theatre Facilitators’ and ‘Assistant Facilitators’ are found in all models. One exception is that the small number of ‘General Managers’ tend to be located in large autonomous youth theatres only.

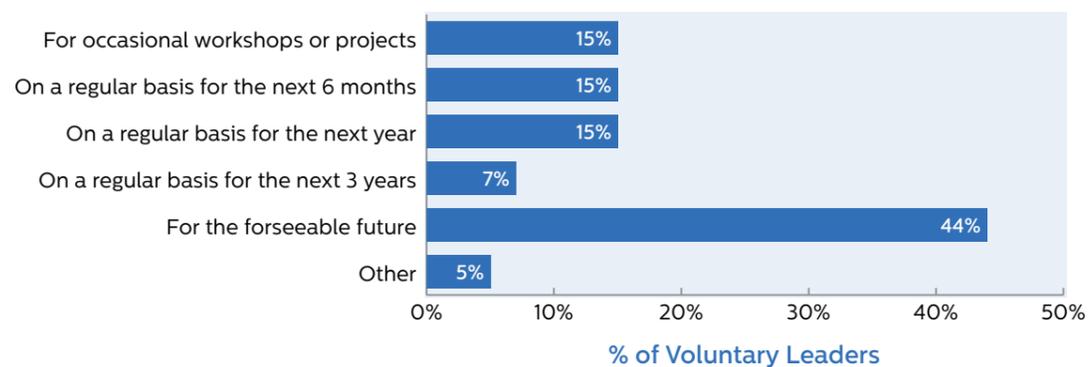
6.2.5 Voluntary Involvement and Commitment

Key Findings

- 60% of youth theatre leaders are working on a voluntary basis, a significant increase from Centre Stage +10.
- The focus on good governance has increased the number of voluntary committee/board members involved in running youth theatres and formalised their participation. Board/committee members now account for nearly a quarter of all leaders (24%).
- Voluntary leaders have a comparable length of experience as their paid peers (with an average of five years) and 44% of them are happy to continue 'for the foreseeable future'.
- Voluntary hours are contributed by paid leaders and voluntary leaders working some additional paid hours, as well as those working on a completely voluntary basis. Leaders volunteered their time in 207 Census Week activities (64%) and gave 432 voluntary hours to their youth theatre across those seven days.

Figure 6.9 illustrates the current commitment levels of voluntary leaders involved in the youth theatre sector.

Figure 6.9: Commitment Levels of Voluntary Leaders



Figures are based on 41 youth theatre roles described by 39 respondents from the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

Centre Stage noted that a significant proportion of adult involvement came from the voluntary sector, with 42% of leaders working on a voluntary basis during Census Week and 82% of youth theatres reporting voluntary involvement.

Centre Stage +10 noted a decrease in the number of voluntary leaders. The increase in the number of youth theatres run by parent organisations and the professionalisation of the role of the youth theatre facilitator contributed to the increase in paid staff. Voluntary involvement supported the running of 24 out of the 45 participating Centre Stage +10 youth theatres (44%). Of the 56 respondents to the Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaire, 29% were volunteers and 11% were volunteers who occasionally received a token payment for their work.

Voluntary Leaders in the Sector

The Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaires found that amongst 440 youth theatre leaders, 60% were working on a voluntary basis (263 leaders). Voluntary involvement supported the running of 45 out of the 55 participating Centre Stage +20 youth theatres (82%).

Voluntary leaders provided further information about 86 roles they held in the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire:

- 38% of leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires were working on a completely voluntary basis;
- 14% were voluntary with some additional paid hours.

Voluntary youth theatre leaders had comparable levels of experience as their peers who were paid for the same work. Their average length of experience was five years, 0.2 years less than the overall average. Volunteers were some of the most experienced leaders included in the Leader Questionnaire sample, with four leaders having 20 years of experience or more. Exploring the Leader Questionnaire sample further:

- 63% of voluntary leaders and voluntary leaders with some additional paid hours were aged between 18 and 35;
- 59% of voluntary leaders were female;
- In comparison with paid youth theatre leaders, voluntary leaders were 17% more likely to be an amateur drama group member, 21% more likely to have experience as a committee member and 11% more likely to have voluntary experience in youth arts;
- Voluntary leaders were more likely to have professional work experience in other sectors, particularly 'Business and Administration'. They were significantly less likely than their paid peers to have professional experience as youth theatre leaders (-33%), drama facilitators (-19%), actors (-24%) or directors (-24%).

