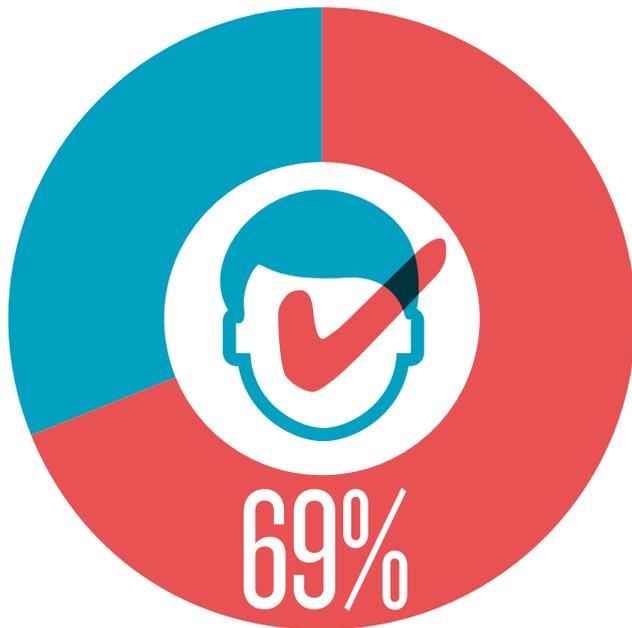


# YOUTH ARTS

National Youth Council of Ireland



69% of people surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that funding for the arts be maintained even in times of economic recession

## What is Youth Arts?

Youth Arts can be broadly defined as young people taking part voluntarily in creative, cultural or expressive activity outside of the formal education process. It can encompass participation and appreciation, as well as engagement with arts work specifically created by, with or for young people.<sup>1</sup>

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) defines youth arts as having a range of principles by which you can recognise it, no matter where it takes place. These include it being a planned programme of work with voluntary participation by young people, high quality throughout, authentic engagement and exploration of the art form as an objective of the project as well as a methodology through which youth work objectives may be achieved and run by organisations with a youth rather than competitive or commercial ethos.<sup>2</sup>

## How many young people participate in youth arts in Ireland?

We do not know because there is no overall map of provision and participation. That is why we need an audit of all youth arts activity.

We do know however, that an estimated 382,615 young people participated in and benefitted from youth work activities in Ireland in 2011 and that the vast majority of youth organisations provide recreational, arts and sports related activities.<sup>3</sup> Participation in a cultural organisation was the 3rd most popular youth activity by young people in Europe (participation in a youth organisation was 2nd).<sup>4</sup>

## What are the benefits for young people who participate in the arts?

For young people in particular, increased participation in arts and culture has shown to increase academic attainment as well as reducing truancy and improving classroom behaviour. When artistic, cultural and sporting activities take place in a community setting there is huge potential to build local social networks. Social capital not only improves local relationships for individuals but also benefits the local area more widely. Recent studies show that increased participation in cultural, artistic and

## FACTSHEET: YOUTH ARTS

sporting activities helps tackle some of the issues that concern local communities, including delinquency, graffiti and crime.<sup>5</sup>

### Is there public support for the arts?

Yes. The independent report *The Public and the Arts* found strong support for youth arts funding among the general public, and arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people were identified as the top priority for 30% and the 2nd priority for 24% of those surveyed. The level of support among the public for youth arts was far in excess of other areas identified by the public.

In the same report, 69% of people surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that funding for the arts be maintained even in times of economic recession.<sup>6</sup>

### Are there other reasons why the state should support the arts?

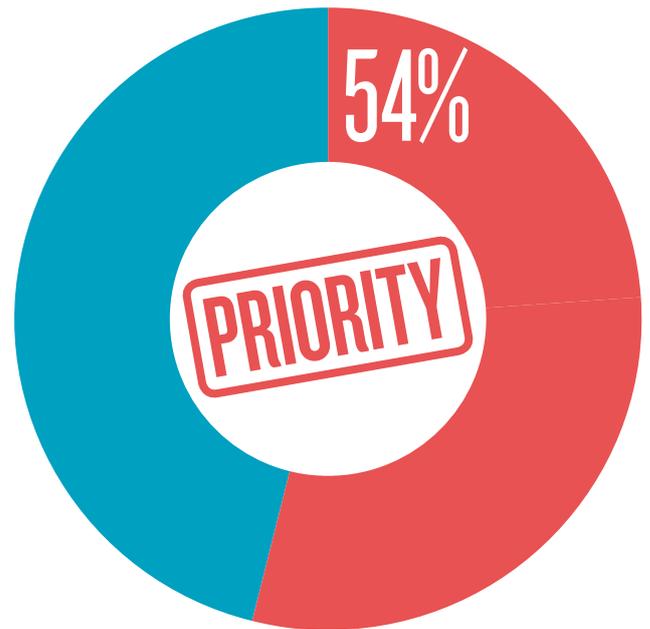
Cultural provision is the right of every Irish young person because of Ireland's ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child which includes the right to participate in the cultural life of the country.<sup>7</sup>

19.2% of the Irish population is between the age of 10 and 24.<sup>8</sup> It is important that provision is made for access to the arts for these young citizens, who make up such a significant percentage of the population. Access to the arts is not about quality of education, or quality of public provision, it is about quality of childhood which must include access to the arts.

