

# **Jobstown Youth Arts Project: ‘My Place, Our Space’ Project Evaluation 2009**



*Young people from the Jobstown Youth Arts Project speaking at their Exhibition Opening  
RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre, May 2009*

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## **THE FOLLOWING APPENDICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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# Evaluation Summary

## Project Description

The Jobstown Youth Arts Project, facilitated by artist Annette Woolley, has been running since January 2009 with support from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). The Jobstown Youth Arts Project involves 6 local youth groups with ages ranging from 8 - 18 years old. Activities focused on the theme of 'My Place, Our Space'. In total, approximately 50 young people were directly involved in the creative learning processes leading to finished art work, which was exhibited at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre in May 2009. 4 of the 6 youth groups undertook 2 hour workshops once a week with the remaining 2 groups each doing an intensive 4 day programme during school holidays.

The main aims of the 'My Place, Our Space' Initiative were as follows:

- To impart artistic learning through research, field trips and practical workshops;
- To promote the young peoples social & personal development by encouraging interaction with the community & within the group; and
- To enhance the environmental aesthetics of the locale by creating 10 large-scale visual art works for temporary & permanent public display.

## Evaluation Aims and Methodology

Artist facilitator Annette Woolley and South Dublin County Council's Youth Arts Coordinator conducted the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The evaluation aims were as follows:

- To investigate the learning young people involved in the project gained about artistic practice, specifically related to pop art, cubism, abstract, and Dadaism/graffiti;
- To assess the satisfaction that young people and volunteers had with their involvement with the project;
- To explore the role of the project in building pride for the Jobstown community;
- To assess the levels of support provided by agencies (stakeholders) and volunteers involved to the artist facilitating the overall artistic project; and
- To investigate the potential sustainability of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project.

Evaluation forms were completed by participants, volunteers and support staff and interviews with young people, key agency representatives and volunteers took place. An evaluation workshop was also held at the completion of the project.

## Findings

Based on the findings gleaned from this evaluation of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project, it may be determined that the structure, organisation and delivery of the project within the context of youth arts in South Dublin County as well as more broadly is a model of

best practice. The Project addresses areas recognized as needs in recent national and local government policy for the arts and youth work.

#### Impact of the Project on the Young People:

- The young people gained learning in art history
- The young people gained greater understanding of and interaction with their local history, geography and community dynamics
- The young people gained learning in exhibiting artwork
- The young people were dedicated to the project
- The young participants were proud of the work created
- The different youth groups' activities were carried out in isolation of each other
- Some of the work carried out was challenging to the young people
- The project enhanced many young people's interest and access to the arts
- The project has helped raise cultural aspirations of the young people involved

#### Impact of the Project on the Wider Community

- The project reached new audiences for RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre
- The project was felt to contribute to the aims and objectives of youth work
- The project gave some volunteers and youth workers new ideas
- The project helped build a positive viewpoint of young people within the Jobstown Community
- The project helped build the profile of the youth groups involved
- The project helped volunteers involved gain learning about art and local history
- The project brought parts of the Jobstown Community together to celebrate their locality

#### Project Organisation:

- The dedication and resourcefulness of the artist facilitator was crucial to the project's development
- Volunteers came from a variety of backgrounds
- Scheduling conflicts arose at times
- Some behavioral difficulties arose among groups of young people

#### Assessment of Agency and Project Supports:

- Administrative and agency-based support for the project was lacking
- Previously determined roles amongst stakeholders and artist became unclear and comprised the structure of the project as a whole
- Reliability of some key agencies was not always present
- The artwork created has a legacy and permanent public exhibition space: Project has support for sustainability

**Recommendations:**

- Establish stronger links of communication between local support agencies for the project
- Establish a volunteer network for the project
- Seek funding for a Project Welfare Officer
- Raise the profile of and enhance the network involved in the Jobstown Youth Arts Project

## Project Description

### Jobstown Youth Arts Project: 'My Place, Our Space'

Once a rural area, Jobstown, is a densely populated outer suburb of Dublin (West Tallaght), which sits within the local authority of South Dublin County Council. The residents of the area grew from the rehousing of inner-city dwellers in Dublin, young people moving out of the family home, and other new housing (Tallaght CIC 2005). As it sits within the RAPID area of West Tallaght, Jobstown is considered an area marked by high deprivation and disadvantage (South Dublin County Council 2005).

Jobstown is the most populated area of all the RAPID areas within South Dublin County and has a high proportion of young people (South Dublin County Council 2005). While the national average of young people in the population rests at around 20%, Jobstown has approximately 30% of its population being under the age of twenty (Live Register Analysis 2003).

The Jobstown Youth Arts Project, facilitated by artist Annette Woolley, has been running since January 2009 with support from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). The Jobstown Youth Arts Project involves 6 local youth groups with ages ranging from 8 - 18 years old. Development of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project stemmed from an earlier project Annette had voluntarily facilitated with one of these groups, the J.A.Y Project, during early 2008 while working towards her Youth Arts Certificate, a programme led by N.U.I Maynooth and NYCI.

