

**YOUTH
THEATRE**
IRELAND

**Strategic
Plan 2021
— 2023**



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Foreword

In a landmark year like no other, Youth Theatre Ireland turned 40 and we created this strategic plan. It is testimony to the values of Youth Theatre Ireland that this plan could be delivered under such unthinkable conditions – a global pandemic. When a young person or facilitator takes their place in a circle in their space they begin to learn the values which made the creation of this plan possible. Patience, adaptability, resilience, trust, fearlessness, the confidence to take a risk and to take the imaginative leap of faith to dream big. All of these values are also necessary to make theatre. Each young person is of course also part of a much bigger circle. That of a national community which is guided by Youth Theatre Ireland.

As we set out on road to deliver this plan, we do so under the new leadership of Eoghan Doyle and a team whose experience, passion and commitment make the ambitions set out here achievable. They too have stood in the circle, have led and supported us through our most challenging time. This new road map is striking in its principles, as we strive towards greater inclusion, greater access and increased diversity. There is always more room in our circle for others to join. As we strengthen our community, we effect the broader community. We are the voice for our youth theatre membership, leaders in the making, with the self-confidence and imagination required to grow and flourish. This voice is strong.

Niall Cleary,
Chairperson, Youth Theatre Ireland.

This plan sets out the vision and goals for Youth Theatre Ireland over the next three years. Like all of the best work done in youth theatre, it is the outcome of a collaborative process with a range of stakeholders, whose insight, knowledge and experience has resulted in a clear and focused plan for Youth Theatre Ireland. I want to thank everyone who contributed – all of our partners, funders and advocates who enable us to support and develop youth theatre in Ireland. To all of the staff team, board, youth board and practitioners that work with Youth Theatre Ireland; your hard work, passion and commitment are central to making our strategic goals and vision a reality.

To finish, I want to send a special message to our leaders and young people. Despite everything that has gone on in the last year, youth theatres across Ireland kept the doors open. When they could they met in person, and when they couldn't they moved online. What never changed was the passion and love for youth theatre that was shown by our amazing leaders and young people all across the country. Work was created and the creative voices of young artists were still heard. Youth theatre has always been a place for young people to express themselves creatively, to examine the world around them through theatre, to learn new things and meet new people. The events of 2020 did not and could not change this. To the leaders and young people who ensured that nothing, not even a global pandemic, could stop youth theatre – thank you! Here's to brighter days ahead and seeing you all in the circle again soon.

Eoghan Doyle,
Director, Youth Theatre Ireland.

Introduction

This plan is the outcome of a strategic planning process which commenced in May 2020. Youth Theatre Ireland engaged the services of Karan Thompson Consulting (KTCL) to work with the organisation to develop a new three-year organisational Strategic Plan for the period 2021 — 2023.

The process included a consultation element with internal and external stakeholders of Youth Theatre Ireland that enabled a wide range of views to be considered while developing this plan. This process also incorporated a range of consultation approaches with a total of 34 individuals and organisations including:

- A series of **individual interviews**, held via video conference, with key stakeholders including representatives of the Youth Theatre Ireland Board, management and internal team at Youth Theatre Ireland, and with external stakeholders including funders and industry stakeholders.
- Two **focus groups** were held via video conference: the first with 10 young people participating in the 2020 National Festival of Youth Theatre and the second with representatives from 10 geographically spread membership organisations.

The process also involved a strategic prioritisation workshop with the Director and board of Youth Theatre Ireland, during which the core areas for organisational development were formed into priority actions of the Strategic Plan.

The insights and experience of those consulted has resulted in a plan for Youth Theatre Ireland which promises a framework for empowering young people in Ireland through accessible and effectively resourced youth theatre.

Our Vision

To empower young people through youth theatre.

To provide access to youth theatre to every young person in Ireland.

Our Mission

To support the social, personal and artistic development of young people through youth theatre. We work to achieve this by:

- Valuing and incorporating the voice of young people in the artistic and strategic development of the organisation to ensure our work responds to the needs of all young people in Ireland.
- Communicating and advocating the value of youth theatre practice locally, nationally and internationally.
- Supporting the sustainability and growth of youth theatre by advocating for improved local and national funding for the sector.
- Increasing capacity within the sector by supporting new and existing youth theatres to establish sustainable structures, policies and systems; to develop their youth practice; to remove barriers to participation and to ensure diversity and inclusivity.
- Leading on artistic practice within the sector by offering youth theatre practitioner training, resource provision, commissioning new work, conducting sectoral research and delivering a national artistic programme.

Our Values

The following core values underpin and inform our work

Access

We believe youth theatre should be diverse, inclusive and accessible to all young people in Ireland.

Sustainability

We believe in sustainable youth theatre practice, that is adaptive and responsive to local needs and that incorporates long term planning as a key goal to success.

