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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The formation of the Creative Youth Partnerships (CYP) in 2004, as a pilot initiative, over a three-year period, had as a central aim the further development of youth arts by increasing access to, and participation in, the arts by young people throughout Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 Creative Youth Partnerships is a collaborative initiative between the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) and the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs). The programme received funding of £750,000 from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), £300,000 from the Department of Education (DE) and £500,000 from Lottery funding.
- 1.3 In January 2005, DCAL and DE requested that the Education and Training Inspectorate ('the Inspectorate') evaluate the pilot, and provide an interim report in September 2005 and a final report in October 2006. The findings of the interim report were shared with a range of stake-holders, including those most directly involved with CYP. This final report makes comment on:
- the progress of the CYP initiative since its inception;
 - the extent to which the initiative has met the agreed success indicators;
 - the extent to which the interim areas for improvement were addressed; and
 - recommendations for the future of the initiative.

1.4 The original evaluation framework document commissioned by ACNI outlined key success indicators which the Inspectorate and the steering group agreed to use as a starting point for the evaluation. They include:

- developing partnerships with youth clubs and non-traditional venues;
- reinforcing links to the Northern Ireland Schools' and Youth Service Curricula;
- helping to ensure that youth arts activity occurs across the district council areas in Northern Ireland;
- helping to broaden participation in youth arts across the age groups of children and young people; and
- delivering high quality educational experiences through CYP.

This final indicator was added by the steering group on the advice of the Inspectorate.

The Inspectorate and the steering group agreed also, that all data would be analysed by the Research and Statistics unit within DCAL, thereby ensuring increased efficiency of public resources.

2. INSPECTION METHODOLOGY

2.1 The evaluation of a creativity initiative such as CYP is developmental in its nature. The current performance indicators employed by the Inspectorate, particularly those associated with the youth, school and further education sectors, have served as

suitably rigorous and robust indicators on which to develop the evaluation of CYP.

- 2.2 At the outset of the process, the Inspectorate contributed to a conference of all the key stakeholders to explain the proposed approach to evaluation. A lead member of the Inspectorate was assigned to each ELB area. In the first stage of the evaluation, the inspectors met with a range of personnel and visited a required number of projects. At the interim stage, the Inspectorate reviewed their procedures based on feedback from the steering group and the development officers. While the second phase of the inspection followed similar procedures, changes included: an inspector taking responsibility for each touring programme visited, irrespective of the ELB area and the preparation of written explanatory information for receiving organisations, to explain the nature of the inspection activity.

CYP Headline Figures (up to September 2006)	
Number of participants from the formal sector:	31,941
Number of participants from the informal sector:	6,872
TOTAL number of participants in CYP:	38,813

CYP headline figures (up to September 2006)	
Number of programmes in the formal sector	704
Number of programmes in the informal sector	272
TOTAL number of programmes delivered through CYP	976

3. THE ORGANISATION OF CYP AND THE QUALITY OF EXPERIENCES

- 3.1 The interim report covered in detail the roles and functions of the various personnel and programmes involved in CYP. A full version of this report can be found at www.etini.gov.uk. The key strengths of the initiative as outlined at that time continue to be significant strengths. The remainder of this report will focus for the most part on additional elements which have evolved, aspects which have been reviewed or modified and on how the areas for development identified in the interim report have progressed over the last year.

4. THE OVERALL ORGANISATION OF CYP

- 4.1 The Steering Group, comprised of representatives of DCAL, DE, ACNI, and the ELBs, guides the work of CYP and has overseen the development of the initiative. It is an example of good practice of departments and agencies working together in the interests of, and to the benefit of, young people. The group makes decisions on the funding of CYP projects, including the final approval of Action Zone (AZ) projects. The Steering Group reports that it has worked hard to encourage a wider representation, including representatives from the youth sector, but that, while these approaches have been made and in some instances personnel nominated, attendance has been limited or non-existent. It will be important for those who fund any future initiative to work with the Steering Group to ensure that this broader representation is fulfilled and includes representatives of the artists. It would also be useful in any future programme to develop stronger links with a wider range of stakeholders, including, for example, using the expertise which already exists

within ACNI, to attract sponsorship for CYP in general and for individual AZ projects in particular.