During 2009, the Jobstown Youth Arts Project was initiated through activities focused on the theme of 'My Place, Our Space'. Annette worked with 6 local youth groups (D Kreative Kidz; M.C. Teens Foroige Club; The Little Monsters; St. Thomas' Snr School Mid-Termers; The J.A.Y Girls; and the CDP Playground Group) to explore the theme of 'Jobstown' under the topics of past, present, people and place. Each topic was matched with a particular art style such as pop art, cubism, abstract, and Dadaism/graffiti. These themes and styles were explored through a variety of media and techniques, e.g. mosaic, collage, print and stained glass. The young people involved had the opportunity to decide which mix of the three elements of the theme with which they wanted to work.

In total, approximately 50 young people were directly involved in the creative learning processes leading to finished art work, which was exhibited at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre in May 2009. 4 of the 6 youth groups undertook 2 hour workshops once a week with the remaining 2 groups each doing an intensive 4 day programme during school holidays.

Below is a list of the groups that took part in the project:

**D Kreative Kidz**, 6 participants age 12-13, mixed gender

This group is made up of two youth groups, J.A.Y & Skittles Collaboration, who collaborated on the “Who’d Ya think ur lookin at?” visual arts project held in Summer 2008. Their positive experience led to a desire to continue learning through the arts on a long term basis and inspired the wider development of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project.

**The M.C.Teens**, 6 Participants, age 14-16, mixed gender

The M.C Teens Foroige club was set up in December 06. It has since become one of the most successful Foroige clubs in the country, winning multiple citizenship and art awards. It is run on a voluntary basis and membership has been consistent since it’s inception. There is currently a waiting list to join. Funding is primarily through minimal weekly subs and fundraising.

**The Little Monsters**, 8 participants, aged 7 – 12 years, mixed gender

Meeting the social, play and creative needs of 7 – 12 year olds from the Jobstown area, the Little Monsters has a membership of 30 children. It was established in December 2006 and is based solely on volunteer support. To date they have been successful in environmental and citizenship awards.

**St. Thomas’ Snr School Mid-Termers**, 12 participants age aged 9-12 years, mixed gender

An after school peer-education group who came together specifically to work on this art project. The young people ranged from 8 to 12 years old and all have an interest in art. The group mixes young people of differing abilities. They did 3 days of intense workshops to complete their work for ‘My Place, Our Space’.

**The J.A.Y Girls (from the J.A.Y Project)** 8 participants, aged 13-17 years, Female

The J.A.Y (Jobstown Active Youth) Garda Diversion project is a multi agency initiative operated by Foroige but funded by the Department of Justice and an Garda Siochana. Its main purpose is to provide suitable activities for young people at risk to facilitate personal development and promote civic responsibility. It has been operating since 2000 and attendance is by referral and is compulsory.

**The C.D.P Playground Group**, number of participants, aged 7 to 11, mixed gender

The Community Development Programme (C.D. P) run the local playground and provides extra curricular activities for local children. This group came together after the CDP advertised for an Easter term art programme which ran over 4 consecutive days.

Both the **J.A.Y project** and **St. Thomas’ Snr School Mid-Termers** are run by Tallaght Youth Service (T.Y.S), which is itself operated by Foroige – a National Youth Organization. **The M.C.Teens** is a Foroige club, which is run on a voluntary basis, and is youth led with the youth leaders in a supportive role.

The fundamental purpose of Foroige is to empower young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development, to develop self-awareness, belief and values. Within Foroige's programme structure there is a cultural programme in place, which encompasses all aspects of culture including art. This policy is to enable young people to discover their talents, develop skills and interests and so realize the unique contribution they can make to society.

The main aims of the 'My Place, Our Space' Initiative were as follows:

- To impart artistic learning through research, field trips and practical workshops;
- To promote the young peoples social & personal development by encouraging interaction with the community & within the group; and
- To enhance the environmental aesthetics of the locale by creating 10 large-scale visual art works for temporary & permanent public display.

A timeline of project delivery is provided in Appendix A.



*Young participant conducting research in the community*

## Evaluation Aims and Methodology

Artist facilitator Annette Woolley and South Dublin County Council's Youth Arts Coordinator conducted the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The evaluation aims were as follows:

- To investigate the learning young people involved in the project gained about artistic practice, specifically related to pop art, cubism, abstract, and Dadaism/graffiti;
- To assess the satisfaction that young people and volunteers had with their involvement with the project;
- To explore the role of the project in building pride for the Jobstown community;
- To assess the levels of support provided by agencies (stakeholders) and volunteers involved to the artist facilitating the overall artistic project; and
- To investigate the potential sustainability of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project.

Artist facilitator Annette Woolley documented and monitored the project throughout its delivery. Monitoring was carried out through regular reports from youth workers and the artist, open discussion with young people and stakeholders involved, provision of an anonymous comment box, and visual evaluation methods for the participants at the end of each session. Evaluation forms for field trips were also completed by participants.

The Youth Arts Coordinator of South Dublin County Council was asked to attend project sessions toward the conclusion of the project to observe activities and the involvement of the young people as well as the supports provided by agencies affiliated with the different youth groups. In addition, interviews with key volunteers and affiliated agency members as well as the artist facilitator were carried out. Due to time constraints some interviews were limited to written questionnaires. Aside from the artist, 2 volunteers, 2 agency members, and one parent-volunteer were interviewed. Each of these 5 individuals who were interviewed were part of different youth groups who had attended project activities.