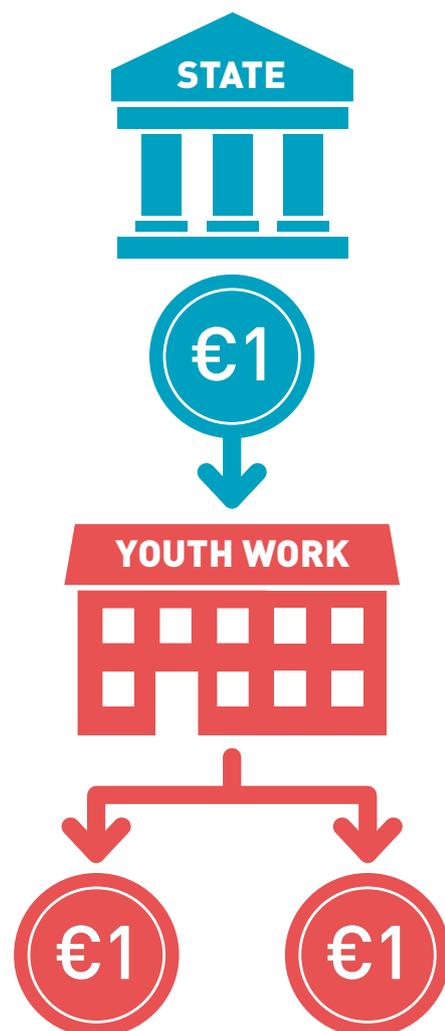
The NESF report *The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion* says that children are a particularly important grouping in relation to the arts by virtue of among other things the developmental significance of childhood experiences.<sup>9</sup>

The Arts are arguably Ireland's most successful export. For such a small population, our contribution to Nobel Prizes, Oscars, Tonys, Grammys and Golden Globes is disproportionate. Our rich cultural heritage is promoted as a reason to visit Ireland; however, it must be a lived reality for our citizens as well as our tourists.

Irish young people will be paying (directly through their taxes and indirectly through curtailed public services) for many years, for an economic crisis which was not of their making. It is morally imperative that we provide them with the best quality childhood and adolescence, with as broad a range of opportunities as possible.



Arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people were identified as the top priority or the 2nd priority for 54% of those surveyed (top priority 30%, second 24%)



For every €1 the State invests in youth work – it saves €2.22 in the long run

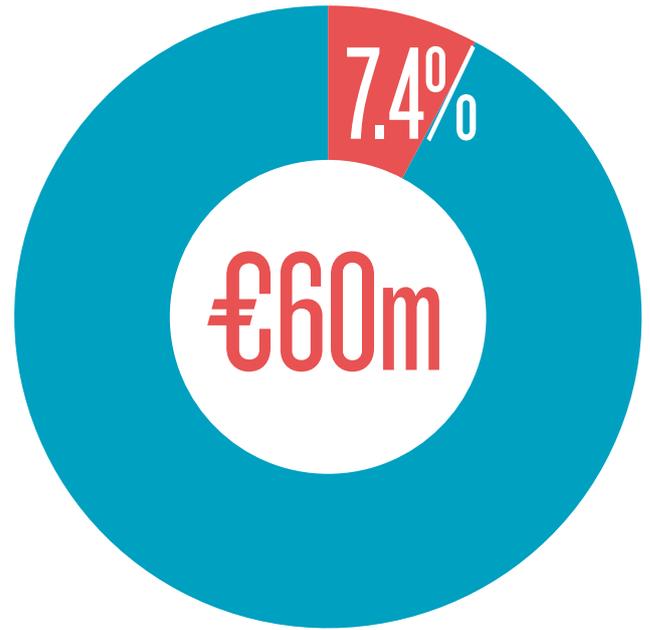
## How does NYCI support the arts?

The NYCI Arts programme is a model example of strategic partnership between agencies with responsibility for children and is jointly funded by Department of Children and Youth Affairs and The Arts Council.