- 4.2 The CYP initiative continues to benefit from the commitment, dedication and enhanced local knowledge of the five development officers (DOs), including those who replaced some of the original DOs, in developing, co-ordinating and refining the programme to meet better the needs of the young people. The team-work and mutual support of the DOs is a particular strength underpinning the success of the initiative to date. They receive good support from the Creative and Expressive Officers of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) whose input represents a considerable commitment which needs to be included in the overall cost of the initiative. There have been problems with line management in some instances due to a change in personnel, and there have been limited opportunities for the continuing professional development of the DOs. Nevertheless, it is due to the total commitment of those concerned that the work has been carried out to a high level of quality.
- 4.3 The competence and growing confidence of the Action Zone Support Groups (AZSG) continues to be one of the major successes and innovations of CYP. Each AZSG receives the support of the CYP and CASS officers in their ELB. It consists of representatives from the primary and post-primary schools' sectors, the Youth Service sector, professional artists and arts groups within the area and young people. They adjudicate the applications for AZ projects and make recommendations to the Steering Group. There have been problems such as encouraging young people to take their place on, and add their voice to, the decision-making process and discussion which takes place at the

AZSG. In such instances, the groups have worked hard to change personnel and to ensure that there is fuller representation at AZSG meetings. The AZSG has provided a good example of all those connected with CYP working in partnership to ensure as far as possible that local communities benefit from CYP projects.

- 4.4 An officer within ACNI holds the brief for CYP and, since the interim report, a co-ordinator was appointed within ACNI with particular responsibility for CYP. As originally intended, the Chairperson of the Steering Group has rotated to a second CASS officer from an ELB.
- 4.5 The interim report underlined the need for a review of the strategic and operational aspects of the programme, including administration and finance, to allow more time for the CYP officers to address their primary function. The appointment of the CYP co-ordinator provided the opportunity to redistribute the responsibilities for the operational part of the programme. However, the role of the co-ordinator and the relationship with the DOs needs to be clarified and developed to ensure that the DOs have sufficient time to focus more on developing the programme. There have been challenges for the DOs in finding the correct balance between promoting and supporting CYP and its aims and dealing with routine secretarial tasks. There has also been the challenge of dealing with the different financial systems within each ELB.
- 4.6 In order for CYP to reap the optimum benefits for children and young people, the integrity of the programme needs to be paramount irrespective of the needs, difficulties and/or requirements of individual ELBs and/or funders. Creative Youth Partnerships needs to be developed further in a context which is characterised not just by the good team-work which already

exists at several levels, but also by strong full-time leadership. Governance, communication, strategic partnerships, financial management and continuing professional development for the DOs are all areas which would benefit from strong full-time leadership. However, the importance of the DO role should not be diminished in any way through the appointment of a programme leader.

5. DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

- 5.1 The development of the partnership arrangements between DCAL and DE, and ACNI and the ELBs has demonstrated that there can be effective cross-departmental and agency work in the interests of young people. The challenge remains as to how this initiative can attract the support of other relevant departments to enhance the creative opportunities for young people and to develop their employability.
- 5.2 In the first year of the initiative, a decision was made to meet the continuing professional development needs of artists through courses aimed at ensuring an enhanced understanding of working with children and young people. There were compulsory sessions on Pastoral Care/Child Protection for all artists, optional sessions on behaviour management, planning and more recently, sensitive issue-based training. There were also voluntary information sessions for companies involved in the Touring Programme (TP). The quality of the training observed by the Inspectorate in a random sample was always satisfactory and almost always very good. External facilitators, in particular, provided practical and pertinent development and advice. Creative Youth Partnerships provided good quality supporting documentation. Feedback from the artists concerned was very

positive; in particular artists new to the programme valued the Pastoral Care/Child Protection training.

- 5.3 In addition, a number of local artists' fora have been set up to replace the original consortium and to allow artists to discuss issues related to creative practices. While it was not in the original remit to provide opportunities for such professional development, CYP has chosen appropriately to respond to the artists' needs. There is a keen interest in, and need for, this type of development among creative practitioners/artists who work with young people. The Steering Group need to keep this work under review and to ensure that it does not detract from the development and delivery of the key aspects of the programme. It will be important for the ACNI to look at the outcomes of this work with regard to the continuous professional development needs of artists generally and, more specifically, of those artists who work with young people.