Artistic Experience

We believe in every young person's potential to be a creative artist. We work with and support volunteers, professional practitioners, creators and producers to support young people to achieve their creative potential and to ensure high quality artistic experiences for all young people in their youth theatre locally and at national programmes.

Empowerment

We believe in the voice and vision of young people. We work to empower young people involved in youth theatre to achieve their full social, personal and artistic potential by including their voice in our strategic and artistic planning.

Collaboration

We value partnership and collaboration with new and existing partners, funders and youth theatres to deliver our strategic objectives.

Communication

We are committed to communicating the value of youth theatre practice to all our audiences and stakeholders.

Strategic Goals

1.

Value and Visibility

Goal

To communicate the value of participation in youth theatre practice as central to the social, personal and artistic development of young people.

2.

Voice of Young People

Goal

To ensure the voice of all young people is central and valued in the work of Youth Theatre Ireland and reflects the diversity of youth in contemporary Ireland.

3.

Sectoral Development and Capacity Building

Goal

To support the development of youth theatres and youth theatre practitioners to strengthen, expand and build capacity in the sector, working with strategic partners to advance youth theatre provision and access.

4.

Artistic Programming

Goal

To design and lead a national artistic programme that responds to the identified needs of the youth theatre sector and advances artform development.

5.

Organisational Management and Development

Goal

To advocate for the effective resourcing of Youth Theatre Ireland to ensure delivery of our strategic goals and improvement of organisational structures.

**How we will
achieve
these goals**

Value and Visibility



Value and Visibility

Goal

To communicate the value of participation in youth theatre practice as central to the social, personal and artistic development of young people.