The Youth Arts Coordinator attended the final exhibition of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project, held at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre in May 2009, gathering feedback from those attending. In addition, the Youth Arts Coordinator talked with various young people who had taken part in the project at their close of project party. An evaluation session was conducted at this time which incorporated artistic techniques to assist young people in reflecting on the experiences they had throughout the project (Sabo 2008).

## Findings

*"[The young people] definitely experienced [and] learned new techniques, things they wouldn't have done before, like mosaics, Pop Art, some photography...it was a new experience. For some it brought out individual talents and creativity...everybody had a different piece to add to the whole of the arts project's final product. One or two were amazed at their own creativity ..."*

Youth worker

### **Impact of the Project on the Young People:**

#### **The young people gained learning in art history:**

Workshops were structured so that young people gained learning in art history in an informal, creative and social environment. Groups were first introduced to art historical works and artists, examining and discussing artwork via presentations and field trips, and then applied that learning through the creation of their own pieces.

In talking to the artist facilitator, volunteers and more importantly, the young people themselves, it is clear that many of the participants of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project gained knowledge of art history. One volunteer stated, "The first week I went along I was amazed at how much they had remembered about graffiti history. One boy had been absent and the artist [asked the other group members] to explain [graffiti history to] the young boy. They did really well."

Members of other youth groups involved were also able to quote Picasso and create art works in the style of Toulouse La Trec, for example. In an evaluation session with some of the young people, they discussed Dadaism at length and explained their preference of certain styles of art over others. In a visit to 'All City', in the city centre, where some of the young people were able to speak to graffiti artists and see graffiti art first hand, members were so impressed of the group's knowledge of the history of graffiti that they offered free sponsorship for one participant to attend a series of workshops at 'All City'. The chosen participant was selected via competition.

#### **Young people gained greater understanding of and interaction with their local history, geography and community dynamics:**

Aside from developing an understanding of different artistic styles, the young people also researched their community by investigating the local history and geography of the area, social circumstances and the diversity of the population in order to create pieces

that reflected their locality and community. For example, in developing a mural piece based on the area of Kiltalown, the MC Teens made a site visit to Kiltalown House, an historic landmark in the area. They researched the surrounding area, including where their own houses are currently located, gaining greater understanding of their own space and its history. They also attended a lecture at the Hugh Lane Gallery about Harry Clarke and were given a private guided tour focusing on the exhibited stained glass pieces and including other areas of the collection. This tour in addition to having a guest artist demonstrate the process of stained glass, helped the young people contextualise the development of their own mural/glass piece created for exhibition at RUA RED.

*"It was awesome. I loved every minute of it."*

Young participant

**Young people gained learning in exhibiting artwork:**

The young people were taken to RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre, prior to the exhibition of their artwork. The artist and staff at RUA RED assisted the young people in understanding exhibition display. The young people were able to consider issues such as lighting, arrangement of artworks to better understand the impact that the organisation of display may have on viewing and understanding artwork.

**The young people were dedicated to the project**

Despite at times feeling 'bored' in learning some of the background and the historical development of artistic styles, young participants were greatly involved and interested in the making of their collaborative works of art. As exhibition time approached, most of the participants came in to meet for additional sessions in order to complete their pieces on deadline. Some young people also carried out research outside the scheduled group meetings.

Their dedication and interest in the project has also been exhibited through the way in which they developed new ideas for exhibiting the artwork and creating a context in which audiences could understand their overall approach to the project. In examining the history and varying understanding of graffiti arts, one of the youth groups decided to create a documentary film about the debate on graffiti art as 'vandalism or art'. The idea to create the film was solely determined by the young people as a result of their interaction with and learning from members of the Jobstown community. In gathering the opinion of local people on graffiti, they felt film was a useful medium through which to unpick various understandings of graffiti.

**Young participants were proud of the work created:**

Their dedication to finish the work and be involved in deciding how it would be

displayed indicates that the young people felt very proud of the work they were creating. In addition, some of the participants were happy to speak at the exhibition opening, describing their involvement in the project and how it impacted on their learning as well as their introduction to and future involvement in the arts. Having the exhibition at RUA RED and having that exhibition mentioned on the community television station, City Channel, also underlined the importance of their work within a wider arts and social community for the young people involved. Young people also mentioned being excited at the prospect of the work being on permanent display in the community of Jobstown.

**The different youth groups' activities were carried out in isolation of each other:**

While each of the youth groups taking part were involved in the overall umbrella of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project and met in the same building at different times, they were not aware of the work that one another was doing. Apart from the merging of some of the groups during trips to "All City" and "Hugh Lane Gallery", they did not meet or interact until the day of the exhibition. While there are no negative findings as a result of this isolation, it may have been interesting, if possible, to bring the groups together at the project's midpoint, to share the learning that one another had gained. Perhaps a discussion of the art and local history gained by the different groups could have been held in conjunction with the exhibition to better link the overall project.