Length of Commitment

Voluntary youth theatre leaders are committed to their youth theatres, however 37% of voluntary leaders are planning to give a maximum of three further years. Exploring the 41 voluntary roles reported in the Questionnaire, leaders were generally happy to maintain their current levels of commitment to youth theatre 'for the foreseeable future' (44%). Other groups of leaders were planning to remain involved for between six months (15%), one year (15%) and three years (7%). A small group of leaders (15%) were also planning to continue volunteering for occasional workshops or projects.

Volunteers with Some Paid Hours

Amongst this group of volunteers were a cohort of leaders who generally worked on a voluntary basis but occasionally received payment for some hours worked. These leaders typically had roles that involved facilitation, production work, project planning and supporting young people's participation, as well as management/administration tasks in some cases.

Governance

The increased focus on good governance in the sector has increased the number of voluntary committee/board members involved in running youth theatres and formalised their participation (Section 2.4 outlines some of the key policy, legislative and regulatory changes which have impacted on governance). This is particularly true of autonomous youth theatres who typically have between three and seven voluntary committee/board members. The number of committee/board roles amongst the Leader Questionnaire sample has doubled to 10 over the past decade and the Census Questionnaire demonstrated that 24% of all leaders were now board/committee members (See Section 3.5).

Hours Worked by Volunteers in Census Week

Leaders volunteered their time in 207 Census Week activities (64%) and gave 432 hours to their youth theatre across those seven days. These hours are volunteered by leaders who are working on a completely voluntary basis but also by voluntary leaders who are paid for occasional hours of facilitation or administration, and by paid leaders whose level of responsibility necessitates them working beyond their contracted, paid hours to carry out their role effectively.

Leaders were more likely to volunteer their time for theatre production tasks rather than be paid for them. Leaders also volunteered their time for 55% of the activities that involved young people during that Census Week. Section 3.5 explores human resources during Census Week in detail.

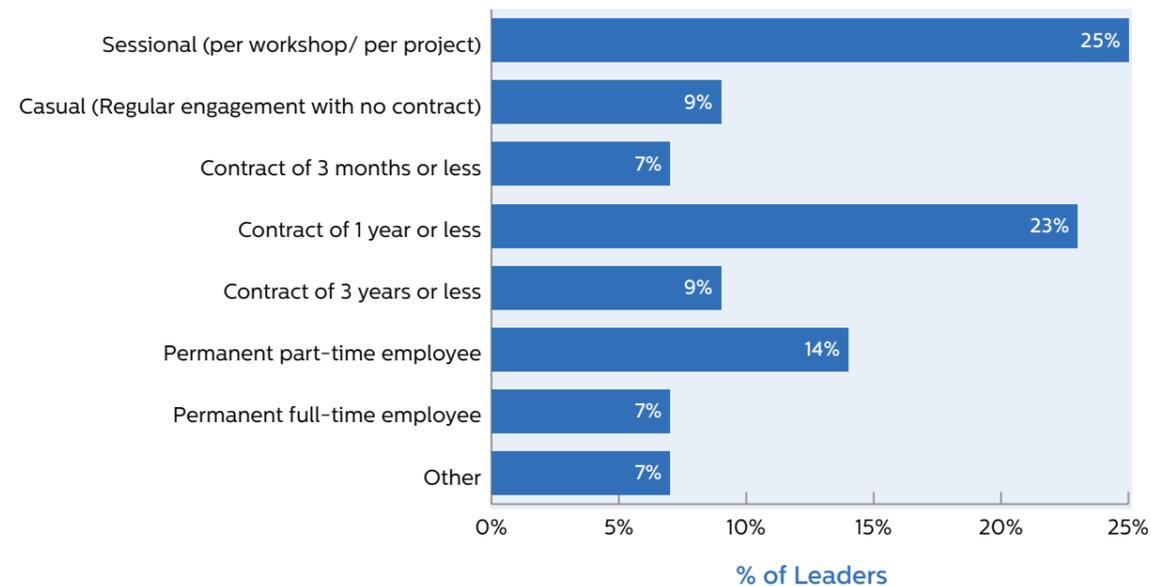
6.2.6 Paid Employment and Conditions

Key Findings

- 40% of youth theatre leaders are paid, a 6% decrease from Centre Stage +10.
- Only a third of paid leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires felt they were being paid for all the work they did in their youth theatre. Of the paid leaders, 66% were working additional voluntary hours to ensure they carried out their role effectively, an increase of 24% in a decade.
- The majority of paid leaders are working under short-term contracts or on a casual/sessional basis (66%).
- Youth theatre leaders are paid a wide range of fees for specific activities or for roles carried out over specific periods of time. Youth theatres are paying leaders what they can afford to pay rather than a standardised rate that is accepted across the sector. The average payment quoted for facilitating a two-hour workshop was €59 (a decrease of €7 from Centre Stage +10).