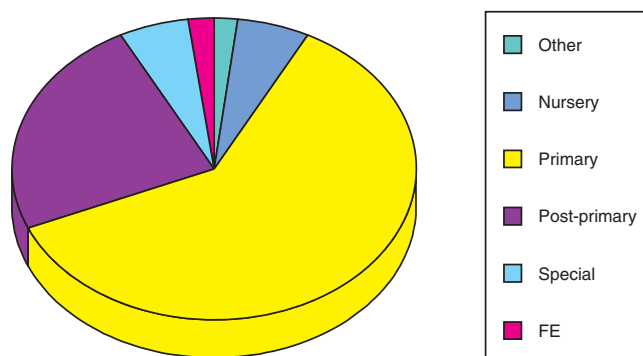
Number and type of Programmes delivered up to September 2006	
Individual Artists Programme	493
Touring Programme	182
Action Zone Programme	301
TOTAL number of programmes delivered:	976

6. QUALITY OF THE EXPERIENCES

- 6.1 The CYP programmes cover an extensive range of art forms under three main areas of activity:
- i. the Individual Artists' Programme (IAP) – a short-term, tailor-made programme lasting no more than three days;
 - ii. the Touring Programme (TP) - a range of short-term programmes including performances, workshops and exhibitions; and
 - iii. the AZ Programme - designed to focus on building longer-term, community arts partnerships, in some instances across the formal and non-formal sectors.
- 6.2 There is a clear statement from ACNI that CYP programmes are designed to enhance the experience and the skills of young people in the creative arts; they are not meant to replace the creative arts programme within receiving organisations.
- 6.3 Since its inception, CYP has been an inclusive programme in the broadest sense. It is not aimed at social disadvantage only, but the initiative has been used to form useful partnerships and to bring the arts to a range of young people, including those with special needs where much good work has been done.
- 6.4 The quality of the work inspected within and across all ELB areas continues to range from satisfactory to excellent. The CYP initiative inherited two programmes from ACNI, namely the IAP and TP. The IAP has been developed usefully in a range of ways including training and mentoring programmes. The quality of the TP remains inconsistent from that which is excellent and tailored to the needs of the young people to that which is a 'one-off' event

and does not complement the curriculum. The work within the AZ programme continues to expand and create potentially beneficial partnerships between organisations which educate children and young people, artists and the community. It is important that the learning which takes place through the AZ projects at local level is shared with all DOs. The reflection and review process has the potential to promote a consensus view regarding what constitutes a good arts project, through the development of more robust quality assurance processes and the dissemination of the lessons learned in individual projects.

CYP in the Formal Sector



Total Number of schools and % of schools accessing CYP in the formal sector		
Nursery	31 schools	17% of all nursery schools (total of 182 nursery schools across all ELBs)
Primary	326 schools	36.5% of all primary schools (total of 892 primary schools across all ELBs)
Post-Primary	127 schools	51% of all post-primary schools (total of 247 post-primary schools across all ELBs)
Special Schools	30 schools	
Further Education	11 colleges	
Other	10	

7. PLANNING FOR FURTHER SUCCESS

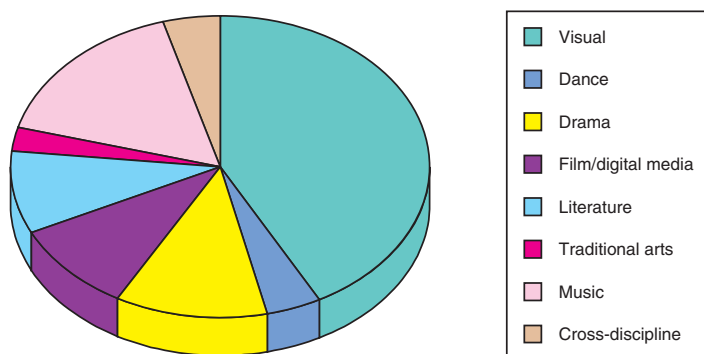
7.1 THE ROLE OF THE RECEIVING ORGANISATION

- 7.1.1 There is a continued need for more effective planning between the artists and the receiving organisation, with a clear indication of the roles and responsibilities of both. It is important that the receiving organisation and the artist take the young people's ideas into account early in the planning stage. This may involve a variety of approaches being used across the different sectors and age groupings, but it is important that the involvement of young people at the planning stage underpins the work of CYP.
- 7.1.2 In all aspects of the programme, there should be an appropriate balance between the process and the product, with the highest of expectations for both; there are occasions on which the expectations of the receiving organisation inhibit the creative process by having too strong a focus on the desired product. Equally, in some instances, even where the end product is impressive, partnerships prove less effective when artists are too prescriptive in their approach or where teachers/youth leaders become almost entirely passive when artists take the lead.
- 7.1.3 In the best examples observed by the Inspectorate, the representative from the receiving organisation had a very clear idea of how the CYP project would benefit the children or young people while respecting the artist's integrity and allowing the creative process to develop. The aspirations of, and the benefits that might ensue from, the CYP project should ideally be shared across the staff of the receiving organisations. There is a need for receiving organisations to be more aware of how the arts experience can enhance the educational experience and lead to

adjustments in their ways of working. One of the central aims of CYP has been to provide links to the Northern Ireland Schools' and Youth Service curricula; as the initiative develops further, the receiving organisation should have some indication in their planning as to how the CYP project will add to the young people's educational and personal experience and how it will inform the planning of future work.