**Some of the work carried out was challenging to the young people:**

Some of the young people involved in the project as well as some of the volunteers and parents described aspects of the project as "boring." This particularly seemed to be the case for the youngest participants. It seems that the art historical objectives of the project may not have been delivered in a way that was entirely accessible or adapted to the learning needs of some of the youngest participants. Some felt that for those participants the focus and terminology could have been more "basic" and involved more kinesthetic styles of teaching.

**The project enhanced many young people's interest and access to the arts:**

Feedback shared with many of the young people involved demonstrates that before their participation in the project, they had little interest in or opportunity to engage in the arts. As a direct result of participating in this project via their usual attendance to their individual youth groups, they gained interest and openness to engaging or participating in the arts. Below are some of the responses young people gave to their experience of being involved in the arts as a result of the project.



Evaluation Feedback from young participants

**Table 1: Statements from Young Participants**

<b>Before I got involved in the project, I felt...</b>	<b>During the project, I felt...</b>	<b>After the project, I felt...</b>	<b>Group Affiliated with</b>
I did not care about art.	I enjoyed it.	I loved it and had a great time.	MC Teens
I wasn't invested at all in art. I didn't really wanted to join an art group because I known myself that I wasn't that good in art.	Doing the project, I started to get more and more interested into art learning. I enjoyed the art history.	I was really happy when I saw my artwork hung up in RUA RED. I am so proud of it and would show it off to everyone.	MC Teens
I did not like art before.	It was fun.	I liked art.	Little Monsters
Before the project I was afraid I wouldn't be able to do all of the things.	During the project I learned a lot of things like working together and I learned how to draw a lot of pictures.	After the project I was very happy.	Unknown
It was started off boring.	I enjoyed it. I loved it. Then I was having fun.	I was really happy and I really felt free doing art.	St. Thomas SNS
Really good and exciting. I admire art work, expecially (sic) graffiti.	...really inspired and I was very glad and happy.	...like a famous pearson (sic) and I felt really good and shocked. I want to continue in my graffiti work with Anett (sic) [the artist].	The Kreative Kidz
[art] was really fun and simple.	[art] was hard. I didn't know what to do.	I learnt a lot.	Little Monsters
I didn't really understand art.	...really excited and happy.	...proud and happy. I also felt sad because the project was over.	St. Thomas SNS
I didn't really do art. I have always liked art but I never did it.	I had lots of fun during it and I had something to do on a Tuesday.	Bags of experience	MC Teens

**The project has helped raise cultural aspirations of the young people involved:**

One volunteer stated that the project helped “develop the kids’ creativity.” S/he “found that some of the kids had an interest in art that might not have otherwise come to light” had the project not have come to fruition. A youth worker made a similar statement about another group: “The project allowed for an insight into individual talents that may not have been brought out in other ways.”

The exhibition of the artwork at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre, only recently opened 3 months prior to the Jobstown exhibition, marked an important, celebratory occasion around the completion of the artwork. The Arts Centre is a new flagship organisation within the wider community of South Dublin County, which exhibits work created by professional artists. Exhibition of the young people’s work helped create a feeling that they can be part of the wider professional arts community and as such has helped to raise the cultural aspirations of the young people involved. Being able to show their artwork publically, with a special event as part of that was an incredibly important point noted by the young people who shared feedback for this evaluation. Having a comprehensive booklet with photos from the project and descriptions of the groups and the artwork they created also gave the young people something that they could put into future arts portfolios, should they wish to continue a career in the arts.

Not only have a number of the young people involved in the project requested that the workshops continue, but a number of young people not initially involved have asked to become a part of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project in the future.

*“I had a great time and now I understand real art.”*

Young participant

*“This was a brilliant art project, I made a lot of friends and it was very creative”*

Young participant

*“It was a blast.”*

Young participant, Playground Group

## Impact of the Project on the Wider Community

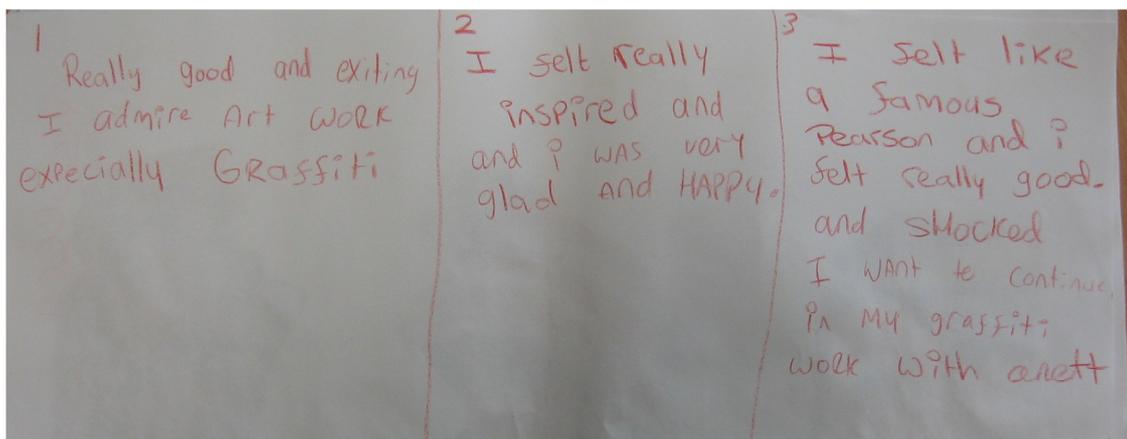
### **RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre**

The exhibition held at RUA RED helped introduce the new arts centre, opened only three to four months prior to the exhibition, to people who had not previously visited it. One volunteer stated that she was “gobsmacked” at seeing the young people’s work exhibited in RUA RED: “The exhibition was absolutely amazing. I was gobsmacked when I walked in the place...to see it all finished and in place.”