Figure 6.10 depicts the type of contractual or employment terms that paid youth theatre leaders reported in the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires.

Figure 6.10: Terms of Paid Employment / Contracting



Figures are based on 44 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

In Centre Stage, half of the 89 leaders who responded to Questionnaires were paid leaders with 51% contracted on a sessional or part-time basis and 5% employed on a full time basis. A decade later, Centre Stage +10 reported an increase of 10% in the number of leaders being paid for their work in youth theatre and a further 11% were receiving token payments/expenses.

It was difficult to identify standard rates of pay or common contractual conditions. Centre Stage +10 leaders were working on a casual basis, were on short-term contracts or were employees (generally of parent organisations). Leaders were typically being paid what the youth theatre could afford to pay rather than a standardised rate for different levels of experience or different levels of responsibility. They were earning an average of €67 per two-hour workshop. Paid leaders

reported that they were working additional hours on a voluntary basis to ensure they carried out their role effectively.

Paid Leaders in the Sector

The Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaires found that amongst 440 youth theatre leaders, 40% were being paid for their work (177 leaders). Regular paid leaders supported the running of 46 out of the 55 participating Centre Stage +20 youth theatres (84%).

Leaders provided further information about 86 roles they held in the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire:

- 16% of leaders described themselves as 'paid';
- 31% of leaders described themselves as being paid with some additional voluntary hours.

The number of paid leaders within the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire sample has decreased by 6% since Centre Stage +10. It is also disappointing to note that the percentage of paid leaders who are working additional voluntary hours to ensure they carry out their role effectively, has increased 24% over the past decade to include 66% of all Centre Stage +20 paid leaders. Only a third of paid youth theatre leaders describe themselves as being paid for all the work they carried out.

Paid leaders who were working additional voluntary hours were carrying out administration/ planning/management duties while only being paid for contact hours with young people or were working beyond the paid hours allocated to complete the wide range of tasks associated with their role. A third group of leaders (14% or 12 leaders) described themselves as voluntary but indicated they had some paid hours and are described in Section 6.2.5.

Terms Of Paid Employment/Contracting

In general, paid youth theatre leaders do not have job security and are working under short-term contracts or on a casual/sessional basis. When autonomous youth theatres formalise their engagement with a leader, it is typically under a short-term contract for services. Youth theatre leaders who have a contract of employment are typically working for the parent organisation of a youth theatre, where the management of the youth theatre is part of their role description.

The 44 Leader Questionnaire respondents who held 'paid' youth theatre roles revealed:

- 36% of leaders were paid on a casual or sessional basis. Just over half of this group were working for autonomous youth theatres and the rest were working for youth theatres run by parent organisations;
- 30% of leaders had a contract of one year or less;
- Eight leaders indicated that they were part-time or full-time employees. These were generally employees of parent organisations that run youth theatres where youth theatre facilitation/ management is part of their role description (e.g., Activate Youth Theatre and Buí Bolg). Three leaders reported that they were part-time employees of one youth theatre because of the regular hours they worked, but did not have an employment contract or written terms and conditions of employment;
- One leader reported that they were on a CE scheme and had terms/conditions related to that scheme.

Payment Rates

Workshop and Hourly Rates

The majority of leaders quoted an hourly rate for contact hours with young people or a workshop rate:

- The average payment quoted was only €59 per two-hour workshop (a decrease of €7 from Centre Stage +10);

- Eight leaders were being paid under €50 for a two-hour workshop. These leaders were experienced, with an average of six years' experience working for their youth theatre. The majority were aged 26 to 35 and two leaders were aged 36 to 45;
- The maximum rate listed was €100 for a two-hour workshop;
- A different hourly rate for rehearsals was quoted by a limited number of leaders (e.g., €22 per rehearsal hour).

A few of these leaders were specialists who were focused on workshop facilitation and were being paid for their contact hours with young people. However, the majority of leaders were carrying out multiple tasks including child protection, administration, communications, finance, etc. and were only being paid for the facilitation of activities with young people.

