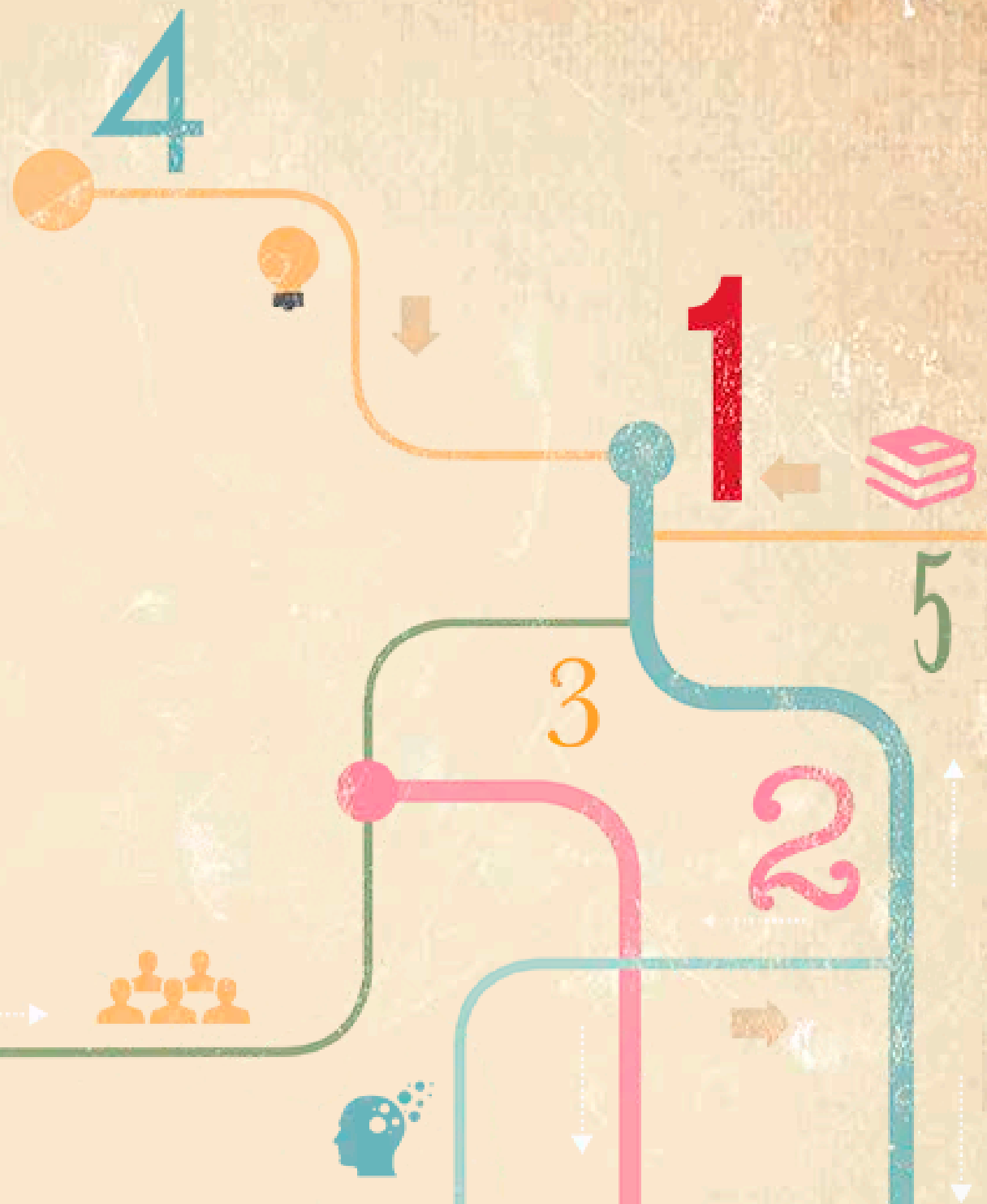


# CAPTURING MAGIC

A Tool for Evaluating  
Outcomes in Youth  
Arts Projects

(Ways to track and measure  
the magic in your project!)

Developed by: NYCI Youth Arts Programme



# NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people. It seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society. NYCI's role is recognised in legislation through the Youth Work Act 2001 and as a Social Partner in the Community and Voluntary Pillar. **[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)**

## NYCI'S YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMME

**NYCI's Youth Arts Programme** is a partnership approach to promoting and developing youth arts in Ireland. It is a strategic partnership of the NYCI, the Arts Council and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. **[www.youtharts.ie](http://www.youtharts.ie)**

Evaluation Framework Developed by Nick Mack, Creative Edge Consulting with Anne O' Gorman

Resource written, revised and edited by Anne O' Gorman

Design by Fuse

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thank you to all the youth workers, youth arts practitioners and participants of the Artist and Youth Work Residency Scheme over the past few years who have used this tool and shared their valuable feedback with us. Particular thanks to Louise Monaghan, Training Consultant, Shona McGillivray Visual Arts Facilitator, Niall Cleary, Head of Outreach and Education, Graffiti Theatre Company, Saoirse Reynolds, Youth Worker, Bru Youth Service, and Alison Cronin, Schools and Youth Co-ordinator, Uilinn: West Cork Arts Centre for their feedback and insight into this revised version.