### **The project was felt to contribute to the aims and objectives of youth work:**

A youth worker involved in one of the youth groups, the Jay Project, felt that the art project made a unique contribution to the aims of their own work. She explained that the purpose of Foroige is to involve young people “consciously and actively in their own development in their wider community.” They have objectives to divert young people from anti-social behaviour and encourage civic responsibility and personal development. It was felt that the Jobstown Youth Arts Project “hit those community development and personal development objectives” in the way that it emphasised learning and social and creative engagement through a long-term process.

Each aspect of the project built on what had come before. Young people learned about art history, then learned about local history and culture and applied both those forms of learning to the creation of an artwork. The resulting artworks reflected the young people’s understanding of both those subject areas and also involved team work as each group produced at least one collaborative piece for exhibition. The process involved a span of several months with regular meetings. The fact that the groups had an event, such as the exhibition, to work toward, where they understood that their work would be received in a public format further enhanced their learning and their role and place within the community, particularly beyond their membership within their individual youth groups. Work carried out for the graffiti project was so successful that it has been shared with other school groups and youth services (see Appendix G).



**The project gave some volunteers and youth workers new ideas:**

Feedback given by volunteers and youth workers after individual workshop sessions demonstrate that they were introduced to new ideas and places to bring groups on visits.

**The project helped build a positive viewpoint of young people within the Jobstown Community:**

Volunteers involved in the project, parents of young participants and attendees of the exhibition stated that they were impressed by the work created by the young people. One individual stated that “volunteers, youth workers, parents and even the Mayor of Tallaght were impressed with the amount of work, research and dedication the young people put in to their project, which resulted in such brilliant work. It showed everyone just what can be achieved when they put their mind to it.”



*Research in the community*

One volunteer who joined the project and was a new member of the Jobstown community stated, “It helped me to humanise in my own mind, my young neighbours more.” In an area where young people are often understood and feared as vandals, this volunteer stated that involvement in the project “proved that even though [these young people] can be challenging at times, time spent with young people really pays off and they can make you proud of them. They are all individual, interesting people with a lot to offer.” While this volunteer acknowledge that s/he might have gained this understanding through any type of work with young people and not just via the Jobstown Youth Arts Project, it is important to note that this arts project did improve some people’s opinions of young people in the area, providing a new avenue through which people in the community could get to know the young people. In addition, the project provided an outlet through which young people in Jobstown could be celebrated and not demonised. This finding is a result of the dedication the young people, the artist facilitator, the public support agencies (including RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre), and the volunteers gave to the project.

**The project helped build the profile of the youth groups involved:**

Aside from field trip and historic site visits, the workshops were largely held in the Kiltalon Estate Management building where a number of other community groups meet. Works in progress were on display in the building throughout the duration of the project, leading people who utilise the building to get an insight into the work the young people were carrying out. People who saw the work in the building commented on the high quality they felt it exhibited and were pleased to learn that work about Jobstown

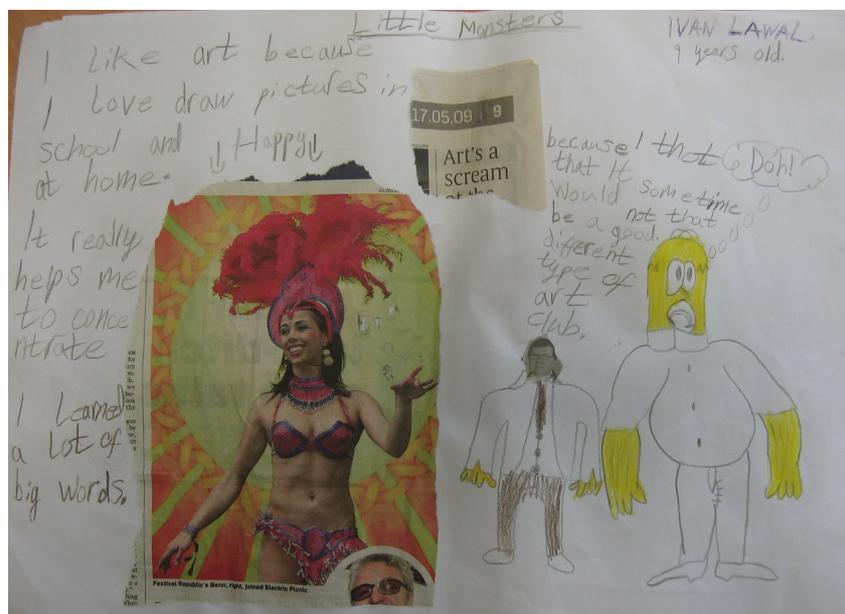
would be on public exhibition in an arts centre as well as eventually on permanent display.