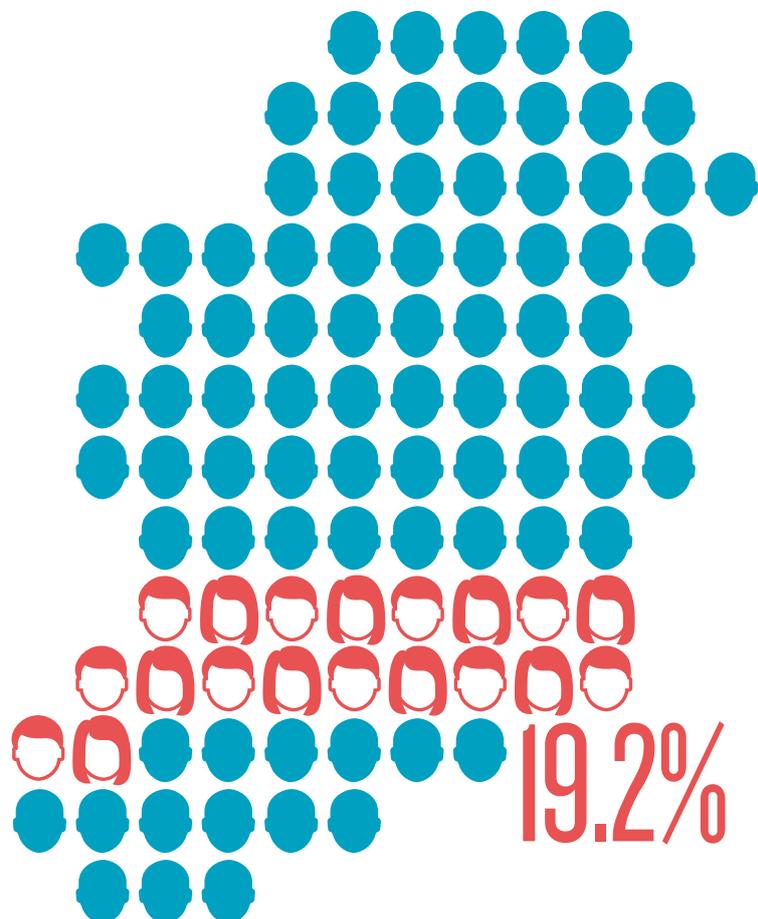
The NYCI Arts Programme is uniquely placed to promote high quality arts access for young people in youth work settings through high quality training, professional development and support. This includes delivering the NUI Certificate in Youth Arts (the only course of its kind in the country) a residential training summer school for youth workers and the production of resources such as the youth workers handbook for digital filmmaking. NYCI also seeks to contribute to policy on local, regional and national level and to highlight the importance of arts provision in these areas.

## What prevents young people being involved in the arts?

Simple...opportunity. The absence of a strategic approach to provision and planning and the lack of adequate funding means that a young person's access to the arts can often be determined by whether or not they are lucky enough to be in an area in which there is strong local provision and if not, whether their parents can pay for it instead.



7.4% of the €60 million Arts Council budget was spent on children and young people in 2012



19.2% of the Irish population is between the age of 10 and 24

1. Arts in Their Lives, National Youth Council of Ireland, 2004
2. Youth Arts Position Paper, National Youth Council of Ireland, 2009
3. Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work, Indecon International Economic Consultants for National Youth Council of Ireland 2012
4. Youth on the Move in Assessment of Economic Value of Youthwork, European Commission 2011
5. The State of Happiness Project, The Young Foundation, 2010
6. The Public and the Arts, The Arts Council, 2008
7. Article 31, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959 (ratified in Ireland 1991)
8. Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work, Indecon International Economic Consultants for National Youth Council of Ireland 2012
9. The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion, National Economic and Social Forum, 2007

# WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SUPPORT YOUTH ARTS?

## NYCI is asking Government:

- ✓ To develop and expand the Arts and Education Charter to include non formal education (youth arts) and for Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to work in partnership with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in this regard.
- ✓ To develop strategic partnerships between government departments with responsibility for arts, education and youth policy.
- ✓ To expand the membership of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group to include representation by The Arts Council, as the state agency with primary responsibility for arts policy and funding in Ireland.
- ✓ To ensure the integration of arts provision in youth policy and developments such as the proposed youth policy framework.
- ✓ To support the development of a repository of evidence on the impacts of participation in the arts for young people in Ireland (this could be part of the DCYA Research Scholarship Programme already in existence).
- ✓ To undertake a national audit or map to establish a baseline of of provision and funding nationally.
- ✓ To continue to provide the resources to the arts programme to enable NYCI to continue to promote high quality access to the arts for young people in youth work settings.

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The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland. It represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people

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The National Youth Council of Ireland Arts Programme is a partnership approach to promoting and developing youth arts in Ireland. The Programme receives funding from the Arts Council, and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. [www.youtharts.ie](http://www.youtharts.ie)

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