# CONTENTS:

- 2** Introduction
- 4** How to use this tool
- 5** Outcomes Map for a Youth Arts Project (What your choices are)
- 6** Description of Outcomes (What those choices mean)
- 12** Measuring Outcomes: Set 1: Creative Ability
- 17** Measuring Outcomes: Set 2: Emotional and Mental Wellbeing
- 25** Measuring Outcomes: Set 3: Social Confidence and Team working
- 30** Measuring Outcomes: Set 4: Included and Participating in Community Life/Society
- 36** Measuring Outcomes: Set 5: Life Skills and Resilience
- 41** Writing Up Your Findings
- 42** Appendix 1: The 7 Potent Mechanisms Delivering Improvements for Targeted Youth Programmes
- 43** Appendix 2: 5 National Outcomes for Children and Young People



# INTRODUCTION - WHY EVALUATE?

Magical things happen in a good youth arts project. The young person who wouldn't make eye contact with anyone at the start of the year is standing on a table leading the charge into battle... you can't place what seems different about the one who used to hide by the wall but he definitely seems three inches taller... and the one whose teachers think she can't concentrate is painstakingly editing a film she shot with her pals an hour ago. The pieces of conversation that drift up from knots of huddled heads seem so complex and sophisticated – they plan, and negotiate and work together so well. The way they treat each other is shot through with kindness. Absorbed in the making of a film, or a sculpture, or a scene from a play, or a problem to solve... friendships form, skills are built, a group of individuals become a team. And you think...*if people could just see this...*

Thankfully the research that proves all of this is becoming more widespread. Most recently, research published in Ireland shows that reading, painting/drawing, going on educational visits and attending cultural events are all significantly related to an improvement in socio-emotional wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. Research published in the UK tells us that people who participate in the arts are more likely to report good health, students from low income families who participate in arts activities are twice as likely to volunteer, three times more likely to get a degree and 20% more likely to vote<sup>2</sup>. However, sometimes trying to capture that magic can be difficult. This tool maps a range of the outcomes that you can typically expect in a youth arts project (though it is by no means exhaustive) to help you decide the priority outcomes you are hoping to see in your project. It supports you to measure progress when you see it and think about how you will describe it.

Additionally, this resource takes account of the 5 National Outcomes for Children and Young People<sup>3</sup> and of the 7 Potent Mechanisms for Delivering Improvements to Targeted Youth Programmes as outlined in the Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes<sup>4</sup> and can be used to gather information and identify outcomes to support the NQSF<sup>5</sup> process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Arts and Cultural Participation among children and young people: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study, ESRI, Arts Council 2016

<sup>2</sup> Key Research Findings: The Case for Cultural Learning, Cultural Learning Alliance, UK 2017

<sup>3</sup> Better Outcomes Brighter Futures The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014–2020, Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes, Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) For Youth Work, Office of the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs, 2010.

# INTRODUCTION - WHY EVALUATE?

You may want to track outcomes that are art form specific – in this case, use the scales in this resource to help you develop your own. See how they describe incremental progress that becomes more advanced? Think about what it is that's specific to your art form that you want to measure and try to create the scale you need.

As you know, the complex outcomes of a good project all seem to come through at the same time. We would recommend that when using this tool, you 'tune your radio' to the three or four that are priorities for your particular project and track those. Unfortunately, we can't capture everything at once, and, sometimes, trying to do that makes evaluating the project too difficult. Start small and build from there. Like all other practices, evaluation will come more easily the more you do it. The more you look the better you get at seeing!

You could also use this resource to help you think about what outcomes you want to promote and support at the design stage of your project – beginning with the end in mind.

It is very important to point out that just because we have a scale in place, it does not mean that the project is only a success if the group reaches the top of the scale. Indeed, some of the most important outcomes in a project might be that the group, or some individuals in the group, took a small step forward.

Describing the value of your work with your funders, managers and project partners is easier if you've been documenting and evaluating the outcomes. And, more importantly, collecting the information you think is important helps you shape that conversation. You are a powerful advocate for the young people you work with, so make sure your voice (and their voices) are heard by contributing evidence of the magic you've seen happening in the projects you run.

We are always here in the arts programme in NYCI to lend a hand.

Good luck!

Anne O' Gorman

Senior Project Officer, Youth Arts



## USING THE SCALES

These scales are designed to provide a series of observable behaviours seen amongst the individuals in a group of young people taking part in a project. The behaviours in turn reflect underlying aspects of a young person's attitudes, confidence and commitment to the goals and possibilities of the project, the artform and the creative process they experience. By selecting some of these scales you are identifying what differences your project might be able to make for young people. The scales will help you to see if the project is having an effect. Being honest about the effect your project is having will help you think about any improvements you might make or things you want to keep the same.

### RECORDING DEVELOPMENT USING THE SCALES

By observation of a session at the start, mid-way through and at the end of your project, decide how many of your group fit one or other of the descriptions provided for each scale as near as you can. Typically, you may find there are one or two young people who fit a number of different descriptions. Record the number under each description as shown below to show the pattern for the group. Alternatively, if your group is small and you have selected a small number of descriptors, you may consider completing one for each participant.

PATTERN IN  
THE GROUP:

There is a reluctance to try any exercise, technique or routine associated with the artform being used for the project.

2

There is a growing willingness to try simple exercises / techniques / routines, if self consciously / awkwardly.

