

ARTiculate: Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme

Case Study:

The following case study is an example of the type of project which it is envisaged will be funded through the ARTiculate programme. An extract from Youth Action's *Domino* will be performed at the ARTiculate launch on Monday 9th January at the Glasshouse, Stormont.

Youth Action Northern Ireland

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a regional voluntary youth organisation located in College Square North, Belfast, with regional offices in Armagh, Ballygawley, Enniskillen, Newry and the North West.

Its Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts offers weekly dance, drama and music classes to over 500 young people. Outreach initiatives inspire those young people most excluded, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities and those living in poverty. Productions range from highly acclaimed musicals, to pantomimes, to contemporary and new pieces in partnership with local artists and festivals. New developments have included the Big Music project, youth internships and mental health initiatives.

Their recent production of *Domino* was inspired by discussions and workshops on mental health issues faced by young people today. The concept behind *Domino* is that, in life, sometimes we go through the 'domino effect' where one thing can affect another and another and so on, and raises the question, "If you fall... can you start again? "



To create the piece, young people talked openly and honestly about the key issues that affect their mental health and wellbeing. These included: peer pressure, rumours spread online, online bullying, the pressure to drink alcohol, exam pressure, self-image, paranoia, depression and suicide. These issues were then woven dramatically together to create *Domino*.

Maire Campbell, Artistic Director of Youth Action, commented: “Projects that tackle mental health issues in a skilful and sensitive manner are simply invaluable. Art has the ability to affect us on a unique and deep level; therefore using the arts to reach out to those who are silently suffering can make a real difference and I genuinely believe may even save lives. Giving young people a voice to express the issues they are dealing with can help inspire other young people and guide them towards asking for help and support.”

A cast member from *Domino* explained how working with the Rainbow Factory to produce *Domino* had impacted on them: “*Domino* has changed my life. Before I did not think how what I said might affect someone. It has made me more confident. I have depression and social anxiety, yet with *Domino* I actually led workshops with the audience and enjoyed it. We should treat each other with kindness, as you never know what someone is going through. “