Weekly and Monthly Rates

Eight leaders quoted a weekly or monthly rate which covered workshop facilitation as well as a range of responsibilities in welfare, administration, finance, etc.:

- The average weekly rate quoted by leaders was €195.50;
- There was significant variance between responses as the minimum weekly rate quoted was €24 and the largest was €450. Some leaders are working with multiple groups and their weekly working hours are equivalent to part-time or full-time hours in some cases;
- Some leaders were being paid per month (e.g., €1,200 per month) or per term (e.g., €500 per term) for roles which incorporated a wide range of different responsibilities;
- One leader mentioned an agreed 'block fee' of €1,000 for directing the major production each year.

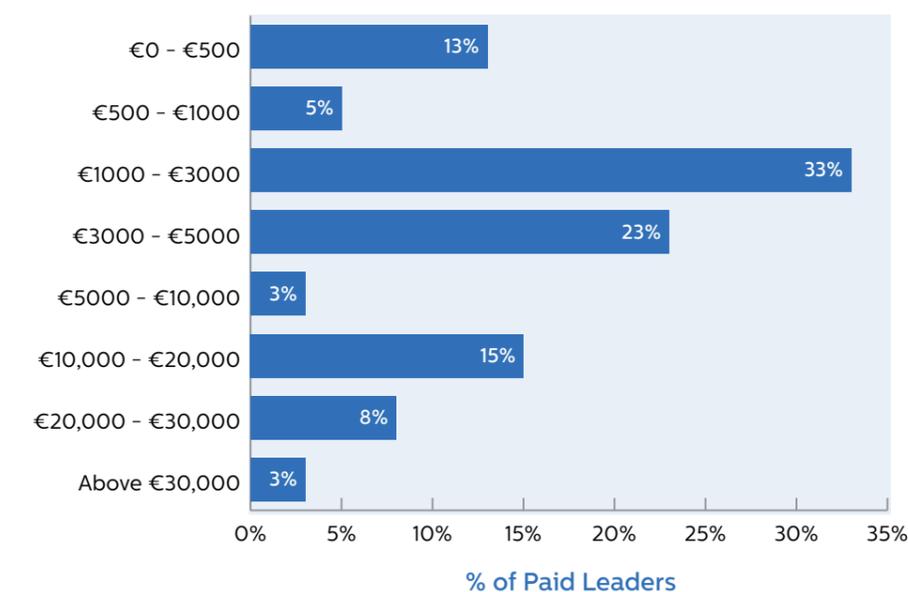
Annual Rates

A small group of leaders quoted an annual payment which covered workshop facilitation as well as youth theatre management:

- Six leaders quoted annual payment rates that ranged between €3,060 and €29,000;
- Four of these leaders were being paid €5,000 or less per year and two leaders who were employed full-time were receiving €20,000 and €29,000;
- A few other leaders were full-time employees of the parent organisations of youth theatres. Running the youth theatre was part of their role and they were unable to isolate a percentage of their pay which is attributed to the youth theatre (e.g., Outreach Officer within an Educational Theatre Company).

Leaders were also asked in the Leader Questionnaires to estimate how much they were paid by their youth theatre in a typical year. Leaders who were normally paid on an hourly or weekly basis as well as those with set monthly or annual fees estimated the following annual rates in Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.11: Annual Payment Rates of Youth Theatre Leaders



Figures are based on 40 respondents from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

The 40 leaders who responded to this question reported:

- The vast majority of paid leaders (56%) were earning between €1,000 and €5,000 per year. They were working an average of 288 hours across nine months (average youth theatre yearly commitment) for this fee;
- 18% of paid leaders were being paid under €1,000 per year. They were working an average of 72 hours across nine months for this fee;
- 15% of paid leaders were receiving between €10,000 and €20,000 a year. They were working on average 666 hours across nine months for this fee;
- 11% of leaders were receiving over €20,000 per year. These leaders were working full-time with a sole focus on youth theatre activities or where youth theatre was part of their overall role;

Hours Worked by Paid Leaders During Census Week

Leaders were paid for their time during 177 Census Week activities (55%) and worked 458 hours in their youth theatre across those seven days. During Census Week, leaders were more likely to be paid for their contact hours with young people and artistic planning. Leaders were paid for their time during 66% of the activities that involved young people during Census Week. Section 3.5 explores human resources during Census Week in detail.