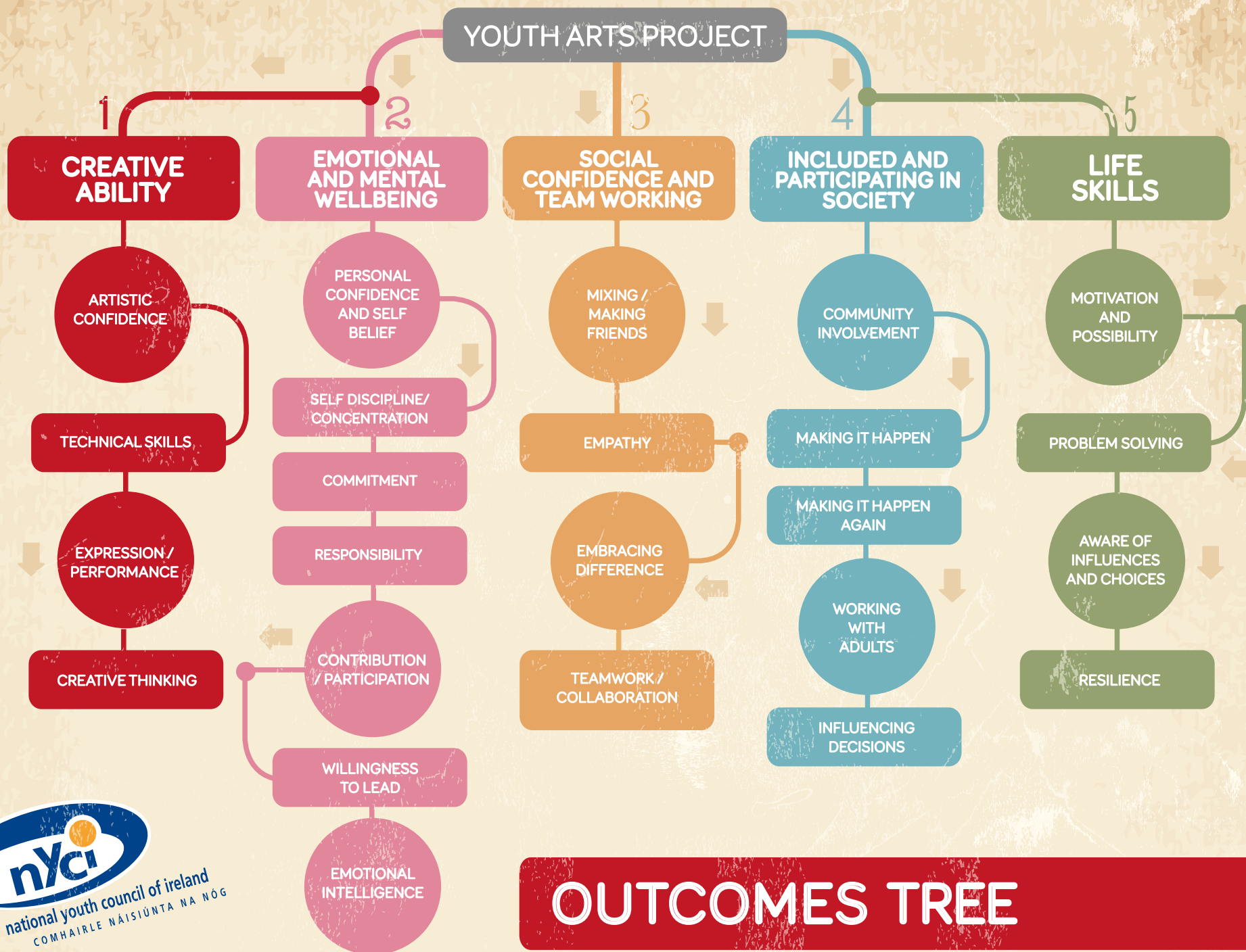
6

There is no hesitation in trying a growing number of different techniques / tools / routines.

2

Individuals are practicing techniques between sessions in their own time and intend to continue doing so after the project has finished.





# NYCI YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMME: OUTCOMES LIBRARY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



## CREATIVE ABILITY, ARTISTIC SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

ARTISTIC CONFIDENCE	Young people feel confident to engage with art and to consider themselves as artists, they value their artistic talents and take responsibility for their own artistic development.
TECHNICAL SKILLS	Young people demonstrate a fluid use of the techniques and tools of the artform, and may have formed a longer term plan for personal artistic development (e.g. taking part in activities with other organisations or going on to further education in that art form).
EXPRESSION / PERFORMANCE	<p>Young people are willing to perform or exhibit work to a wider public including friends and family and / or including in solo performances.</p> <p>They are willing to take risks including trying out their own ideas.</p> <p>The work of young people communicates with and engages an audience.</p>
CREATIVE THINKING	<p>Young People make suggestions for creative ideas frequently that are imaginative and engaging.</p> <p>Young people's ideas show interesting connections or a new take on accepted ways of doing things.</p>





## EMOTIONAL & MENTAL WELLBEING

PERSONAL CONFIDENCE & SELF BELIEF	<p>Young people show steady and consistent eye contact and show confidence in presence and self expression.</p> <p>Young people are able to recognise and communicate / express their own feelings and emotions fluently.</p>
SELF DISCIPLINE & CONCENTRATION	<p>Young people always listen to and consider / try what the session leader is suggesting.</p> <p>Young people are able to maintain their engagement in the work for extended periods.</p>
COMMITMENT	<p>Young people find solutions to problems they may have attending sessions, and / or are willing to attend additional sessions.</p> <p>Young people show care and consideration for the venue they use / and take an active part in the planning and organising of workshops or events additional to sessions.</p>
RESPONSIBILITY	<p>Young people show care and consideration for the venue they use and take an active part in the planning and organising of workshops or events.</p>
CONTRIBUTION / PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE PROJECT	<p>Young people make regular suggestions for their group to consider and are willing to constructively discuss / develop their ideas with alternative suggestions.</p>
WILLINGNESS TO LEAD	<p>Young people are willing to take a lead in developing, planning or delivering an idea.</p>
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	<p>Young people are able to recognise the emotions they experience as they arise and can communicate/express their feelings and emotions fluently.</p>

## 3



## SOCIAL CONFIDENCE AND TEAM WORKING

MIXING / MAKING  
FRIENDS

When arriving in the room, young people mix easily with others, including people from different backgrounds or communities, not sticking to the same clique.

## EMPATHY

Young people are able to recognise the emotions and points of view of others and take them into account.

EMBRACING  
DIFFERENCE

Young people are able to appreciate difference by sharing views, stories and ideas and building on different strengths.

TEAM WORK /  
COLLABORATION

Young people work as a team, seeking consensus rather than putting their own interests first. Young people actively appreciate and build on the contribution of other group members.





## INCLUDED AND PARTICIPATING IN SOCIETY

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	Young people feel confident about themselves and what they can do.
MAKING IT HAPPEN	Young people have the knowledge and skills they need to be able to initiate and carry forward arts or other community projects.
MAKING IT HAPPEN AGAIN	Young people can identify and approach people within or outside their community who can help them to access resources needed for a project.
WORKING WITH ADULTS	Key people in the wider community feel confident to work with and involve young people and are aware of what they can offer.
INFLUENCING DECISIONS	Young people are able to inform the thinking and decisions of other groups and organisations in order to enhance their own quality of life.



## 5



## LIFE SKILLS

MOTIVATION AND  
POSSIBILITY

Young people can envision goals they can strive for in the future, and see the steps they can take to get there, in projects or in their own personal lives.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

Young People are able to independently generate and explore a number of possible solutions to problems and to take action based on those solutions.