**The project helped volunteers involved gain learning about art and local history:**

Not only did the project help build a positive viewpoint of young people from the area for those involved in the project as well as for those who attended the exhibition, but the project also helped individuals involved learn more about the local history of Jobstown. One volunteer stated, “I found out about how much our local area is steeped in history—between old churches and ‘the pale’ boundaries, etc... I also learned a lot about history of political graffiti, Dadaism and cubism.” Another volunteer stated, “I learned a lot about Dadaism and graffiti art, history, stuff I had missed in college.”

**The project brought parts of the Jobstown Community together to celebrate their locality:**

The exhibition provided an opportunity for members of the Jobstown community, such as volunteers, youth workers, development workers, parents and family to come together to celebrate their neighbourhood in a new way. The exhibition was held at the new arts centre, RUA RED, which demonstrated a new way in which the locality of Jobstown could access the centre. In addition the exhibition was opened by Mayor Marie Corr, herself from Jobstown, which added to the importance of the occasion. People who shared feedback for the evaluation on the day of the exhibition opening were all very proud to be a part of the day and also described themselves as happy to be celebrating their local history.



*Evaluation Feedback from young participants*

## **Project Organisation:**

### **The dedication and resourcefulness of the artist facilitator was crucial to the project's development:**

Work carried out by the artist facilitator meets best practice criteria as presented in South Dublin County Council's Youth Arts Policy (Bartlett 2006: 13). The artist facilitator took incredible initiative in sourcing volunteers when agency supports for such were lacking at times. In addition, her organisation of field trips to galleries and places such as 'All City', which including provision of transport and volunteers, making contacts with the organisations and getting assistance in establishing tours of these places, were an important contribution to the project. These trips helped the young people gain an understanding of the historical creation of art works and the place in the wider arts community in which their own artwork would sit. Finally, the artist facilitator is quick-witted and has great ingenuity in making the case to the wider arts community of the importance of projects such as these. She is incredibly capable at convincing people of the contribution that providing materials at low cost and donating time in giving tours and site visits and exhibition facilities can make to a project such as this. One way that this is demonstrated is via the great number of sponsors that contributed to the project. These included the National Youth Council of Ireland; the Department of Education and Science; RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre; the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; the Arts Council Ireland; Foroige; South Dublin County Council; Doggett Print and Design; and A Big Nose Production.

One volunteer described the artist facilitator as having strong capability in keeping "momentum going" among the young people. Her previous experience in teaching was felt by volunteers involved as contributing greatly to the young people's "understanding of history and the significance of their work."

### **Volunteers came from a variety of backgrounds:**

Volunteers were sourced through sites such as volunteer.ie and through schools such as NCAD. Having a variety of volunteers with both social work and artistic backgrounds contributed positively to the project's development. While it was difficult at times to source volunteers, those that stayed involved in the project had much to bring to its development. At times, this opportunity was not always taken advantage of, with some volunteers feeling they could have and would have liked to contribute more of their expertise and enthusiasm.

### **Scheduling conflicts arose at times:**

In some occasions, individual young people's activities outside that of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project clashed with scheduled workshops. This caused frustration in terms of completing some of the pieces for the project's exhibition. In some cases, these clashes may not be avoided.

**Some behavioural difficulties arose among groups of young people:**

While the overall behaviour of young people involved in the project was good, one of the groups in particular had extreme cases of behavioural difficulties. These cases involved some form of bullying. Without support for the project by a constant volunteer, this was difficult for the artist. She would sometimes be put in situations where she had to address behaviour, rather than lead on developing the creativity of the young people.

One youth worker stated that behavioural difficulties are often unavoidable with some of these groups as they often involve young people who are facing difficult situations. While at times different group activities had to be cut short due to behaviour, it was not felt that this was necessarily due to the arts project itself, but part of the overall work that different youth development programmes are trying to address. Rather, it was felt that the arts project was a positive contribution to addressing some of these behavioural difficulties and not a cause of them.

**Assessment of Agency and Project Supports:****Administrative and agency-based support for the project was lacking:**

The CDP had initially planned to provide a community development worker to assist the project with administrative support; for example, arranging consent forms, invoices, transportation. Unfortunately, the proposed staff member left the CDP before the project commenced and due to budget constraints was not replaced. As a result, the artist took on unexpected additional administrative responsibilities for the project, including sourcing volunteers, which created a stressful situation.

**Previously determined roles amongst stakeholders and artist became unclear and comprised the structure of the project as a whole:**

Due to the above factors as well as the maternity leave of a key youth worker supporting one of the youth groups, the artist became incredibly reliant on volunteers who were not always reliable. At times, the artist was left on her own with groups of young people in different workshops and on field trips, having to spend much time sourcing other support staff, often at the last minute. These situations also contributed great stress on, though did not necessarily compromise the project's organisation and on the creative vision of the project as a whole.

**Reliability of some key agencies was not always present:**

As the artist was put in a position where she took on a major coordinating role of the project, beyond that of Creative Director, she was often in a position where she needed access to buildings where workshops were held, even without key building staff available. This situation particularly arose at Kiltalon Estate Management Building. The artist was often left waiting around for a key staff member of South Dublin County Council to arrive to let groups into the building as well as close up the building upon

workshop completion. This put unexpected and considerable time constraints on the creative workshops.