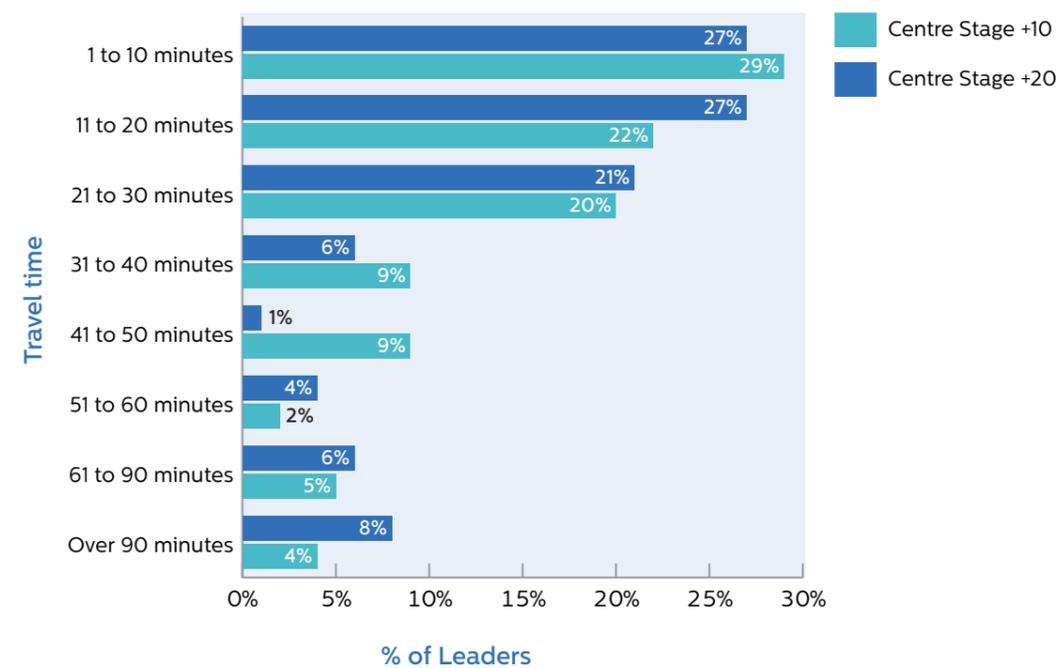
6.2.7 Travel to Youth Theatre Activities

Key Findings

- The majority of leaders live within 30 minutes of their youth theatre (75%), underlining their commitment to delivering arts services for young people in their local area.
- Just over half of the leaders are within 20 minutes travel time (54%) and just over a quarter are within 10 minutes (27%).
- A small group of leaders (14%) travel over an hour to their youth theatre activities because of a strong connection to that youth theatre/area or to take-up paid facilitation work.

Figure 6.12 charts the length of time it was taking leaders to travel to youth theatre activities during Centre Stage +20 (2019) and Centre Stage +10 (2009).

Figure 6.12: Length of Travel Time to Youth Theatre Activities – Leaders



Figures are based on 71 responses from Centre Stage +20 Leaders Questionnaires and 55 responses from Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Centre Stage Context

In Centre Stage (1998), about seven out of eight leaders lived within 10 miles of their youth theatre. Centre Stage +10 showed that 7 out of 10 leaders were travelling less than 30 minutes to their youth theatre. In general, leaders had been committed to working with young people in their own locality, particularly if they were working on a voluntary basis.

Centre Stage +10 noted a small group of paid facilitators who were travelling long distances to facilitate in youth theatres outside their county. This commuting trend, where leaders were travelling from cities to work in regional towns and rural areas, was a reverse of the national commuting pattern at the time.

Leaders' Travel Time to Youth Theatre

Leaders Travelling Short Distances

Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires (71 leaders) reveal that though there have been some small fluctuations over the past 10 years, the overall picture remains roughly the same in 2019:

- Three-quarters of the leaders were within 30 minutes travel time of their youth theatre (75%);
- Half of the leaders were within 20 minutes travel time (54%).
- A quarter of leaders were within 10 minutes travel time (27%).

The vast majority of leaders are living near their youth theatre and this supports the idea that leaders are committed to delivering arts services for young people in their local area (See Section 6.1.3).

Voluntary leaders live very close to their youth theatres, reinforcing the sense that they're committed to young people and youth theatre in their own community:

- 93% of the leaders working on a completely voluntary basis live within 30 minutes of their youth theatre
- 44% of leaders working on a completely voluntary basis live within 10 minutes of their youth theatre.