AWARE OF  
INFLUENCES AND  
CHOICES

Young people can confidently assess and distinguish different influences and choices affecting their wellbeing.

Young people have the confidence to deal with conflict or pressure in order to make the choices that are right for them.

## RESILIENCE

Young people can cope with difficult challenges and know how to seek advice or assistance if they need it.





### SET 1: CREATIVE ABILITY

1

1. Artistic confidence
2. Technical skills
3. Expression/performance
4. Creative thinking



### SET 2: EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

2

1. Personal confidence and self belief
2. Self discipline/concentration
3. Commitment
4. Responsibility
5. Contribution/participation
6. Willingness to lead
7. Emotional confidence/intelligence

### SET 3: SOCIAL CONFIDENCE AND TEAM WORKING

3

1. Mixing/making friends
2. Empathy
3. Embracing difference
4. Teamwork/collaboration

### SET 4: INCLUDED AND PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY LIFE

4

1. Community involvement
2. Making it happen
3. Making it happen again
4. Working with adults
5. Influencing decisions

### SET 5: LIFE SKILLS

5

1. Motivation and possibility
2. Problem solving
3. Aware of influences and choices
4. Resilience

# SET 1: CREATIVE ABILITY

This set of scales provide some different ways of exploring how young people are taking up the artistic process for themselves; in terms of confidence, active use of tools and techniques, creative thinking, and their willingness to be publicly associated with work that is thought provoking or challenging.



1

## 1.1 ARTISTIC CONFIDENCE

This is not so much about skills and knowledge as the confidence to embrace art. Success is that young people feel confident to engage with art and to consider themselves as artists; they value their artistic talents and take responsibility for their own artistic development.

There is a reluctance to try any exercise, technique or routine associated with the artform being used for the project.

There is a growing willingness to try simple exercises/techniques/routines, if self consciously/awkwardly.

There is no hesitation in trying a growing number of different techniques/tools/routines.

Individuals are practicing techniques in between sessions in their own time and intend to continue doing so after the project has finished.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:

1



## 1.2 TECHNICAL SKILLS

This scale describes the way young people use tools and techniques as an indication of how familiar they are with them and therefore how skilled we can say they have become. Success is that young people demonstrate a fluid use of the techniques and tools of the artform, and may have formed a longer term plan for personal artistic development.

Techniques/routines are conducted mechanically.

Techniques/routines are conducted with some thought and involvement but depend on the instruction of the artist.

Participants show an understanding of how to use tools and techniques of the artform to achieve a desired effect or outcome. They often discuss approaches to using techniques to achieve different ideas and effects.

Participants sometimes lose themselves in the flow of using techniques/tools. Participants have begun to look for further opportunities to develop their skills such as taking part in activities with other organisations or going on to further education in that art form.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:





## 1.3 EXPRESSION/PERFORMANCE

This scale explores how willing a young person is to be clearly associated with their own work publicly. Success is that young people are willing to perform or exhibit work to a wider public including friends and family and/or including in solo performances.

Participants are not willing to go on stage or show/ be identified with their individual work publicly.

Participants are willing to go on stage/show work publicly but mostly as a group not as a solo artist. Audience/viewers show limited engagement, describe support for the young people but little reaction in work itself.

Participants are willing to perform or show work individually (for example, a solo performance, or a picture/sculpture they have produced on their own) or show work that is more unusual. The piece includes some of their own original ideas. Audience/viewers are engaged much of the time or describe being interested in the work.

Participants are willing to perform or exhibit a piece they have developed in large part by themselves and/or that can be considered challenging; for example in terms of message or level of emotional expression. Audience/viewers are challenged or describe feeling strongly affected.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:



This indicator explores how far the young people are thinking creatively for themselves rather than looking only to the artist for creative guidance. Success is that young people make suggestions for creative ideas frequently that are imaginative and engaging, and/or that young people's ideas show interesting connections or a new take on accepted ways of doing things.

Participants take the lead in creating their own work demonstrating their own personal artistic journey.

NOTES:



## SET 2: EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

This set of scales explores the difference participation in the arts project might make to the personal self-confidence, concentration, emotional intelligence and assertiveness of individual young people for personal resilience and broadly applicable life skills.

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It features three main colored lines: a blue line at the top, an orange line in the middle, and a pink line at the bottom. These lines curve and intersect. A large, stylized purple number '2' is positioned in the center-right. Various icons are scattered around: a blue head with gears in the top right, a small brown arrow pointing down in the upper middle, a small orange arrow pointing right in the bottom left, and a small orange lightbulb at the bottom center.

2

## 2.1 PERSONAL CONFIDENCE AND SELF BELIEF

This scale explores how confident a young person is in who they are as a unique individual; in their beliefs, likes and abilities. Success is found in young people expressing themselves and who they are fully and confidently.

There is a reluctance to make eye contact, head is often down when talking, general closed/protective body language.

There is occasional eye contact and sometimes a more open, expressive body language.

There is steady and consistent eye contact and a confidence in self expression/self esteem.

Personal expression and self-confidence is consistent and unique.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:

2



## 2.2 SELF DISCIPLINE AND CONCENTRATION

Attention deficit disorder at school has become viewed as a growing medical problem, but it may reflect the complex media environment young people are growing up in which cultivates a short attention span. Arts projects may be able to provide young people with the opportunity to develop longer periods of focused engagement. Success would be young people being able to maintain their engagement in the work for extended periods, listening to and considering/trying what the session leader is suggesting, or being lost in the flow of a creative process.

Participants are often/ occasionally distracted and can be disruptive.

It requires effort to get participants to listen to and apply what the session leader suggests or ask for.

Participants are attentive and engaged some of the time. They tend to listen to what the session leader is suggesting/ asking for and sometimes seek clarification if unsure.

Participants are attentive and engaged most of the time. They listen to and reflect on what the session leader is suggesting, asking questions that indicate they are thinking about what is being suggested.

Participants are fully engaged and can be completely immersed in what they are doing for extended periods of time (otherwise known as 'flow').