- 7.1.4 In the best practice observed in Action Zone projects, DOs were confident that clear parameters had been set regarding what the receiving organisations would provide in advance of the project, the various responsibilities of the different partners, what the role of the artist was and what would happen after the artist left. Increasingly, the onus should be on the receiving organisation to take responsibility for the evaluation process, with the assistance of the DO and/or an ELB link officer.

CYP Art Forms



8. IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND RANGE OF THE EXPERIENCES

- 8.1 In order to meet more effectively the overarching aims of the initiative, it was agreed at the interim report stage that it would be important to devise a strategic and coherent development plan, with specific action plans for each ELB area, to target agreed groups of young people, geographical areas and arts disciplines. The DOs have been aware of the areas in which these limitations exist and have attempted to address the issues. The action plans and supporting work plans for CYP have been useful in providing a common and purposeful agenda for the DOs. The action plans should be prioritised, so that the most important aspects receive appropriate weighting and emphasis in the ongoing development work.
- 8.2 A collation of the very relevant points made in the individual summative reports at the interim stage and collectively at the end of the second year, allows for the identification of major areas for development which the overall action plan needs to address more specifically. In year two of the pilot, the methods of reporting back on the AZ projects were amended to allow for comment as to how successful a particular project was and what might have inhibited that success. The summative reports were replaced by the ACNI Access reports, which allow for a numerical return. Neither of these methods provides a clear picture of how successfully the agreed targets have been met. The Steering Group need to work with the DOs to develop a more efficient, effective and user-friendly approach with regard to the financial management of the AZ programme and in which self-evaluation plays an integral part. The monitoring and evaluation sections of the general action plan and, more specifically, the action plan for

the evaluation group provide some useful ideas which have not as yet been fully implemented.

- 8.3 In assessing the effectiveness of the CYP programmes, all concerned recognised the limitations of a framework evaluation which is largely quantitative and the need to develop further the scope of the evaluation framework. The key objectives were to provide more opportunities for the participants to evaluate their experiences in the CYP initiative and for the receiving organisations to evaluate the development of the participants' creative thinking skills. The DOs and their line managers set up a sub-committee to propose improved or different methods of evaluation. This work is at an early stage of piloting, but it is important and should inform any future development of the initiative.

9. COMMUNICATION – ENHANCING/COMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICE

- 9.1 A priority in the action plan continues to be 'profiling CYP' through showcasing good practice and through high profile events such as the conference held in June 2006. The purpose of such profiling is seen as 'to increase the quantity and quality of creative experiences in the arts for children and young people'. There have been many examples of successful marketing to encourage schools, youth clubs and other organisations to apply for a CYP project. The challenge remains as to how the assessment of projects can demonstrate effectively the social and cultural capital to be gained from participating in CYP work.
- 9.2 The co-ordinator worked hard to set up and organise a conference in June 2006, with the help of members of the

Steering Group and the DOs; the conference successfully brought a range of activities reflecting the good work of CYP, outputs and information to a variety of stakeholders.

- 9.3 There has been significant improvement in the quality of the CYP website with helpful examples of successful CYP projects. A useful start has been made to the development of the communication and the dissemination of the good work between artists and others involved with CYP through on-line fora and, more recently, a CYP magazine.

Youth and Community	2004-05	2005-06	April-Sept 06
Individual Artists' Programme	25 groups 553 participants	63 groups 1427 participants	43 groups 933 participants
Touring Programme	10 groups 280 participants	8 groups 560 participants	13 groups 702 participants
Action Zone Programme	27 groups 875 participants	34 groups 503 participants	49 groups 1039 participants

10. MEETING THE SUCCESS CRITERIA

- 10.1 After an initial year in which all those concerned with the pilot had to make great efforts to set the programme in motion, the second year has been one of consolidation and moving towards progress in meeting the overarching aims of the initiative.
- 10.2 Good progress has been made in meeting the overall objectives of the CYP initiative. More specifically, CYP has facilitated the

development of partnerships with the youth sector and non-traditional venues especially through the AZ projects. It has also brought to light the difficulty of working with organisations which have different timetables, in particular when activities are taking place at weekends or during the holiday period.

