



The Education and Training Inspectorate

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning



An Interim Report on the
Creative Youth Partnerships

September 2005

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.

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 receives 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.

3. In January 2005, DCAL and DE requested that the Education and Training Inspectorate ‘the Inspectorate’ evaluate the project, and provide an interim report in September 2005 and a final report in September 2006.

4. The key success indicators as agreed by the Steering Group of the CYP and the Inspectorate 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.

5. The evaluation of a creativity initiative such as CYP is developmental in its nature. Additional anticipated outcomes for the key partners include:
 - reaching agreement, by the end of the initiative, as to what constitutes good practice not only in the evaluation, but also in the delivery, of arts projects;
 - developing agreed self-evaluative documentation for use by arts organisations;
 - providing a complementary approach to the work of the Research and Statistics unit within DCAL, thereby ensuring increased efficiency of public resources; and
 - providing policy advice to DE and DCAL with regard to the development of the creative skills/creativity of young people.
6. This document constitutes an interim report to the Steering Group of CYP. The final report may differ in structure.
7. The findings of this interim report indicate that there are many strengths in the CYP pilot initiative which include:
 - the commitment and dedication of all those involved, and especially of the five CYP officers, in developing and co-ordinating the programme in the first year of implementation;
 - the 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 competence and growing confidence of the Action Zone Support Groups (AZSGs); and
 - the good progress made in beginning to meet the overall objectives of the CYP programme.
8. The report draws attention to the limitations of a framework evaluation which is largely quantitative. In year 2 of the programme the officers are working with the Inspectorate and DCAL to develop further the scope of the evaluation framework. The key objectives are to provide opportunities for:
- the participants to evaluate their experiences in the CYP programme; and
 - the receiving organisations to evaluate the development of the participants' creative thinking skills.
9. The CYP officers in their end-of-year reports have rightly identified areas for further development, which the inspection endorses. The interim evaluation has identified the need to:
- review 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;
 - 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;

- review the various layers of management of the programme and to implement more fully a collaborative and inclusive approach; and
 - develop and use additional approaches as outlined in the evaluation framework, to capture more fully the quality of the experiences for the participants.
10. The interim report highlights that there is potential for CYP to make a difference, not just in Northern Ireland but in a wider arts context, if agreement can be reached as to:
- what constitutes a good youth arts project; and
 - how the success of such a project can be measured effectively.
11. Through developing and extending the various partnerships which have already been formed successfully, CYP can ensure that the young people of Northern Ireland have wider access to the arts and increased opportunities to develop their creativity.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
September 2005