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:




## 2.3 COMMITMENT

This scale explores how far young people genuinely want to participate in a project rather than come out of a sense of duty or obligation. It indicates the benefit and meaning the project might be having to them. Success would be found in young people finding solutions to problems they may have in attending sessions rather than excuses, and/or their willingness to attend additional sessions.

	Participants arrive late, or choose not to attend some sessions without giving a reason.	Participants mostly arrive on time. If they cannot attend a session they provide a reason.	Participants arrive on time or early, and try to find a way to attend if a problem arises.	Participants arrive on time or early, stay as long as they can, and are willing to attend additional sessions to achieve the outcome they want.
PATTERN IN THE GROUP:				

NOTES:

Young people are often considered a risk by adults in not looking after a room or equipment provided for them, but this may be because it is provided for them not with them, so that there is no sense of ownership. This scale explores indications that a sense of ownership has been successfully developed with young people, demonstrated in their willingness to show care and consideration for the resources they use or in taking an active part in the planning and organising of workshops or events.

## 2.5 CONTRIBUTION/PARTICIPATION

An important indicator of confidence and of positive social skills lies in the frequency and way in which young people contribute ideas into their group. Making contributions is an indication of confidence. How the young person deals with the response to their idea is also instructive; do they constructively explain and try to sell their idea rather than simply let it go (indicating a lack of assertiveness) or force it upon the group? (being over dominant). Success would be where young people are being supportive of each other to make suggestions and are able to constructively discuss/develop the ideas collectively to a shared decision. This is both a quality of each individual but also the way the group as a whole is working. The scale below therefore provides both an individual and group level perspective to assist assessment.

PATTERN  
AMONGST  
INDIVIDUALS

Participants do not contribute to group discussions.

There is a mix of participants: those who make occasional suggestions which are often not heard or are forgotten in discussions and those who are more assertive in putting their own ideas first.

There are a number of participants making periodic suggestions for the group to consider. These are listened to more often and discussed, but decisions do not always have consensus and/or a clear conclusion.

The majority of participants are making regular contributions. Individuals in the group assist the contribution of others, reflect back what the ideas are and help to achieve a clear decision.

THE  
GROUP AS  
A WHOLE

The group as a whole is passive.

The group as a whole tends to be dominated by one or two individuals.

The group is working together more but lacks ability to achieve a clear decision.

The group is working together very well and is able to make clear decisions which are broadly shared.

PATTERN IN  
THE GROUP:

NOTES:




## 2.6 WILLINGNESS TO LEAD

Leadership skills are another much sought after quality in the workplace or in local community initiatives. An arts project can provide opportunities for young people to take on and explore leadership roles. Success would be indicated by young people being willing to take a lead in developing, planning or delivering an idea. The following scale might be used to assess the group as a whole rather than the pattern amongst individuals in the group.

	Participants wait to be told what to do and when. If invited to consider options they do not readily express a clear preference.	Participants largely wait to be told what to do. One or two individuals speak on behalf of the group in considering options but the facilitator still tends to lead the decision-making.	When invited, participants are more engaged and thoughtful in considering options. They will arrive at decisions without need for further prompting from the facilitator.	The group proactively seeks to take on responsibilities for planning and developing parts of the project and can express clear views on preferred options.
POSITION OF THE GROUP:				

NOTES:




## 2.7 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

This scale helps explore the emotional confidence of a young person. Also referred to as emotional intelligence, a competence now increasingly recognised as important to personal resilience and effectiveness and which an arts process can help cultivate. Success is when young people are able to recognise the emotions they experience as they arise and can communicate/express their feelings and emotions fluently.

Participants hide their feelings and try to avoid talking about them.

Participants are willing to explore some of their feelings.

They may be willing to share a feeling but not necessarily perform/express it artistically.

Participants look for and try to make sense of emotions they are experiencing.

They are willing to share and use their emotions in their work.

Participants can quickly recognise what emotions they are experiencing. They are able to draw freely upon and express emotional experiences in their work.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:





## SET 3: SOCIAL CONFIDENCE AND TEAM WORKING

A big part of what arts projects can do is to improve social skills – either in working as a team in taking forward aspects of a project, (a valuable skills set for the workplace or in community initiatives) or in being better able to mix and make friends with others from different backgrounds. The following scales explore these possible differences.

# 3

### 3.1 MIXING/MAKING FRIENDS

If working with a newly formed group, if some of the participants in the project are new to the group, or if two or more existing groups are coming together, the project offers a chance for young people to meet new people and make new friends. Success in enabling new friendships would be indicated by participants mixing freely and confidently with each other and not sticking to cliques or spending large parts of the session keeping to themselves.

When arriving in the room participants stand apart on their own or stick with the friends they arrived with or joined the group with.

When arriving in the room participants recognise and acknowledge one or two more of the others. They occasionally converse with individuals other than those they arrived with or joined the group with.

When arriving in the room participants mix quite easily with others, and spend time with different people during a session or from session to session, not sticking to the same clique.

Participants make arrangements to meet each other outside of sessions and swap contact details. Participants are inclusive and ensure no one is left standing on their own.

PATTERN IN  
THE GROUP:

NOTES:

3



## 3.2 EMPATHY

There is growing concern that extended time spent on social networking sites, mobile phones and computer games is reducing the opportunity for young people to develop empathy – the ability to understand how others might be feeling. This has implications for the ability of young people to be fair, supportive, collaborative, and to form lasting positive relationships. Arts projects can make a significant contribution to helping young people explore and understand the viewpoints and experiences of others and appreciate how others may be feeling. Success would see young people seeking to understand the views of others as part of a project, or supporting each other to share how they are feeling.

Participants tend not to recognise the feelings of others. For example, they use insensitive remarks or do not take time to understand the viewpoints of others.

Participants take time to understand the viewpoints or feelings of others, for example in discussing ideas but mostly only if encouraged to do so by the facilitator.

Participants often take time to explore and understand the views and feelings of others without being asked to by the facilitator. They may notice when another individual is unhappy or uncomfortable and seek to support them.

Participants are able to help each other to recognise and express how they are feeling (as a peer mentor for example). They will quickly recognise when an individual needs support.