Leaders Travelling Long Distances

Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires (71 leaders) reveal that:

- 14% of the leaders were travelling over an hour each way to youth theatre activities;
- Four leaders were travelling up to 90 minutes each way and five leaders were travelling two hours each way;
- The longest travel time was 2.5 hours, which meant a leader was doing a five hour round-trip for youth theatre activities.

Paid leaders or paid leaders with additional voluntary hours were the most likely to be travelling long distances. Remarkably, one voluntary leader and one voluntary leader who had occasional paid hours were travelling between 90 minutes and two hours each way to get to youth theatre activities.

Leaders travelling long distances include those who are facilitating for a youth theatre in their home town while living in other counties (e.g., Fracture Youth Theatre, Roscommon County Youth Theatre). A strong connection to a particular area or youth theatre is a major contributing factor and some leaders have committed to travelling these distances for between nine and 12 years.

Youth theatre leaders also travel longer distances to their youth theatre activities to secure paid employment as a youth theatre facilitator and to assist in counties where there is a scarcity of local facilitators. The vast majority of leaders currently travelling over an hour each way were only working with the youth theatre for one or two years. It can be a challenge for some leaders to sustain such travel distances long-term and during the Centre Stage+20 research period, two of the leaders in this category have stopped facilitating for their youth theatres.

Conclusions

Paid leaders play a vital role in delivering quality youth theatre services to young people. Though arts funders value the appropriate payment of the professional artist, paid youth theatre leaders are not being funded adequately to carry out their roles. Their contracts under-estimate the work-load of a youth theatre leader and under-value the administration work involved in managing a youth theatre.

Voluntary youth theatre leaders are playing a significant part in direct work with young people and also in supporting the management of youth theatres, including those with paid youth theatre leaders. Youth theatres need increased levels of support to clarify and streamline the governance and administration tasks undertaken by volunteers, as well as assistance to sustain volunteer levels.

Youth theatre leaders need support to maintain their engagement with youth theatre and opportunities to help them progress from being a Young Leader, to an emerging youth theatre facilitator, to an expert Artistic Director. The considerable amount of hours worked by leaders (particularly on a voluntary basis) and their working conditions have the potential to over-stretch youth theatre leaders and result in the departure of emerging and experienced leaders from the sector. To safeguard the quality of youth theatre practice in the future, it is important to ensure that youth theatre leaders can sustain their voluntary or professional careers in youth theatre.

Youth theatre plays a successful role in its own renewal and development. Youth theatre membership and the tradition of supporting Young Leaders provides a significant training ground and motivation for new leaders in the sector.

6.3 Young Leaders

Key Findings

- 12% of youth theatre leaders are Young Leaders aged 18 to 25. These Young Leaders are receiving mentorship and training to support them to take on a range of leadership roles within their youth theatre.
- The roles of Young Leaders typically centre on workshop facilitation, supporting the participation of young people and theatre production work. However, some Young Leaders also carry out a wide range of management tasks and are working between five and 100 hours per month.
- Informal mentorship is the most common method of supporting the development of Young Leaders (97% of youth theatres) and this is supplemented by training courses offered by Youth Theatre Ireland (57%) and other local and national organisations (43%).

Centre Stage Context

Young Leaders have also been known as Senior Members or Junior Leaders over the past two decades, but as far back as Centre Stage in 1998, youth theatre leaders were reporting that they “had received structured leadership training within their own youth theatre”³⁶ By Centre Stage +10, Young Leaders were active in 25 out of the 45 participating youth theatres and were taking part in informal mentorship opportunities, self-directed projects and Youth Theatre Ireland training courses to develop the skill set of the youth theatre leader.

Centre Stage and Centre Stage +10 Leader Questionnaires both reported that about a third of leaders were Young Leaders aged 18 to 25.

Young Leaders in the Sector

Young Leaders are aged 18 to 25 and are typically receiving support within their youth theatre to carry out a range of roles, including workshop facilitation. The cycle of youth theatre members being supported to develop into Young Leaders and emerging as the next generation of youth theatre leaders has been central to youth theatre development over the past 20 years.

- The Centre Stage +20 Census Questionnaires found that amongst the 530 leaders working in the youth theatre sector, 64 (or 12%) were Young Leaders.
- Young Leaders supported the operation of 27 out of the 55 participating Centre Stage +20 youth theatres (49%).