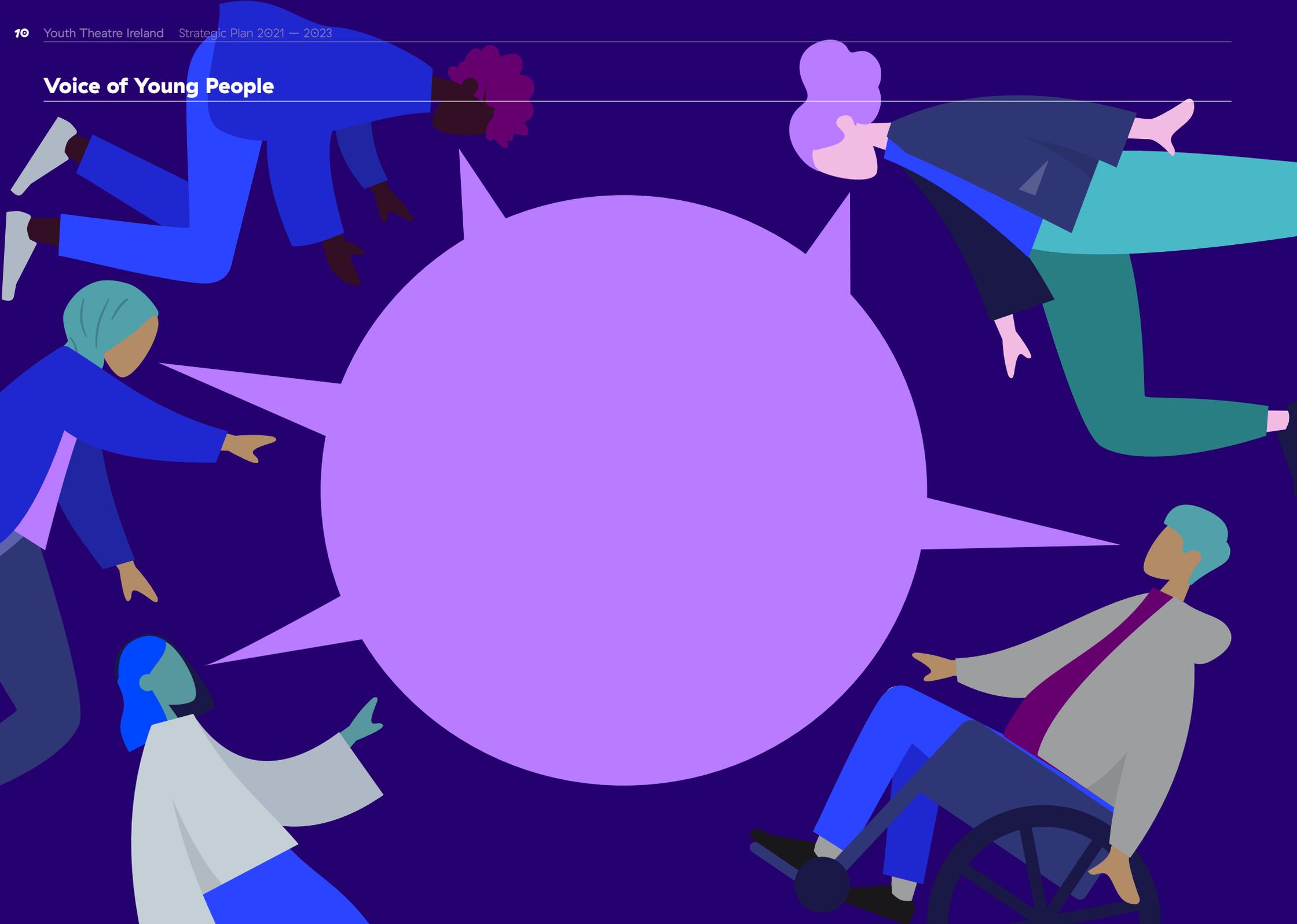
Actions

Develop a communications strategy that more effectively communicates the value and impact of youth theatre on the social, personal and artistic development of young people to all audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

Support young people across Ireland to advocate for the value of youth theatre.

Continue to deliver high quality research to support the development of the youth theatre sector in Ireland.

Voice of Young People



Voice of Young People

Goal

To ensure the voice of all young people is central and valued in the work of Youth Theatre Ireland and reflects the diversity of youth in contemporary Ireland.

Actions

Support the voice of young people as creative artists and their value to the cultural landscape in Ireland.

Expand opportunities for young people's involvement in Youth Theatre Ireland's work by further developing our Youth Board and our Youth Theatre Members' forum.

Maximise opportunities for the development of young leaders and support their progression beyond their time as participants.

Employ national and international best practice to ensure young people's participation is appropriate to their level of experience.

Sectoral Development and Capacity Building



Sectoral Development and Capacity Building

Goal

To support the development of youth theatres and youth theatre practitioners to strengthen, expand and build capacity in the sector, working with strategic partners to advance youth theatre provision and access.

Actions

Build the leadership capacity of new and experienced youth theatre leaders in key areas such as youth theatre facilitation, theatre practice, safeguarding and management.

Support the development and sustainability of new and existing youth theatres to establish strong youth theatre practice, structures, policies and procedures through training, mentorship and resources.

Develop accredited training for youth theatre facilitators with appropriate partners to advance capacity building within the sector

Work with partners, funders and stakeholders at a local and national level to: strengthen and expand the youth theatre sector; improve young people's access to youth theatre in areas of low provision; and increase the diversity of the youth theatre membership.

Build capacity of the sector by developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools that will clearly demonstrate to our stakeholders the impact and value of youth theatre.

Advocate for effective resourcing of youth theatre in Ireland.

Artistic Programming

Goal

To design and lead a national artistic programme that responds to the identified needs of the youth theatre sector and advances artform development.

Actions

Lead on the artistic development of the youth theatre sector.

Continue to review, adapt and develop programming that responds to the artistic needs of the youth theatre sector.

Advance opportunities for youth theatre leaders to share and develop their artistic practice.

Engage with artists and creators who will enhance and advance the artistic programming of Youth Theatre Ireland and the sector generally.

Develop the international artistic practice of Youth Theatre Ireland, our members and the sector generally.

Organisational Management and Development



Organisational Management and Development

Goal

To advocate for the effective resourcing of Youth Theatre Ireland to ensure delivery of our strategic goals and improvement of organisational structures.

Actions

Develop a more strategic and sustained approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Work with Youth Theatre Ireland's board to ensure competencies align with governance requirements, strategic and organisational objectives, diversity and inclusion.

Address gaps and build capacity in Youth Theatre Ireland's team to support the strategic goals of the organisation and fulfil each team members' potential.

Design and deliver an evaluation framework which assess the impact and outputs of the work of Youth Theatre Ireland.

Build organisational capacity to pursue philanthropic giving and development of a fundraising strategy.

How we will measure success

Youth Theatre Ireland's strategy will be delivered via an annual implementation plan.

We will measure the success of our programmes, services and strategic goals through our evaluation framework.

Staff

Eoghan Doyle
Director

Shelley Troupe
General Manager

Rhona Dunnett
Research and Development Officer

Alan King
Youth Theatre Officer

Louise Holian
Child Protection and Welfare Officer

Dave Kelly
National Training Coordinator

Barry Morgan
Special Projects Officer

Youth Theatre Ireland Directors

Niall Cleary (Chairperson)
[Activate Youth Theatre](#)

Máire O’Higgins (Secretary)
[Independent](#)

Sarah Bragg–Bolger
[Dublin Youth Theatre](#)

Leish Burke
[Griese Youth Theatre](#)

Emelie FitzGibbon
[Graffiti Theatre Company](#)

Antonia McTaggart
[Independent](#)

Geraldine O’Brien
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