**The artwork created has a legacy and permanent public exhibition space:**

Artwork created and exhibited at RUA RED from the 12<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> of May will be put on permanent public display within the Jobstown community. Final sites will be discussed and agreed upon in a public meeting with community officials, residents and young artists. The CDP is currently coordinating this aspect.

**Project has support for sustainability:**

The CDP have agreed to provide a room free of charge with insurance coverage for continuation of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project. The project will be continued in three different groups based on age. Volunteers who had participated in the project have agreed to support the continuation of these three groups. Participants in the group will be determined based on two approaches: 1) promotion to young people outside those who had participated in the Jobstown Youth Arts Project and 2) the levels of interest amongst those young people who did participate. Individuals who participated in the Jobstown Youth Arts Project will be given the first option for places. A nominal fee of 2 euro per young person will be used for materials and/or outings.

Volunteers involved with the project are interested in staying involved. In addition, some are keen to have more responsibility in the future running of the project, stating that they felt their initial engagement to be largely based on child protection guidelines in terms of keeping appropriate child-adult ratios. New volunteers are now also on board and involved with planning the sustainability of the project under the heading of *D Kreative Kidz*. Initial meetings with volunteers and young people to design a future programme of activities have already taken place and an agreed start date of November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 has been decided.

**Conclusion of Findings: The Jobstown Youth Arts Project in Context**

Based on the findings gleaned from this evaluation of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project, it may be determined that the structure, organisation and delivery of the project within the context of youth arts in South Dublin County as well as more broadly is an exemplar model.

In 2006, South Dublin County Council's Arts Office commissioned research into developing a Youth Arts Policy for the County (Bartlett 2006). That document describes the elements necessary for delivering a best practice model of youth arts activity. The Jobstown Youth Arts Project fits many, if not all, of those criteria. Table 2 presents those criteria and its links to the Jobstown Youth Arts Project.

By addressing diverse groups of young people, as regards age, and inclusive of those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Jobstown Youth Arts project provides an informal environment in which young people can access new areas of education, an area recently emphasised within research conducted by the National Youth Council of Ireland as well as the Arts Council (NYCI 2007; Arts Council 2008: 17). The project links learning in art history, local history with skill building in arts and design in a social setting. Further, by allowing the young people involved in the project to lead on decisions related to art making, the project utilises methods of youth-participatory education within an informal setting.

**Table 2: Best Practice Elements within the Jobstown Youth Arts Project**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Jobstown Youth Arts Project</b>
<b>Meaningful</b>	In that young people’s participation is in a form that they can understand and which means something to the individual as well as the group.	By linking the project to the history, geography, social circumstances of the local area and the participants’ artistic/creative interpretation of that
<b>Participatory</b>	Is more than simply being involved; it is feeling part of the active work and the creative explorations undertaken and building a loyalty to the group or club that offers that positive experience. Group identity is often a very important part of youth arts activity, and sharing an artistic experience is in many cases just as important as the activity itself, because it enhances self-worth and confidence.	By linking to local history and context; encouraging and facilitating the young participants to research that history; emphasising the importance of the young people’s creative and artistic interpretation of that history; involving other members of the community in the project promoting a holistic participatory approach; encouraging young people to be involved in the decision-making aspects of the whole project from start to finish (from idea development to creation to curating and hosting the exhibition).
<b>Expressive</b>	Because the particular art form is used to explore and express an individual’s own ideas, thoughts, emotions or understanding of the world around them and because such processes of exploration and expression help to develop a recognised or perceived talent or skill.	Emphasising creative interpretation of local history, geography and social circumstances and learning and application of learning regarding art historical approaches to art-making
<b>Hands on</b>	Because the pleasure is in the doing, in the acquisition of the means to express, appreciate, understand, and participate in a particular art form.	Creating own artworks, exhibiting at a major cultural institution in the area and plans for permanent public display in the community
<b>Accessible</b>	Because it is desirable to always have an Open Access Policy.	The project had a number of different groups participating, including various ages and aspects of youth services and community development groups for youth in the area
<b>Responsive</b>	In that it meets the needs, ideas and the	The project enhanced participation in the arts for young people

	aspirations of young people which have been expressed/explored during the planning stage of the project.	already interested but wanting to get more involved and introduced the arts to those that were skeptical that it was 'for them'.
<b>Respectful</b>	In that through the creative process it fosters respect and appreciation of all the participants for each other and for the art form itself.	While some behavioural difficulties resulted during the project, largely due to existing matters of working with young people in difficult situations, the project did not let these matters prevent participation of young people. Field trips and gallery visits continued as planned. At no time were young people prevented from participating in certain activities due to pre-disposed ideas about their interests and abilities
<b>Joyous</b>	This comes from "the doing" and "the sharing" as well as the social engagement of the teamwork.	Creating own artworks, exhibiting at a major cultural institution in the area and plans for permanent public display in the community
<b>Artistic</b>	Because participation is by means of artistic and creative expression.	Young participants were very involved in the creative decision-making regarding artworks produced for exhibition

The Project has helped build pride in the local area through its emphasis on learning local history and the exhibition of the work in a prominent cultural space in Tallaght, RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre. Further, the plan to display the young participants' artwork permanently within the Jobstown estate aims to continue to build confidence not only in the locality but also in the young people who are equal residents there. These aims link with the South Dublin County Development Board's strategic aims for 2002 – 2010, which strive to improve the quality of life of people within the County by focusing not only on economic inclusion, but also significantly for this study cultural and social inclusion (South Dublin County Development Board 2002).