Twenty-five Young Leaders provided further information about themselves in the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire. The gender breakdown of the Young Leaders group was 48% male, 48% female and 4% non-binary. It is the only age group amongst leaders with equal participation levels between men and women.

Why do Youth Theatres Support the Development of Young Leaders?

The most common reasons youth theatres support young people to develop as leaders are: to provide progression for interested members; and to train the next generation of leaders for the youth theatre. Youth theatres find that Young Leaders understand the core ethos and practice of youth theatre and, with training, can make excellent leaders. It is particularly important for the viability of youth theatres in areas that lack trained drama facilitators. Young Leaders also help youth theatres maintain the appropriate adult to young person ratio during activities and share responsibility for the management of the youth theatre.

36 Centre Stage, Marieva Coughlan, Youth Theatre Ireland, 1998, Page 43

“Training for young leaders is vital to ensure the sustainability of the youth theatre and to bring new ideas and new energy to the group.”

Griese Youth Theatre Leader

“We feel progression for our members is important. We have invested in their future and we are happy for them to share their skills & knowledge with younger members”

Act Out Youth Theatre

Youth theatres find that Young Leaders can really support the engagement of younger members, become strong role models and ensure that activities remain youth-focused.

“It increases their ownership of the youth theatre and Young Leaders are in a better position to connect with young members than a middle-aged facilitator! They also provide an excellent role model for younger members.”

Activate Youth Theatre Leader

Some youth theatres also believe that by developing Young Leaders, they are not just safeguarding the future of their own youth theatre, but also contributing to youth theatre practice in the wider sector.

“We know that the training and development of young facilitators is good for the sector generally. Our members and young leaders have gone onto work with youth theatres all over the country, to take part in national events and continue to support the general development and success of youth theatre practice.”

Droichead Youth Theatre Leader

Characteristics of Young Leaders

Twenty-five Young Leaders provided further information about their roles through the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire.

- Young Leaders typically have experience of being a youth theatre member. All Young Leaders who completed Leader Questionnaires had been members and the majority (68%) were working in the youth theatre where they had once been a member.
- Like other leaders, Young Leaders rate a belief in the positive impact of youth theatre participation and an enjoyment of being involved in the personal, social and artistic development of young people as the key reasons they are working as Young Leaders. They also want other young people to have the same opportunities as they did in youth theatre, they are getting valuable experience that is helping them build a career and the youth theatre is supporting them to develop as a leader.
- Young Leaders are most likely to be working on a voluntary basis (48%). Only three Young Leaders classed themselves as ‘paid’ and the remaining 40% balanced voluntary and paid hours (when funding was available for specific tasks).
- Leaders in this category were most likely to choose the titles ‘Young Leader’ or ‘Assistant Facilitator’. Young Leaders with more experience were more likely to choose titles similar to the wider cohort of youth theatre leaders (See Section 6.2.4).

Roles of Young Leaders

The role of the majority of Young Leaders centres around assisting with the facilitation of workshops, helping with theatre production work and supporting the participation of young people. Depending on the age, capacity and interests of the young person as well the youth theatre model, Young Leaders are also taking on a range of management tasks including communications, administration, fundraising, planning and child protection. One of the most common ways Young Leaders contribute to the management of their youth theatre is through the supervision of social media and communications.

Some young leaders reported that they were only assisting at weekly workshops while others

were carrying out a wide range of roles, similar to the wider cohort of youth theatre leaders. They were working between five hours and 100 hours a month.

The 25 young leaders who responded to the Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaire, reported a range of different responsibilities as outlined in Table 6.6.