- 10.3 There has been a clear focus on reinforcing the links between the creative arts activity and the Northern Ireland Schools' and Youth Service Curricula. This success has been achieved through the support and training given to artists and the opportunity for the pre-planning of activities. The sustainability of the benefits to children and young people from their participation in a CYP initiative needs to be more clearly identified and promoted particularly given the current review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- 10.4 Through a range of different projects, and the use of the three programmes, CYP has helped to broaden the participation in youth arts across the age groups in a variety of settings. The hard work and dedication of the CYP DOs, has helped to ensure that youth arts activity occurs across most of the district council areas in Northern Ireland. However, there remain areas which still need to develop the arts further. It is important that all children and young people across Northern Ireland have equal opportunities to access the enjoyment of participation in arts activities and the enhancement of their creativity.
- 10.5 Through developing and extending the various partnerships which have already been formed successfully, CYP has the potential to ensure that the young people of Northern Ireland have wider access to the arts and increased opportunities to develop their creativity.

11. STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

11.1 The strengths of the CYP programme include:

- the commitment and dedication of all those involved, and especially of the five CYP DOs, in developing and co-ordinating the programme in the first two years of implementation;
- the continuing development of effective partnership arrangements between DCAL and DE, and ACNI and the ELBs;
- the quality of the work inspected, which within and across all ELB areas ranges from satisfactory to excellent;
- the contribution of CYP to enriching the curricula of the various sectors targeted;
- the competence and growing confidence of the Action Zone Support Groups;
- the additional unanticipated work done by CYP with regard to the continuing professional development of artists, particularly in the area of Pastoral Care/Child Protection training;
- the significant improvement in the quality of the CYP website;
- the improvements in communication between artists and others involved with CYP; and
- the good progress made in meeting the overall objectives of the CYP programme.

11.2 The areas for development include the need to:

- continue to review the strategic and operational aspects of the programme, including administration and finance, to allow more time for the CYP DOs to address their primary function;
- refine further the development planning and action planning processes in order to ensure that key areas are prioritised, in particular those which pertain to the actual outcomes for specific groups of young people, in targeted geographical areas and arts disciplines;
- continue to review the various layers of management of the programme, specifically the potential development of the role of an overall co-ordinator and to implement more fully a collaborative and inclusive approach; and
- continue to develop the evaluation framework, including the involvement of young people where possible at the design and evaluation stages of the programme.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inspectorate recommends the continuation of the CYP initiative as it enhances and supports the education of children and young people.

Furthermore, it recommends that:

The Department of Education, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Arts Council for Northern Ireland should:

- articulate clearly to CYP the role they will play within their respective strategies and support CYP in the ongoing development of an infrastructure that promotes sustainable partnerships between educational organisations and their communities, and artists; and
- continue to facilitate the collection of quantitative data and to provide advice, where appropriate, as to how this work can be improved.

The Education and Library Boards should:

- work with the ACNI and CYP to ensure a smooth transition to the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) for both the CYP DOs and those children and young people involved in CYP projects.

The Arts Council for Northern Ireland should:

- examine the outcomes of this work with regard to the continuing professional development needs of artists generally and, more specifically, of those artists who work with young people.

Creative Youth Partnership should:

- base future planning and development on the high level outcomes of the Strategy for Children and Young People;

- agree a way forward with regard to monitoring and evaluation of the ongoing work;
- select a number of projects which are viewed as having the potential to demonstrate clear learning outcomes and, depending on the scale of the project, allocate resources to working in partnerships with those receiving organisations on the development of good practice with regard to the preparation, planning and review of CYP projects; and
- appoint a full-time co-ordinator for CYP and form a wider network of partners.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The agreed definition of creativity is: ‘Imaginative activity with outcomes that are both original and of value.’ Throughout the short lifespan of CYP, there has been much good work as evidenced by the numbers of children and young people who have had the opportunity to benefit from the initiative and from the positive feedback from participants. CYP has demonstrated that despite any anticipated difficulties, collaborative approaches by professional people at all levels have resulted in enhanced experiences for children and young people. Increasingly, young people who acquire the transferable skills that accrue with involvement in high quality arts experiences are more employable. Increasingly too, those same young people may seek employment in the creative industries. The stakeholders involved in CYP have taken risks to ensure that there is better support in the arts for children and young people. While never losing sight of the focus on ‘unlocking the creativity’ which lies within all our young people, those risks have resulted at times in

CYP resources being over-stretched and a slower pace to some of the more complex aspects of the programme than was originally anticipated.

- 13.2 There is no doubt that CYP has improved and energised the provision of the creative arts for young people. Creativity is as much about problem-finding as problem-solving, and, in this area too, the CYP initiative has been successful. The CYP initiative has worked well for young people, in terms of promoting their creativity. However, it would take a much longer period to determine whether and to what extent this increased creativity translates into increased employability.

Creative Youth Partnerships 2004-2006

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