POSITION OF  
THE GROUP:

NOTES:


### 3.3 EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

Embracing difference is partly about making friends with other young people from different cultural backgrounds including different preferences within youth culture. But it could go further to recognise the strengths that can come from diversity and difference as a resource for creativity or learning. Success might be indicated by young people appreciating and actively using the different cultural perspectives of people in their group in a project or in developing their own worldview.

Participants avoid acknowledging differences in appearance or background that they can see or are aware exist within the group.

Participants are willing to explore difference if supported and encouraged by the facilitator, but not otherwise.

Participants actively explore and appreciate difference without the help of a facilitator; for example by comparing views, lives and ideas in conversation.

Participants actively draw on differences in developing creative ideas and appreciate the benefits in new thinking. They will defend/explain the difference of group members to others as a 'difference advocate'.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:





### 3.4 TEAMWORK/COLLABORATION

Arts projects provide rich opportunities for young people to work in teams and to learn from those experiences. This will include learning to negotiate and plan, work together towards shared goals and overcome differences of opinion. Success might be indicated through a shared plan for a task and a commitment to the smooth running of the group and a respect for other members' contributions.

The team have difficulty defining the task and planning their work. Few members participate actively and there isn't a clear sense of a 'group'. There are many disagreements.

Team can define the tasks but not all members understand the plan or their contribution and so are not actively participating. The follow-up is sporadic. There are still some disagreements and complaints about others' working style/ contribution.

Team can clearly define the tasks to be accomplished, discuss their approach and share the work. The team engages in follow-up activities. Team members are treated with respect, listen to each other and acknowledge each other's work. Members feel free to seek assistance from others or to ask questions. There is an open productive atmosphere. When working to achieve goals, the team is able to adjust plans as needs arise. There is shared ownership of the goals and vision.

Team has an extensive plan that outlines the tasks to be accomplished, resources, dates, assigned aspects to various members and anticipated future needs. The team engages in regular follow-up activities between meetings/sessions. All team members contribute personal strengths and ideas and can negotiate a balance between their views and the views of the group. They build on each other's ideas and acknowledge that each member has a significant role to play and personal responsibility in decision-making. Team members are flexible and creative and can adapt to difficulties or changes of plan in the face of challenging problems and changing situations. They have built experience from these challenges.

PATTERN IN  
THE GROUP:

NOTES:

3



## SET 4: INCLUDED AND PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY LIFE/SOCIETY

One objective of a youth arts project might be to help young people gain confidence and respect to take more of a part in shaping their local community; in decision making, or in initiating their own projects. These provide the stepping stones to active citizenship and becoming stakeholders in society. It can also help young people to become more entrepreneurial, or to build their personal profile and so enhance their prospects for employment or a place in university. These scales explore some of the key outcomes that demonstrate these skills and qualities.



# 4



## 4.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This scale explores what limits young people feel there may be to becoming actively involved in local life. Success would be indicated by young people feeling confident about themselves and what they can do, stepping outside of what is provided for them (such as sport or school activities) to initiate activities in the wider community.

	Participants lack any confidence to participate in activities outside of project sessions – it is hard to get them motivated and involved.	Participants express confidence around involvement in one or two areas of their lives, for example sport or school, but are less confident beyond these.	Participants are confident to approach activities and project ideas in their wider community if supported – they may be dependent on others to access resources.	Participants are confident to approach activities and project ideas in their wider community and will initiate projects and access resources with minimal support.
PATTERN IN THE GROUP:				

NOTES:

4




## 4.2 MAKING IT HAPPEN

This scale explores how far the arts project has been able to give young people skills and confidence to initiate and take forward a project of their own, whether an arts one or something else. Success would be indicated when young people feel they have the knowledge and skills they need to be able to initiate and carry forward arts or other community projects.

Participants have little or no knowledge and skills to initiate a project.

Participants have a fair level of knowledge and skills to initiate a small project, but rely heavily on the support provided by the worker.

Participants have a good level of knowledge and skills to initiate a small project and need limited support from the worker to carry it forward.

Participants have extensive knowledge and skills to initiate a project and are able to carry it forward on their own initiative with positive results.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:




## 4.3 MAKING IT HAPPEN AGAIN

The resources available to young people may well be limited and to get a project to happen they will often need to identify, access or recruit in the resources they need from people in the community or outside it. Success would be indicated by young people being able to identify and approach people within or outside their community who can help them to access resources needed for a project.

Participants do not think of approaching someone in their local community or outside it to help them access resources or support, or are unable to identify who they should approach.

Participants can identify a small number of people they could approach in their local community or outside it to help them access resources or support but for the most part lack the confidence to approach them.

Participants can identify a number of people they could approach in their local community or outside it to help them access resources or support, and have a growing confidence to approach them.

Participants can identify a range of people they could approach in their local community or outside it to help them access resources, and they are confident to approach them.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:



## 4.4 WORKING WITH ADULTS

Arts projects can be a means to show what young people can do to contribute to community life, demonstrating and learning how to plan and take forward initiatives in the community such as an arts event or something else. This can build trust and confidence amongst adults to work more fully with the young people in their community in planning and implementing community projects, helping strengthen citizenship amongst young people. An indication that this is being achieved would be that adults in the wider community feel motivated and confident to work with and involve young people, aware of what they can offer.

Adults involved in community groups or activities are wary of young people and have low expectations for what young people can offer.

Adults involved in community groups or activities are aware of what young people can do but are unsure how to work with them.

Adults involved in community groups or activities can see what young people could bring to their work and to the life of the community. They are willing to involve young people in their activities but they still keep control over much of what is planned and done.

Adults involved in community groups or activities see young people as a positive benefit and resource in the community. They involve young people from the start and often give them lead roles in planning and taking forward projects.

PATTERN IN THE COMMUNITY

NOTES:





## 4.5 INFLUENCING DECISIONS

It is typical for many groups or initiatives (such as a local event, community plan or community festival) to fail to consult with young people to take on board their views and suggestions or to include them as members of a steering or planning group. Arts projects can be a way for young people to get their views and their ideas noticed, and to build confidence to represent those views in a range of other groups. An indication of success for this outcome would be young people being able to inform the thinking and decisions of other groups and organisations and to play a part in shaping the content and form of local events or plans.