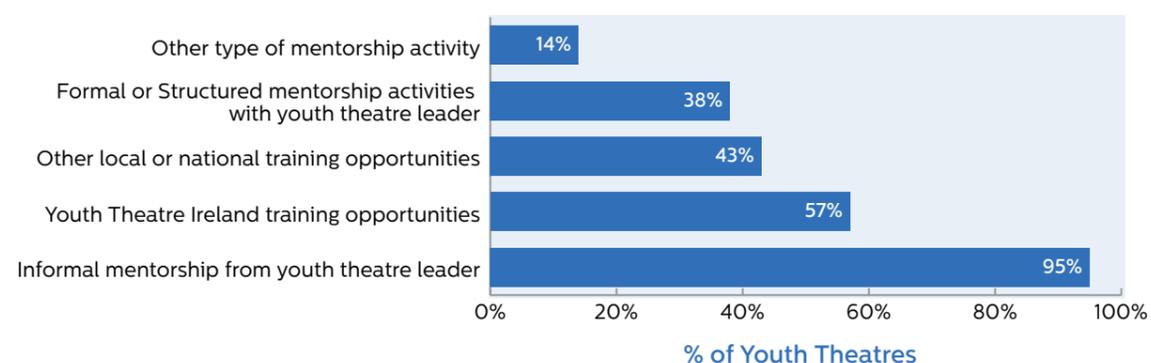
Type of Responsibilities	% of Young Leaders
Workshop Facilitation Assistant	80%
Supporting Young People and Their Participation	76%
Workshop Facilitation	64%
Theatre Production Work	64%
Directing	48%
Participating in Training	48%
Marketing, Communication & Social Media	44%
Project Planning & Co-ordination	40%
Administration	36%
Child Protection & Welfare	32%
Artistic Planning	24%
Strategic Planning	24%
Recruitment of Members	20%
Evaluation & Documentation	20%
Fundraising	20%

Figures are based on 25 Young Leader responses from Centre Stage +20 Leader Questionnaires. Percentages are rounded the nearest whole number.

Training and Mentorship

Young Leaders are taking part in a variety of informal and structured mentorship opportunities and training courses that are outlined in Figure 6.13.

Figure 6.13: Type of Mentorship and Training Opportunities Offered to Junior Leaders



Figures are based on 21 respondents to the Centre Stage +20 Youth Theatre Questionnaire. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

The most common type of training offered to Young Leaders is informal mentorship from youth theatre leaders (95% of youth theatres). Youth theatres were also giving Young Leaders the opportunity to develop their own projects within the youth theatre and work towards tangible goals such as the delivery of an improvisation workshop, sound design for a production or an evaluation project.

“I work closely with emerging leaders in terms of workshop planning and delivery. There are structured conversations on workshop planning, youth theatre ethos and approaches and youth theatre management.”

Kilkenny Youth Theatre Leader

Youth theatres are supplementing this ‘in-house’ training by sending Young Leaders to Youth Theatre Ireland training events (57% of youth theatres). They are also accessing other types of training courses for Young Leaders at a local and national level (43% of youth theatres). Leaders mentioned Youth Theatre Ireland courses such as ‘Leading On...’, ‘Emerging Leaders’ and Child Protection Awareness Training as well as courses run by the National Youth Council of Ireland, the Drama League of Ireland Summer School and Léargas.

“My assistant who came through the ranks of Complex Youth Theatre is offered all training opportunities that are valuable via Youth Theatre Ireland, NYCI and similar organisations. Though those that have a high fee are sometimes not affordable.”

Complex Youth Theatre Leader

A smaller number of youth theatres (38%) were offering formal or structured mentorship activities for Young Leaders such as the programme described in the County Limerick Youth Theatre case study.

Case Study: County Limerick Youth Theatre

County Limerick Youth Theatre has a cohort of six Young Leaders called the ‘Leading LYTs’ who receive mentorship from the Artistic Director and assist with the facilitation of workshops, youth theatre projects and outreach projects. In recent years, the youth theatre also ran a year-long Leading LYTs programme which assisted young people to learn and apply facilitation skills in a variety of settings. The project was structured in the following way:

Term 1	Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week-long residential centred on a non-formal learning process with two professional facilitators. Sessions ran from 9am to 5pm each day with time to reflect upon their learning. • Weekly workshops of a wide variety of facilitation techniques with their regular youth theatre leader. • End-of-term week-long session in theatre-in-education with a specialist facilitator.
Term 2	Shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people allocated a facilitator/mentor whom they shadow whilst working with a group of young people, observing their practice and assisting when appropriate.
Term 3	Facilitation / Supported Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-week creative project, to achieve a particular output, e.g., a short film or performance. • Regular support and observation by youth theatre facilitator. • Assessed by the two external professional facilitators who had given them their initial training.

Conclusions

The training cycle of Young Leaders becoming the next generation of youth theatre leaders is in good condition and is being driven by young people and youth theatre leaders. It is important to assist this cycle on a national level through the support of youth theatre mentors, the sharing of best practice and the provision of training opportunities for Young Leaders (with other leaders and as a discrete group) in order to contribute to the sustainability of the sector and young people's progression through youth theatre.