Arts Council research and strategy documents have emphasised arts activities that "stimulate public interest in the art and promote knowledge, appreciation, and practice of the arts" (Arts Council 2008) The Jobstown Youth Arts Project has not only fostered the creativity of young people living in the area of Jobstown, but it has also helped build an appreciation of other styles of art through its emphasis on learning art historical knowledge. Linking the project to an area of interest and commonality for all of the youth groups involved, namely the locality's history, also helped foster links for not only young people but also the wider Jobstown community to the arts as well. Further, by displaying the end of project exhibition at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre, the project has made a link for the Jobstown community to the new centre in Tallaght, recently opened in February 2009. Attendance to that exhibition in May 2009 was the first time many had ever been to the centre.

Views shared by volunteers, parents and youth workers involved in the project spoke to the benefits the Project had to addressing objectives and concerns of youth work. In fact, many of the Project's findings link to Francois Matarasso's (1997) findings on the potential social impact of the arts. By helping the young people showcase their work, the Project went some way toward validating the contributions that young people can make to their communities (Matarasso 1997). By focusing the project on local history, social circumstances with a view to exhibiting the artwork permanently in the community (with decision-making on that being reached via public community forum), the Project has helped promote a dialogue about the locality within the locality (Matarasso 1997), but a dialogue sparked by the creativity of young people themselves. Further this approach has helped build community support for the sustainability of the project via venues for activities and potential volunteer networks. The very fact that the development of this project has come about from previous arts activities in Jobstown demonstrates the capacity that can be built among the young people involved over the year for carrying on new arts activities in the future. In fact, one such member of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project has become involved in other arts based projects in the area as a result, such as the filmmaking group Tallaght Young Filmmakers and the Tallaght Youth Arts Forum, which aims to promote youth voice and participation in arts in the area.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Establish stronger links of communication between local support agencies for the project:**

In order to address some of the agency support issues, it is suggested that the CDP and South Dublin County Council's Arts Office set up a forum for communication with one another and the artist on the future development of the project. Now with a Youth Arts Coordinator present in the Arts Office, the Arts Office is better situated to assist the artist in liaising with local government agencies and perhaps gaining more support for the project. It is suggested that a meeting between the artist, the Art's Office's Youth Arts Coordinator and key CDP and South Dublin County Council Community Department and Housing Department staff, who may have greater knowledge of the venue currently utilized for the project, be set.

### **Establish a volunteer network for the project:**

In making calls for new volunteers to join the project, it is suggested that the project take on a panel of volunteers that may be available across overlapping days, so that there may be 'back-up' if a volunteer is ill or unable to attend at the last minute. In addition, the artist may consult South Dublin County Council's Community Department via the Youth Arts Coordinator to gain information on vetting and training volunteers. It is suggested that the Youth Arts Coordinator assist the artist in developing a volunteer pack for the continuation of the Jobstown Youth Arts Project. Additional supports may be found within Voluntary Arts Ireland, Volunteer Ireland, the Arts Council and the National Youth Council.

### **Seek funding for a Project Welfare Officer:**

While focusing on youth theatre, the National Association of Youth Drama has published information on the provision of Welfare Officers for arts project as a form of best practice. Hiring a Welfare Officer would help to ensure a continued and dedicated member of the project who could support the welfare needs and address the behavioural difficulties of the young people. Hiring an individual with specific skills in managing these issues would take the pressure off the artist, freeing her from having to discipline and instead being able to further develop the creativity of the young people.

### **Raise the profile of and enhance the network involved in the Jobstown Youth Arts Project:**

Findings demonstrated that the various youth groups involved in the Jobstown Youth Arts Project did not interact with one another as much as could have, the majority only coming together at the exhibition opening. Learning and links among the different ages of young people involved in the various aspects of the project may be enhanced if a discussion seminar, led by young people, were held in conjunction with a future exhibition of work in the next phase of the project. Such a discussion seminar would not only help the young people to better understand one another within their own

community, but it would also help celebrate young people in the area more widely, building their role as citizens within Jobstown and Tallaght as well as members of the arts community. It may also help to establish the project as an example of best practice within the sector of Youth Arts, if the seminar was opened up to the attendance of youth work and youth arts practitioners and funders. Organisations that may be approached to support such an endeavour include RUA RED, Tallaght Community Arts, South Dublin County Council's Arts Office, Foroige, the National Youth Council of Ireland and the Arts Council.

Another way in which the Jobstown Youth Arts Project may build its profile is to get involved in projects with Voluntary Arts Ireland and Volunteer Ireland. Voluntary Arts Ireland is seeking voluntary arts groups and organisations to build the profile of the role the arts sector plays in providing training and support for volunteers.

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