Young people do not have their own representative in other groups or initiatives in the local community.

They tend not to be asked to contribute their views.

Representation by young people on groups or initiatives tends to be tokenistic.

If young people are asked to contribute their views they are unsure what to say.

Young people do have their own representative on one or two other (youth) groups and (youth) initiatives.

They feel fairly confident in expressing their views which are sometimes taken into account.

Young people have their own representatives on a range of groups/ initiatives.

They are able to make a good case for young people's needs and ideas which are taken on board alongside those of others.

PATTERN IN THE  
COMMUNITY

NOTES:



## SET 5: LIFE SKILLS

Arts projects can provide a new way to investigate issues, explore options, and learn more about choices, influences, self, community and the wider world. Projects can also open up a sense of possibility and vision for young people about what the future could be like and give them the confidence to become active in shaping that future. Along with problem solving skills, these can contribute to the resilience of a young person.



5

## 5.1 MOTIVATION AND POSSIBILITY

Young people in disadvantaged communities can often have very limited expectations for themselves for the future. They may lack role models within their community or peer group to encourage them to strive for a future vision for themselves. An arts project can open up young people's thinking to see wider possibilities that they can aim for – either in further projects or perhaps in a vocation or career. An indication of success would be if young people in the project can envision goals they want to strive for in the future, and see the steps they can take to get there.

Participants are unable to see future possibilities for themselves to aim towards in the short or the long term.

Participants are able to see some future possibilities to aim towards in the short-term (for example, another project) but look to others to make them happen. They have some ideas for themselves in the longer term (for example, a possible job or vocation) but are not planning the steps to get there.

Participants can see some possibilities for themselves in the short-term which they are planning to make happen. They have some sense of a long-term goal and the steps to get there but these require further clarity.

Participants are able to describe a strong vision for the future for themselves (or their community/for young people), they can describe the steps they think can make this happen, and are actively pursuing the first of these (e.g. looking for training/ progression routes).

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:



## 5.2 PROBLEM SOLVING

The creative and broader thinking, resourcefulness and improvisation characteristic of art projects can give young people the ability to see a range of alternative solutions to a problem. This is something that they can use in other aspects of their lives, contributing towards resilience and a 'can-do' attitude. An indication of success would be if young people can independently generate and explore a number of possible solutions to problems and to take action based on those solutions.

Participants are unaware of having the option to solve problems rather than put up with them – perhaps not even aware of the problem or barrier in the first place.

Participants are able to see and describe a problem or barrier and suggest some solutions with the help of the facilitator/artist/youth leader.

Participants are able to describe and explore a problem or barrier and generate and test a number of possible solutions collaboratively with the facilitator/artist/youth leader.

Participants are able to unpack problems or barriers and independently generate and test a number of possible solutions to problems.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:

5



### 5.3 AWARE OF INFLUENCES AND CHOICES

Whether it is personal health, lifestyle, moral issues and beliefs or the background to their community, arts projects can help young people explore and come to their own views, and identify what choices they could or should have and how to take them. This scale could be applied generally to any topic or issue being explored by a project. Indications of success might be that young people can confidently assess and distinguish different influences and choices affecting their wellbeing or that of others, or that young people have the confidence to deal with conflict or pressure in order to make the choices that are right for them.

	Participants have no (or limited) understanding of an issue and do not see it as relevant to them.	Participants can see that an issue could be relevant to them and are willing to explore it further as part of the project.	Participants have developed a good understanding of the influences, implications and choices effecting them around an issue.	Participants have identified clear messages about an issue they want to convey, and can define and advocate the choices they want to take.	Participants have explored and developed skills that can help them achieve the choices they wish to make within the influences working upon them.
PATTERN IN THE GROUP:					

NOTES:

## 5.4 RESILIENCE

The need for young people to be able to cope with the uncertainty of life today has perhaps never been higher. Arts projects can contribute to building the mental resilience young people need to handle fears and anxieties. An indicator of success here would be if young people can demonstrate strategies for coping with difficult challenges or are willing to seek advice or assistance if they need it.

Participants show little or no ability to cope with challenges.

Participants are able to describe ways they can handle fears or anxieties themselves in dealing with challenges but often keep their anxieties to themselves.

Participants show an ability to overcome early fears in seeing through a challenge with support from others.

Participants have a range of strategies for coping with challenges themselves but are also willing to seek the support or advice of others when necessary.

PATTERN IN THE GROUP:

NOTES:





# WRITING UP YOUR FINDINGS:

Let's say you ran a drama project, and you decided that what you most wanted to measure was how young people participate and work with each other. You also wanted to track how they grew in drama skills specifically.

So, you chose Technical Skills and Team Work/Collaboration as the two areas you were going to particularly watch for during the project. Afterwards, as part of your reporting, you might describe that as follows:

Among other outcomes, this project identified Technical Skills and Team Work/Collaboration as being of particular importance and tracked developments in these areas throughout the project. In technical skills, (which we describe as demonstrating a fluid use of the techniques and tools of the art form), young people were identified as progressing from conducting techniques and routines mechanically (example, the young people learned a number of favourite drama games by heart and repeated these exactly as taught, they also repeated sections of learned text from a play) to demonstrating an understanding of how these tools achieve a desired effect or outcome (they used these favourite drama games as a base or frame to create new games and used these new games in warm ups. Additionally, they moved, in teams, from repeating sections of learned text to writing and performing their own monologues using the skills learned. Please see accompanying video for examples). This is a movement of 2 points out of a possible 3 along a developmental scale.

## WHAT WAYS MIGHT YOU CAPTURE EVIDENCE TO FURTHER DESCRIBE THIS MOVEMENT?

You could include short video clips of the young people at the start and end of the project which demonstrate their growth in technical skills, or include quotes you captured of their introduction to new skills and techniques while they tried to learn them, and quotes you captured at the end when they were using the techniques in more sophisticated ways. If it was a visual arts project, you could include work they made at the beginning and work they made at the end.

There is no reason why the participants can't also be included in assessing their own learning, and the progress they feel they've made can be explored in the group.

For more information on documentation techniques and evaluation, please see *Creating Magic: A Handbook for Creating Youth Arts Projects*. This and other resources are available on [www.youtharts.ie](http://www.youtharts.ie)

# Appendix 1: 7 Potent Mechanisms Delivering Improvements for Targeted Youth Programmes

**Communication Skills** are essential for a successful transition to work or training, for independence, and to access a range of life opportunities, to attainment, in forming positive relationships and in reductions in re-offending.

**Confidence and Agency** enables young people to recognise that they can make a difference to their own lives and that effort has a purpose; is important to key outcomes such as career success. There is evidence of a link between positive outcomes and self-confidence.

**Planning and Problem Solving** alongside resilience, provides young people with a positive protective armour against negative outcomes associated with risky life events. Problem solving has also been shown to be associated with the ability to cope with stresses in life.

**Relationships** are an effective mechanism for getting young people involve in positive activities through valued personal relationships with peers, adults or siblings. A beneficial change in young people's relationships with other adults through their participation in positive activities can be transferred to academic learning and may lead to better outcomes.

**Creativity and Imagination** is related to resilience and well-being. Creativity can have a positive impact on both self-esteem and overall achievement.

**Resilience and Determination** if society intervenes early enough, it can improve cognitive and socio emotional abilities and the health of disadvantaged children. Effective early interventions can promote schooling, reduce crime, foster workforce productivity and reduce teenage pregnancy. Self-discipline has been highlighted as a vital factor in building academic achievement, significantly better than IQ.

**Emotional Intelligence** is associated with the ability to manage feelings by knowing one's own emotions, as well as recognising and understanding other people's emotions. This is vital in managing relationships (e.g. managing the emotions of others).

Taken from: Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes, Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014.

# Appendix 2: 5 National Outcomes for Children and Young People

## VISION

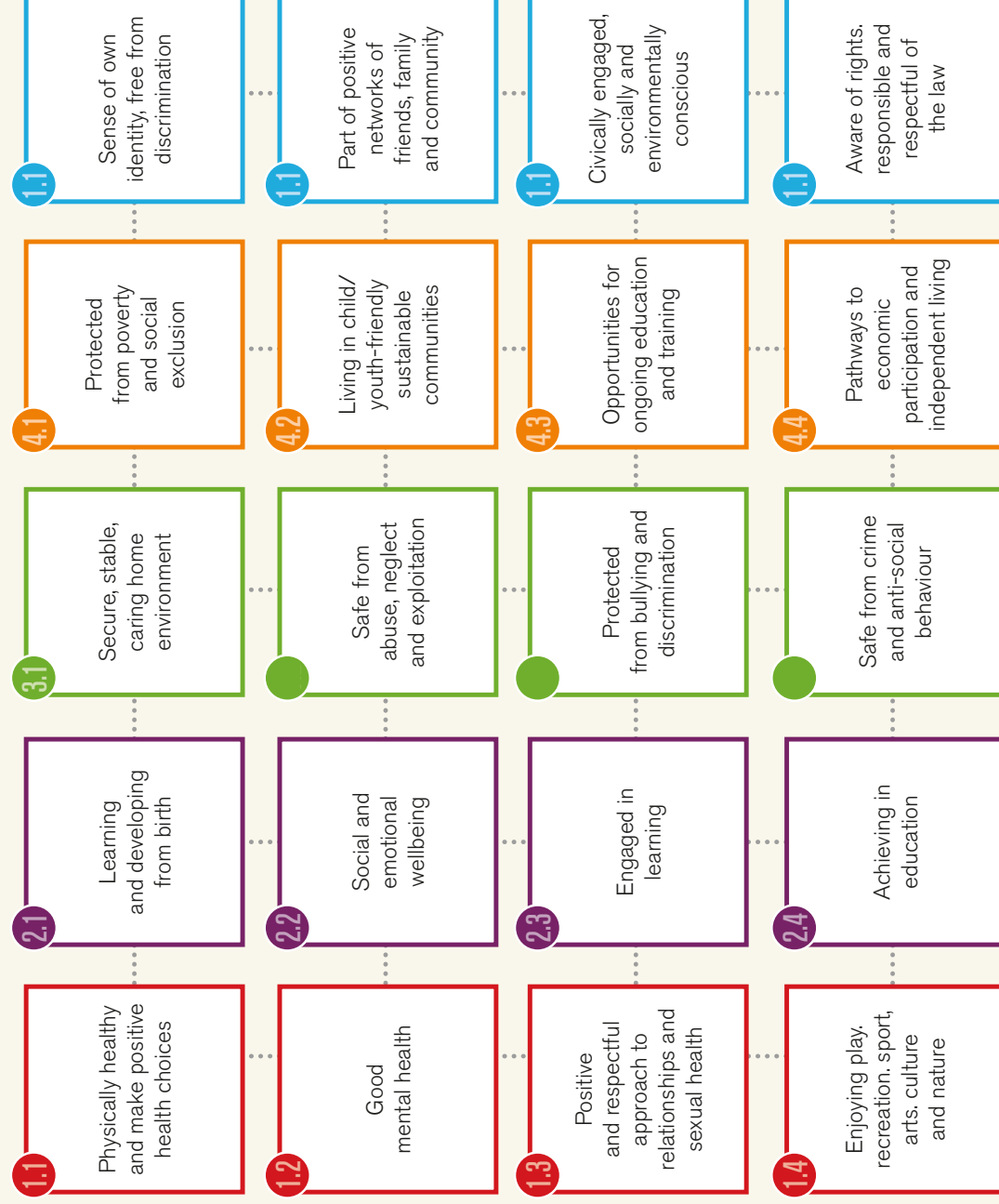
Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

## NATIONAL OUTCOMES



## AIMS:

Children and young people are or have ...



**Children and Young People have a voice and influence in all decisions affecting them**



National Youth Council of Ireland  
3 Montague Street, Dublin 2, D02 V327  
Youtharts.ie  
Youth.ie



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs

