

**The Theatre of Possibilities:
Mapping Drama in Community and Healthcare
Contexts in the Northwest of Ireland**

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ABSTRACT

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There has been considerable interest in recent years in the potential of participatory or engaged arts to stimulate impacts beyond intrinsic value, emanating from such diverse sources as artists, activists and statutory bodies. Is there a case for a revised definition of the role of the arts? Can creative engagement influence personal development or contribute to social change? Could some of these outcomes be allied with strategic social policy objectives?

This study uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies to explore the praxis of drama as applied to community and healthcare contexts in three counties in the Northwest of Ireland; and the outcomes of participation in such projects as experienced by participants and practitioners. The research is informed by a cross-disciplinary review of theoretical currents which have contributed to contemporary practice in this field, illustrations of applied drama forms, as well as a critical overview of recent Irish and international research into personal and social outcomes of participation in arts (particularly drama) projects in community and healthcare settings.

The rich accounts arising from applied drama praxis in this region concur with comparable studies elsewhere. As such, they provide a cogent argument for the value of this work and indicate a need for enhanced supports and further research, while cautioning against the subsuming of drama's unique qualities by social policy objectives.

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THE THEATRE OF POSSIBILITIES:
MAPPING DRAMA IN COMMUNITY AND HEALTHCARE CONTEXTS IN
THE NORTHWEST OF IRELAND

I: INTRODUCTION

In this study, I aim to explore the praxis of drama in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwestern counties of Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, in the period December 2003 to June 2004.

My focus will be on projects including a focus on process-based outcomes such as personal development, community development, therapy or cultural inclusion; in addition to or, in some cases, in place of formal theatre productions.¹ This exploration will include approaches ranging from Forum Theatre, Youth Theatre, Community Drama, and Drama in Personal Development, through to Dramatherapy; as practiced in varied location types with participants from diverse backgrounds. I hope to reflect this diversity, and illuminate some perspectives on the work.

I will begin with a review of the literature pertaining to the theoretical and historical context of this work, internationally and nationally. I will also review recent research into impacts of participation in arts projects, with a particular focus on drama.

I will use the results of a postal survey to present a quantitative and spatial outline map of all relevant practices in the region current in the period December 2003 to March 2004. I will then 'zoom in' to some of the projects to attempt a fuller understanding of the meanings attributed to these processes by those with most intimate knowledge of them: the participants, practitioners and organisers. I will

¹ This definition bears a strong resemblance to that of Applied Theatre, which Taylor describes as "...the manipulation of theatre form....to help participants act, reflect and transform" (Taylor, 2003)

invite these stakeholders to join me in creating descriptive, qualitative maps of their perspectives, opinions, feelings, hopes and concerns around experiences of participatory drama praxis.

I am drawn to this research by an interest in the potential personal and social outcomes of drama praxis; arising from my experience, both of participating in and facilitating practice of the arts in contexts outside the mainstream arts environment. While I view theatre and drama-based approaches as valuable- potentially even transformational- processes that may contribute to development on many levels, I do not see them as an alternative to structural social change, and suggest that care is needed in the attempt to marry arts projects with social policy objectives.

The **Research Objectives** then are:

- To examine the theoretical and historical background of drama as used in community and healthcare settings.
- To review research pertaining to the impacts of participation in such activities.
- To describe and analyse the range of current practice of Drama in Community and Healthcare contexts in the Northwest, by:
 - Constructing a map of project types and locations
 - Profiling practitioners, participants and approaches
 - Examining existing networks of communication and/or support
 - Illuminating the views of participants and practitioners on work practices and on impacts, in terms of artistic merit and personal or social benefits.
- To suggest indicators for models of best practice for the Northwest, and make recommendations for development of this sector.

The scope and possibilities of this field are currently under-researched in the region. This study will contribute to understanding of the sector's characteristics, potential value and needs for strategic development and will be of interest to:

- Participants and workers who have collaborated in this research, for purposes of internal evaluation and planning, or inter-agency networking.
- Policy-makers in Arts, Community and Health sectors, in the Northwest or elsewhere.
- Applied drama workers interrogating best practice.
- Planners, lecturers and students of performing arts, drama, community arts, social science, cultural studies and other courses who have an interest in Applied Drama.
- Organisations or individual workers considering drama approaches.
- Potential participants in applied drama projects.

The results of a section of the survey conducted for the preliminary stages of this research are under consideration by members of the Northwest Arts and Health Forum for possible activity and/or policy planning.

II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The literature review begins with a brief discussion of issues in current discourse on community-based or ‘engaged’ arts practice and the place of drama within it. In section two, I examine historical and theoretical influences on the field of applied drama internationally and in Ireland; and review some of the contemporary forms of practice arising from these roots. Finally, in section three, I look at selected recent research into the impacts of participation in such processes.

These strands are intended to provide the reader with an overview of the diverse field of practice covered in the practical study; and an outline of the body of research which informs it.

1: ARTS FOR WHOSE SAKE?

WHERE ARTS AND LIFE INTERSECT

Drama in community and healthcare settings extends theatre practice and aesthetic space to non-traditional contexts and participant groups; with objectives such as initiating dialogue and accomplishing inclusion alongside artistic exploration and creation.

Those opposed to such arts 'engagement' criticize it as devaluing the artform with pragmatism:

Engagement by definition is aimed at effect. Whether it be about changing a mentality or a goal-oriented action (political, social or economic) that will produce tangible results..... Art is so very different. Art has no objective. It does not have anything in mind. It only knows an effect of evoking, in as far as the spectator is receptive to this. Art *is*, while the critically-engaged artist *want[s]* something. (Pontzen, 2003: 121-122)

Counter to the modernist paradigm of art as neutral or detached, or as the sole preserve of the gifted or elite; it may be argued that all art works communicate, represent or signify in particular ways the perspective of the artist or her/his position within artistic or philosophic discourse, and that cultural, strategic and commercial relationships are at play each time an exhibition or performance opens. Theatre in particular, as the next section examines more fully, has located at various points on the spectrum of *dolce* and *utile* or entertainment and efficacy. The theatre of ancient Greece, for example, was seen as fulfilling multiple functions in the community, including the individually and socially therapeutic.

Furthermore, while I acknowledge that

The beauty, the intangible and magical aesthetic of art, is its greatest use. (Matarasso, 1997:86),

I contend that community-based arts practice at its best seeks to broaden opportunities for the experience of that very 'intangible' to groups of people who have typically belonged to neither the category of 'artist' or 'consumer of arts'; in an approach that embraces the possibility of art in the everyday and of cultural inclusion as a democratic right. Its ideology questions established product-oriented

value systems and notions of excellence. It may additionally utilize the particular qualities and processes of the art form in exploring, imagining or creating change. Art is not necessarily diminished by ‘therapeutic’ or developmental aspirations, and applied drama seeks to enrich *both* the art form and the lives of participants and their communities by creating practices that fully engage with human and social experiences.

Of the drama approaches discussed in the literature review (and in the main body of this research), some are specifically designed as processes of empowerment, whereby drama processes integrate opportunities to voice stories, to explore alternatives, enact changes or develop resources for transformation in social and personal spheres. In other approaches, capacity-building arises as a consequence of the participant’s recognition of her/himself as a valued actor engaged in a high-quality artistic process. In best practice of each approach, people who have been in some way marginalized (socially and/or culturally) have the opportunity to experience themselves as key protagonists: perhaps in a performance, perhaps in their own lives and in the lives of their communities. The use of drama is uniquely appropriate for such objectives.

The practice of reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it is a recursive act of being, doing and becoming. The concept of performance captures the dynamic fusion of awareness, embodiment and movement that praxis entails. Praxis is an intellectual, aesthetic and kinaesthetic process—the joining of heads, hearts and hands. This holistic engagement sustains and supports participation and organization. (Finn, Jacobson & Campana, 2002:28)

There has been a growing interest in the value of participation in the arts in the last two decades, as broadly or explicitly therapeutic, or as fulfilling social and community-building functions. Possibilities cited have included a movement towards cultural democracy through collaborative practice between artists and others, in practices such as Community Arts, New-genre performance art (Lacey, 1995), Littoral arts (Kester, 1999), Community Cultural Development and Arts in Health. As the ideals of participatory arts interface with the realities of power and

politics, various tensions have arisen, among them issues relating to access, quality and agenda.

Theorists including Owen Kelly have examined questions of access, distinguishing between democratisation of culture and cultural democracy. The former, consisting of measures such as improving accessibility to the 'arts world' (theatres, galleries, etc) for ordinary citizens, Kelly sees as

...the popularisation of an already-decided cultural agenda....the imposition on society at large of the values of one particularly powerful group (Kelly, 1984:100-101).

It is this model that has been accused of proffering the arts as a shiny smokescreen or a palatable panacea for social problems. It echoes the concerns of Gramsci, who argued that culture is a way in which the ruling elite reinforces itself, diminishing the potential for ideological development (Holloway, 2003). Kelly favours cultural democracy, defining it as:

...direct participation in the production of a living culture...an idea which revolves around the notion of plurality, and around equality of access to the means of cultural production and distribution. It assumes that cultural production happens in the context of wider social discourses....it will produce not only pleasure but knowledge [which] will accrue to the primary understanding of community (Kelly, 1984:100-101).

Participatory arts, in *this* understanding, assume the potential for user-led personal, political and social enrichment, as well as inclusion in processes of cultural production. The pursuance of participation of this level necessitates the re-thinking of major issues of quality, process and product. As Gemma Tipton, writing on public art, notes:

...drawing 'newcomers' into the art aesthetic won't just make more people like what the art-world likes, but if genuinely approached, can change the ideas of what is aesthetically appropriate, and what is ultimately regarded as art.....The value or perceived quality of an artwork lies in its context (2003:10).

In some cases, the art lies in the process rather than in a finished product, as in current discourse on relational aesthetics:

...an aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks in terms of the inter-human relations which they show, produce or give rise to (Bourriaud, 2002:117).

....to work as an artist is necessary, since as an artist you deal with change, you create change, and you give credit to change. So one day you have a credit with people who couldn't care less about art. The work is sometimes not a fountain on the corner of the street but this natural process of doing and seeing something you did not do or see before. This change is the sculpture. (Tipton, 2003:11)

This conception is related to the ideas of transversal politics (see Yuval-Davies, 2004), which is the practice of dialogue with explicit recognition of diverse and respected standpoints; and immaterial production (See Negri and Hart, 2002), which considers work as defined less by the generation of capital, and more by the fostering of networks and flows of activity.

A further central concern within new arts praxis is an analysis of its power dynamics, both between artist and participants and between project and funder. The question arises: 'whose agenda is served by this work?'

The role of the artist working in collaborative contexts may vary according to approach, so that issues such as level of participation, voice, ownership and authorship, within a quality artistic process, must be continually negotiated and clarified. Support and funding agencies may also differ in their orientations, expectations and requirements. Care is essential to accord weighting to the interests of participants in this delicate balancing act.

Ackroyd cautions:

Whose needs are served by a drama applied to calming inmates or young people in care? The inmates and young people? The authorities? Both? Is it efficacious.....because there is no room for dissent? (Ackroyd, 2000:6).

It is with this continuing debate in mind that I set out to provide an overview of literature on the historical and current trends in drama as applied to community and healthcare settings.

2:SHAMANS, THERAPISTS, ACTIVISTS AND DIRECTORS: **THE HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT**

In this section, I outline some of the historical and theoretical currents which have influenced approaches to applied drama practice, and describe a range of contemporary practices.

Richard Schechner defines the functions of performance as:

To entertain; to make something that is beautiful; to mark or change identity; to make or foster community; to heal; to teach, persuade or convince; to deal with the sacred or demonic (2002:38).

This is the story of drama as applied to healing, therapeutic, dialogic or developmental objectives; often focused on community issues, inclusion, awareness-raising or spiritual concerns. Its strands are drawn across several disciplines: In the following section, I will discuss some of the sources which have contributed to the development of modern applied drama², under the following headings:

- (i) Ritual
- (ii) Theatre
- (iii) Social activism
- (iv) Healthcare
- (v) Sociology
- (vi) Psychotherapy
- (vii) Play
- (viii) Education

I will also introduce some of the best-known contemporary approaches arising from these roots- including Community Drama, Forum Theatre, Psychodrama and Dramatherapy, among others- those which engage drama processes with primarily psychotherapeutic objectives, those aiming at personal or community development

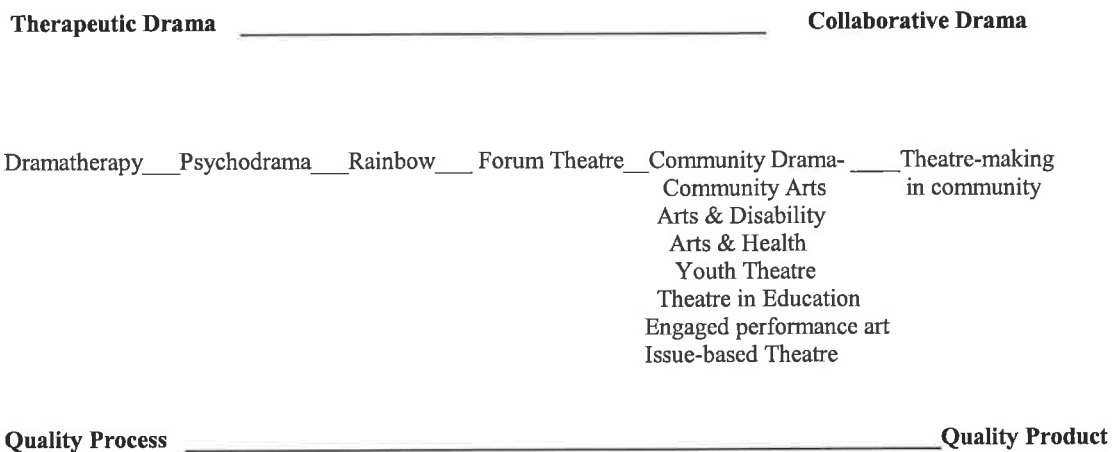
² Strict chronological ordering is not adhered to, nor is any ranking of importance implied by the sequence of influences discussed

or social activism, those focused on theatre-making itself, and those integrating plural aspirations. In some cases, all seven functions described by Schechner may be addressed simultaneously. These forms share some common points of reference, though differing in their focus, rationale and methods; and interplay between them continues to inform the evolution of new approaches.

I have arranged some of the contemporary applied drama forms on the continuum below to illustrate my understanding of the relationships to conventional theatre and the respective emphases on process and product; function and form. Projects may be situated within or between approaches.

Fig. 1:

Drama in Community & Healthcare Continuum



This spectrum, and areas of convergence within it, will be addressed in the discussions that follow.

(i) Ritual

Anthropologists writing in the early twentieth century, most notably the Cambridge School, postulated a theory of evolution from early Dionysian ritual to the development of modern drama (see Harrison, 1913). According to Schechner, such claims of linear progression are somewhat spurious. His argument is that performance as entertainment and functional drama, including ritual forms, have co-existed and interwoven since time immemorial.

If the performance's purpose is to effect change... [it] is a ritual. But if the performance's purpose is mostly to give pleasure, to show off, to be beautiful, or to pass the time, then the performance is an entertainment. The fact is that no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment Efficacy and entertainment are not opposites, but 'dancing partners', each depending on and in continuous active relationship to the other (Schechner, 2002:71).

His efficacy-entertainment dyad, intended to be read as a continuum rather than as a binary, illustrates some of the interrelationships:

Fig 2: Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad (Schechner, 2002:71)

EFFICACY/RITUAL -----ENTERTAINMENT/PERFORMING ARTS

Ritual	For fun
Link to transcendent Other(s)	Focus on the here and now
Timeless time-the eternal present	Historical time and/or now
Performer possessed, in trance	Performer self-aware, in control
Virtuosity downplayed	Virtuosity highly valued
Traditional scripts/behaviors	New & traditional scripts/behaviors
Transformation of self possible	Transformation of self unlikely
Audience participates	Audience observes
Audience believes	Audience appreciates, evaluates
Criticism discouraged	Criticism flourishes
Collective creativity	Individual creativity

Ritual may be sacred, secular or may combine both sacred and secular elements, as in the pomp of royal or state occasions, for example. Functions of ritual as discussed by ethnologists have included validation of leadership, expressing aggressions and safeguarding community harmony, symbolic appeasement or control of nature, rites of passage and transformation. Ritual experience may include feelings of intense group solidarity and connection, or 'communitas' (Turner in Schechner, *ibid*:62).

Severally, under the auspices of conventional theatre, in popular celebratory practices and in recent and emerging forms of community, applied or therapeutic drama, elements of entertainment and efficacy are combined.

Life becomes a mirror held up to art (Turner in Schechner, *ibid*: 68)

Through the work of experimental theatre practitioners, radical educators, activists and therapists, new forms of drama fulfilling functions similar to some of those of ritual- specifically community-building and group or personal development- have been created. Thus, drama practices in community and healthcare contexts may share with ritual certain of its functions and experiential characteristics as participants imagine and enact alternative realities in a liminal space with an involved audience.

(ii) Theatre

With the development of the theatre of ancient Greece, we see the emergence of a new group, the audience, which is more distanced and passive than are the participants at ritual; with more formalized language and structure. It has been argued that a vital relationship existed between audience and theatre of that time, which allowed for a profound and spiritual identification with the themes portrayed, and outcomes which might today be termed personally and socially therapeutic.

According to Shepher,

...it could serve as a magnifying glass, isolating and drawing attention to fundamental problems and conflicts. The performances brought to life and liberated an audience's soul from its distress, gently

injecting illuminating and calming wisdom....The power of ancient Greek theatre lay in its ability to help maintain a level of emotional tranquility, adapting to reality, and identifying with the cultural climate prevailing, and thus constituted cultural, educational and therapeutic factors. (Shepher 1992:183).

Many writers identify Aristotle and the concept of catharsis as a starting point for drama as possessed of the potential to enable human or social change and development (Jones, 1996, Feldhendler 1994). In classical theatre, it has been suggested, tragedy functioned as an opportunity for the audience to relate profoundly to actors portraying extreme emotions, culminating in the purging of their own repressed feelings in catharsis-

...a release of deep feelings that originally had a connotation of purification of the senses and the soul (Aristotle, 1966, in Jones 1996:44).

This process was considered to enhance the well-being of both the individual and the community, through precipitating the

....return to a desirable balance or controlled proportions (Hodgson, 1972:69).

A central point omitted by some of these writers, however, is that the morality conveyed within Greek tragedy was strictly defined to correspond with the values of the ruling classes. A central theme was the

...struggle between the unconstrained power of 'free play' and the 'rule of law'.... (Schechner, 2002:95),

thus promoting through theatre the establishment of rationalism as the dominant ideology.in order to contribute to social and political cohesion.

Ideas on uses of drama from experimental theatre in the twentieth century have been crucial in the emergence of contemporary applied drama practice.

Director Nikolai Everinov, writing between 1915 and 1924, described the concepts of Theatrotherapy, which considers theatre as well as play to be instinctual and 'pre-aesthetic'. He postulated a direct link between playing of roles and improvement in health through behavioral re-learning (Jones, 1996:55-56).

'Psychological' approaches to theatre have included those of Artaud and Grotowski, both of whom have directly influenced dramatherapy practice (Mitchell, Jennings, in Jennings, 1992:50-67 & 93-113). Artaud proposed the use of mask and metaphor

towards the rediscovery of primal archetypes for Western Theatre, and believed in the possibility of catharsis through his Theatre of Cruelty (Jennings, 1992:103). Grotowski, working with 'para-theatre' in his Theatre Laboratory of the 1970s and 1980s, addressed his conviction that audience-actor relationships are stifled by 'cultural roles'; arranging 'work-meetings' which aimed to allow participants to ...disarm from [their] conditioned and cultural roles and to explore possibilities of 'immediate expression' (Mitchell,1992: 55).

Bertolt Brecht proposed radical theatre with the

...potential to create direct political change in society and the lives of individuals attending performances (Jones, 1996:53).

He was interested in theatre's potential as a revolutionary force, and looked to experimental theatre for a solution to the question of

...how can the tortured and heroic, abused and ingenious, changeable and world-changing man of this great and ghastly century obtain his own theatre which will help him to master the world and himself?(Brecht, 1964:135)

Peter Brook advanced the notion of 'necessary theatre', in contrast to what he considered the 'deadly theatre' of today; advocating theatre forms that would promote audience participation and engagement with personal and interpersonal themes (Shepher, 1992:183).

Jacob Moreno successfully bridged the gap between theatre and therapy, beginning with the Theatre of Spontaneity in 1920s Vienna, which emphasised improvisation and participation and dispensed with the written script. He developed techniques of therapeutic theatre and Psychodrama in the US, where a psychodrama centre and hospital theatre were opened in the 1930s and 1940s (Jones, *ibid*: 61-62). His approach drew attention to the importance of role perception and enactment in everyday life:

Role is the unit of culture; ego and role are in continuous interaction (Moreno in Hodgson,*ibid*:133).

Strong echoes of both Brecht and Moreno can be felt in the more recent developments (beginning 1956) of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre in South America; a reaction to didactic theatre, which centres on ...dramatic techniques that activate passive spectators to become spect-actors - engaged participants rehearsing strategies for personal and and social change (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994:1).

The following descriptions of Psychodrama and Theatre of the Oppressed exemplify contemporary applied drama approaches influenced by ideas from the world of theatre; and which, in the case of Theatre of the Oppressed, cross into the domain of social activism.

Psychodrama challenges participants to play out significant life situations in a controllable setting, finding fresh solutions and expanding their natural creativity. The particular concerns of one person, or protagonist, become the focus of action on behalf of the whole group. Others function as involved audience and supporting actors ('auxiliary egos', 'doubles') The therapist's role tends to be more directive than in dramatherapy.

After warm-up and identification of the protagonist, the director (psychodramatist) facilitates the protagonist in the presentation of a scene that is causing difficulty in his or her real life. Generally, the protagonist will play him or herself, and may be supported by a 'double', who shadows and attempts to add depth to the performance. Methods such as role reversal, soliloquy, interviewing and role analysis are then explored to afford insight and suggest the source of current problems (see Chesner, 1994, Yablonsky, 1986). The protagonist may then move in to the spontaneous creation of new experiences on the psychodramatic stage, through which he/she expresses previously unconscious emotions and wishes and ...learns to activate new roles and begins to internalise a new belief system (Chesner, 1994:122).

Yablonsky considers psychodrama as

...a happening or productive experience rather than exclusively as a therapeutic method...that can often result in individual or social change (Yablonsky, 1986:4).

(iii) Social Activism

Theatre of the Oppressed, as developed by Augusto Boal, takes methods that bear similarities to those of Psychodrama, and applies them to a context that, while still personal, emphasises the potential for social and political change. Boal's work is influenced by Brecht and by the call of Paulo Friere (1970) for artists to support the people's struggle. Boal's solution is a form of participatory theatre which invites the audience to become activated as 'spectators' in scenes directly relevant to their own lives, discovering solutions to real oppressions through the play, which may provide a basis for responses to real-life struggles.³

Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action! (Boal, 1979:122)

In Image Theatre, groups of participants create human sculptures portraying a collective image on a theme of oppression; followed by an Ideal Image and finally an Image of Possible Transition. Invisible Theatre presents scripted pieces addressing social issues- racism, sexism etc- in public places, for example a train. Spectators, unaware of the fiction, become involuntary 'spectators', as they are engaged in debate or intervention in the action.

In Forum Theatre, the audiences are consenting participants. Its techniques were originally developed with small homogeneous groups in Latin America, but have also been applied with large audiences. Boal describes the structure as a competition:

The game is spectators -trying to find a solution, trying to change the world- against actors- trying to force them back, to accept the world as it is (1992:20).

³ Houston, Magill, McCollum and Spratt argue that Theatre of the Oppressed is "compatible with, and [gives] expression to, Habermas's call for ethical discourse rooted in the lifeworld" (2001, 291)

The 'Joker' leads the game, explaining the rules, narrating, and encouraging action. The initial performance which portrays an oppression common to audience members is presented, containing an error in at least one social or political aspect. Spectators are invited to intervene by shouting "Stop!", and prescribing a change; and usually, replacing the actor. As the action continues, the other actors intensify the oppression, thus rehearsing the possible consequences of dissent in the real world. Responses and solutions to the problem are explored; but it is *activation*, rather than satisfactory conclusions, that is the object of the play.

Boal modified these techniques in Europe as a response to internalised oppressors, or "cops in the head" (see Boal, 1995). His latest documented experiment followed his election as Legislator in Brazil in 1992; and the decision to use this opportunity to follow Forum Theatre to its logical conclusion- to address institutionalized oppression through direct links between Forum groups and the legislature. Groups formed in Rio de Janeiro on occupational or social lines were successful in involving local people in generating legislative changes during the four-year mandate.

Boal describes this process as Legislative Theatre, and contrasts its outcomes to those of Aristotlean Greek theatre:

In the Legislative Theatre, the aim is to bring the theatre back to the heart of the city, to produce not catharsis, but dynamisation. Its objective is not to pacify the audience, to tranquilise them, to return to a state of equilibrium and acceptance of society as it is, but ... to develop their desire for change (Boal, 1998)

Like Theatre of the Oppressed, other forms of drama in community contexts have melded inspirations from theatre practice and socio-political activism. In common with the approach of Boal, Community Drama methods may bring theatre to non-traditional venues, and may have a participatory ethos. Community drama may also employ processes of reflecting on injustice and/or suggesting solutions.

The oppositional potential of Community Drama is emphasised in the neo-Marxist perspective of Baz Kershaw, who looks to its origins in alternative or activist theatre which

...aimed to combine entertainment with- well if not instruction (*pace* Brecht) then debate, discussion, socio-political proposals and recommendations...primarily committed to bringing about actual change in specific communities (Kershaw, 1992:5).

The lineage of community theatre extends at least to the didactics of agit-prop and Socialist Realism of 1920s Russia, which presented direct and easily-understood messages of propaganda. The cultural life of the socialist movement was drawn on in 1930s Britain by the Red Megaphones, a street company formed by Ewan McColl, which performed political material by and for mill-workers. Joined by Joan Littlewood, the Theatre of Action was founded in 1935, with a manifesto to perform ... plays which express the life and struggles of the workers (Goorney, 1981:11).

As Unity and later Theatre Workshop, the company attained mainstream success, but was judged a failure as working-class theatre by McColl himself, who claimed that

Theatre, when it is dealing with social issues, should hurt... (Goorney, *ibid*: 128)

The 1960s saw the development of theatre groups with direct links to oppositional politics and in many cases the large-scale support of subcultural movements. The Bread and Puppet Theatre Company in the US was allied to anti- Vietnam War protests, El Teatro Campesino to the Chicano labourers movement and Free Southern Theatre to the campaign for civil rights (see Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). In the UK, former Unity members formed CAST, utilizing satire and drawing on contemporary styles of presentation from television, cinema and variety show. Other groups combined agit-prop with carnival;

Brecht and Artaud were combined on the site of celebratory protest... (Kershaw, *ibid*:82)

while some, such as The People Show, were absurdist and anti-political, with influences including Performance Art and New York Happenings. One of the radical innovations of this time was the increasing movement away from traditional theatre spaces. In a bid to disseminate its messages of egalitarianism and change, alternative theatre sought in the 1970s to reach a wider audience, in many cases tempering its overt activism to increase user-friendliness. Welfare State combined carnival and politics in

....a joyous blend of visual spectacle, popular theatre and celebration (Coult and Kershaw, 1983),

aiming to revive the subversive tradition in folk culture- theatre, storytelling and song. The mid to late 1970s was characterised by a degree of specialisation, and saw the beginning of Youth Theatre, Reminiscence Theatre and Prison Theatre. At the same time, there was a renewed interest in collaborative practice.

Ann Jellicoe's 'community plays' were staged in village halls with the participation of large sections of the local community in staging and acting, and an effort to include marginalised members. The plays tended to deal with aspects of community history which had resonance for the present, including class issues. Jellicoe, however viewed politics as 'divisive' and writes

If we set out to challenge the basic political feeling of the communities we serve, we will alienate large sections of them and lose their support (Jellicoe, 1987:122).

The overall emphasis, therefore, was more on accessibility, celebration and unification.

In the early 1990s, performance artists including Suzanne Lacy in North America began to collaborate with groups as diverse as older women and teenage gang members in the production of large-scale visual and dialogical events outside of traditional art venues (see Lacy, 1995). Interested in the art/life divide and Boal's Invisible Theatre, Lacy's work aestheticises such community events, so that they become both symbolically and practically meaningful. Grant Kester describes such exchanges as 'Littoral Art', which he defines thus:

Littoral Art is interdisciplinary. It operates "between" discourses (art and activism for example) and between institutions (the gallery and the community center or the housing block).....[its new locus of judgement]...can be found in the condition and character of dialogical exchange itself. (Kester, 1999).

Practices such as these advanced notions of cultural democracy, allowing for a further broadening of ideas on what theatre might be; in terms of who might participate, the venue in which it might be staged, the roles of audience and actor, and the relative importance of process and product. Reflecting the aspirations of Boal, proponents of cultural democracy envisaged the eventual growth of a broad movement...

...aiming to link cultural and political action and to locate pleasures which unite production and consumption (Kelly, *ibid*:136).

It has been suggested that community theatre contributed significantly to the promotion of egalitarian ideology, including gay rights and feminism in the UK in the 1970s (Kershaw, *ibid*). It may be that its potential for oppositionality has been diminished by increasing reliance on state funding from the 1980s onwards-

...community arts became the welfare arts. We no longer spoke, as a movement, of working with the working class, or even with 'the people', but instead we began to talk of working with 'the most deprived sections of the community' (Kelly, *ibid*: 29).

At the time of writing (2005), recognition of the need for channels for dialogue between artists, statutory bodies and participants is apparent, and is managed through partnership mechanisms and consultation processes in many cases in Ireland and the UK. It remains open to question, however, whether engaged drama practice can conceivably retain its critical teeth while depending on the support of statutory bodies whose 'social inclusion' or 'community development' agendas may tend towards consensus models.

The following describes some of the current forms of drama devised and produced within particular communities (defining themselves by shared identity or interest as well as by geographical location) that have arisen from historical movements combining theatre and activism.

Declan Gorman defines Community Drama as

...drama activities originated within a group of people in a community where the core purpose of participation is enrichment through art, in the context of personal or community development;

and Drama-in-Community as

...the activities of professional companies and individuals who contribute to community cultural life by presenting tailored performances, animating workshops or involving non-professionals in collaborative creative processes using drama as the medium (1995:230).

High production values will be emphasized, concomitantly with prioritisation of participation and quality process. A model of consultation or collaboration will be utilized to varying degrees. Generally, themes of importance to the particular

community will be explored. Objectives may include personal learning, for example, in terms of skills or confidence-building; artistic enrichment and community development through the forging of collective identity, building networks or awareness-raising.

Explaining the ethos of community cultural development, the more descriptive term for community arts coined in Australia, Deidre Williams writes:

Social isolation, dependency and poor self-esteem all work against the likelihood of self-discovery and greater self-determination - for individuals, communities and nations. Collaborative artistic practice at community level is a potent forum for communication of ideas and values. In seeking new ways forward, the arts can draw on the intuitive, the non-rational, the mythical and the symbolic, and can be a powerful tool for cutting through existing patterns of thought and behaviours (Williams, 1997:8).

The Arts and Disability movement began to access the world of professional theatre for its members, including in some cases artistic exploration of issues pertinent to people with disabilities. Specifically, the tendency to impose 'medical models'⁴ of arts provision with people with disabilities was highlighted. (see Arts Intervention, 2000:17). Graeae, a British theatre company of people with disabilities was founded in the late 1970s. One of its founders, Richard Tomlinson considers the choice of the medium of theatre to be significant in itself for this community, in that performance enhances the person's social status, challenges him/her to develop new skills and allows for an educational message.

So performance gives power. The very fact of power gives status..... Performance means responsibility and risk...and for the disabled person who takes the responsibility, takes the risk- and succeeds- it is especially gratifying... It allows for enlightenment and education; it is a tool whereby the reality of disability and the realities of people who have disabilities can be introduced, demonstrated and discussed (Tomlinson, 1982:12-13).

Other groups marginalised by mainstream society expressed similar intent. The Its All Right to be a Woman Theatre Company and Gay Sweatshop were both founded around this time.

Youth Drama also became a dedicated entity, with a mandate that emphasized process, personal and group development as well as production and performance.

⁴ Administrative model defining impairment as the cause of person's inability to participate fully in particular activities: opposed 'social model' focuses on society's lack of appropriate response as the root of exclusion or disability.

(iv) Healthcare

Theatre was offered as a pastime in some progressive psychiatric hospitals in Europe since at least the early nineteenth century, aiming to

...restore health to diseased minds (Jones, *ibid*: 47).

Vladimir Iljine, whose ideas linked to experimental theatre of the time, developed a system of Therapeutic Theatre for treatment of mental health in the Soviet Union between 1908 and 1917. Methods consisted of improvisation training to develop creativity, spontaneity and communication skills; followed by playing out, reflecting on and receiving feedback on relevant themed scenarios (Jones, *ibid*: 57-61). From the 1930s onwards, the use of drama in hospitals became more widespread, initially with the purpose of entertainment and self-expression, while interest in its developmental potential gradually expanded. By the 1950s at Tampa Hospital, Florida, ‘betterment of personnel relations’ was noted as incidental to the institution’s Theatre Therapy programme (Jones, *ibid*:76). Meanwhile, the arts and crafts movement in hospitals in the US and Europe had been developing since the end of World War I as a branch of Occupational Therapy.

The Arts and Health sector, described below, is the most recent encapsulation of ideas relating the arts (including drama) and healthcare.

Arts in Health, (or Arts and Health), in common with Community Arts, relies on a network of partnerships between statutory bodies (Health Boards, Arts Councils, other funding structures), community organisations and research institutes, such as CAHHM (Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine) at the University of Durham in England.

The term ‘arts in health’ emerged during the mid-1970s. It is based on the principle that the arts are beneficial to mental, physical and emotional health, and that the arts are also an effective means of expressing and communicating views both individually and in communities. The concept of health used is holistic,

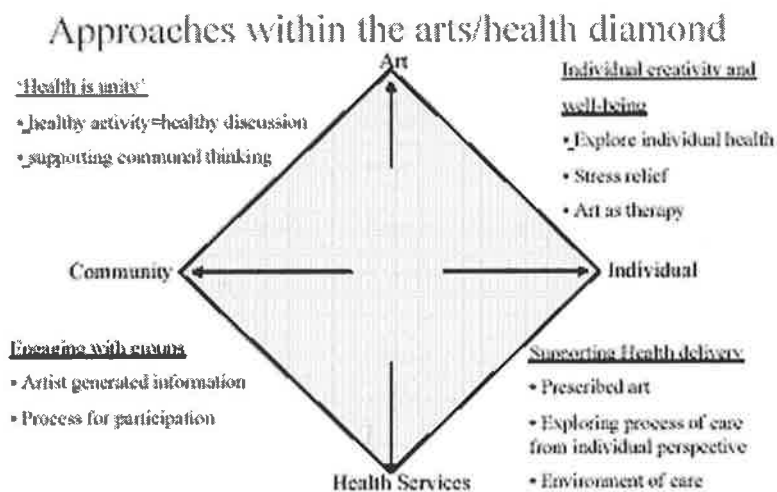
acknowledging that healthcare must be preventative as well as curative, and recognizing that:

....the solutions to major public health problems such as heart disease, cancers, mental health and accidents are complex. They will require interventions which cut across sectors to take account of the broader social, economic, political and physical environments which shape people's experience of health and wellbeing (Health Development Agency,2000)

Arts in Health generally encompasses all art-forms and diverse approaches.

The Common Knowledge Report (CAHHM,2003) identifies four project types: those focusing on creativity and wellbeing, those aimed at supporting health services, projects interested most in engaging groups, and those with a 'unity is health' philosophy.

Fig. 3:



Common Knowledge Interim Report

(Tom Smith / CAHHM)

Drama, for example, might be employed as therapy in a hospital setting, developmentally in a community health project, as the basis of community discussion on healthcare topics, as a component of training for healthcare staff, or as a means of health information dissemination in a public setting.

As such, drama practices within Arts in Health may sometimes be difficult to distinguish from, or may simply constitute new uses of Community drama, Forum theatre, or Dramatherapy.

Arts in Health seems set to be an important umbrella term for arts activities which share objectives of enhancing health and healthcare whether directly or indirectly.

(v) Sociology

The dramaturgical perspective in social interactionism, developed from the 1930s on, focuses on the roles played by individuals in everyday life. It sees human experience as sharing important elements with the world of theatre, and assumes individuals' awareness of their participation in the creation and presentation of their social roles. Proposed by social scientists including Herbert Mead and Erving Goffmann, Dramaturgy applies theatrical metaphors to everyday life, extending the concept of the social actor ('All the world's a stage...') and exposing the constructedness of social structures and hierarchies. Within this context, the ability to understand and adapt social roles is crucial to interaction and development. Social performances may be shared by groups or 'casts'; and social spaces divided into 'onstage' and 'offstage' areas. According to Goffmann,

This self does not arise from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action. ...this self is a product of a scene that comes off, and not a cause of it (Goffmann, 1959, in Kivisto, 1998: 237)

Social players alternate between audience and actor depending on context.

Applied and therapeutic drama practices embody ideas similar to Goffmann's, for example- literally playing with or 'trying on' new roles without the fear of real repercussions of transgressing one's habitual role, thereby broadening the participants' perspectives, perhaps creating empathy or suggesting possibilities for change in ones 'assigned' role. (e.g. Psychodrama, drama in education, community drama). In Theatre of the Oppressed, spectator becomes spect-actor, again challenging ingrained patterns of social behaviour and highlighting the potential for

political action and change. In community theatre, oppressive social constructions may be exposed or satirised, helping to express or shift the awareness of community participants and/or audience. In many approaches, capacity for spontaneity is encouraged, allowing greater flexibility within and between roles.

(vi) Psychotherapy

The transformational potential of drama was employed in some branches of Psychotherapy, particularly Play therapy (see below) and Fritz Perls' Gestalt. Perls created the 'empty chair' technique in the 1950s by adapting a Morenian psychodrama method. In this approach, the empty chair

... has the task of taking up roles which you have disowned, and other people which we need to understand our lifscript (Fritz Perls, 1973).

The client plays all roles, bringing past conflicts into the present, and maximising the insight achieved.

(vii) Play

Winnicott considered play to be the basis of all creativity and indeed culture, viewing the 'transitional space' explored between mother and baby as a precursor of the experience of potential space between individual and environment which provides the arena for culture (Schechner, 2002:90). Many observers have commented on the functional importance of play in the life of the child. According to Margaret Lowenfeld,

... there is play that expresses the bodily impulses of the child; that apperceives his environment; that prepares the child for life; that enables him to mix harmoniously with his fellows (Lowenfeld, 1935, in Hodgson,1972:51).

Studying the stages of play throughout childhood, she considered it to be crucial to normal development:

Play is to a child.....work, thought, art, and relaxation, and cannot be pressed into any single formula. It expresses a child's reaction to himself and his environment, and, without adequate opportunity for play, normal and satisfactory emotional development is not possible (Lowenfeld, ibid:53).

Acknowledging this importance, others have developed systems utilising play with adults as well as children; and practitioners recognise play and Playtherapy as antecedents of drama and dramatherapy. Sue Jennings comments:

I have always taken the significance of play as implicit in the development of drama. The play of children is the basis both of drama and of the capacity for human beings to create and re-createThe capacity to be playful, whether with ideas, with a relationship, with a crisis-enables us to manage life more appropriately and more creatively (1993:x).

The value of play and playfulness by adults has regained respect from the late twentieth century onwards, as

Notions of the unconscious in psychology, literature, theories of relativity and uncertainty... in physics, and game theory in mathematics and economics [were] examples of play taken seriously. In the visual arts, play resumed its world-making activity with the development of cubism and then abstract expressionism. Various avant-gardes disrupted, parodied and in other ways playfully subverted the values of official culture (Schechner, *ibid*:80-81).

Schechner describes the 'flow' of the play experience as akin to that of the 'oceanic' experience of ritual, whereby the participant simultaneously experiences total immersion in the activity and a heightened self-awareness (Schechner, *ibid*:88).

Inasmuch as drama, particularly improvisational drama, encompasses the qualities of play, it offers the possibility of this altered consciousness.

(viii) Education

In the field of education, pioneers such as John Dewey, Viola Spolin, Dorothy Heathcote and Peter Slade advocated the use of play and drama techniques as beneficial to the personal and social development of children and adults from the early twentieth century. Heathcote's work with children is improvisational, using drama to

...expand their awareness, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meaning (Wagner, 1979:15).

Trusting each child's innate 'capacity to identify' with dramatic roles, she facilitates reflection and insight, generally participating in the play, and guiding rather than directing, through questioning and suggestion. With her 'mantle of the expert'

technique, she empowers the child to draw on her/his resources of wisdom and imagination to become an authority on the situation at hand.

Peter Slade developed systems of 'Child Drama' and 'Social Drama' from the 1930s on, working with teachers and children, including disturbed children, children with disabilities and those from deprived backgrounds. According to him,

One of the most important tasks of dramatherapy is to provide a means whereby Success and Hope can be achieved. For I found that successes *even in the world of dreams* (i.e. imaginative drama) could bolster hope (Slade, 1995: 62).

Slade was one of the founders of the new discipline of Dramatherapy in Britain in the 1960s, other pioneers being Sue Jennings and Marian (Billy) Lindqvist. The following paragraphs describe some of the characteristics of this approach.

Dramatherapy

While the basis of Psychodrama comes from the work of one man, Moreno, dramatherapy draws on a wide range of sources;

...dramatic and theatrical traditions, such as shamanic ritual, story-telling, dramatic and creative play, and the work of a variety of theatre practitioners....(Chesner,1994:119)

Methods in psychodrama are structured, specific and directive, whereas the scope of dramatherapy tends to be broader and more flexible. Indeed, psychodramatic methods may be used within dramatherapy.

Both Psychodrama and Dramatherapy utilise methods from drama practice. In contrast to the 'talking therapies', both involve physical action as a means of accessing emotions. Another commonality is the concept of challenging fixed roles and developing spontaneity in moving between roles. As in theatre, both therapies use a specialized space, where

...the context of illusion and play give permission for more freedom of exploration and expression....The particular quality of reality....can be describedas *liminal*, existing between one state and another (Chesner,ibid:116).

Sue Jennings considers theatre as intrinsically therapeutic and performing a ritual social function. According to her

Dramatherapy is the application of theatre art in clinical, remedial and community settings with people who are troubled or unwell. Whereas theatre art could be termed preventative in relation to mental health, dramatherapy is curative (Jennings, 1998:12).

Primary approaches to practice within dramatherapy are Developmental models, Theatre models, and Role models. While space precludes a thorough analysis of these approaches, I will discuss some examples.

In the Developmental model, human distress is viewed as arising from ... a blockage or halt in development...(Cattanach, 1994:29), and life stages are explored and re-worked using story, symbol and ritual.

The 'Therapeutic Theatre' model, as developed by Steve Mitchell, is influenced by the work of Grotowski, Brook and Rebillot, among others. (see Mitchell in Jennings et al,1994:41). Depending on the nature of the group, various processes may be used, ranging from story-making, to exploring characters to workshopping, directing and acting in a play, along with training in theatre skills. Benefits include indirectly addressing the range of roles available to the participant and developing interpersonal skills. In Mitchell's view, product may be equally important as process in this form of dramatherapy, with the therapeutic aspect inherent in

.....the 'group' becom[ing] a 'theatre company' of actors, writers, technical crew and not a sick or mentally ill drama group who must be guided towards exploring and sharing their psychopathology. (Mitchell,ibid,1994:52)

The Role model relates to the sociological theories of Goffmann. In this model, the development of the person is seen as dependent on the roles he or she plays in everyday life- biological, occupational and social- and can be restricted by a limited repertoire of roles. This approach has been particularly important in the work of dramatherapists such as Robert Landy. Greatly simplified, it consists of examining the type and function of roles played by the client in life, focusing on particular roles and variations through embodiment, enactment puppets etc; with the aim of integrating roles into a system which allows for the use of ...role as a mediator between the self and the social world (Meldrum, ,1994 : 86).

Contemporary dramatherapists continue to adopt new and eclectic responses to clients' needs, which include recognition of the political and cultural realities of today's world. (see Holloway,2003; Sajnani,2003). Robert Landy, in recent work with school children who had witnessed the events of September 11th 2001 in New York City, collaborated with a local theatre company, integrating dramatherapy techniques with the eventual production of a performance for family members. Landy expresses enthusiasm for cross-disciplinary practice and the possibilities of broad-based applied theatre (Landy, 2003).

SUMMARY

A range of practices using applied drama processes in co-creating changes towards enhanced personal and social well-being have been developed, based on some of the following premises:

- Drama is inherent to human development, as evidenced by early ritual, religious ritual and play. In a similar way, drama may be used to enhance communication; or as a means of rehearsing and transforming potential repertoires of social roles and behaviour.
- Participation in drama, in common with other art forms, is intrinsically healing, relaxing, liberating, and self-actualising.
- Drama exercises encourage spontaneity and allow freedom of expression in a liminal space. Real emotions can be enacted without risk of repercussion, thus encouraging emotional literacy. Real consequences can also be considered and rehearsed dramatically. Assuming the inherent capacity of communities, groups and individuals to be active protagonists in the drama of life, these processes may enable them to critically and creatively explore issues of importance in their lives with the option of developing strategies for implementing desired changes.
- Inclusion in drama activities affords an opportunity to access and contribute to an aspect of cultural life from which many people feel alienated.
- Participation in the devising and staging of a dramatic piece may have a number of positive outcomes for individuals and communities including strengthening community identity and contributing to social cohesion, learning theatre skills, developing co-operative competencies and organizational skills, enhancing self-confidence, and raising community and public awareness on social and political issues of importance.

3: SETTING THE SCENE: IRELAND

This section gives a brief overview of the evolution of applied drama practices in Ireland.

(i) Community Drama

As a relatively recent movement, the history of community drama in Ireland is sparsely documented, and is perhaps a subject for further research. The following account of developments and trends is, as such, dependent on a small number of sources.

Activists of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland were first on this island to introduce methods of using the arts to strengthen and communicate cultural identity. Groups were established in nationalist areas in the late 1960s which employed drama, as well as photography, film and visual arts, with objectives of personal and community development. Both community leaders and artist-activists, including Leila Doolin, James King, Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden initiated activities. By the late 1970s, community arts began to receive statutory recognition and funding through the arts council of Northern Ireland. (Bowles, 1992:5)

Influenced by developments in the North and Britain, and by international movements in development education, the voluntary sector in Ireland turned to arts approaches in the late 1970s as one strand in its response to the crisis in urban areas resulting from poor housing and amenity, and high levels of unemployment (Bowles, 1992:6). This represented a new emphasis on political and social awareness, self-advocacy and dialogue on issues affecting communities.

The Grapevine Arts Centre (which became the City Arts Centre in 1985) was founded in the North Inner City of Dublin in 1973 with a mission statement citing its aim of

Putting the arts to work for community in a way that is relevant, practical and exciting (O Baoill, 1998).

In a related development, groups such as Waterford Arts for All, Macnas in Galway, Sligo Community Arts Group and Theatre Omnibus in Limerick were founded to promote widened access and inclusion in cultural activity (Bowles:6).

Key players in community drama in Dublin in the early 1980s included Peter Sheridan of the Project Arts Centre who ran the City Workshop in conjunction with the North City Centre Community Action Programme. A series of community-inspired works arose from this partnership, among them *The Kip*, *The Digs* and *The Village*.

Wet Paint Arts was founded in 1985, producing issue-based theatre relevant to youth and community audiences. By 1987, a decision was made to change course, and Wet Paint began to engage in collaborative work with youth groups, facilitating young people to write produce and perform their own material. In partnership with Route 36 of Ballymun, *Stories from the Seven Towers* and *Open the Lid* were produced, ... moving chronicles of the lives of young people trying to find hope in a society that was still disgracefully indifferent to the circumstances of its excluded urban youth”(Gorman 2001).

A performance event entitled *The Parade of Innocence*, co-produced by artists and activists, appeared on the streets of Dublin in late 1989. Gorman, who regards this as a pivotal event in Irish activist theatre, describes it as a

...10,000 strong procession led by 400 artists....to protest at the continued incarceration of the Birmingham Six, and to demand justice for victims of other miscarriages of justice....Pyrotechnics: the late brilliant street artist Thom McGinty on a high judge's throne of decayed rubbish; one hundred percussionists, actors chained in circus cages- it was hugely emotive. (Gorman, 2000)

Kathy McArdle, who had worked with Wet Paint, was involved, along with local activist John Bissett, with the community-based Rialto Youth Project in the 1990s; which created dramas such as *Here Today*, *Where Tomorrow*, *In the System* and *Inside Out*; communicating realistic views of the struggles of young people in marginalized communities.

Other community-based drama groups in Dublin in the 1990s were Walk the Talk in Coolock, New Vision, North Clondalkin Arts and Drama Group, the Parents Alone Resource Centre in Coolock, KLEAR in Kilbarrack and Balcony Belles at the North Wall Women's Centre (further discussed in section 5). New Vision, facilitated by Joni Crone, was the first community drama group to perform at the City Arts Centre (Gorman, 2001).

The National Association of Youth Drama was founded in 1980, and currently has seventy member groups. (National Association website) Gorman(1995) also found substantial use of drama methods within youth services generally. (216-223)

Drama and Disability pioneers in Ireland included The Mount Street Club, Muscular Dystrophy Ireland and the Centre for Independent Living. Other activists include Peter Kearns and Yvonne Lynch of The Workhouse. Horizon Arts, a major EU-funded initiative supporting innovative work in this field, has documented numerous projects. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland produced an island-wide Arts and Disability Handbook in 1999. Arts and Disability Ireland (formerly Very Special Arts) promotes cultural equality of people with disabilities in the arts in Ireland. Current Disability Theatre groups include Blue Teapot, based in Galway, Quick Bright Things in Dublin and Stage Beyond in Derry.

Currently (2005) professional companies actively engaged in collaborative, dialogic and/or community-based work include Shadowbox in Co Dublin, Upstate in Drogheda, Smashing Times (Dublin and border counties) Balor in Ballybofey, Calipo in Drogheda and Quare Hawks in Monaghan. Dedicated Theatre-in-Education companies include TEAM (Dublin), Barnstorm (Kilkenny) and Graffiti (Cork).

Fitzgerald (2004:71) identifies a meeting called by City Workshop in 1983 as the moment of formal recognition of the sector in Ireland, presaging the formation of CAFE (Creative Arts for Everyone, now CREATE) in 1984, which aimed, with

limited resources, to support practitioners and build a cohesive community arts movement (Fitzgerald, *ibid*:74).

The Arts Council/ An Comhairle Ealíon began to provide funding for community arts initiatives in 1980. In 1985, the Arts Council, assisted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, established the ACE Project, with a brief to research and make recommendations on the place of the arts in community and educational settings in Ireland. Its report, *Art and the Ordinary*, produced in 1989, has been influential in policy and practice since. Certain of its recommendations, including Artist in the Community funding (now administered by CREATE), were implemented, and community arts gained further recognition within the Arts Council's Arts Plans. (Coughlan, 2004:122-123). *Mapping Community Arts*, commissioned in 1997, investigated the range of practice in Ireland and the role of the Arts Council within the sector. The Arts Council has been accused of failing to take a leadership role in the promotion of cultural democracy in the last ten years, in tending to emphasise access to the arts rather than participation (Coughlan, *ibid*:123 & 127). The current draft strategy, if adopted, could go some way towards addressing these shortcomings- included in its goals are undertakings to:

-Make it possible for people to extend and enhance their experiences of the arts [by]
 - Support[ing]arts organisations to enable more people to experience the arts.....
 - Acknowledg[ing] and support[ing] the growing role of local authorities.....Creat[ing] better opportunities for young people to experience the artsExtend[ing] opportunities for people to work collaboratively with artists ;

[And to]

Promote and reaffirm the value of the arts in society. (Arts Council/ An Comhairle Ealíon, 2005)

Funding for drama projects in community settings has also been accessed through County Council Arts Offices, National Youth Arts Council, Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and through Area Development Management/ Combat Poverty Agency.

Drama in the context of community arts now often tends to be linked to the politics of social partnership, through funding and support networks, involving for example, local partnerships between state agencies (Health Boards, County Councils or

Corporations, Arts Council), Development companies (LEADER, ADM/CDP) and Community Organisations (CREATE, Blue Drum). While highly bureaucratic in nature, and necessitating the co-operation of diverse groupings, this model aspires to a level of communication and dialogue between citizens and institutional structures. Kathleen Lynch (2004) has drawn attention to the fact that the social partnership model in Ireland is underpinned by an assumption of the citizen as paid worker, and has expressed concerns as to the lack of consideration given to how those outside the labour market can participate in consultation.

(ii) Dramatherapy

The Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists was founded in 1992, and it is thought that individual dramatherapists, trained elsewhere, have been active in this country since the 1970s; with employment, generally of a part-time nature, in the health and education sectors⁵. Practitioners of note include Katie Woolett and Angela Bracken. St. Patrick's College, Maynooth introduced an MA course in Dramatherapy in 2002, the first of its kind in the state.

(iii) Arts and Health

This is an area of growing interest in Ireland, with an Arts and Health Conference held by Dublin Healthy Cities in May 2000, and an Arts-in Health seminar by CAFÉ in July 2002, and a conference again in June 2004.

A national directory of arts and health projects compiled by Dublin Healthy Cities in 2001 analysed 125 projects, which originated in county/borough Councils, Health Boards, Arts organizations, Community groups, Hospices, Non-governmental organizations, Hospitals, Universities/colleges and Nursing homes.

Mapping the Arts and Healthcare, a presentation given by Ruairi O Cuiv on a review commissioned by the Arts Council in 2001 recorded 150 projects nationally,

⁵ e-mail correspondence with Kate Soudant, IACAT (Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists)

of which forty-two per cent included a drama component. Arts activities tended to be located mainly in extended care services, followed by provision in services for people with learning disabilities. Funding was largely by Health Boards, Local Authorities and the Arts Council.

The Arts Council's Arts and Health Handbook (2003) refers to three main categories: Environmental enhancement, participative arts activities and health promotion/education projects.

4: RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACTS OF APPLIED DRAMA:

“CULTURE IS ABOUT THE CREATION OF MEANING”(Williams)

In this section, I relate the theoretical aspirations of applied drama, as described in the previous pages, to a review of the findings of selected Irish and international research on personal and social outcomes of applied drama practice. As the field to be covered here is diverse in terms of approaches and participant groupings, my main focus is on major studies in the generalised area of Community Arts/ Drama; followed by an overview of findings from more specialised domains.

Community Drama

Research into the personal and social impacts of participation in Community Arts programmes which include a component of Community Drama has indicated a range of positive outcomes for individuals and communities.⁶

Creating Connections examined five developmental community arts projects in Ireland in the period 1993-1994, four of which included an element of drama.

Benefits identified included

Identifying and exploring community needs....The P.A.R.C. and North Wall Women's Centre projects in particular report that drama workshops have been important in acquainting participants with change and in supporting them to set out and manage changes in their personal and social lives (Cullen, 1994).

Developing a sense of community identity was also important, and developing alternative images to those being presented by mainstream media was central to this process. The North Wall Women's Centre's theatre production *Balcony Belles* prompted

....a great feeling of community pride and a desire by local people to become involved in community activities (Cullen, 1994).

⁶ Where studies are drawn from the general field of Community Arts, I have concentrated on those which include drama projects. For comprehensive reviews of the impacts of community arts, particularly in Ireland and the UK, see Jermyn, 2002 and Reeves, 2002

This also had a positive effect on social inclusion in the area. By focusing on developing skills, projects were found to increase participants' self-esteem, as well as building organizational capacity.

This report, however, concludes that the value of community arts is solely as an adjunct to the development process, rather than being effective processes in their own right. Later, larger studies suggest that the arts as important components of culture, are of themselves uniquely placed to operate as catalysts for change in communities.

Australian research indicates long-term benefits from participation in community arts projects/ community cultural development. *Creating Social Capital* (1996), tested social, educational, artistic and economic outcome indicators of eighty-nine projects for benefits two years after completion. The impacts delineated in this study include

...building and developing communities, increasing social capital, activating social change, developing human capital and improving economic performance (Williams,1997:5) .

Community-building is a measure to which Williams ascribes particular importance, as

...a sense of belonging in a community is essential to individual well-being and to our systems of social organization (Williams, ibid:13) .

She argues:

Community... is firstly a fundamental element in the experience and expression of culture. Secondly, people understand culture through their experience of community..... And thirdly, if culture embodies a system of values, norms and moral codes, then art is one of the most powerful ways in which those values are communicated (Williams,ibid:13).

Case studies generated positive outcomes for indicators such as

...developed community identity, decreased social isolation, improved recreational options, developed local enterprise [and] improved public facilities (Williams, ibid:16).

The potential of arts projects for promoting social change is highlighted in the report, with claims that projects can, for example, create empowering outlets for the voicing of concerns of groups whose views may be marginalized. Outcomes

demonstrated in this category included those from the Women Ex-Offenders'

Theatre Company: Almost all respondents agreed that the project

...raised public awareness of an issue, lessened social isolation [and] inspired action on a social issue. (Williams, 1997:19)

Linking Community Cultural Development to the concept of 'learning for human development', Williams considers that community arts can help to build 'human capital' through enhancing personal, social and political awareness, and this view is verified by respondents. A participant of the Women Ex-offenders' Theatre

Company comments:

[Just] having a voice [in theatre]...I was speaking for so many people and that was a real privilege, and in the beginning really hard.... I didn't have a voice my whole life and I felt I wasn't worth anything. I was just a junkie....Since then I haven't used drugs. So much has happened since then. I have a different life, I speak differently, my politics are different. I didn't even know who I was then. I'm not saying I know who I am now, but I like myself now (Williams, 1996:16-17, in Williams, 1997).

Williams describes social capital as the increased co-operation and trust arising from collaborative processes. The Boomtown Rural Theatre Project, for example, identified 'social capital' outcomes including:

...improved communication of ideas and information, improved skills in planning and organizing activities [and] developed community identity (Williams,1997:8);

while Panic Station Police and Young People Theatre Project respondents considered that they had gained

...improved understanding of different cultures or lifestyles [and] increased appreciation of community arts projects. (Williams, ibid:9)

Economic benefits are also noted, mainly related to cost savings in public expenditure, as well as employment and local enterprise creation. Williams emphasizes the need to

...draw attention to the limits of the value system underpinning the economic frameworks of our times. (Williams, 1997:29)

Comedia's 1997 paper *Use or Ornament?*, which draws on responses from six hundred individuals, similarly describes impacts relating to broad public policy objectives, including: personal growth (confidence-building, skills development),

social cohesion (developing local networks and capacity for self-determination, environmental renewal and health promotion), social change and community development, and cultural enhancement (Matarasso, 1997).

Matarasso concludes that participatory arts projects can contribute significantly to social policy objectives. By promoting the inclusion in cultural creation of people traditionally excluded from such activities, effective arts projects have the potential to encourage further activation and participation in community and/or political life.

New confidence and skills; new friendships and social opportunities; co-operation towards achievement; involvement in consultation and local democracy; affirmation and questioning of identity; strengthening commitment to place; intercultural links; positive risk-taking- these and the other social impacts which this study has identified are crucial means of fighting social exclusion. Participation in the arts does this partly by building individual and community competence, but more importantly by building belief in the possibility of positive change (Matarasso, 1997:82).

He insists that arts projects are uniquely effective in fulfilling these objectives

because of their ability to attract participants, and the concern of art with values:

The greatest social impacts of the arts- and the ones which other programmes cannot achieve- arise from their ability to help people think critically about and question their experiences, and those of others, not in a discussion group but with all the excitement, danger, magic, colour, symbolism, feeling, metaphor, and creativity that the arts offer. It is in the act of creativity that empowerment lies, and through sharing creativity that understanding and social inclusiveness are promoted. (Matarasso, 1997:84)

Matarasso acknowledges that negative impacts may result from poorly- planned or -facilitated projects, and calls for a commitment to high quality partnerships and standards. Personal risks to participants, resulting from the strain of change, are also noted.⁷

⁷ *Use or Ornament* has been strongly criticised by Paola Merli (2003) on methodological and political grounds. . Merli argues that ...the impact of arts programmes cannot be studied using predefined indicators [which are]...not suited to the task of discovering the unpredictable results of activities (Merli, 2003). Moreover, Merli criticizes Matarasso's tendency to centre on the contribution of arts programmes to 'social cohesion', naming it as ...a new way of achieving the old civilizing objective of cultural policy (Merli, 2003), and cautions against 'The new missionaries' [who] have a notion of their work as an instrument to transform the culture of the studied communities and make it more similar to their own culture and values.... and explain how this should be accomplished (Merli, 2003) .

Matarasso's 1998 study, *Vital Signs: Mapping Community Arts in Belfast*, of which drama was the principle artform in 40% of projects, shows even greater levels of participant satisfaction with personal and community development outcomes. The major concern raised here was with regard to ensuring sustainability- Positive outcomes can always be dissipated if they are not nurtured. (Matarasso, 1998:32)

Research from England- *Turning Points: The impact of participation in community theatre*- involved past participants in Community Theatre projects, and so represents a long-term perspective on impacts. Findings indicate that the major gains experienced were confidence, enjoyment, new friends, skills development, community spirit, social awareness, sense of achievement and work. (Beddow, 2002:106)

Youth Theatre

Playing a Part, a recent study of the personal and social impacts of Youth Theatre involved peer researchers in facilitating research workshops with 250 youth theatre participants across England. Qualitative interviews conducted indicates that it:

... [facilitates] the transition to adulthood in a risky society....provides a supportive context for personal and social development..... develops young people's ability to be agents in their own development.....provides a safe context for young people to take risks and responsibility and assert their independence.....provides opportunities to explore self and experiment with personal identity in a supportive setting...[and]to develop a range of pre-vocational skills.... [and] encourages young people to participate more fully in their communities. (Hughes & Wilson, 2003:34)

Themes discussed include the importance of spaces for informal peer support outside of school where young people may begin to develop independent identities, explore thoughts and feelings and work co-operatively; the development of competencies and skills that encourage self-confidence and self-advocacy; the possibility of safely taking risks with emotions and behaviour in a fictional context; and the increased awareness of and participation in social and community issues arising from participation in youth theatre.

Forum Theatre

Research into the use of Forum Theatre generally focuses on impacts with specific participant groupings. *Developing creative solutions to the problems of children and their families: Communicative reason and the use of Forum Theatre* (Houston, Magill, McCollum & Spratt, 2001), details work with children in Co. Donegal, Ireland, using Forum theatre as a means of exploring the topic of bullying in schools. The study found that as a method of working towards critical consciousness, this approach was effective in raising children's awareness of ethical issues, and allowed them to recognise their unity as an 'oppressed group' and begin to rehearse for possible futures in the real world. The study concluded that Forum is particularly suitable in cases of social problems which are incapable of resolution by systematic means.

Evaluation of a forum theatre project designed to promote community development activation in Brisbane, Australia, found it to be successful in engaging young people in discussion of alcohol and sexuality issues and providing insights into difficulties faced by young people, although there were difficulties with involving some sections of the communities, particularly elders. The Department of Housing, which sponsored this scheme, expressed interest in ...the power of applied theatre "as part of the 'tool kit' for community capacity-building"(Taylor, 2002:8)

Dramatherapy and Psychodrama

A body of research exists which documents the efficacy of Dramatherapy and Psychodrama in specific situations. To give a sample of this range, Rousseau found dramatherapy workshops useful in facilitating

..the adaptation of young immigrants and refugees to their new environment through creative work on identity issues related to migration and status as a cultural minority (Rousseau, 2005: 24) .

Robert Landy, writing on work with New Yorkers after the events of September 11th, 2001, contends that

By taking on the roles of children or by taking on the role of rescuer of the firemanthe clients were able to work through some feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Working in role.... helps clients distance themselves from the trauma of everyday life. Playing in role gives clients permission to explore alternative ways of being, to move from victim to survivor (Landy, 2002:140).

Other research documents a role for dramatherapy and psychodrama in healing children who have been sexually abused, through re-creating processes of early attachment and development (Bannister, 2003:8).

Arts in Health

The Arts in Health movement tends to take as its criteria expressed or measured improvements in physical, mental, emotional or spiritual health. *Art for Health*, an evaluation of ninety projects by the Health Development Agency (2000) reported improvements in wellbeing of participants in terms of motivation, connectedness to others, more positive outlooks, reduced sense of fear, isolation or anxiety and pride in achievement, among others. Educational outcomes were also reported, relating both to arts skills and non-arts learning. In the view of the authors, these outcomes appeared to relate more to artistic involvement than merely socializing or carrying out other physical activities.

Conclusion

This section has served as a summary of possible personal and social impacts of engagement with some of the approaches on the broad spectrum of applied drama praxis which were elucidated in the previous section. As such, it will guide the research and thematic analysis, although I will also strive to allow for emergence of further themes from research participants, avoiding the use of pre-defined indicators, as advised by Merli (above).

While applied drama praxis has been increasingly utilized in diverse community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest of Ireland in recent years, there has been little research into the geographical spread or theoretical range of projects, of the backgrounds of participants who have become involved in such processes, or of how projects are supported and funded. The intention of the current study is to undertake such a mapping of the ‘physical’ characteristics of the field; as well as interrogating the meanings and outcomes attributed to involvement by participants and practitioners. This analysis will inform proposals for best practice and recommendations for development of the sector in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal.

Chapter III: RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The principal areas for consideration in this research are an examination of the field of drama in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest of Ireland, and an exploration of the personal and social outcomes of these processes as experienced by participants and practitioners.

The focus of the literature review is the investigation of participatory drama practices, including those which enable critical reflection and exploration to create change. My core assumption in the conduct of this research is the right of participants to be fully informed, to collaborate, and to control in as far as is possible, research practices and the production of knowledge that concerns them. In this study, I adapt the practices of participatory research; with a theoretical perspective that draws on critical theory, and is especially congruent with aspects of the work of Paulo Freire; and the areas of standpoint epistemology and transversal politics within feminist theory and methodology.

1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Critical theory is based in critiques of social and intellectual life, with particular attention to issues of power and control. It disputes the positivistic view which tends to conceptualise social actors as

...passive entities determined by 'natural forces' (Ritzer,1996:147).

Critical theory draws attention to the domination of people by social and cultural structures; including 'the knowledge industry' of mass media, education and academic structures. Reality, the Critical school contends, while assumed by positivism to be objective, natural and unchanging; is in fact constructed and controlled by dominant groups and is in a constant state of flux. Emancipatory ideals are espoused, notably by Habermas (1971), who emphasizes the role of 'Critical Knowledge' in promoting change.

Freire advances this analysis, underlining the capacity for critical reflection on one's world, life, roles and responsibilities as vital to enable change in life circumstances.

He describes humanity as

...beings in the process of becoming- as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality (Freire, 1972:56-57);

and proposes

...critical thinking...which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and men,...which perceives reality as process and transformation, rather than a static entity,...which does not separate itself from action... (Freire, 1972:64-65)

Furthermore, he called for effective solidarity, culminating in dialogue. Realising the Critical ideal of integrating theory and practice, Freire developed a 'pedagogy of the oppressed', whereby marginalized people in Brazil became active participants in a dialogical system of popular education. Dialogical education aspires to equal partnership between educators and learners as they

...engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization (Freire, 1972:49),

a process of questioning, of profound political import, of empowerment, change and social justice.

Of particular interest in the current study is the identification by Finn, Jacobson and Campana of links between popular education, popular theatre and participatory research in that they

...see knowledge as power and seek to democratize practices of knowledge production. They challenge hegemonic notions of 'power over' and promote alternative forms of power- power within, power with, power to do...They are transformative processes that recognize ordinary people as protagonists of knowledge development and change. In so doing, they blur the boundaries between researcher and researched, teacher and learner, and actor and audience. (Finn, Jacobson and Campana, 2002:7)

Feminist theorists have been among the most effective critics of positivism, and have also been very active in developing theories of emancipatory action, education and research.

Emancipatory research involves a recognition of the moral right of research subjects to exercise ownership and control over the generation of knowledge produced about them and their world...If people are structurally excluded from democratic engagement with research practice, they are precluded from assessing its validity in an informed manner. They are effectively disenfranchised from controlling the creation and dissemination of knowledge about themselves and about institutions and systems within which they live and work.(Lynch, 2000: 87)

Feminists have further analysed the sociology of knowledge, developing what is known as "standpoint epistemology" (Harding, 1986), which argues that good research relies on three framing tasks, identified by Madoo, Lengermann and Niebrugge as being:

(1)to identify and describe the complexity of the actor's social situation as a 'vantage point' on reality (2) to establish the standards by which the sociologist working with admittedly partial accounts can lay claim to producing any knowledge...;and(3) to analyse how power relations become manifest in knowledge claims. (Madoo, Lengermann and Niebrugge, 1972: 338)

While standpoint epistemology has been challenged by postmodernists, it is central to the ideas of transversal politics, which is based on

... a dialogical standpoint epistemology (Harding,1991, Stoetzler & Yuval-Davies,2002), a recognition that from each positioning the world is seen differently, and thus any knowledge based on just one positioning is 'unfinished'...thus the only way to approach 'the truth' is by a dialogue between people of differential positionings, and the wider the better.

Secondly,.....the claim is that...differences are important but...should be encompassed by, rather than replace, notions of equality.....

Thirdly, transversal politics differentiates.... between positioning, identity and values (Yuval-Davies, 2004:16-17).

Transversal politics shares with applied drama approaches, radical pedagogy and participatory research methods an interest in processes which, while dialogical, recognise and problematise the implications of differential positionings.

In the following section, I will attempt to apply some of the concepts discussed here to the methodology and design of my research.

2: METHODOLOGY

We are always on a journey of discovery. This journey is certainly what is powering applied theatre (Taylor,2003:130)

It seems appropriate as I set out to explore processes which are at their best inclusive artistic explorations of possibilities, confronting diverse and often conflicting perspectives in many forms of practice; that I should engage similarly dialogic methods in as far as is possible if I aim to reflect anything of the inherent complexity and richness.

We must not forget that applied theatre is a human-centred event[involving]... a variety of agendas, interests and expectations (Taylor, 2003:107).

This is a 'snapshot' study focusing on applied drama projects in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal in the period December 2003 to June 2004.

In this work, I use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: a preliminary postal survey to elucidate the breadth and types of applied drama work currently practiced in the Northwest; and focus groups and interviews with participants, practitioners and other stakeholders to give some flavour of the perspectives of those engaged in this work at the time of my research. In the qualitative part of the work, I am interested in exploring the possibilities of Applied Drama in the particular context of the Northwest of Ireland. Rather than testing whether experiences here match a series of pre-defined criteria, I am attempting to discover what views, what questions, what agendas arise. As Jermyn (2004:9) has noted in her work on the arts and social inclusion:

One of the difficulties underlying an indicator-based approach is that there is such a diversity of work taking place, with particular groups having particular needs, and a one-size-fits-all approach will inevitably be problematic.

(i) Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies

The preliminary stage of this research utilises quantitative methods, yielding descriptive statistics. The quantitative approach, based on a positivist or post-positivist view of reality as objective and measurable, relies on numerical data and statistical analyses.

Qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is twofold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of postpositivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:13).

The main body of this work is conducted within a qualitative framework. This is a naturalistic approach, which holds that there is more than one version of reality..

Qualitative research utilizes a number of methods. It is multi-perspectival, in an effort to reflect the multi-faceted nature of reality. The presence of the researcher, with her/his

...gaze...always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:31).

is explicitly recognised.

This study draws on narrative accounts of experience and impacts as reported and explored by people purposively selected from the field of current applied drama practice in the Northwest, and interpreted by me with a measure of consultation with research participants; resulting in what Denzin and Lincoln (2003) call “negotiated text”. I acknowledge the value-laden nature of research- as a person with a cultural and gendered position, it is inevitable that consciously and unconsciously, my own values and biases are part of the research process; and I try to remain reflexively aware of these.

It is my position that a satisfactory measure of the experience of human engagement with creative and participatory projects cannot be achieved through the use of pre-defined questions alone, although in pragmatic terms this type of data is more easily analysed and packaged.

Evaluations should include interview data, journal writing, descriptions of behaviour, anecdotes from participants, funders expectations and hopes. The evaluation report should be a multitext narrative, which privileges all voices and is especially eager to solicit the voices of the silent.(Taylor,2003:131)

To this I would add the need to create space for dissenting or critical voices.

(ii)Relationship to Evaluation-oriented Research

The present study has been initiated by the Institute of Technology, Sligo, and has not been commissioned by drama projects in the Northwest, or by any body representing them. As such, it does not aim to provide a comprehensive evaluation study of the field, in terms of measuring effectiveness against previously decided indicators or objectives.

However, as this work attempts to interrogate participants' and others' views on involvement in drama processes, some mention must be made of the recent literature on approaches to evaluation of participation in arts projects. (See Arts Council of England, 2002; Williams,1997; Matarrasso,1997; Moriarty,1997; Lingayah,1996; Kelly and Kelly,2000). These writers explore the development of methods to measure the impacts of arts interventions in terms of social outcomes as perceived by key stakeholders.

I will draw on the work of some of the above writers, particularly Williams(1997), adapting indicators developed by them in the postal survey, and utilising the stakeholder-based approach in the research design.

(iii)Participatory Research

Participatory research and evaluation methods were initially used in communities in Africa and South America in the 1960s and 1970s as a more empowering alternative to

...the intellectual colonialism of western social research into the third world development process (Sohng,1995:3)

Its approach involves the collaboration of local people in research into or affecting their lives. Hurst defines it as

...the result of the ongoing effort in popular education to come to grips-in both theory and practice-with the question 'what is knowledge and what gives it credibility in a society that aspires to be genuinely democratic?' ...it assumes that in a truly democratic society, knowledge is not simply for the people, but created with and by the people...(Hurst, 1995:3).

In as far as is practical, this study is intended to be exploratory and participatory. I address the key areas of Participatory Research identified by Finn (1994) - people, power and praxis. The study is people-centred in that it is informed in many aspects by the expressed values and opinions of some of the key stakeholders. It addresses issues of power by inviting participants to co-create knowledge of the processes in which they are involved, and to collaborate in the process of interpretation. Praxis is central in that

It recognizes the inseparability of theory and practice and critical awareness of the personal-political dialectic. (Sohng, 1995:5)

The current work does not, however, incorporate all aspects of Participatory Research. Firstly, it has not been initiated from within the community- although it has the clear support of some stakeholders, particularly within the North Western Health Board (now HSE North West) and Sligo County Council Arts Office (See Research Design section below). Secondly, it is not explicitly action- or transformation-oriented, nor does it give control of planning or dissemination to the participants. In terms of goals and process dimensions of collaborative inquiry as defined by Cousins and Whitmore (1998: 12), my approach is moderate, falling somewhere between 'Stakeholder-based' and 'Democratic' models.

While keeping in mind the findings of recent research and the theoretical groundings of drama approaches discussed in the literature review, I am most interested at this stage in indicators and categories arising from the individuals and groups themselves, as valid accounts of their experience. Within this approach lies the challenge to all research in arts in community and healthcare contexts, whether it is evaluation-oriented or not: How to do research that is meaningful not only to funders but also to participants and workers; which will contribute not only to developing

funding criteria, but will address the work in all its richness, thus advancing reflective and flexible structures and practices. My intention is to privilege the voices of the local experts in reflection on the place of applied drama in their lives and its possibilities as they see them.

I consider Participatory Research methods in the tradition of Freire, who defines dialogue as:

...two-way intercommunication, a horizontal relationship between persons who are engaged in a joint, critical search (Randal, 1981:350);

implying reciprocal learning. I also acknowledge Guattari's (1974) vision of transversalism as entailing

...a constant flow of communication both horizontally and vertically...without.. processes of reification taking place.(Yuval-Davies, 2004:16)

In the design and conduct of the research, I recognise the issue of power relationships between researcher and researched. In as far as is possible within the constraints of this work, I aim to uphold participatory ideals of consultation, informed consent, transparency, and definition of issues generated by participants.

(iv) The Researcher

I come to this work having some experience of using the arts (primarily visual arts) in a community context, and having a positive view of the role of such engagement. My personal, practical experience of applied drama approaches has been as participant in workshops on community drama, Forum Theatre and dramatherapy. Having studied the theoretical aspirations of such approaches, as well as research into impacts for the literature review; I wished to hear accounts of applied drama in the Northwest, from the perspectives of participants and practitioners.

I approached research participants in the role of an interested learner or “acceptable incompetent” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 99), and I emphasized the fact that this study was not intended as an evaluation or judgement of their work. I felt that

my interest was welcomed, particularly by the practitioner group, who seemed keen to discuss and explain their work. I was very conscious of and grateful for the time afforded me by all research participants.

As a first-time researcher, I experienced the role as a sometimes curious balancing act, as I attempted to find ways of temporarily fitting in to and understanding the various contexts I visited while at the same time acknowledging my position as an outsider. Perceptions of me possibly varied. I am a woman aged thirty-eight, so younger participants may have seen me in a 'teacher' or 'inspector' role, which would have affected their responses. As I live in the region, I was already known to some research participants, which may have increased their trust levels and enabled communication of their perceptions.

(v) Validity

As I have stated, I seek in this piece of research to understand and explain what participants and practitioners describe as the important organizational issues and perceived personal and social outcomes with regard to involvement in drama projects in community and healthcare contexts in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal.

Research cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that positivists strive for, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. (Miller and Glassner, 2004:126)

In the quantitative section or preliminary research, which is mainly descriptive, I attempt to maximize validity by surveying the entire population and by careful design of the questionnaire. (See Appendices B, C & D))

In the qualitative section, I aim to fairly represent the narrative of the participants and practitioners with whom I have communicated....

.....there are no standardized or accepted tests within qualitative research and often the nature of the investigation is determined and adapted by the research itself. There may not be any hypothesis or even any findings as such. Instead the 'validity' of the research resides with the representation of the actors, the purposes of the research and the appropriateness of the processes involved. (Winter, 2000)

Methods have been selected with validity in mind. Acknowledging that various pressures may influence research participants in this short-term study including unfamiliarity with the researcher or perceptions of 'research' that are well-founded; to conform to group consensus norms or to respond in particular ways; my design strives to achieve balance by fully informing participants in the research of its purpose and by allowing for additional non-public feedback in the focus group (See Appendices F & G).

Interview questions were carefully chosen to reflect the research aims, and the semi-structured approach allowed clarification by myself and by respondents where necessary (See Appendix E). I have viewed the interviews and focus groups as processes of active meaning-making.

Validity has also been enhanced through triangulation; that is the utilization of multiple methods and perspectives in order to explore questions in a rounded way that is more than one-dimensional:

Human beings are complex, and their lives are ever-changing; the more methods we use to study them, the better our chances to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell us about them. (Fontana & Frey, 2003:99)

Additionally, the focus groups members with whom I worked have all participated in groups together, so that the material collected is also important in terms of presenting various views of the same events. This has been referred to as crystallization:

Multiple perspectives on the event researched, what is now referred to as *crystallization*, confirm the trustworthiness of the findings. (Taylor, 2003:122)

In triangulation, a researcher deploys "different methods"- such as interviews, census data and documents- to "validate" findings. These methods however carry the same domain assumptions, including the assumption that there is a "fixed point" or "object" that can be triangulated. But in postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we do not triangulate, we crystallize. We recognize that there are far more than three sides from which to see the world. (Richardson 2003:517)

In order to increase further the perspectives available to me, such as participants' changing viewpoints as they evolve over time, or insights into the particularities of their engagement with the art form, a longer-term study would be necessary.

As regards validity of interpretation, the findings of my research are convergent with those of recent studies in many of its key themes. The section on impacts shows similarities to patterns in larger research projects on the impact of involvement in arts projects, although I have concentrated specifically on drama approaches. I aim to treat data comprehensively. All tapes were listened to several times, and personally transcribed by me (in very slow two-fingered typing), which, I believe, enabled me to become very familiar with the data in its completeness and in its nuances. I discuss themes which are supported by most of my data, and subsequently address any divergent cases.

It is my position that respondent validation contributes to the validity of the findings. In line with my theoretical position, it is my view that any account representing the views of a group must privilege their own validation. Where causal links have been suggested, for example in the discussion of personal and social outcomes of involvement in drama processes, it is my intention to rely on respondents' constructions of the situation; to categorise these in terms of themes suggested by research participants' own words, and to ask them, where feasible, to review my written analysis. The major shortcoming of this would be the fact that some of the research participants would either lack interest in the analysis, or not have the required literacy skills to read it.

3: RESEARCH DESIGN: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

(i) Preliminary Research: Local Information

As no comprehensive listing existed of groups or individuals using applied drama in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal; my first task was to create one, based on information supplied by key informants, knowledgeable in the area of work and/or the geographical region.

At this stage of my research, I was contacted by Anne O'Connor, Projects Officer at the Sligo County Council Arts Office and Geraldine Delorey, Health Promotion Department, North Western Health Board, both members of the North West Forum on Arts in Health. The Forum was interested at that time in collecting information on all arts forms practiced in Health Care contexts in the region. As to do otherwise would result in an attempt to collect very similar information from the same set of respondents at the same time, we agreed to collaborate. The knowledge and contacts brought by Anne and Geraldine to the process proved very helpful in accomplishing a comprehensive survey of the field.

As a means of identifying the survey field for the 'community' section of the survey, a Snowball sampling-type approach was chosen., No inclusive database of practitioners/ projects utilizing applied drama in Sligo/ Leitrim/ Donegal existed. Contact details of suggested respondents were obtained by telephone, e-mail and personal contact with a number of key informants, or 'gatekeepers' who were known to me. These people were asked to recommend others knowledgeable in the subject area in this region. Additional informants were consulted until saturation point; that is, when no significant new information could be provided by new informants.

Key informants are listed below:

Sligo

Ann O'Connor, Projects Officer, Co. Sligo Arts Office

Anna Spearman, Arts Development Officer, Sligo LEADER Partnership

Gerri Bruce, Arts Development Officer, Sligo LEADER Partnership

Leitrim

Terre Duffy, Arts Officer, Co. Leitrim Arts Office

Kate McCarthy, Womens Development Worker, Leitrim LEADER Partnership

Anna Legge, The Glens Centre, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim

Martin Reading, Leitrim Arts Newsletter

Donegal

Traolach O Fionan, Arts Officer, Co Donegal Arts Office

Angela Holohan, Information Officer, Donegal Community Workers' Co-op

Maura Logue, Wavelengths, Atlantic View CDP, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Sara Anderson, Dramatherapist, Co. Donegal

Mark McCollum, Balor Theatre, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal

Other

Deirdre Healy, CREATE

James King, University of Ulster, Magee College, Derry

Tara Jenkins, Project Co-ordinator, Smashing Times Theatre Company, Dublin

Sandy Holland, Community Connections, Blacklion, Co. Cavan

YouCAN Youth Culture Arts Network, Cork

Margo Kenny, National Youth Arts Programme

Kate Soudant, Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists

Macra na Feirme website

Contacts with this group resulted in a list of **69 groups/ individual practitioners who were to receive the 'Community' questionnaire.**

In the case of the 'Healthcare' section of the survey, I attempted to identify similar key informants within the North Western Health Board (Now HSE Northwest) through phonecalls and e-mails to (a) Regional Managers of the various departments and (b) Managers of Centres known to be using arts activities. Geraldine Delorey supplied contact names of the latter group.

From these initial communications, it emerged that, due to the size and dispersal of the organisation, information on the arts in NWHB locations was not centralised, and was available only for localised pockets from a small number of Centre Managers. I therefore decided to send the questionnaire to all NWHB centres, and obtained listings of service units from the offices of the following Managers:

Aisling Gillen, Childrens Services

Maria McInnis, Community, Family and Prevention Services

John Hayes, Mental Health Services

Mary Talbot, Learning Disabilities, Sligo/Leitrim

Dermot Monaghan, Learning Disabilities, Sligo/ Leitrim/Donegal.

The listings included details of units that are purely residential in nature, ie not providing recreational or ancillary services, and these were excluded from the survey database. Some groupings of daycentres share a manager; in these cases managers were sent one questionnaire form. In the course of my contacts with the offices of regional managers, I was also informed of individual social workers attached to hospitals, health centres etc; who were known to be interested in therapeutic uses of drama. Questionnaires were sent directly to these workers.

This resulted in a list of 82 respondents.

In addition to this, Geraldine Delorey undertook to post questionnaire forms to an additional 126 respondents, comprising all Day and Community Hospitals, all daycentres for older people, and all Active Age Clubs in the region (See Appendix

D). 'Health' section forms were to be returned to Geraldine Delorey's office in Ballyshannon.

208 Centres were to receive the Healthcare questionnaire.

(See Appendices C and D for mailing lists)

(ii) Postal Survey: Establishing Details of Centres/ Practitioners using Drama in Community and Healthcare settings in the Northwest

The purpose of the postal survey was to determine which drama projects current in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal were defined by their organizers as having outcomes additional to the aesthetic or the recreational- combining entertainment and efficacy- in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal; and where drama had been used in this way in the last five years. I also wished to answer some basic questions on the nature of the work: What did organisers see as the objectives? Who were the participants? How were projects funded? How did practitioners perceive the work, and what did they see as the barriers to its development?

The survey questionnaire was drafted with reference to indicators drawn from the works of Williams (1997), Matarrasso (1997), Hughes & Wilson et al (2003), Keating (2003), and informed by the literature review. A mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions was designed to address the objectives of the survey. Space was also allowed for general comments. The information obtained by the survey would begin to outline the map of the subject area spatially and descriptively; providing a sampling frame which would form the basis for some qualitative investigation.

Following meetings with Anne O'Connor and Geraldine Delorey, a format for the 'Health' section of the survey was agreed upon. This differed from the 'Community' questionnaire only in that respondents were asked to name which artform(s) their

group employed, rather than answering questions on applied drama only. Only those selecting drama as their chosen artform would be of interest to my research, while the North West Arts and Health Forum would be interested in all returns.

The draft questionnaire forms were piloted by four people and slightly amended (See Appendix B). Questionnaires for both survey sections were posted in mid December, 2003, with self-addressed envelopes enclosed, in an effort to ensure maximum returns. In mid January 2004, I began to follow up unreturned 'Community' section survey forms with phonecalls and e-mails where possible. Three forms were filled over the phone, and in one case the relevant information was e-mailed to me. In February, I mailed new forms to 8 of the addresses. By March 1st, 37 forms, 53.6 % of the total had been returned.

For the 'Community' section, 23 of these responses have been analysed in terms of current relevant projects.

A further 6 detailed relevant drama projects in the last five years.

The remainder are accounted for by:

- (i) Duplication of information, for example where an individual practitioner detailed freelance work on a project which was also described by a representative of a centre. In these cases, I have attributed the project to the organising centre.
- (ii) Respondents who indicated that their activities did not fall within the remit of the study.

There were prompt returns of 'Health' section survey forms from the outset. Telephone follow-ups were also carried out by Geraldine Delorey's office. The eventual returns from this section of the survey were, however, rather low. By March 1st 2004, 76 forms had been received, 36.89 % of the total sent. Of these, most contained information on visual arts practice. Only 10 respondents from

individual centres reported using drama, although there were also 2 general reports of drama activities by NWHB officials.

It can only be concluded that there is, in fact, a very low rate of use of drama practices in these settings, some of their characteristics perhaps rendering them inappropriate to particular patients' needs. It must also be remembered that for this section, the entire population was surveyed, in contrast to the specially selected sample of the 'Community' section.

I examined all returns and copied the relevant completed questionnaires, ie those referring to applied drama activities.⁸ The entire 'health' section of the survey is of interest to Geraldine Delorey and the Northwest Arts and Health Forum, and may be used by them for the purposes of identifying the nature and provision of arts in health in the Northwest, and for planning future policy/ services.

For the Healthcare section of the survey, 10 centres using drama approaches, i.e. 10 current projects, were analysed.

(iii) Analysis

On examining the responses, I became aware of a limitation of the survey form. In the case of organisations having several drama-based projects, the form allowed inadequate space for details. It was therefore necessary to obtain further information by phone. There was also a difficulty in that not all respondents followed the instruction to numerically indicate their objectives in order of importance, so that my analysis had to rely on the forms completed as requested.

Data from survey responses was coded using SPSS software, yielding descriptive statistics relating to uses of drama (See Appendix H).

⁸ Although I have not included them, I did note with interest the use of techniques such as Jungian Sand Play and Gestalt therapies by social workers, as these practices share some commonalities with drama approaches.

4: RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Introduction

In the next stage of the research, I sought to transform the two-dimensional map into one with more depth and substance, with the addition of interviews. I hoped that conversations in focus groups and unstructured interviews would convey some of the richness of lived experience of drama in community and healthcare contexts. My readings would be from a number of different sightlines or perspectives, to include those of participants, facilitators and support organizations.

Drawing on what I had learned in the earlier stages of the research (Literature review and postal survey), I formulated the areas of concern for more in-depth exploration, to include:

What are the features of some of the drama projects in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest? What are their commonalities and what are their differences? What strategic partnerships exist? How do participants and practitioners experience these processes? What do participants and practitioners see as the aims of the work and the outcomes? What are the shortcomings/problems encountered? What is the future? What indicators for best practice emerge?

(i) Sampling for Interview Stage

The sampling frame consisted of all 33 current relevant projects as described by survey respondents; that is, all projects using drama that were defined by the organizers to have an integral orientation towards developmental objectives - in written description and by selecting any of the following on the questionnaire: 'community development', 'confidence-building', 'awareness-raising', 'social inclusion', 'personal development', 'therapy', 'catalyst for social/political action', 'enhance well-being'.

Respondents who identified the objectives of their activities *solely* in terms of ‘recreation/pastime’, ‘enjoyment’ ‘quality work’, ‘learning drama skills’ and ‘social outlet’ were excluded from the study, although I acknowledge that drama even in these contexts may have additional consequences for participants.

I chose non-probability sampling methods, as my objective is to reflect a number of aspects of the work in a qualitative manner. Dimensional Sampling, a type of Quota Sampling, was used to select projects for further qualitative study, in order to reflect the multi-dimensionality of the field in as far as possible within the time and resource constraints of this research.

Drawing on the results of the survey, I selected applied drama projects on the basis of:

- At least one project having participants from each of the following backgrounds selected from survey results; Women, Young people, Adults who have learning disabilities, People who have physical disabilities, Older people.
- At least one project from each of the three counties, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal
- At least one project from each of the project types: Community Development, Personal Development, Dramatherapy and Theatre Workshop
- At least one project conducted by an organization whose main focus is drama work, and at least one example of a project where drama is integrated in other programme activities
- Examples of both long-term and short-term projects

I then used Purposive Sampling methods to select a group of participants and a practitioner from each of the projects.

The following were selected on the basis of the criteria above:

Balor Developmental Community Arts Group, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal

Hit and Myth Verbal Arts, Co. Leitrim

Footsteps Project, Blue Raincoat Theatre Co; The Factory, Sligo

Iona Project, Cloonamahon Centre, Collooney, Co. Sligo

Co Sligo Youth Theatre, Lower Quay St; Sligo

Sligo Youthreach, Sligo town

Twilight Zone Active Age Club, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Women as Peacebuilders Project, Wavelength Community Development,

Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Training for Success Project, IT, Sligo

MS Tactics, NW Region, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

(ii) Access to Research Participants

In practice, it did not prove possible to arrange meetings with Hit and Myth, the only Leitrim project selected; and this must be acknowledged as a weakness of the qualitative section of this study.

Where practicable, I spoke with a facilitator and a group of participants for each project. Programme organisers were contacted, and acted as intermediaries in obtaining group members' consent to participate, and to arrange meetings. Where groups consisted of young people aged under eighteen, it was decided that the organizer should remain in the room or immediate vicinity during the course of the focus group. Although focus groups did not take place with persons who have learning disabilities, parental consent was given for the research meetings to occur.

In most cases, the focus group consisted of a group which was already in existence and working together on a drama project. In one case (Wavelength) the co-ordinator agreed to reconvene members of a project that had finished between the dates of the survey and the focus group/ interview research. In many ways, the existence of these groups was significant in that members were familiar with each other, and accustomed to group discussion. I was aware, however, that group norms or

conventions might have formed over time which could make dissent or discussion of certain areas difficult. For this reason, I felt it was important to include a section for private reflection and written comments at the end of the focus group session.

In one case (Footsteps), the time of my research coincided with a very busy rehearsal period, and a focus group of participants could not be timetabled. I did, however, participate in a project workshop, which allowed me to familiarise myself with the style and structure of the project, to observe practitioners and participants at work, and to speak briefly with some of the participants on their feelings about the project. I was also able to conduct a focus group with a group of parents of Footsteps participants, who had helped to initiate the project; and who had observed their sons' and daughters' responses to the project as it progressed.

In the case of the Iona project group, participants' verbal communication skills were not of the level required to enable participation in this type of consultation. I attempted to compensate for this by interviewing, in addition to the principal facilitator, a care worker who had assisted in the dramatherapy process, and who was very familiar with the participants, having also worked with them on a long-term basis.

Where available, I also consulted documentary sources (Iona project, Sligo Youth Theatre, Balor Developmental Community Arts)

I attended drama presentations by Footsteps, MSTACTICS and Twilight Zone.

In addition to the interviews and focus groups with practitioners and participants, I consulted the following people for a structural perspective:

Mary McAuliffe, Arts Officer, Sligo County Council

Terre Duffy, Public Arts Officer, Donegal County Council (also ex- Arts officer, Leitrim Co. Council, until 2004)

Traolach O Fionan, Arts Officer, Donegal Co Council

Janet Gaynor, Health Promotion Unit, North Western Health Board

(iii) Ethical Dimensions

Qualitative research seeks to privilege the narratives of research participants regarding their experiences. Following guidelines for ethical practice from participatory and feminist research approaches, I designed the research as a consultative process, with regard to participants' personal dignity and the possible consequences of the process for them.

Recognising possible power implications in the role of 'Researcher', I attempted to address this throughout with an attitude of equality and respect, acknowledging the unique perspective of local experts. I endeavoured to de-mystify the research process, consulting participants at each stage and being transparent in my actions. In the case of focus groups and interviews, I undertook to do the following to maximize participant control of processes involving their information:

- Fully inform focus group/Interviewee, verbally and in writing, of the purpose of the research and what forms it will appear in.
- Inform of right to withdraw.
- Conduct sessions with sensitivity and respect. Check that people are comfortable with audio recording. Cease recording on request.
- Arrange a time and venue that is suitable for participants.
- Assure focus groups that every effort will be made to ensure that persons quoted in the research are not identifiable.
- Assure all interviewees that minidisks will be kept securely, will be accessed only by the researcher, and will not be used for any other purpose.
- Explain that I will be attempting to fairly analyse and synthesise the points made into a written thesis, to give an account of the main themes, comments and opinions raised in these sessions. Relevant sections of the research will be presented to groups and interviewees (where possible) before the research is finalised. Comments will be noted and acknowledged, and revisions made if possible.

(See Appendix F: Information sheet for Focus Groups)

(iv) Focus Groups and Interviews

The purpose of my contact with practitioners and participants in drama projects was to explore their perspectives on involvement in drama activities. I was interested in the meanings they attributed to it, what they saw as its objectives and the outcomes for them personally, and whether they identified any outcomes of broader social or political significance.

Initial contacts included attendance at a rehearsal/ workshop and at performances.

I then aimed to create opportunities for dialogue between myself, the researcher, and the participants and practitioners. These were designed as enjoyable reflective encounters which recognised the expertise of the 'researched' on the topic of their own experiences and perceptions; while acknowledging the theoretical positions and the aspirations of the various drama approaches. Issues of importance were identified by focus groups and interviewees, which helped me to explore my areas of interest.

I chose focus groups to work with drama participants because they seemed to offer the best possibility of accessing a range of multiple views and allowing for rich description of the issues of greatest importance to those involved. I planned a one-hour session that would invite participants to identify and discuss key themes with reference to their experiences of applied drama processes, positive or negative impacts upon them personally, and any wider impacts they perceived (See Appendix G: Focus Group Format). My design for the focus group was semi-structured, with open-ended questions for discussion and individual reflection. According to Basch,

Focus group interviews are particularly well-suited to collecting in-depth qualitative data about individuals' definitions of problems, opinions and feelings, and meanings associated with various phenomena (1987:434)

From my experience of working with groups, I have found that the group setting is a valuable way of stimulating rich conversations, its interactions tending to spark new ideas and themes. Disadvantages of the group discussion include the possibility that some participants may feel pressurized to agree with dominant views, and that it

limits the time available to each participant (see Darlington & Scott, 2002). I attempted to address these limitations by giving time to a personal mapping exercise within the focus group. It was also important to effectively moderate the group, avoiding the domination by one person or sub-group, and allowing opportunities for inclusion of quieter members.

Semi-structured Interviews were used with practitioners and with other stakeholders (See Appendix E); and similar efforts were made to explain the research aims and process. An advantage of semi-structured interviewing lies in the fact that the form seems similar to that of everyday conversation- indeed, Silverman (1993) contends that we have become “an interview society”. Well-conducted interviews may seem familiar to interviewees, thus putting them at ease, and misunderstandings can be immediately clarified. The researcher can also be sensitive to non-verbal signals. Semi-structured interviewing addresses some of the issues of power implicit in the research process, in that it allows for a fuller and fairer account of the interviewees’ perspectives. By using open-ended questions and formulating some questions in the course of the interview from categories arising from the interviewee, she/he is afforded space in which to give an account of her/his immediate opinions, experiences interpretations and feelings on the topic- meaningful properties in the approach I have chosen. Skilful facilitation by the interviewer can enable the interviewee to expand upon or clarify certain points.

I tried to use a flexible interviewing style, taking account of the particular dynamics of each interview situation, but geared to covering particular topics. I treated the interviews as social interactions wherein meaning is jointly generated and negotiated by interviewer and interviewee, what Fontana and Frey (2003:91) call “interview as negotiated accomplishment”.

Both parties to the interview are necessarily and ineluctably active. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge- treasuries of information awaiting excavation, so to speak- as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers.(Holstein & Gubrium, 1997:114)

Like Miller and Glassner (2003:138), I would resist the “dualistic imperative” to regard interviews as either representing underlying facts or as being hopelessly compromised by problems of self-presentation, lack of commitment, status or context (see Denzin,1981).

In conducting interviews and focus groups and in their analysis, I kept in mind themes suggested by Matarasso (1997) , Matarasso & Chell (1998), Hughes & Wilson with peer researchers (2003), Williams (1997), HAD (2000) and Keating (2002), but my main aim was to accurately reflect the issues identified by the group members themselves. I consider the indicators arising from the narratives of individuals and groups themselves as valid expressions of their experiences.

(v) Analysis

Most group and individual interviews were transcribed from minidisc. In some cases, interviewees were uncomfortable with audio recording, and I relied on written notes at the time of interview. I also drew on focus group members’ written reflections, my participation in one workshop, observation of performances and documentary sources (detailed in the relevant sections).

Qualitative analysis was ongoing throughout the consultation process, with patterns and themes arising from interview data and the literature review. Transcriptions were coded as a means of identifying significant themes, using NVivo software (See Appendix I). Thematic organization was accomplished manually; with patterns and interpretations arising from this ordering. I created a qualitative analysis including a structural profile, project profiles, an overview of contexts, aims and practices, personal and social impacts, and suggestions for best practice. Accurate representation of the voices of research participants was a central concern, so that quotes were used throughout.

My interpretations were verified by reviewing transcripts for errors or omissions; and by asking research participants to review the analysis. Interviewees, and, where feasible, focus group participants, were sent a draft copy in early 2005 for comment. In practice, there was very little feedback, with only three out of a possible eight groups responding. This was disappointing given that a central ambition of my research methodology was to enable a dialogical process. This lack of response from participants can perhaps be partially explained by the fact that they are busy with the concerns of their projects and do not find this research directly relevant. In this case, research with a greater emphasis on action-based outcomes (a form of real reciprocity) might be more successful in promoting dialogue. Greater effort on my part, or a longer time-frame might also have been useful in stimulating participant feedback.

Conclusion

In the foregoing account of the research perspective, methodology and design used, I have described the framework that supports this study. The following sections will provide an account of the interpretations and analysis arising from the quantitative and qualitative research.

Chapter IV: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1: FINDINGS OF POSTAL SURVEY

(i) Summary of Survey Responses

The survey responses revealed that drama praxis in community and healthcare settings follows a huge range of patterns in the Northwest area. Various approaches are used, ranging from Community Drama to Dramatherapy. Of the 33 survey respondents analysed here, ten organizations/ individuals have this work as their primary focus. In the case of organizations, this tends to indicate the presence of an administrative structure and concomitant funding and partnerships. For the majority of groups however, drama-based work was on a more piecemeal or ad-hoc basis. Seventeen other respondents regularly integrate drama into aspects of their work, while for still others drama enters into work on short-term basis. There is diversity, too, in the participants in projects; including children, young people, women, users of mental health services, people with learning disabilities, older people, and the wider community.

The picture provided by this survey is necessarily incomplete, as some groups/individuals contacted and currently using drama in community and healthcare contexts chose not to participate in the research process. In at least one of my follow-up calls, a general misgiving about research and the uses of information was mentioned as a reason for non-response.

I have grouped the respondents into four categories according to the *primary* focus of their current work, as identified by them on the survey form. In many cases, such categorization does not adequately reflect the multiple objectives of the project processes, and is offered merely as a guide at this stage. I hope that the qualitative stage of my research will give more of a sense of the richness and diversity

contained within projects. The groupings I have used follow loosely the models developed by Drohan (1996). They are Community Drama/ Community Arts, Personal Development, Dramatherapy and Theatre Workshop.

The **Community Drama** category includes groups with a clearly- defined community development ethos and socio-political aspirations, as well as those engaged in issue-based or awareness-raising work.

Groups describing their focus as **Personal Development** include: those using drama alongside other methods as part of personal development modules, those who see personal development as an outcome of participation in drama activities, and those for whom personal development is an integral part of ongoing drama processes and theatre-making; for example, dedicated Youth Theatre groups.

Groups described here as **Theatre Workshop** focus their attention on providing opportunities for participation in high quality theatre-making, but not without attention to process and its potential personal and social benefits.

Those listed in the **Dramatherapy** grouping have explicitly referred to the therapeutic nature of their work.

I also indicate below the number of projects in which each of the 33 centres/individual practitioners is *currently* engaged, (in brackets, March 2004), showing a total of over 50 projects.. This enumerative device conceals the fact that some projects are actually ongoing and long-term, rather than being simply 'current'.

Community Drama

Wavelength, Tírugh Resource Centre, The Mall, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal (4)
Forum Theatre, Issue-based drama, Schools drama work

MS Tactics, MS Society of Ireland NW Region, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Awareness-raising drama on Multiple Sclerosis and Disability issues

Maugherow Project, S.N. Padraig Naofa, Ballinfull, Co. Sligo
Intergenerational project

Balor Developmental Community Arts, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal (10)
Large number of projects with children, young people, community groups; using process-based drama, devising, issue-based work and Forum Theatre

Sonas Theatre Co. Ltd, Castle St; Sligo
Issue-based drama toured to schools

Twilight Zone Active Age Group, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal
'Age Rage', issue-based drama on concerns affecting older people, has toured widely.

Tir Boghaine Teo; Kilcar, Co. Donegal
Annual children's projects, including focus on primary to secondary school transition

Atlantic View CDP, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal (3)
Issue-based community drama

Second Chance Education Project for Women, Co. Donegal (2)
Issue-based drama in community education. Forum theatre in community settings.

Personal Development

Youthreach, Lifford, Co. Donegal
Drama integrated in personal development modules

Youthreach, Sligo
Issue-based drama and video work linked with S.P.H.E and C.S.P.E

Raphoe Youth & Community Project, Co. Donegal
Young girls group perform poems by women from Donegal Domestic Violence Centre

Daybreak Programme, Donegal Youth Service, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Drama integrated in personal development modules for early school-leavers

Youthreach, Gortahork, Co. Donegal

'Soap opera' drama as part of personal development module

County Sligo Youth Theatre

Dedicated youth theatre project

Hit and Myth, Keshcarrigan, Co. Leitrim (4)

Oral skills development in schools, including drama

Training for Success, IT Sligo, Ballinode, Co. Sligo

Drama as part of capacity-building programme for students who have epilepsy

National Training and Development Institute, Sligo

Courses of 10 3-hr sessions focused on confidence-building

Sligo Macra na Feirme

Participation in Macra drama events

Youth Theatre, Glens Centre, Co. Leitrim

Dedicated Youth theatre

Eileen O'Toole, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim

Freelance work with children's and special needs projects

Cashel na Cor Resource Centre, Buncrana, Co. Donegal

Drama for personal development (adults who have learning disabilities) practiced by staff, social workers and VEC trainers

Raheen Day Centre, Sligo

Role-play activities with clients who have learning disabilities, conducted by staff

Cleary Centre, Donegal Town

10-week modules of drama for personal development

St Columba's Hospital, Sligo

6-week drama modules for users of mental health services

Children's Services, NWHB, Hazelwood Drive, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Attended workshops at An Grianan

James Connolly Hospital & Attendant Services, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal

7-week advocacy workshops, including role-play. Social worker regularly uses drama with patients with profound disabilities. Forthcoming project in conjunction with Magee University to investigate possibilities of work with this client group.

Gallagher House, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo

Weekly drama workshops for adults with learning disabilities, with drama facilitator

Woodhill Resource Centre, Ardara, Co. Donegal

Staff work with clients, who have learning disabilities, on drama productions staged in community

Theatre Workshop

Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, Lower Quay St, Sligo

'Footsteps' Project in association with Sligo Downs Syndrome Association. Annual 'Cairde' Festival

Dramatherapy

Sara Anderson, Dramatherapist, Co. Donegal

Work with Men's Group, Adults with learning disabilities, Boys who have Aspergers' Syndrome, Birth children in foster families

Iona Project, Cloonamahon Centre, Collooney Co. Sligo

Educational project with young adults who have learning disabilities, including dramatherapy with Bernardine McManus, Dramatherapist.

Iona Project Cregg House, Co. Sligo

Educational project as above, including therapeutically- focused drama work with Bernadette Meehan.

In addition, information on past projects was provided by:

Sligo Family Centre, The Mall, Sligo

Project in 2000 in association with Ballytivnan Training Centre for people with learning disabilities; included drama workshops

Carmel McGill

Youth theatre director, Co. Donegal

Irish Wheelchair Association, Cartron Village, Sligo

Role- play and Performance

Marie Hannigan, Freelance writer/facilitator, Co. Donegal

Issue-based drama

Maura Logue, Freelance drama work, Co. Donegal

Issue-based drama

Ann McGowan, Freelance drama work, Co. Donegal

Issue-based drama

(ii) Project Locations

Of the 33 centres/practitioners included in this study, 13 were based in Sligo, and 17 were based in Donegal. Only 3 were based in Leitrim (9.1%), a somewhat surprising finding in light of the vibrant arts scene in that county. This may be partially explained by the fact that the Co Leitrim Arts Plan for 2002-2005 (Leitrim County Council, 2002) has visual arts, music and literature as its primary focus.

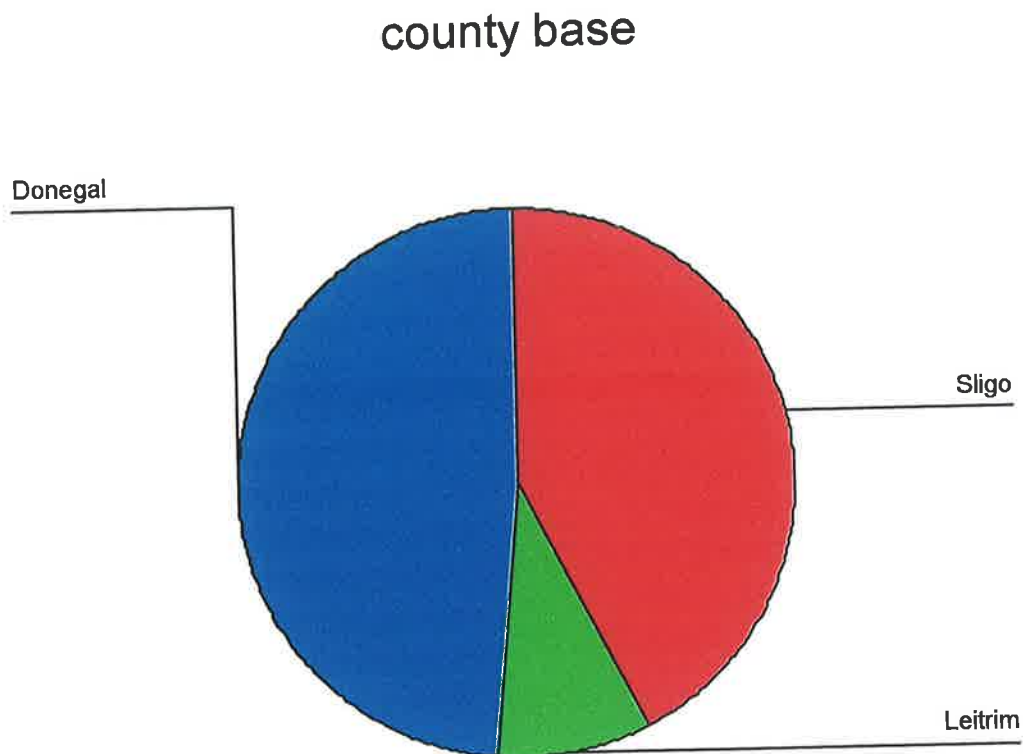


Fig 5: Survey respondents by county

(iii) Project Category

The majority of projects (60.6%) were identified as fitting the Personal Development category, as broadly defined above. 27.3% identified as Community Development in orientation. 9.1%, or three projects were in the Dramatherapy Category by virtue of their objectives, while just one of the projects studied was identified as fitting most closely to the Theatre Workshop model.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Community Development	9	27.3	27.3	27.3
Personal Development	20	60.6	60.6	87.9
Theatre Workshop	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
Dramatherapy	3	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	33	100.0	100.0	

project objectives

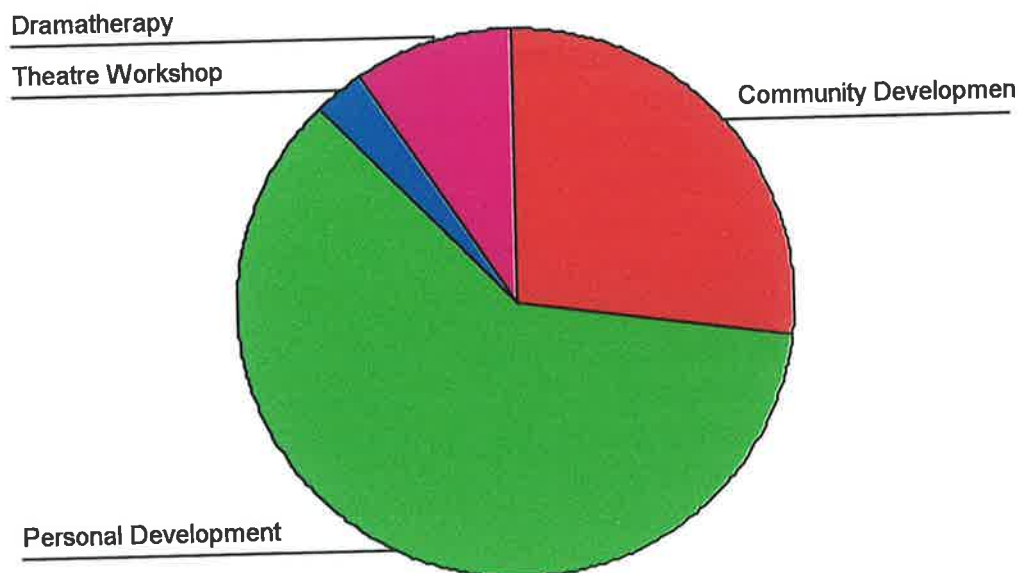


Fig 6: Survey respondents' project category types

(iv) Participant Background

Participants in the projects examined came from a wide range of backgrounds. In general, drama projects were geared to the needs and interests of particular groups or communities. The participant profile shows that, in the North West of Ireland, young people are the grouping most likely to be involved in the types of drama activities under investigation in this study (24.2% or eight projects); closely followed by adults with learning disabilities, who are the participants in 21.2% or seven projects. Women's groups comprise five of the projects, with a further four aimed at children with learning disabilities. Other groups target adults who have a physical disability, users of mental health services and children (each two projects) and projects focusing on older people, the farming community and intergenerational concerns are each represented once.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
women	5	15.2	15.2	15.2
youth	8	24.2	24.2	39.4
adults with learning disabilities	7	21.2	21.2	60.6
children with learning disabilities	4	12.1	12.1	72.7
children	2	6.1	6.1	78.8
people with physical disability	2	6.1	6.1	84.8
users of mental health services	2	6.1	6.1	90.9
intergenerational	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
farming community	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
older people	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	100.0	

participants

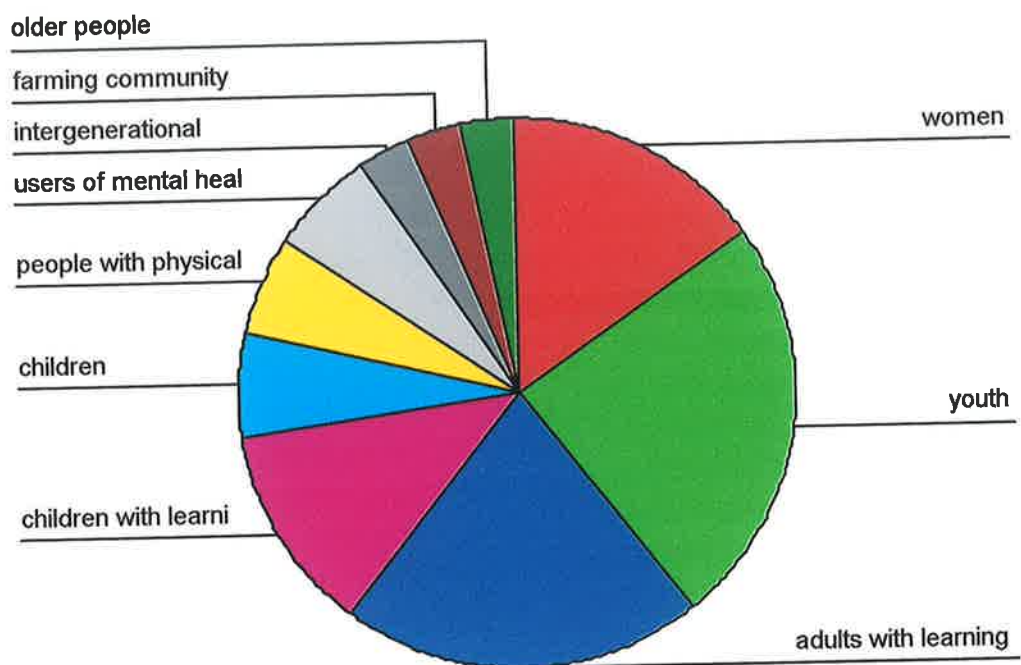


Fig 7: Participant backgrounds

(v) Participant Numbers

Half of the projects surveyed had between ten and thirty participants. 18.8%, or six projects, had fifty to one hundred participants; while 12.5% had thirty to fifty participants. Three projects had over one hundred participants, while three projects had ten or less.

number of participants		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5-10	3	9.1	9.4	9.4
	10-30	16	48.5	50.0	59.4
	30-50	4	12.1	12.5	71.9
	50-100	6	18.2	18.8	90.6
	100+	3	9.1	9.4	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

number of participants

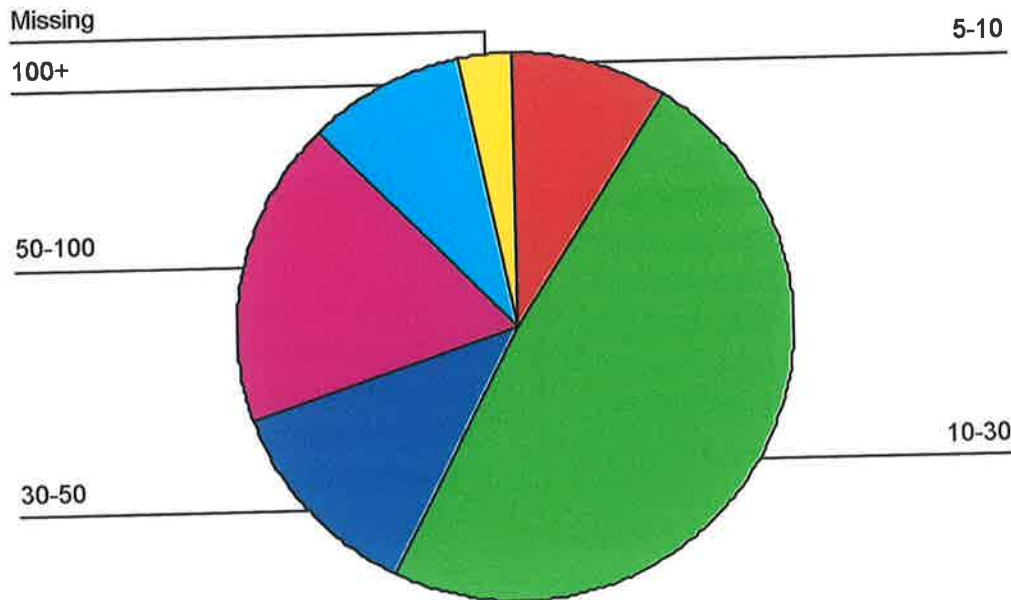


Fig 8: Numbers of participants in projects

(vi) Organising and Facilitating Projects

In most cases, projects were organised in collaboration between staff members of the sponsoring organisation and external practitioners. A large percentage was also organised solely by staff- this signifies cases of dedicated drama organisations.

Facilitation of drama projects was carried out by staff with external practitioners in 39.4% of cases, by staff alone in 30.3% of cases and by an external artist alone in 24.2% of projects.

Where facilitation was shared between staff and external artists, this generally meant sessional employment of a drama practitioner to work alongside community or healthcare professionals; although some dedicated drama groups also chose to work with occasional guest facilitators. Where facilitation was conducted by staff only, this was mainly in situations where drama was the main focus of the host organisation, with specialized staff employed. In only one situation, nursing staff took on the task of employing drama methods without professional training in that area, guided by their personal experiences of drama and role-play.

who organised		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	staff	11	33.3	33.3	33.3
	other	2	6.1	6.1	39.4
	external artist	2	6.1	6.1	45.5
	staff & others	3	9.1	9.1	54.5
	staff & external artist	15	45.5	45.5	100.0
	artist	33	100.0	100.0	
Total					

who organised

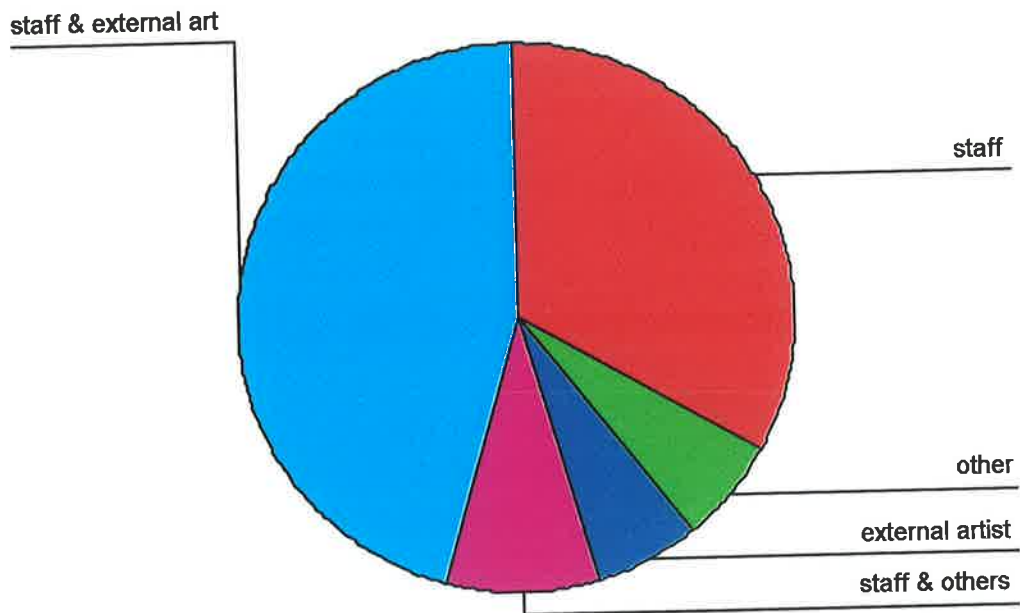


Fig 9: Project Organisers

who facilitates		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	staff	10	30.3	30.3	30.3
	other	1	3.0	3.0	33.3
	external artist	8	24.2	24.2	57.6
	staff & others	1	3.0	3.0	60.6
	staff & external artist	13	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

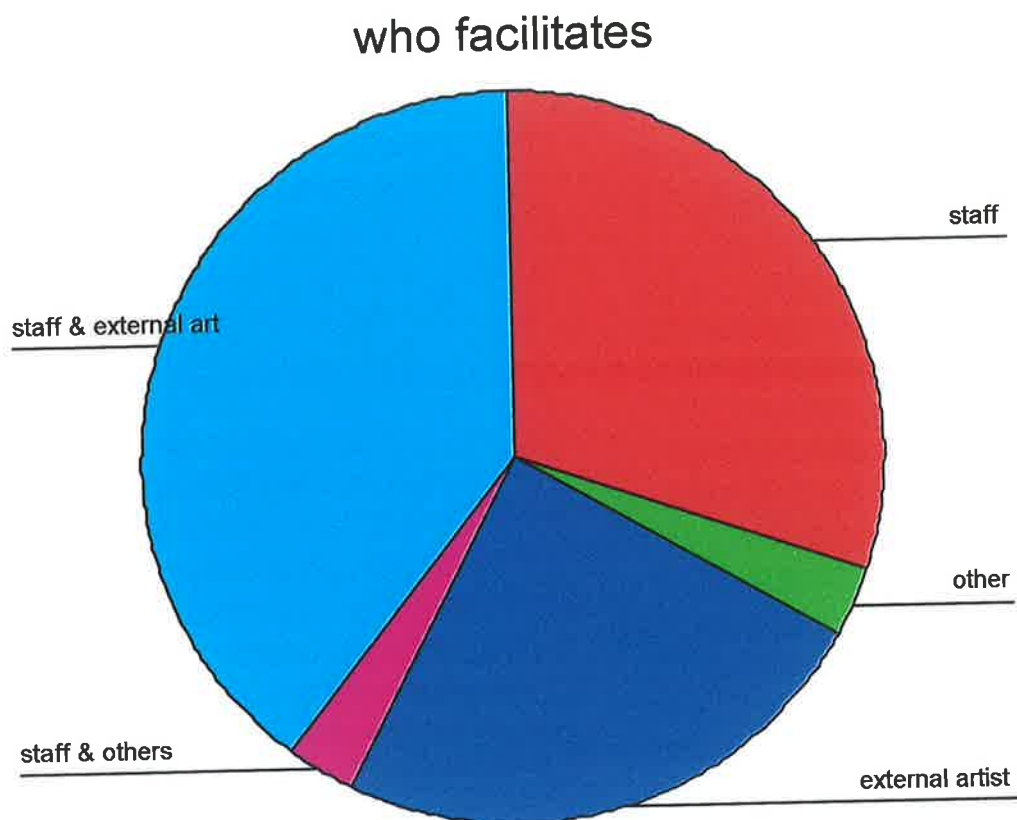


Fig10: Project Facilitators

(vii) Primary Objectives

Of those who gave a numerically-ordered response to the question on the objectives of their drama work, first choices were analysed. 50% considered the primary focus to be on personal development. 21.4% saw their main objective as community development, while 10.7% considered therapy to be their focus. Confidence – building, social outlet, awareness-raising, social inclusion and learning drama skills were each selected as number one by 3.6% of those respondents who made a numerical selection.

primary objective		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	community development	6	18.2	21.4	21.4
	confidence-building	1	3.0	3.6	25.0
	social outlet	1	3.0	3.6	28.6
	awareness-raising	1	3.0	3.6	32.1
	social inclusion	1	3.0	3.6	35.7
	learning drama skills	1	3.0	3.6	39.3
	personal development	14	42.4	50.0	89.3
	therapy	3	9.1	10.7	100.0
	Total	28	84.8	100.0	
Missing	System	5	15.2		
Total		33	100.0		

primary objective

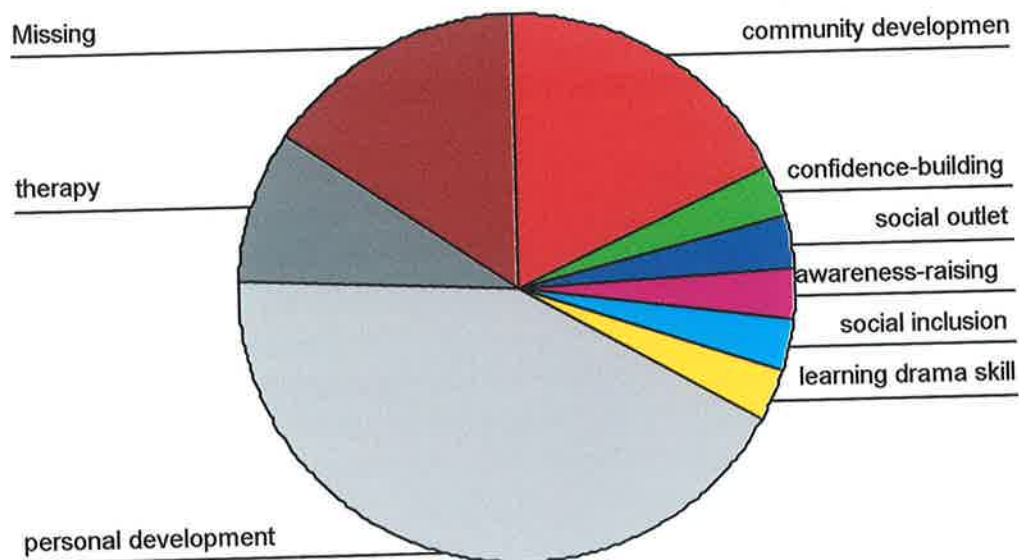


Fig 11: Primary objectives of projects

(viii) Main Funding Sources

Interestingly, although there were a low number of responses from HSE-run centres utilizing drama approaches, the Northwestern Health Board was named as major funder by 32.3% of those who responded to the question. Funding from Area Development Management/ Combat Poverty Association and The Peace and Reconciliation Fund accounted for 22.6% of projects; with the Vocational Education Committee funding 16.1% and the Arts Council funding 12.9%. The Department of Education, FAS, Sligo County Council and charitable organizations were each identified as main funder of one project each, while one project stated that it operates without funding.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ADM/CPA/ Peace & Reconciliation	7	21.2	22.6	22.6
Dept of Education	1	3.0	3.2	25.8
FAS	1	3.0	3.2	29.0
Arts Co.	4	12.1	12.9	41.9
County Council	1	3.0	3.2	45.2
VEC	5	15.2	16.1	61.3
NWHB	10	30.3	32.3	93.5
Charitable organisations	1	3.0	3.2	96.8
No funding	1	3.0	3.2	100.0
Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing System	2	6.1		
Total	33	100.0		

main funding sources

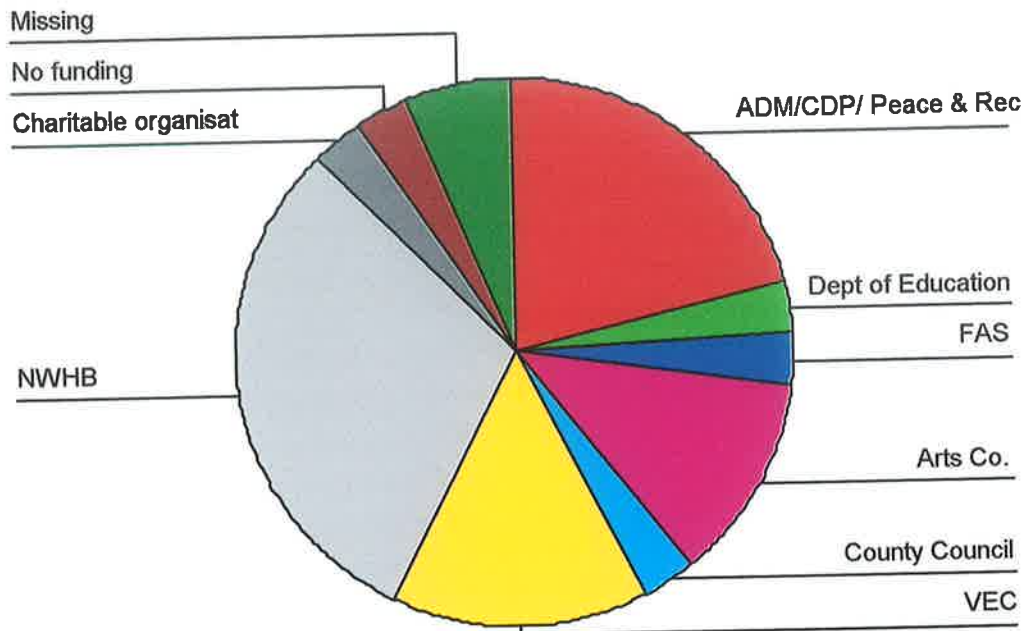


Fig 12: Main funding sources

(ix) Future Plans and Difficulties Anticipated

About half of the respondents noted future plans which differed in focus from their current work. These included; Theatre in Education, Backstage workshops, Dance, Film and Video, Training youth workers, Young men's issues, Mental Health issues, Broaden target group, More work with developmentally disabled.

Most of those who responded to the question on anticipated barriers saw Funding as a major concern. Two regarded lack of participant confidence as presenting difficulties. Mentioned once each were Confidentiality concerns, Wide area covered, Time, Physical accessibility, Staff availability, Staff skills and Lack of public understanding regarding process-based arts work.

(x) Comments

General comments were invited. Statements from community organisations reflected the benefits and challenges of applied drama processes:

The earlier children are exposed to drama the better. The complex relationship between the world of the imagination and the real world cannot be overstated.

The work is sensitive and demands that trust and humour are worked into the process. It always depends on the confidence and vitality of the facilitators. It is the dynamic created by the dramatist that makes or breaks the process.

The use of drama as a process... achieves much more than people realize, e.g. personal development, conflict resolution, peace-building, accepting diversity.....can have a profound positive effect on the individual.

....difficulties with participation in drama....

We have seen great benefits in raising awareness.

(This) has given many members a new lease of life and we are doing things in our senior years that we thought we could never do- it's never too late to start enjoying life and to learn new activities.

A source from the Northwestern Health Board commented:

Drama is used in a number of adult day and residential services for people with learning disability. Drama teachers are employed on a sessional basis....Most often it is the nursing and care staff who carry it out with clients....The benefits are increased self-confidence and a sense of achievement and a platform to focus on ability rather than disability.....Role play is also used to teach clients socially acceptable behaviour in a safe environment.

Another highlighted the constraints attached to the work:

What we can do depends on the funding we can access- this is our major difficulty.

Some of the comments from freelance workers indicated the sometimes precarious or isolated nature of their work:

Need to make links with other community-focused workers.

As a freelance worker, it is almost impossible to make a living. Most, if not all full-time positions require third-level qualifications....

One representative of a community organization also asked:

What's the future, when ADM/CPA funding runs out in two years?

2: FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP STAGE

Introduction

As described earlier, my preliminary research into this field in the Northwest revealed a diversity of approaches to drama in community and healthcare contexts, operating with a wide range of participant groupings. Through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with participants, parents of participants and practitioners of a sample of these heterogeneous groupings, and in some cases perusal of documentary sources or attendance at workshops or performances, I attempted to understand their differing emphases, experiences and needs as well as their commonalities.

I regard the voices of the contributors to this research as central to my analysis, and while creating a thematic framework, allow these voices to stand alone where possible. Persons quoted are not identified in the analysis. Quotations by practitioners are denoted by the initial 'P', and participants by the initials 'A', 'B', 'C' etc. My questions and comments are denoted by the letter 'S'. Some other words, place names etc have been omitted from quotations in order to protect the privacy of individual contributors.

This section is organized under the following headings:

- (i) Structural profile
- (ii) Project Profiles
- (iii) An overview: Diverse contexts, structures, aims and practices of projects
- (iv) Impacts: Personal and social outcomes
- (v) Challenges of the Work
- (vi) Towards Best Practice: Factors for success
- (vii) Recommendations

(i) **STRUCTURAL PROFILE:**

Supports for Drama Projects in Community and Healthcare settings in the Northwest

Objectives of ‘social inclusion’ are embodied in the objectives of the current Arts Plans of Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal County Councils, in addition to policies on audience development, capacity building in the arts sector, promoting quality etc.

The arts not only constitute a central element in our cultural identity but can also play a key role in assisting local authorities to achieve their development objectives and promote the quality of life of its people. (The Brightening Air: Sligo County Arts Plan 2002-2005)

Resourcing is spread over the full range of art-forms, and includes administration of certain Arts Council funds.

In the County Leitrim Arts Plan, creating opportunities for children and young people to engage with the arts is particularly mentioned, with youth drama projects being supported under this heading.⁹ In Sligo, building on the achievements of its last phase, support of Sligo Youth Theatre continues, with transition to independent status planned. The development of the Maugherow intergenerational project, which has included a drama component, is also assisted. Sligo’s Artists in Context series (supported by the Arts Office and Sligo LEADER Company) provides seminars on diverse practices, and opportunities for practice development and networking to local artists interested in this field. The area of Arts in Health is currently being developed in partnership with the Health Service Executive (see below).¹⁰ In the Donegal Arts plan, the primary community drama focus is through broad-based carnival groups which have a developmental and inclusive ethos.¹¹

The Health Promotion Unit of the Northwestern Health Service Executive have funded and supported a number of drama-based initiatives in the region, both in community settings and within the health service- for example the Arts Initiative

⁹ Interview with Terre Duffy, previously Arts Officer, Leitrim Co. Council; now Public Art Officer, Donegal Co. Council

¹⁰ Interview with Mary McAuliffe, Arts Officer, Sligo Co. Council

¹¹ Telephone conversation with Traolach o Fionan, Arts Officer, Donegal Co. Council

programme within the Mental Health service, which has included drama. An Arts in Health Partnership group has been established with the Arts Office of Sligo County Council and other health service sectors. This group is working towards developing integrated Arts and Health policies and extending the possibilities for arts work of this kind. The Unit has recently piloted a training course for healthcare workers that included workshops in various artforms. FETAC accreditation is currently being sought for the course.¹²

In recent years, Area Development Management and Combat Poverty, managing the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, have been major supporters of a range of community-focused initiatives in the region, including drama projects.

Drama projects in community and healthcare settings in the region are also supported by national agencies including the Arts Council¹³, CREATE, FAS and the VEC.

The support organizations listed operate from a range of perspectives in terms of their approaches to the arts in community and healthcare contexts, occupying various positions between the poles of 'cultural democracy' and 'democratization of culture' as discussed in chapter II. Emerging inter-agency partnerships and fora which include practitioners may contribute to debate and the forging of common definitions and visions for the sector.

¹² Telephone conversation with Maura Gilligan, Health Promotion Unit.

¹³ A key priority identified by the Arts Council's 2005 *Partnership for the Arts, Draft for Consultation Purposes* is 'to make it possible for people to extend and enhance their experiences of the arts', contending that 'The arts are central in the growth of civil society'. It commits to enhanced supports for the arts in community and healthcare contexts.

(ii) PROJECT PROFILES

Twilight Zone Active Age Club¹⁴

For this active age group in Ballyshannon, Co Donegal, 'Age Rage', a devised piece, was their first such venture, but one that has had long-term consequences, as repeat performances are still being requested a year since its inception. Interest in using drama for issue-based work was mooted by participants, who then sought funding and approached experienced community drama facilitator, Maura Logue.

The work began with discussions of issues of importance to older people, which were crafted into a script by the facilitator. Any members of the group who wished to perform had the opportunity to do so. The aim of the piece was to raise awareness of concerns affecting older people, including caring responsibilities, public transport, pensions and closure of rural post offices; as well as highlighting the importance for older people of a full and active life. The style was amusing and lighthearted.

MSTactics¹⁵

The MSTactics group is administered by John MacGinty at the MS Society of Ireland regional office in Letterkenny. Members' interest in drama work, facilitated by James King, started in 2000 with a series of workshops and eventually evolved into the presentation of short pieces in diverse locations, all based on the experiences of members of the MS society. Aims included raising awareness of Multiple Sclerosis and disability issues and providing a catalyst for change in attitudes and practices. Productions have ranged from fairly conventional issue-based short pieces shown at conferences, to dialogic or Forum theatre inspired pieces in educational settings, to Invisible Theatre and performances in public places such as cafes and shopping centres. The venture is funded by ADM/ CPA through Peace and Reconciliation, and supported by the MS Society. A particular feature is that some

¹⁴ Interview with Maura Logue, drama practitioner, 14/06/04

Focus group with participants, 02/06/04

Attendance at performance, The Coach House, Ballymote.

¹⁵ Focus group including James King, drama practitioner/ participant, John MacGinty and Kieran Carlin organiser/participants, 23/06/04

Attendance at performance, The Coach House, Ballymote, 23/06/04

of the organisers of the project are among the core participants, often due to logistic and time constraints of members traveling to present pieces.

The group has contacts with the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Carers' Association.

Footsteps¹⁶

The Footsteps Project was originally initiated by a group of parents of young adults who have Down Syndrome, who approached the Blue Raincoat theatre company in 2001 with a request for drama workshops. The company agreed to become involved, offering a project firmly based in theatre, their area of expertise. Ciaran McCauley has been responsible for direction, with the support of company Director, Niall Henry, and other members, Malcolm Hamilton and Tara McGowan. The involvement of company members who are not actors in this theatre venture is also seen as important in terms of company development.

The start-up phase consisted of workshops, beginning to focus on productions in its second year of operation. Ciaran McCauley researched similar initiatives, visiting UK pioneers of disability theatre Graeae, Chickenshed and Heart 'n Soul. The Footsteps group is now internally managed by Blue Raincoat, with ongoing informal contacts with parents. The group meets on a fortnightly basis for part of the year, with intense rehearsal periods close to performances. A rigorous approach to production values is upheld, with the full resources of the company available to the Footsteps group. A strong commitment to the process expected of members, balanced with an awareness of participants' level of ability. There is sensitivity to health and safety concerns, with regular breaks, parents present in the building during rehearsal, and a female worker present in groups at all times. A high ratio of theatre practitioners to participants is evident in rehearsal.

¹⁶ Interview with Ciaran McCauley, theatre practitioner, 23/04/04

Focus group with parents of participants, 28/04/04

Attendance at workshop 04/04

Attendance at performance, the Factory Theatre Space, 01/05/04

The Footsteps group is seen as an integral and important feature of the work of Blue Raincoat. Costs of the project are absorbed by the company, with no regular funding sought. Evaluation is ongoing and informal. An element of the group's latest production *Kirai Kis Miklosa* - the use of puppets- was suggested by a parent of a participant, and it is expected that future productions will include input by the participants themselves, who have recently begun to make thematic suggestions.

Balor Developmental Community Arts¹⁷

Balor DCA was founded in 1999, a progression of work by Butt Drama Circle (a production company since 1959) which already sponsored Community Employment Projects which created access routes to theatre for people who would traditionally have been excluded.

Balor DCA is co-ordinated by Mark Mc Collum, and has two full-time staff and one part-time worker who are engaged in Balor's drama projects, as well as three administrative staff. Its mission statement is:

Empowering people from a range of backgrounds to creatively engage and connect with their communities through art. (Balor Theatre website, 2004)

In addition to other arts programmes, it offers community drama and Forum Theatre projects, both as part of its ongoing programme and in response to requests from community groups. The company would tend to have at least ten drama projects running at any one time, in its Ballybofey base and in outreach locations throughout Co Donegal, as well as some work in cross-border locations.

Strands include Youth Theatre, Cross-border youth projects (Cultural Pathways Project), Secondary and Primary schools work (Class Acts), work with groups of adult non-nationals, groups of people who have disabilities, and women's groups.

¹⁷ Interview with Youth Arts practitioner, Siobhan Gallagher 17/06/04

Focus group with Youth Theatre participants, 17/06/04

Conversations with Mark McCollum, various

Donegal Local Development Co Ltd; Review and Evaluation of the Balor Education Project, 2004

Balor Theatre website www.balorthatre.com

Balor projects place a strong emphasis on process-based dialogic theatre work as a means to explore personal and societal attitudes, motivations and actions. Aims, therefore, include both community and personal development.

Issue-based pieces on pertinent themes (most recently bullying) are presented to school groups through Forum Theatre, an approach that is also often used in the devising process for finished issue-based productions.

Funding is sourced from a number of areas, including Peace II, North Western Health Board, local area partnership boards, Donegal County Council, and the private sector. Projects are managed by individual workers with support from the coordinator and an external mentor. Evaluation reports are completed internally, with additional external evaluation. The company has a board of management structure.

Women as Peacebuilders¹⁸

The impetus for this project came from host organisation Wavelength's focus on rural women, and their location in Ballyshannon, Co Donegal, close to the border with Northern Ireland. Aware of the presence of a number of women in the rural hinterland who had resettled in the area, mainly from Northern Ireland, a project was proposed by Maura Logue, Project Co-ordinator, which would address the problem of isolation and provide an opportunity to weave personal narratives of women and children who lived in Northern Ireland during the Troubles into a radio play. Aims of the work included both community and personal development through the telling of these stories, often excluded from the official narrative of that place and historical period.

The group met on a weekly basis for seven months, facilitated by writer/ dramatist Marie Hannigan, who eventually scripted the piece. The radio play, entitled *From here to there*, was performed by group members and broadcast by the Artsbeat programme of Midwest Radio. Sensitivity to the needs of the women in the group

¹⁸ Focus group with participants, 17/05/04

Interview with Project Co-ordinator of Wavelengths, Maura Logue, 14/06/04

was a vital part of the process. Funding was through ADM/CPA with monies from the EU fund for Peace and Reconciliation and the National Development Plan of Ireland.

County Sligo Youth Theatre¹⁹

The County Sligo Youth Theatre was launched by the Sligo County Council Arts Office in 1999. Initially, advertising material was sent to schools and youth clubs, and weekly workshops were held in Sligo town and Tubbercurry. A part-time co-ordinator, Bernadette Meehan, was appointed in 2002, and a dedicated space acquired in Sligo town. Membership is open to all young people between the ages of fifteen to eighteen. There is also a junior section, which is unfunded, for ages 11-14. The group introduces young people to acting and technical skills, study of dramatic texts, and involves them in at least one production per year. Personal development aims are seen as equally important:

The aims of Youth Theatre work would be to provide opportunities for young people to develop self-esteem, responsibility, being able to collaborate and co-operate and to come to a place where they will feel ownership, where they will feel their ideas are appreciated, where they can share with their peers. On the one hand these two things go hand in hand- personal development stuff and acquiring skills- all the theatre skills ranging from street theatre stuff to regular theatre.

Funding is through Sligo County Council, Sligo Borough Council, the Arts Council and the VEC. Its management board is composed of representatives of stakeholders, interested individuals and a youth theatre member. The group is a member of the National Association of Youth Drama, and has a good working relationship with the Blue Raincoat Theatre Company.

Sligo Youthreach²⁰

Sligo Youthreach is an educational project for young people aged 15+ who have left formal education. Modules offered include video expression and animation, which is taught by David Moriarty. In 2003 the centre was invited by Calipo Theatre

¹⁹ Focus group 1 with participants 22/05/04

Focus group 2 with participants 01/06/04

Interview with drama practitioner, Bernadette Meehan, 18/ 05/ 04

²⁰ Interview with video expression tutor and project organiser, David Moriarty 16/06/04

Focus group with participants 16/06/04

Company and Sharp Focus Productions from Drogheda, Co. Louth to participate in a cross-border project which would entail meeting with three other youth groups, devising an issue-based piece, and acting in a short film. Sligo Youthreach management saw this as a valuable opportunity for the young people to learn drama and film-making skills at a professional level, with the joint aim of personal development and confidence-building.

I would have seen a wonderful opportunity for young people to be totally immersed in film-making and you know getting hands on experience in the business which is something we couldn't offer them here at that level, at a really professional level. That was one aspect of it, and the other would be to do with the reason those young people are here in the first place, which is personal development, and of course drama is very much geared to that end. It brings out a person's confidence, and it teaches them an awful lot about themselves and the other young people.

Each group was assigned a director, a scriptwriter and two drama facilitators. All thirty-five young people attending Youthreach took part in initial drama workshops, and ten were selected to participate in the full process. During a two-day devising meeting with the other four groups, and a month-long process back in Sligo, they decided on a theme, and devised characters and plots which were then crafted into a finished script by a professional writer. The writer consulted the group again before finalizing the script. There was later a week of rehearsals and six days of filming, followed by a number of high-profile 'premieres' of the four films.

Co-ordination of the Sligo Youthreach team and their facilitators was managed by David Moriarty and Ultan Mulvihill, the centre manager. Numerous local individuals and businesses assisted with provision of locations.

The entire project was funded by Peace II, through Calipo. Skills accreditation was by FETAC(NCVA). The four youth projects met to jointly evaluate the process, with Calipo conducting a separate evaluation.

Training for Success²¹

Training for Success is a unique course supported by BRAINWAVE (Irish Epilepsy Association) and FAS, and based at the Institute of Technology, Sligo. Its focus is on the personal and vocational development of young people who have epilepsy.

²¹ Interview with Bernardine McManus, dramatherapist, 11/06/04
Focus group with participants 09/06/04

Within this course, dramatherapist Bernadine McManus works with the group on a weekly basis, with the primary aim of developing the personal confidence and social skills of the individual.

.....developing social skills, relationship skills, learning to care for the other and to see that consensus decision-making is what is important in finding harmony in our own lives; and this is not about learning acting skills, because none of you have chosen to go on acting courses, this is about drama to look at life issues. So at one level it's about developing confidence in your voice, developing confidence in your right to have a voice, and to explore that in this group this year in many different ways. Also to engage with your body, to free your body, and to let go of some of the social conditioning that would have gone with that. so you can re-enter, continue with life with new understanding of yourself, your medical condition and the impact it's had on your life with a new sense of self and confidence.

The IONA Project²²

The Iona Project is a two-year transitional programme between school and adult services for people with moderate to profound learning disabilities. It is based at both the Cloonamahon Centre, Collooney Co Sligo, and at Cregg House, Ballincar, Co Sligo; and involves partnerships between service users and their families, NWHB, Cregg House, and the Department of Education and Science. The programme is tailored to individual needs, and incorporates educational activities, leisure and social activities, reflexology, art and dramatherapy.

At Cloonamahon, dramatherapist Bernardine McManus (who also facilitates drama for the TfS project, above) works with a group of participants who have autism. The dramatherapy entails both individual and group sessions, focusing on responding to each participant's needs, building trust and establishing relationships, and developing communication skills. This demands a high level of skills and consistency of the practitioner.

²²Meeting participants and interview with Pauline McMorrow, special needs assistant, 22/ 06/04
Interview with Bernardine McManus, dramatherapist, 11/06/04
Report on the Iona Transition Project, NWHB Disability Services, May 2003

(iii) AN OVERVIEW:

DIVERSE CONTEXTS, STRUCTURES, AIMS AND PRACTICES

In this section, it is my intention to reflect some of the common and differing features of this sample of projects which have used, or are using drama in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest.

Start-up

As the case studies above show, there were examples both of projects which were initiated by participants or their families, and those which participants joined as existing programmes or aspects of programmes. In projects community-led by inception, there was also variation in the degree to which participants were involved in planning programme content.

Management

Styles of management varied greatly also. In some cases, there were difficulties of timing or communication within management structures. There was also variance in the degree of support available to workers. Structures consisting of small groups with a good understanding of the work seemed particularly effective.

Participant Recruitment

Some of the projects studied were initiated within previously existing groups. For those that required new participants, word of mouth and personal contact seemed vitally important in the recruitment process.

S: And how did you get to hear about it?

B: I heard from A, who heard from her sister.

C: It was in the paper as well.

D: I was just passing the centre and I thought 'what's that about? - I'll go in and check it out'.

The importance of attractive content was mentioned, as well as holding open days.....

S: You mentioned the criteria for people becoming involved- so what kinds of things would you be looking out for?

P: It's just really age ranges, that's a delicate balance to get the age ranges right, so you can gear it at a level that'll suit everyone. You know, having a balanced programme that'll suit..... quiet, expressive, movement, word-based, whatever.

I suppose just being willing to get involved with things.....

S: So it's more or less open to anyone within the age range?

P: Yes, it is.

S: And how do people come to know about you?

P: We have open days, and people seem to know about it now, they'll tell their friends or people in school about it, but we do have an open day. We used to have one twice a year, but now once a year seems to be enough, we have to gather people up from different projects, so we normally have an open day in September, and start workshops by the end of September and do a production mid-January or February.

.....and outreach work.

P: I go out to the schools, put ads in the papers, meet them on the street and say, 'why don't you give it a try?' But I'm actually overloaded at the minute; I have to put kids on a reserve list.

S: And would they come from quite a mixture of backgrounds, or...?

P: Yeah, it'd be cross- community.

S: And is that by making a particular effort to attract people from particular areas, or..?

P: Well the effort is made... going out to the schools is honestly the only way to do it. And then they love it so much, they bring their best mate.

For some projects, particular participant groups were targeted. The existing profile of the organizer was also significant in influencing the decision to become involved:

P: From my observation of the participants before they entered into this contract with us, I wanted women who I could see were surviving in their everyday world, women that had taken on responsibility and were able to deal with that, I suppose I was looking for women with a sense of strength, that had a sense of themselves, maybe never voiced it very much, but were not in need of counselling really, I suppose is what I'm saying. I also wanted to bring a group of women together from different areas..... that don't really have an infrastructure for this kind of work. They would have known of me, my work, they would have trusted me and I think that really helped get them on board.

Funding

Funding came from a number of sources- including Peace II through ADM/CPA, North Western Health Board, local area partnership boards, County Councils, the Arts Council, FAS, VEC and private sector- and was a concern to very differing extents.

In some cases, available funding appeared to place considerable constraints on the content of programmes offered. As a major support to community arts programmes, the imminent scaling down of Area Development Management/ Combat Poverty Agency grant aid was mentioned as a cause for concern.

Project-based or short-term funding seemed to be a source of constant headaches and a strain on administrative resources in some of the groups studied, especially those committed to sustainable working practices, as they struggled to ensure funding for the next phase while continuing to manage the current phase.

The importance of dialogue with, and flexibility within funding systems was emphasized by others.

.....we have to be seen to be accountable..... but I think you need that fluidity- you're taking people on an unknown journey, you're taking them to a new place, and sometimes I think you have to lose time in order to make time later on. You must look after their needs, because if something comes up for someone during a process, then it's important that that's looked at, and is addressed, and that means you might lose a week or two of the set facilitation work. So we would have elongated that project timeframe, we felt it was necessary.....

I think if you have a good rationale and something to show in terms of work in progress, I think you can justify your argument quite well.... And that takes confidence really, because, we'll say, if those in charge of the monies are looking at things in a very mathematical, administrative way, if they're not really familiar with the creative process, I think you have to make them aware. It's about educating them as well really. But I would feel that our arguments for extension were actually taken on board very well by our funders, and there wasn't any issue with that.

Organizations able to operate without specific funding for a project experienced fewer external constraints on timing or content.

Staffing

The projects in the sample studied were all led by practitioners with qualifications and/or extensive experience in relevant areas of theatre, applied drama and writing. As in the field of Community Arts generally, routes into this work were varied, and some practitioners had begun their careers in other fields, for example teaching and film. The need for recognition of informal qualifications was an important issue raised.

Predictably, those employed within dedicated organizations seemed most satisfied with levels of support and access to ongoing training opportunities.

S: And what supports do you have?

P: A would be my main support as the project coordinator and I have an external mentor as well. We have a very close team here and we all get on the best. We're very fortunate in the sense that we have the same standards, and we'd all work to that standard and thrive on it. So I really enjoy my job here

..... the training opportunities are great as well, there is a training budget for staff. You have to keep updating your skills all the time and keep it fresh.... It means it's always changing, which keeps it exciting, and it keeps it exciting for ourselves as well!

..... I suppose the support has always been, I mean we keep on training in our own professional fields, and so anything you learn will naturally pass itself along within the process

Freelance workers generally sought professional support and supervision outside the host organization.

It was felt that provision of additional specific training opportunities would be of great benefit in cases where auxiliary staff members assist drama practitioners.

The role of the drama practitioner is pivotal, demanding skills not only in the artform, but in group facilitation and dynamics.

The facilitator was vitally important- she was just so understanding, brilliant at her job- she really listened to us and encouraged us.

P: And group dynamics, the facilitator has to keep aware all the time to have some sort of forum to discuss power struggles that are happening within the group, and there need to be structures in place so that if this does happen, both parties can talk about it, because sometimes a bullying situation can arise, and it's hard for us to get rid of our pasts, so the facilitator has to keep reiterating that everybody is equal, nobody should overshadow or dictate to anyone else in the group, and that's why it's maybe better to go into a group that has their democratic structures in place, so that you can always go back to those structures and have a forum to discuss those.....

P: ... the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and they'll have learned more from being in that group and staying true to the dynamic of that group.....Life is full of groups.

S: Do you find you need any particular skills in this project that you wouldn't use with other groups?

P: No, really, well I have found certain physical things..... I do not think it's my job when people are doing a workshop to motivate them.....so in a sense we don't motivate, we demand, and we get the response from that, so that doesn't change, that's the same with any group.....so really our only thing would be to keep an eye on the medical sides of things, to try not to push as hard sometimes, to be aware that there's certain things they're just not capable of, there are certain health issues involved, so we just have to be careful about that, so that's one of the reasons we have the parents in the area as well, just to provide some sort of.... that if something happened, there'd be somebody there who would know what's going on, that's probably the only thing it's not overriding, but I always take a scan around to see somebody's not being pushed too hard, and we take a break, have a glass of water and relax, and that's important to keep in mind.....

Concerns were expressed by organizers and by drama practitioners about the difficulties of freelance working in terms of secure employment, communication, support and sustainability.

Partnerships and Strategic Links

All projects in this phase of the study featured partnerships and contacts with support agencies, funding organizations, arts groups and interest groups, including local, national, cross-border and international examples; although the degrees to which these connections were structured or long-term varied greatly. Links with groups having common interests or using similar forms were seen as valuable means of seeding ideas and pooling resources and information. Contacts with more established practitioners were a source of learning and inspiration. Cross-cultural links were seen as important in building understanding.

There were divided opinions amongst practitioners as to the efficacy of existing networks in the Northwest in supporting and funding drama in community and healthcare contexts; from the very positive:

S: How do you see the strategic picture for this kind of work in the Northwest?

P: Well I think the local Arts Officers in the Sligo/ Leitrim/ Donegal area are quite aware of moving art into an art in the community context, and I think there's been great work done, where you're skilling people up and you're offering them opportunities. I think another agency that really values this type of work is the North Western Health Board in their Health Promotion work, active age work, mental health work and youth work; because we've been engaged with all those different units in creative processes. The VEC as well would see the value of this type of work for adults; they would do small grants for facilitation, although I must say the rates are a bit low, I'm not that happy about that, but then things will change hopefully. So you would have those vehicles. You would also have now monies in the School Completion Programme, and this would be the transfer from primary to secondary school, and there are monies allocated, and the co-ordinator of that would maybe link in with us, The Department of Education would also begin to see the value of these things.....

.....To the less satisfied or ambivalent:

S: Around the Northwest, do you see any policy emerging, anything coherent coming from, say, arts organisations or....?

P: No, I don't think so..... apart from that, what we're doing on the ground, there's not really a connection.

Some questioned aspects of funding rationale, especially in terms of sustainability:

S: Do you think within the Northwest there's much recognition of this kind of work? I'm thinking of strategic policy, in terms of what's here

P: No I don't think there is. I'm going to qualify that by saying that...

[core funding by Peace and Reconciliation]

....it was very successful but as P&R money dried up so did courses and that equipment is just sitting in boxes gathering dust..... There seems to be a grey area within P&R funding.

Aims

The necessity for clarity of aims and objectives was emphasised in all cases.

Exploration of the balance between artists' and participants' expectations was essential in this.

For some, the intention to impact on social or personal development is explicit, with emphases occupying varying shades between drama as catalyst for community development, personal development, or therapy. One project focused on offering an opportunity to access participation in theatre-making.

Methods

Approaches used by different groups, or at differing stages within groups included:

- Workshop, discussion and consultation methods, with a scriptwriter assisting in production of a finished piece to be performed by participants.
- Emphasis on exploration, discussion and learning through theatre games and workshops rather than performance.
- Participant-devised and performed pieces.
- Directed performance pieces.
- Dialogic approaches: Forum Theatre, Invisible theatre, Playback theatre, Action theatre, Drama pieces with question and answer sessions to follow.
- Dramatherapy.

Process, Product and Quality

Groups varied in their relative emphases on drama as process or drama as product. For some, the drama process encompassed their objectives. Some focused on process aims, but also produced finished work. Focus varied throughout the life of some groups. Those groups primarily concentrating on producing theatre also stressed the importance of handling the creative process in a way that was at once challenging and conducive to participants' development.

Overall, there was a strong commitment to quality of both process and product. Practitioners identified in words and in action that these drama projects in community and healthcare contexts were perceived as part of serious artistic practice.

I mean, the full resources of the company are put behind productions and workshops, so, it's an integral part of the company at this stage.

Ethos

Most of the projects studied emphasised the importance of a supportive, inclusive and non-judgemental ethos, where creative risk-taking and experimentation could be carried out. In practice, this would be facilitated by a period of group formation and trust-building through games and theatre exercises; and would be both modeled and encouraged by the practitioner.

And usually it takes the first two months to begin to get a sense of them seeing themselves as a group, and whatever competition and dynamics is going on. So I did about half an hour with them, exercises just to get them talking, see were they able to listen, a bit about their hopes, fears, expectations, patience, could they talk in front of each other, and I just fed that back into the process, you know just got them to do a few silly exercises where they had to stand up and do something, to see would they be receptive to that, and in the drama there's always two or three of them who are so inhibited in their body, and if they're shy and withdrawn it's a matter of all year coaxing them to take another wee step forward. I have a simple warm up where I get each of them to speak about something, every week it's something different, so they've heard themselves in the group, for some of them at the end of the year if they've achieved that, they've done it; for another one it's getting on the stage and doing a good performance, for some it's really daring to open their mouth and value their opinion on something.

This appears to be a key factor in maximizing participant engagement, and may be an aspect which some projects could consider developing or factoring-in at the planning stage.

User-responsive Models of Practice

All practitioners identified the importance of models of practice that corresponded with and were sensitive to users' needs, while at the same time offering scope for personal and creative challenges.

For some, this meant beginning with a collaborative, facilitated model.

The facilitator to me is a much more effective way of bringing people forward than the old-style director.... This is not about me talking down to you..... It's a two-way thing, and it's about co-operating together, rather than I'm at the top table and you're down there- that in itself is a change, and a change people are still learning.

For others, the approach was clearly director-led

....there's a clear line of authority, there's no democracy in a theatre rehearsal, the director is the dictator if you like, and he gets to call, because it's on his head, he acts as the third eye, so that we have a good clear idea of the structure of the piece, we've got the right support group in the sense that the lights are right, the sound is right, the costumes, props etc. are of the highest standard we can have.

..... but within a responsive framework.

Fundamentally it boils down to communication and how somebody who's appointed as a director tries to get across to the people involved what he wants, what the vision is, and if we can somehow reach a consensus on that or form a language that we all understand, that everyone in the room understands then if we move on from that the creative process starts if you like, so definitely it has to be about communication.

Practical issues encompassed considerations of participant needs, pace and the practitioner-participant ratio.

..... your pace is dictated by the slowest in the group, so we move at that pace and are comfortable with that, because we're learning ourselves, and so each thing is revealed to us as well.

...very early on I said 'listen, I need to do one- to- one with them in order to even get them to relate to me as a person' I do twenty five minutes with them individually, and it could be taking weeks and weeks and weeks developing the trust that this is their space... I only do what they do, and it's very much reflective work...

What I find interesting is developing new styles, sometimes to suit the fact of the abilities of the group, like in Action Theatre with other groups, we do a lot more athletic, physical work, but here we concentrate on the voice aspect of it....Instead of doing Playback Theatre, we did what we call Gossip Playback, where somebody told a story, and the team talked about the story and fed the story back as though we were gossiping about the person, with them being the hero of the story. And that was because it was less challenging physically for us, not having this moving around..... So because of the abilities of the group, you're finding yourself creatively relying on innovative form.

Settings

Drama projects were based in diverse contexts, including community groups, training/ education bodies, specialized community arts groups, a North Western Health Board centre, and a professional theatre company space.

Environment

Practitioners emphasized the importance of an appropriate working environment. Generally, this meant an exclusive 'safe' place free from interruption, with ample space, heat, light, comfortable seating and pleasant aspect, which was accessible to participants with disabilities. For those working within dedicated centres, there was the possibility of arranging or adapting spaces to meet their specific needs. Those working in other contexts sometimes found their surroundings less than ideal. Despite consultation regarding the necessity of suitable spaces, practitioners often found their needs in competition with the other business of host organizations.

...when I went I was working in a space that was full of computers and photocopiers and I had like six feet by eight feet in the middle of the room to do creative drama... I mean even the whole thing of having a room that was engaged, and people coming wanting to do photocopying and I was like, "sorry...", and it then creates a real sense that you're not working with... part of a... team.....

For those whose work included performance, the quality of performance space was also crucial, and sometimes found lacking.

A: Venues can be a problem, when you're asked to do a performance, and you arrive on the evening and you don't know much as regards space.

B: I think we have allowed ourselves to be put into impossible situations in the past, with a conference of a couple of hundred people and us being asked to do something on a wee tiny stage... I think I would resist that kind of thing now... I mean what I liked was doing it in a small room, instead of for the whole conference.

.....
B: Well it's like what I said earlier, for us to be much more aware and critical of the context that we're working with; that we lay down the regulations- a small group, a small room.

A: We need to be more assertive.

Access

In addition to the physical accessibility of the workplace, some practitioners commented on the need to allow for participants' needs in terms of transport and caring responsibilities when planning and applying for funding.

S: Is there any reason why people might sometimes drop out?

P: Probably just geographics, access, just being able to get here, and that's been our main problem, but unless we had our own bus..... Because you're living in a rural community.. People do really make an effort...but it's really sad when that happens.

One needs to remember that if you're working with rural outreach participants, transport is an issue, childcare is an issue, and without those things in place, those women are not able to access any programme.

Evaluation and Reflexivity

For many projects consulted, evaluation of whether the project had achieved its stated aims was carried out at completion in order to justify funding granted. It was not evident whether this form of evaluation afforded opportunities to describe less tangible effects of the work, or to outline additional, unexpected learning outcomes. It was clear that it was an activity demanding of time and resources.

S: How does evaluation work here?

P: Well I would write my own reports and we have an external evaluator as well who assesses the overall programme; and I also do questionnaires for all my evaluations.

It is important to distinguish between this, the formal face of evaluation, and internal evaluation as an integral facet of practice. This was less mentioned by interviewees, although it was a strong feature within a few of the projects; where means of ongoing reflexive examination had been devised, actively using the creative skill of organically integrating reflection and action to inform practice.

Yes, I think that seems to be the thing that's a strength that has kept it fresh for us, and no two sessions are ever the same, different problems arise or different goals are achieved without one necessarily immediately planning that six months in advance. I think we.....always need to think on our feet, so it works in that way and helps to keep it fresh and alive for us.

That would be part of our facilitator's contract work, that she would evaluate back to us and that she would let us know on a weekly basis how things were going. And generally things were going smoothly. But it's important not to lose track of little problems that happen along the way.

.....between ourselves we constantly monitor it, and we constantly chat about it and meet and revise and try to prepare for it, but it is very much project-based.

.....whatever you encounter you have to improvise and find your way through it, that there is no - there are a couple of books written about how to deal with it- but it really is just about being live, you deal with the situation as it happens.

Respondents also felt that external research would be of value:

I think for it to survive, to have a place on the statutory bodies' list is for research, chronicling what has happened is vital...because as facilitators, as artists, we get immersed in the doing and we forget about the publicising and right, lets see how we can create papers and publications so the wider population can know and understand the work better.

Although unspoken by respondents in this study, it seems relevant to mention the observation that arts workers may be wary of evaluation methods because of their perceived inadequacy in describing complex processes...

...the anxiety that something very precious may be lost, that the complexity of an experience which includes relationship, enjoyment, learning, exploration, expression will be destroyed, diluted or reduced... (Moriarty, 1997)

... and concerns about over-emphasising utility:

... the Health Development Agency (HDA, 2000) review of community-based arts which impact on health and well-being noted a feeling that evaluation may set uncomfortable precedents in justifying art in terms of social usefulness. Coalter (2001) suggested that such attitudes may derive from the limited nature of current evaluation so often undertaken to ensure that funding has been spent appropriately; such evaluations often involve output driven, volume orientated, performance indicators at the expense of more holistic measurement of outcomes(Jermyn, 2001:10).

Sustainability

Good working environments, long-term projects, those offering viable routes for progression, or those that maintain contact with participants after conclusion were seen as preferable by interviewees.

P: And they must know that you're with them a hundred per cent, that you're walking with them on this journey, and that when the task in hand is completed, that you reach out to them post the project and let them know that they're valued, that you just haven't dropped them, that would be important.

S: So follow-up...

P: So we would still stay connected with those women, or maybe encourage them to come on board with other project work that we're doing. So that to me is important.

S: So what's the future? Is there anything you're thinking of changing or doing differently?

P: I just hope it will grow, and be self-sustaining, that it'll be well rooted in the community long after I'm gone. And I think it's kind of moving into a new stage now, where we have the space, and money coming now to refurbish the space. I'd just like it to grow, for the space to be used a lot more, and, yes, to attract more funding.

And when you've completed a project, it is nice just to link back with them, even if it's just a card or popping into their group meeting..... Also sometimes the product doesn't happen immediately after the process, and that can be seen as a celebration, a time to come back together again.

S: And just to wind up, do you see this continuing, are you going to continue for the foreseeable future?

P: Yes.....I do, I have no problem with it now. This working with puppets has been new to me, so immediately that's brought up a new thing, I think they have felt there's a progression within the work.

P: I make a comparison with the Nerve Centre in Derry- that is run constantly, and they're taking in people constantly, it's a very vibrant place.....

S: So do you see anything similar happening here in the future?

P: [The scheme] has got further funding, but I don't think we'll be able to take part again. I would love to see it happening on an annual basis. What we have done here is we have introduced a drama facilitator.

S: So you're going to continue with drama?

P: Yes and we're going to try and do something like it ourselves..... and we have pretty much the wherewithal to do it; all we need is to employ the services of a scriptwriter, and when the time comes a director..... we're certainly going to go for it

P: They are very worried about the programme stopping. There has been two years of sustained drama now.

S: So if funding was no object, how would you like to develop your issue based drama work?

P: Well I think you need a place, an arts building where there's an open-door policy and where you're running a series of different programmes according to different needs. So you'd introduce drama workshops. It would be accessible to all, and I think you could have exploration of issues through drama with primary, secondary, youthreach, active age, outreach to women's groups, rural groups

S: Is there anything else that needs to change for that to happen?

P: I would have a small bank of good facilitators- it is difficult to find them.

[The project] has the potential to grow and grow and grow, like I'll have a new intake of young people next year, the thirty kids already here will be year two, and the bigger kids will be teaching the younger kids and so on..... the same mission as before.

Conclusion

Having reviewed some of the characteristics of drama projects in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest; the next section discusses themes arising from participants' and practitioners' perceptions of the personal and social outcomes of the projects under research.

(iv) OUTCOMES: ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS AND PRACTITIONERS REGARDING THE DRAMA PROJECTS IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED

Introduction

As I have described in the literature review, a number of claims for the positive impacts on individuals and communities resulting from involvement in drama activities have been consistently asserted by recent research. My findings concur broadly with this body of research. In the interviews and focus groups conducted as the second stage of this research, participants and practitioners likewise expressed an overwhelmingly positive response in discussion of what they saw as the outcomes of involvement in drama projects in community and healthcare settings in the Northwest. As Jermyn opines, some of the personal benefits experienced may in turn have an influence on social/community benefits and on transferable skills development:

..... there are also processes that are less direct and more complex and are dependent on achieving intermediary outcomes. For example, people may learn new skills and feel more confident as the result of participating in community arts activity, and this, in turn, may increase their employability.

Many of the benefits are interlinked, overlapping or even inter-dependent. For example, social capital is a term that is very closely related to social cohesion and well-being. Definitions of social capital often refer to the existence of, and participation in, organised networks or groups and less tangible items such as social trust, civic co-operation, reciprocity, local democracy and group solidarity. The HDA (2000) is one institution that has noted the development of social capital theories that place emphasis on social inclusion and connectedness as key determinants of health and well-being. (Jermyn, 2001:14)

Other perspectives, however, caution that the measurement of 'benefit' in these terms is inadequate, in that it centres on the individual and on social 'connectedness' rather than encouraging critical consciousness of the structural socio-political milieu in which he/she is situated. As Kester notes of a particular project:

The Shooting Back project takes for granted the fatalistic political horizons of current conservative rhetoric; the best that can be hoped is to give Native American children the "self-esteem" needed to stay sober and get to McDonald's in time in the morning. Clearly there is nothing wrong with teaching kids how to use a camera. But why can't these technical skills be joined with some form of pedagogy which would help to encourage formation of a critical consciousness of their situation within the current political economy? One of the important characteristics of the aesthetic lies in its power to critically comprehend a cultural or social totality and to think beyond its limitations.... (Kester, 1999)

Within the findings of this research, there is evidence, too, of groups which have mobilized critical capacities and encouraged participants to imagine and voice anti-hegemonic ideas and calls for change. As I have noted earlier, the scope of such work, embodying social activism, may currently be limited by public funding with stated objectives of cohesion and consensus.

Having noted criticisms of research into social impacts of the arts in the literature review and methodology sections (Merli, 2003; Jermyn, 2004); I have attempted, in research design and practice to allow space for discussion of outcomes, without excessive reliance on previously specified indicators. As Jermyn states,

.....indicators can be ambiguous and need to be interpreted with care. For example, if someone feels no more confident at the end of the project than at the start that does not mean the project has 'failed'. Indicators in themselves can only tell us so much. Jermyn, 2004:9)

I endeavored, too, to include opportunities to express dissent, criticism or suggestions for change. In practice, these were little voiced. Reasons for this may have ranged from group loyalty to the pragmatic consideration of repercussions of dissent, again, perhaps, in the context of particular support structures. In the best interests of projects and participants, it is probable that some conflicts and difficulties are more effectively aired in a less public forum

In keeping with the spirit of qualitative and participatory traditions, the writing of this analysis is guided by the voices of contributors, and gives precedence to the richness of their expression over precision or succinctness.

I wish to emphasise that central to the more or less tangible outcomes of participation discussed here is the participants' immersion in the unique features of drama and theatre processes. I believe that evidence of the richness of this experience runs throughout the responses cited.

I will examine the responses of practitioners and participants under four interconnected headings:

- Personal Development
- Social/ Community Importance
- Artistic Importance
- Development of Transferable Skills

Within each category, subheadings are connected with each other, and also interplay with subheadings in other categories. I have attempted to show some of the inter-relations in the diagram below.

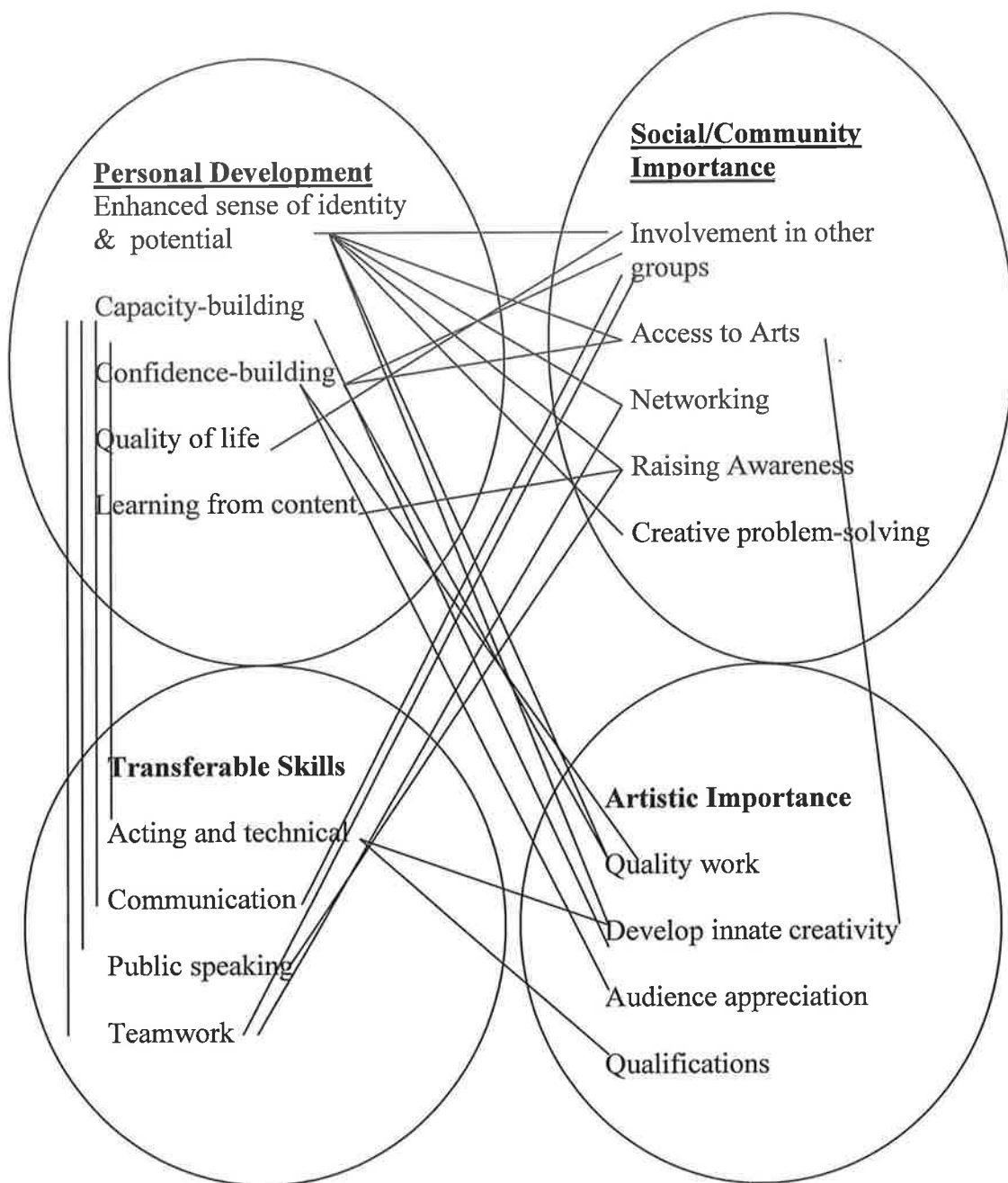


Fig 13: Interrelationships between participant impacts

(a) Personal Development

I define personal development outcomes as those impacting on building a positive, resilient and flexible self-concept and developing existing and new skills and capacities, including critical capacities. Personal development outcomes have been described as building ‘human capital’ (see Williams, 1997), that is, contributing to personal or collective effectiveness; and imply further impacts on ‘social capital’, which I will discuss in the next section, Social/ Community Importance.

In conversation with practitioners and participants, while personal development-type outcomes were described by all as arising gradually through the process, the levels of development attained varied widely, depending on the individual, type of project and length of involvement. In some projects, changes that might go unnoticed by others were seen as highly significant by workers, participants or their families. In other cases, the language of ‘personal development’ was simply one unfamiliar to participants.

I will discuss five broad and inter-related themes under this heading:

- Enhanced sense of personal identity and potential
- Capacity-building
- Confidence-building
- Quality of life
- Learning from content

- **Enhanced Sense of Personal Identity and Potential**

This study suggests that the notion of developing a strong sense of identity and exploring the possibilities of self-determination is the area of personal development that is most specific to creative drama, while also perhaps the most intangible. It relies on processes which are reflective, kinaesthetic and active. It relates to the person's perception of *being an actor in the world* and the concept of the potential for creating change.

As Tom McGill explains:

We can utilize the fictional methods of drama and theatre to explore and rehearse possible solutions to our pressing problems.

Through fiction we can create the necessary distance to take risks in safety.

Taking successful risks develops our capacity for positive change.

'Power comes from risking ourselves in creation' [Paulo Friere] (McGill, 2001: Appendix 4, Donegal Local Development Company, 2004)

Through drama processes in a safe and non-judgmental space, roles, conflicts and attitudes may be explored, negotiated, changed and rehearsed. As discussed in my examination of the various drama approaches, this may impact on development of personal, social and political identity and self-image. It may also result in a generally more fluid, dynamic outlook in responding to the world, strengthening the concept of the individual and the group as co-creators of reality. Beginning as a perception of personal power, this outcome may result in further benefits, such as increased autonomy and self-advocacy.

This type of outcome may embody a critical pedagogy, and links applied drama processes very closely to forms of radical community education and learning for human development (See Williams, 1997).

In interviews, practitioners identified the progression of participants within and between roles and the beginnings of the awareness of potential for change:

P:.....we do a lot of work about the roles they've been given in life, and that basically they are their own scriptwriter. They can write their own script.we've also devised a piece which means that it's improvised so that those who are not confident don't have to stick to lines and they can let it evolve and emerge, so they know from the beginning this script can change at any point in time, depending on how the characters want it to change, because this is what life's like- you can change

your script in life at any point in time, once you get clear what you want to do. And even if other people don't like what you're doing, you're living your life and you don't have to please them.

S: That's a really nice concept for all of us...

P: Oh for all of us, sure, I mean the reason why drama is therapeutic is it's a reflection of life, and what we see on a stage sometimes makes us think, good lord I never thought of doing that and when we see a character doing something we think, goodness. And in dramatherapy, you dare to enact in a safe space, you play the role, and you realise I can play this role, I never thought I could say those things. And of course in the real life it is hard to say to your Mum or your Dad, but you suddenly realize 'I can', and that seed is sown.

Participants described increased assurance in their ability to 'perform' socially and accomplish self-representation as a key learning outcome:

I feel stronger, fitter and that I am changing every day.

I feel I am a stronger character.

I'm more able to control myself in a situation- getting to grips with things- things like relaxation, breathing techniques and 'letting go' in the build-up to actual performing can be followed elsewhere in my life, until now they'd have been discounted, ignored or simply not considered.

A: I think this is the best thing I have ever been in. It has had a huge impact on my life- I have freedom to act in my own style. I feel capable of anything. I can be myself without judgement.

B: I'm seeking ways of finding 'comfort' in all sorts of situations as then I'll perform better- similar to on stage.

The possibility of fluidity between roles, exploring and experimenting with aspects of the self in a safe environment, with implications for personal change and development were also discussed:

P Do and say things that in everyday situations would be thought of as strange, but there it's quite normal...so it's a real chance..... I think theatre is such a great leveller in a way, because you can't be cool and do theatre. And even if they come in cool, after a few sessions either you are getting into it, or you leave.after a while the cool goes and whatever they're getting into just improvising or whatever..... it's lovely. It keeps that element of creativity, fun and breaking down that very self-conscious thing, and the image thing, because that doesn't work, *and they can have loads of images*, it makes it more....

S: Playful and flexible.....?

P: Yes

This included the chance to take risks and express aggression:

A: I felt alright, like I felt happy in myself, and when I was acting out I felt all mad and I didn't know what I was doing; I just calmed down in myself then...

According to Brice Heath,

A sense of self identity... never lie entirely 'within' but always in dialectical constructions of how one appears to others... each individual learns to become human by doing what others already do... each 'plays' at different times and in multiple ways a wide range of roles... one's stance, character and emotional state are all, in turn, read by interactants and audience... an individual also reads others' responses as well as the self who interprets feedback and decides how to respond. (2000).

In this research, young participants in particular identified enjoying the experience of trying new roles:

I absolutely love drama because it's a way of being somebody completely different in a play. It's a way of meeting new friends and interesting people. It's really fun! You can be really silly and not get judged. It's so great to walk out of one world and into another! It's great to be yourself!

I have become a lot of different personalities.

S: What did you enjoy most as it was going along?

A: Just not being yourself.

The discovery of fluidity in roles seemed to impact on fluidity of thought process and activation of creative approaches to difficulties:

There is a solution to everything...endless possibilities.

S: What new things have you done or learned?

A: Looking outside the box.

Examples were given of situations where drama inputs had immediate impact on empowering participants to find solutions to changing ingrained patterns of communication:

P:.....with the Forumit really works. And I mean the feedback every time is great, it's so positive, like I was up in the school last week, and the class hadn't gelled andthere was a lot of fighting within the group. We went down and worked with them for one full day and got a call back saying, ' I don't know what you did, with them, but they're all getting on the best' so when you get feedback like that it makes your day.

S: Really....

P: They were getting on better, more attentive in class. What was happening was you had three bullies in the group, and they were just spoiling it for everyone else, and everyone else was afraid to say anything and again they all found their voices and thought 'right, we're not having this...'

S: They had got into a pattern...

P: They had just got into a rut, big time, they just needed a little push in the right direction.

The sense of having a voice, of having ones personal story heard and validated was mentioned again and again as therapeutic in itself, and as vital in developing a sense of personal worth and of contribution to a greater narrative:

Women in Northern Ireland were in the background, their needs weren't considered at that time..... I wouldn't have dreamt of talking about it..... so being able to tell my story, being understood and supported here.... It was unbelievable. My mother found it hard to take at first, but I have found that looking at my past really helped me to move on in my own life..... now I'm encouraging her to write down her experiences, and she's thinking about it.

P: But actually revisiting these stories, and being mothers themselves now, and understanding more the climate of the times from an adult point of view, they could understand why those things happened. And I think it'll help lessen that resentment that they carried with them for a long while... and even to bring issues up with family members that had never been brought up, it gave them the confidence and gave them their adult voice that allowed them to speak to their mother as an adult now, and to tease out some of those things.

In some cases, this communication was at a seemingly basic level, but in fact was of major significance to the participants involved, where they became actors in dialogue perhaps for the first time in their lives:

P:and it's very much reflective work...you know this woman in particular has really got the gist of this and is having great fun! And I very much embody everything she does, but I also sound it... every action she does has a sound that goes with it, so I do the action and the sound, so she deliberately will do the action to hear the sound, and she'll laugh, and there's that thing of - *she's recognised I'm in the room with her, and she's recognised there's a relationship.*

S: She gets a reaction...

P: And her eye contact has developed beautifully in this last four months, it's almost like something clicked in her head..... so she's realised this is not going away. For the first year she slept, she'd be asleep for the last fifteen minutes, and I was thinking what in God's name am I doing here?It's just the consistency, the trust that's built up- something just clicked, I mean earlier in the year, she started taking my hand, and I'd noticed from some of the other times in the group doing ' Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream', she was quite interested, and when she took my hand I just sang that song, and she moved her hand and according to the rhythm I sang it faster or slower, higher or deeper. And so that sort of caught her attention and so for a few weeks she would take my hand, and then she began to notice that if she'd scratch her nose I'd scratch my nose, and then ears is 'bzzz' and every body part has a different sound. So she'd touch her nose to hear the sound and so on...

S: So she's almost initiating the communication...

P:and the one who'll not really engage in a conscious way, she'll do some wee thing and we'll all copy it, and she'll kind of look around to see, and *she'll know she's been acknowledged.*like in the moment that they reach out that is just massive

S: Absolutely

P: I mean that's as big as someone else doing a four hour play sometimes

The importance of finding a voice often had very real and practical implications:

P:like I had a little girl, and she had no voice, and I was like, why is she here? Because she just didn't look like she was enjoying herself. So I let her on, and gently easing her into it, and she turned around and she was just fabulous, she was able to stand on the stage and this voice came out that we didn't even know existed

S: She'd be very very quiet in discussion?

P: Oh her whole...even persona... she was quiet and shy.

[interruption]

S: So you were saying that one outcome you were coming across was people finding their voice.....

P: And confidence, yes, that they can stand up and verbalise, or even get the problem off their chest. Because invariably it's the kids that can't talk are the ones that are going to get bullied, and it's a huge problem here..... and it just seems to be worsening all the time, so if you can address that as much as you can....

In other cases, the intrinsic personal therapeutic value was compounded by initiating a public dialogue on an issue the group felt strongly about, raising awareness, enacting possible solutions and potentially contributing to change at a structural level:

P: I mean there were people who were bringing up issues, whenever we were planning a performance, for example, a couple who both had disabilities within the group, and we did a play about the fact that the parents were not happy about the two of them getting married. So we did the play about the girlfriend bringing the boy home, and the parents' response to this. So this was a play of universal interest, but it arose out of the experience of the actual participants, so there would have been perhaps a therapeutic value in telling the story, but then there's artistic merit in that story being rooted in real life.

P:to realise that they have a voice in society is a great breakthrough for them.

A: I decided I would write to people who are in the right places to help make changes for women and children to keep them safe

P: We use a form sometimes called Action Theatre, and Voice Chorus work, and one of the Voice Chorus which we did, called Two Up, Two Down, where we chanted phrases that people with disabilities don't want to hear, phrases like "Aren't you looking well?" and "Does he take sugar?" "Sure it does you good, it gets you out", and we would have chanted this to the audience, then we did it with one performance with the MS Conference, and we asked the audience to tell us phrases that they didn't want, and one that one woman told us was "Oh you're too young to have MS", and she was very conscious of being the youngest person at the conference, and that came out, and we actually developed this form where we asked people to tell a story, a short story from their life, and we would play it back to them using one of these forms

S: Is that Playback Theatre?

P: It was, that was our version of Playback Theatre.

A: I think we brought up some of the issues that are important to older people, and in a way that was a bit of crack, that people might want to listen to

B: I never would have believed we'd do what we did- we spoke at conferences, seminars, at the Burlington Hotel!

S: What did you like best about the whole experience?

A: Well I liked the travelling, everybody treated us so well.

C: I'll always remember the junior doctors, they spoke to us after the show for a long time, they were really so interested in what we had to say.

S: So you really felt you were reaching the right audience?

C: Oh yes.

B: I thought it was all great fun.

A: It was part of the group who felt they'd been hurt badly by being labeled, being called some disability or other, so we came up with thing that was called 'Labels Stick', sort of names, labels that stick, so with percussion, to a beat saying "Labels stick" [*clap, clap*] "Labels stick"

B: And the finale was 'Labels stick-NO!' And we had a structure where C was in the center, and all they saw. all the people saw... was a wheelchair, and she said " I'm here, look at me!"

A: The public generally would have a disability to get past the wheelchair, all they can see is the wheelchair, they're frightened and they don't know how to speak.

A: And we did all this at seminars. We wouldn't have been fit to stand up and make a speech, but this way we got our point across to a whole room full of people.

In addition to increasing perception of personal potential generally, it should also be noted that for many participants, there was a shift in their concepts of themselves as cultural producers. In contributing to the drama process or performing in a piece of theatre, their relationship with the arts has changed.

Community Arts is a new concept in the area, and I mean really Community Arts is about process as opposed to product at its heart, at its core. People would be used to seeing productions and seeing different things being presented and they would say well that's that drama society and let them do it. But I think that people didn't think that they also had the creative skills that may not have been explored in the past, and really what we're doing is offering people an opportunity to dip into that, be it visual art, drama and storytelling, music or dance, so I suppose it's opening up a new concept to the person or people in the area, and really it's a lot of one- to-one initially to make them understand what it means and to take that fear away that you don't necessarily have to actually have a showcase in a big setting; that a showcase if one wishes can be an intimate situation among twenty friends or whatever.

A: When I seen drama on the brochure, I thought- well, I didn't know what to think, and, pleasantly surprised, thank God..

S: Yes?

A: I've enjoyed it so far. The thing I've enjoyed most is the idea of putting a performance together, putting the work in and actually doing the performance.

We are doing a play soon, and I never would have seen me doing it before!

Like X used to often think he'd love to be in a film, and I think even to be daydreaming about this, for him it's lovely.

A: You still have a lot of people coming up to you asking about the film we made.

B: And asking will we go further with it and things like that.

S: So they're all very interested?

B: Even asking for autographs....

Some participants have developed a sense of transferable expertise:

S: And where do you see yourself going? Are you thinking about any new possibilities for the future?

A: Well if there was another group I could tell them all about it.

Others' perceptions of the participants have also changed in this regard:

S: And what kind of feedback have you got from... is it mainly parents who see the performances so far?

P: Yeah, it was parents and friends and they were without a shadow of a doubt, completely blown away.I think none of those parents would have expected their child to perform in a show on a stage with a full sort of, lights go on, lights go off and stand there and bow at the end. That was excellent, that was such a brilliant feeling off that, you know, and people's feedback was tremendous, people were so happy about it, and the kids in here in the dressing room that night, they just were so happy. So, yes, the feedback has always been tremendously positive about it, and of course now the spin-off of that is they want more!

He takes great pride in performing, and that family and friends would come to see him. He loves introducing people to each other afterwards.

- **Capacity-Building**

Intimately linked to growth in facility to imagine and enact change, as discussed above, was the development of other capacities as identified by participants.

S: What things has this project has made you think about?

A: I'm more confident and capable since taking part.

B: What I could do when I try.

C: That I was a good actor.

D: Makes me feel better about myself. I did not think I had the ability to take part in a drama project.

Enhancement of social and communication skills was mentioned again and again:

S: Since you've been involved, would you say anything has changed in your life or your personality?

A: I'd talk to more people.

B: More sociable like.

S: How do you know that's happening in your life?

B: When you're going to different places, trying to meet new people, you wouldn't be as shy.

A: I was shy, then I got to know everybody, and I was as hyper as anything!

S:Anything else?

B: In school, you'd speak out more and give your opinion.

S: Is that because you'd be used to giving your opinion here?

B: Yeah.

F: I think the improvement in communication skills..... My son's skills are quite low, and some others in the group as well..... it's very hard for them to express their desires you know.... That's so important.

D: Well I was hoping when it started that it would help Y to think better, he falls down on his communication skills..... and it has helped him enormously, I can't believe it, and he loves it so much. Even today, we had visitors and....they asked what do you have to say in the play? And he said "nothing" but he's communicating, which to me is huge.

S: So that's a whole different aspect to it...what kinds of games do you do? Do they relate to the everyday world for you?

A: Well, with eye contact, sometimes I'm not that great at it, and they help you with concentrating and that...

.....because since I've been in drama it builds your confidence, in the wider world also, you can talk to people instead of shying away from them and being the loner in the corner. You feel more out there and able to talk to people because of it

For many, the responsibility of committing to a project and seeing it through was undertaken for the first time:

S: Do you think if somebody was coming into a project like this they'd have to be into drama to start with?

A: Well they'd have to know a bit about drama. We did some stuff before and we knew where we were going like.

B: I don't think that at all. They just have to make sure they're going to make the commitment to it, because like, you need to have a hundred per cent commitment because there's no point if you're needed for a piece saying I have to go here and here and here, because you learn that as you go along.

S: Would you have had to be that committed to something before?

B: No not like that...

My daughter complained about missing her soaps when she had to come to rehearsal, so I explained that the actors in the soaps have to give up things to perform for her- and that seemed to change the way she thought about it.

This engendered both a sense of personal competence and independence, and an appreciation of the experience of interdependence, teamwork and co-operation.

It's not part of the agenda..... but you can feel it off the group themselves, and that's a sense of independence.

.....and so they get to learn that sense of how everybody's important in the grand scheme of things, and they've all got a valid contribution to make, and if they don't make it they let somebody else down, and maybe that's a healthy enough lesson for anybody to learn.....

They really feel themselves a company, and you can see it now, the progression is moving all the time towards that, and they seem to have a good bond with each other, and you know there's the idea of looking after each other and watching out for each other. There's a couple of people who have far less capabilities than others, but you can already see it now where they'll interact among each other and look out for the weaker ones, which is excellent, is all one can hope for really.

A: [*chose images of dipping toe in water and tug-of-war*]

You can all give a big groan, but that's drama at the start of the year, a step into the unknown for everyone, but, you gain confidence with the support of everyone else, if you want to symbolise it in that kind of way. And this is like the production, the cast pulling the rope, everyone's a part of it, teamwork, the actual production, doing the whole project together... everyone is a part of it.

S: And is that the kind of thing that's impacted on the rest of your life?

A: Yeah, it's given me confidence, and enjoyment above anything else.

S: I noticed you mentioned teamwork as well, would that be something you'd carry with you?

A: That would be something I'd value.

Theatre skills, both artistic and technical, were learned in a supportive environment:

I've learned not to over-react to an audience of a hundred or more people (At first performing is totally nerve-wracking) It really helps to have people saying you'll be grand, just get up there, it really helps your confidence.

S: So how did you go about getting to the point where you were ready to do the performance?

A: We did workshops first, and we talked about what our concerns were, you know the type of things that affect older people, transport, pensions, all that. And we learned theatre skills- throwing your voice is very important, otherwise you'll only strain yourself, or no-one will be fit to hear you.

I have learned voice projection, how to hold myself in character on stage, stress-relieving techniques and breathing techniques.

S: What new things have you done?

A: Movement, voice, acting, Interpretation of pieces, lighting, sets, costume, Diablo, juggling, stilts...

B: Voice projection, stage presence, directing, sound, dance, yoga, mime, acrobatics, unicycle...

C: Stiltwalking, acting, lighting, costume, facepainting, maskmaking, mural painting, Diablo...

A: To be honest I was real excited when I heard there'd be drama on it, 'cause I did drama before. When we started on the course it was so different, because we done games, we were actually staring out people to see who'd last longer, and she was helping with our breathing, 'cause if you lose concentration up on a stage in front of a lot of people you'll start shaking, you won't be able to know what to do; when she helps you with the breathing it helps an awful lot.

Some participants reported an improvement in concentration and learning skills-

..... I've also been finding myself better able to focus on matters whereas before I'd lose track or interest.

Pride in achievement, especially where productions were concerned, was also widely mentioned:

S: Do you have any other comments, then, anything I forgot to ask?

B: It came out better than I thought.

A: I'm happy for myself.....in years to come when we're sitting down talking to our kids, we can say I did that

B: You never know what the future holds.

A: Exactly. It will always bring us back good memories and you can always say remember that part or that part.

I didn't think I would be capable of something like this..... I'm surprised at what we've achieved.

- **Confidence-building**

Perhaps as a result of the development of a stronger sense of personal potential; perhaps linked to the practice of voicing, improvising and performing; perhaps because of pride in artistic production; or perhaps arising from capacity-building, especially the development of social skills..... Becoming more confident and having increased self-esteem was an outcome almost universally reported by participants in this study, and the one most perceived by practitioners. It is almost certainly interlinked with all of the outcomes discussed so far.

The degree of change in confidence levels can only be self-defined; and participants assessments of this varied greatly. I found it was a concept that some participants suggested using different words.

S: And that's how other people reacted, did you feel any different in yourselves?

A: I felt all up in myself to be honest.

I agree with everyone else in terms of the confidence aspect, I suppose a subtle way of building confidence. You could use another word, comfort as well, you'd be a lot more at ease with yourself, going into new situations. Confidence and comfort in general.

Drama has helped me build up my self-confidence, but I still have a long way to go ... I trust people a bit more than I did, and I am better able to talk about how I feel.

I feel more self-confidence. I also feel a sense of belonging.

I have been through a lot, drama has helped me, it's helped me come out a lot and I'm still not fully there. We have until August...but...with some more help, I will get there.

A: Well it helps me use my confidence right... when I first came down here, for want of a better word, I was a bit too cocky, and now I'm able to use my confidence in a right way.

S: So.. now it's more assertive, rather than over the top, or...?

A: Weelll...I don't know about that, but I'm able to use my confidence in a positive way.

S: What are your feelings resulting from the project?

A: I feel more confident.

B: I feel confident, like I can get involved in more things, happier.

C: I feel more confident, not scared to give my opinion, wouldn't feel stupid if I was wrong about something.

In the beginning I felt really nervous and hostile towards drama. I could not see the point of the whole thing and I thought it was a complete waste of time..... However in the format and style we have done it, I feel it has really helped my self-confidence and self-esteem. I feel I could now get up on a stage and not give a damn about what other people think.

D: I feel happy because I can come here after school and have fun...confident- I can give my opinions here or anywhere else because I don't feel as shy anymore... more relaxed to make friends and speak freely.

E: I feel that I'm much more confident, more sociable and happier.

C: It builds confidence though as well..... for my child last year was the first time in a public place other than at school that she had ever been involved in a play, and they were very confident here when it was all over...

S: They really felt they'd achieved something...?

Yes, they kind of liked the idea of this was our performance, this was our day, which would seldom happen for them, you know maybe in a home situation it would, but not in a public situation, it seems to build up confidence that way for them.

S: It is a big thing, having a public event.

A:the confidence this drama gives you is unreal, it really helps you a lot, it's very good, I'm very thankful to that woman for it, in the last ten months she's done an awful lot for us.

S: So you'd really bring the stuff you've done here into real life as well?

A: It's helped an awful lot.

B: I agree with that as well.

A: 'Cause usually I wouldn't be able to talk like this at all. You see how long it's taken me to say something!

S: How would they have responded to it?

P: Well they did talk about it and from a visual physical side, they... we could see young people who might have been slow to come forward, and it changed them, you know. I'm sure they'll probably tell you that themselves when you talk to them.

S: So you felt they had learned social skills or gained confidence...?

P: I think so....it mightn't be too obvious, but I think they're there

Increased self-confidence may be verbally expressed, or, as studies included in the literature review have shown, it may manifest in becoming involved in another group or a new avenue of training or employment.

- **Quality of Life**

Further outcomes described by participants seemed to indicate improved quality of life, as evidenced by a broadened social circle and increased social opportunities, as well as experiencing drama processes as enjoyable or relaxing.

A: Since I've started doing drama I've built up so much confidence inside that I've met some local lads and started talking to them recently, and I've started going fishing with them on Lough Gill, going out on the boats fishing for salmon and trout.

S: So you've started making new friendships that you wouldn't have done before?

A: Yes..... So I'm really happy for doing the play helps to build up confidence for speaking to local people.

When I started I was very nervous, didn't know what to expect, but as it went on I came out with a good few friends I think I'll stay in contact with after the course.

It gave me back my confidence to playact and be silly and enjoy it.

P: It gets things going, and particularly in schools, because they're not coming to you for a specific purpose, and wouldn't normally do drama, and they don't see it as a performance, that it's just a bit of crack, a bit of fun.

Since I moved to where I'm living now, I wouldn't have met anyone outside of say my husband's family until I came to the group, I was very isolated. So it's been great to come here and make friends.... I haven't worked outside the home for a long time either and this has made me think about going back into work.... I'm starting another course soon that will be the first step towards that.

A: We travelled a lot. It got us out of the house.
B: And we met lots of people we wouldn't have met otherwise.
A: It really boosted our confidence.
C: We got to know other people and each other a lot better.

P: Well I think that one of the main outcomes would have been ...that they had two hours on a Wednesday morning that was just theirs. Where they had no other responsibilities to look to, and where they could concentrate on what they felt... and that being how they feel now in the present, and how they felt in the past. And also maybe a view to the future, because each and every one of them really talked about what they wanted for their own children, and freedom of expression, freedom to go out the door, freedom to go where they wanted... also different programmes offered to them, especially those in creative methods, creative arts.
But the women were very comfortable together, they trusted the facilitator very much, she was excellent at her work, P was, and I think they actually enjoyed coming together.

Two hours really fly when we're in here, you can't believe it, saying four o'clock is here already!

S: What has the project made you think about?
A: The future and forgetting about the past.
B: Living life to the full and enjoying every minute of it.

A: As it went on I kind of got more comfortable with it, it was much different than I expected. It was a totally different to what I thought drama would be, which was learning lines, appearing on stage and so on, a different approach to what I was used to, holistic, I would say. At the beginning I was set against it, but now I find it easier.
S: Anything in particular you liked about it?
A: What I liked about it was the total emphasis, not on performance alone...all things she's taught us like breathing techniques that you can use in other areas, not just drama alone. If you never did drama again, some of the things she's taught us you could use in many different areas.

- **Learning from content of play**

Some participants described important learning outcomes arising from text or devised pieces:

S: I like to ask people what the project has made you think about....
A: It made me think about the facts of what drugs can do to you.
B: A lot of people can react to drugs.

A: The picture I picked is a picture of Earth. The reason that caught my eye is because we're going through a play at the moment about four different characters who for one reason or another are tired of one aspect of life on earth and there's a whole series of events leading after that, but ... in the end they find out that even though their problem seems enormous and can't be solved, that if they leave, it doesn't mean its going to go away.. what I found out from that is that it's better than they realise, and we're lucky to have a planet such as our own.

(b) Social/Community Importance

Social capital, a concept often associated with the work of Robert D. Putnam (1993, 2000) refers to the extent to which social networks have valuable implications for civic life, resulting in concomitant mutual benefits flowing from norms of trust, reciprocity, information-sharing and co-operation. Although questioned by Morrow et al (2001) as overly simplistic, I regard it as a useful tool, if conservatively used. Deidre Williams (1997) identified the generation of social capital as a valuable outcome of community arts projects. The Health Development Authority (2000), too, in its study of arts in healthcare interventions highlighted the role of the arts in social inclusion resulting in improved levels of wellbeing.

According to these writers, arts processes relying on co-operation to achieve common goals was an important determinant of social capital. Factors already discussed here, such as enhanced sense of personal potential and self-determination, growth in confidence and capacity and improved communication skills are also significant, indeed uniquely so with regard to drama processes.

The themes arising in this section were:

- Involvement in other groups
- Improved access to the arts
- Developing community and inter-community networks
- Raising Awareness
- Creative problem-solving

- **Involvement in other groups**

According to many of the participants in this study, the experience of involvement in a satisfactory group/arts process influenced their decision to join other groups in their communities, or to consider new possibilities in terms of life or career choices.

S: Where do you see yourself going as a result of this project?

A: Getting more involved in the theatre and the community.
B: Hopefully to college to study acting!
C: BROADWAY! I hope anyway.....And theatre exchanges in Roscommon.
A: I would like to study drama at college.
D: Maybe working in the theatre when I leave school...or becoming a director.

S: What are your feelings as a result of this project?
A: Not to be as nervous in participating in other projects.
S: What new things have you done as a result of this project?
A: Joined a computer class, started second chance education, writing radio plays.
B: We met so many people and travelled to so many places it was unbelievable.

Some participants seemed much more hesitant in their aspirations:

S: Anything else you're thinking of doing?
A: I don't plan ahead of myself.

- **Improved Access to the Arts**

Improved access to the arts, as well as being experienced by participants as personally enriching had societal implications in terms of inclusion and integration of people who were in some way marginalized. This involved a move towards cultural equality, and a model of respecting and working with difference, which entailed valuable learning for participants and their families.....

F: Not many people get a chance to do what we done, so we may as well just go with the flow...
S: It's brilliant to get the chance...
M: 'Cause some people would do a course like that and it'd cost a lot.

S: What kind of difference do you think it makes to them?
P: I think the sense that they feel they can operate on an even par, that they can get up and do a show and be just as committed to that asan intense rehearsal period, and getting things wrong, and feel like they're making fools of themselves, and all those feelings that anybody can have, and I think that they feel that they're competing on an even keel, that they can do it, and I know it doesn't happen anywhere else, so they get a chance to get up there and do their thing. And many of them can be quite extrovert at times, they like to perform and sing, so there's no harm to put a little bit of discipline on that.....

C: I've seen Down Syndrome people acting in various things, and I just said, well, my son could be just as good as them, when they got the opportunity then it was great.
D: I was the same, at association meetings we would have had input from different groups, I remember two groups in particular....on television as well you would sometimes have Down Syndrome people in American series or drama things, so even the young people themselves would recognize that they could be on the TV as well, so it was a great opportunity..... we weren't looking

for our own TV show or anything, we just knew if the young people were given something to aim for, working with good people, that they could achieve....

E: I suppose you don't often see people with special needs involved in plays or anything, in feises or that, and it's certainly something new for them, and it's great that these people have taken it on because it hasn't been done in the past, and it's a great opportunity for them..... it might develop their communication skills to get them on the stage and project themselves... just an opportunity for them, so it's great.

....and for auxiliary staff:

P: Yes. It's a great idea. It's all at their pace, they make the choice... it's totally with them. Before this I probably would have said 'come on', but now I let them make the choice.

S: So there would be a lot of learning for you as a member of staff in this work too?

P: Totally. See A there, she would be a real loner, very intelligent and understands a lot. It's just amazing to see her take part in a group, she suggests games and everything. She just loves it. It'll teach me something too - they have more capabilities than I thought. They might not be as fast as the rest of us, but it's important to give them the choice. I wouldn't have done that so much in the past. So it's an interesting experience for me too.

- **Developing Community and Inter-community Networks**

Arising from the structure of projects -in some cases inter-community exchanges was a stipulation of funding, and collaborative working was a feature of all- and from the personal capacities developed through drama processes, participants frequently mentioned increased opportunities to meet people they would not otherwise have met.

A: Well I knew I'd meet new people for a start..

S: Right, you liked the idea of that..

A: And what way they'd be different to us..

B: And what way the other people would react to us, and how we'd react to them, but it came out good, like.

A: 'Cause we met with a few different cultures, like from across the border..

S: That's right..

B: It was a cross-border project, the four groups, but we all got on grand.

I learned to listen more to people with more understanding- not to judge them or impress my views on them.

I felt the sadness and fear people lived through, breaking of families and friends.

S: What has the project made you think about?

A: What we can do to help other people, and we really made lovely friends with people through the production.

B: Other people and their needs and disabilities.

C: Mixed with a lot of people I wouldn't normally meet.

- **Raising Awareness**

Building critical consciousness and awareness-raising on important issues was felt to be a major concern by participants of some projects. This may also have broader social significance, and contribute to changing attitudes and encouraging action, possibly impacting on structural or social change.

A: Well, I think it would be good if we actually made a difference somewhere. We did at the end of a performance about access for buses hand out letters to the conference to do with the fact that buses weren't accessible, that we got them to sign these letters and send them off to the appropriate minister, because somebody said something today, that reminded me of an issue we had tackled, yes it was that there's no neurologist in Donegal, and we have brought that into a number of our sketches, but we still haven't done anything about it, we still have no neurologist in Donegal, so I'd like to see a real change coming as a result of it.

B:we had a good sketch on the neurologist issue, nobody had seen a neurologist for years, and they were wondering where they were, P said they were extinct, they were an endangered species, so we tried to catch one...!

A: We did attempt some street theatre, or Invisible Theatre, but we didn't take that too far, about issues of disability.. we would go into a café and people around wouldn't know that we were having a play, and one person used a wheelchair, and the other person was saying "Oh it's great you have this girlfriend, and it must be great for you to have her to look after you", sort of inappropriate phrases, and the man saying, "Oh well actually, I look after her", so sort of having that conversation in a public place, and we had conversations about the neurologist issue as well..

S: And did you provoke any discussions, or did people stay well away?

A: The problem was finding places where there wasn't too much background music...That could be a direction you could take it. To be realistic, I just see the development as going around more schools.

C: And I suppose by generating conversations in the classroom, it's the first step towards change in attitude.

- **Creative-problem solving**

As discussed in the previous section, projects may result in the development of demonstrable conflict-resolution skills, and the ability to critically reflect on and find solutions to old patterns, both personal and political. In a longer-term view, project participants could bring such skills into future relationships and group situations in their lives.

(c) Artistic Importance

Currently the focus of policy and research interest is on the value of the arts in reaching non-arts social inclusion goals such as health but perhaps there is an argument for saying that arts inclusion should be considered one of the dimensions of social inclusion itself. (Jermyn, 2001:29)

In this section, I look at the artistic importance attributed to this work, in terms of:

- Quality work
- Developing Innate Creativity
- Skills learned
- Qualification

- **Quality work**

In the projects studied here, the question of prioritization of artistic merit, and indeed of a product at all, varied from group to group. Depending on the approach used, factors such as:

- mainstream aesthetics
- pride in artistic achievement
- working to the best ability of the group
- integrity of practice
- creating change/ development
- progression
- audience feedback
- efficacy in promoting discussion or awareness

were measures of quality variously cited.

In many cases, commitment to high-quality processes was evident in the practitioners' attitude to drama in community or healthcare contexts as part of serious artistic practice.

..... I think within the company that it's one of the best things that we do, it's one of the things I'm most proud of, that I feel that it's a real... it's doing something that other people aren't doing, and it's really... something that should be provided, and I suppose we're lucky enough... .. I mean we're

sitting in a building that's got all the facilities.....and that's the kind of ethos this company works on, so.... You've got to stand up and challenge yourself....

There was also evidence of finding new ways of regarding creative excellence in drama in community contexts, where the process determines the outcome, where creating change is integral to the artform. Rather than attempting to conform to an aesthetic based in historical contexts that could be seen as wholly irrelevant by participants, another approach is conceived: Sometimes the art is contained within the process. This approach bears comparison to the notion of relational aesthetics, described as

...an aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks in terms of the inter-human relations which they show, produce, or give rise to (Bourriaud, 2002:117).

Research participants observed this type of outcome in their practices:

P: So it's very simple, very repetitive, I mean in my reports I just have to continually say the challenge is not to bring in new techniques, it's to do the same again and again and again because that's what they're familiar with, that's what develops their trust, their confidence, and their sense of guiding this work, and I have to stop myself and just try and not get bored and really like in the moment that they reach out that is just massive.

The other outcome was they would have worked on the stories they had come up with themselves, to keep them very authentic to the women's words, and then the challenge of actually delivering this in some sort of a media context was left to their discretion, if they felt strong enough, if they felt confident enough to do it, then we would go ahead with it, if not we would maybe compile in a book. But all of them were OK to do it, and they all came on board, and they were nervous of course, they'd never dealt with a radio studio before, but they were very very good and they were confident in their work, you know.

I have a simple warm up where I get each of them to speak about something, every week it's something different, so they've heard themselves in the groupfor some of them at the end of the year if they've achieved that, they've done it; for another one it's getting on the stage and doing a good performance, for some it's really daring to open their mouth and value their opinion on something.

- **Developing Innate Creativities**

By creating access to participation in drama processes and skills training, participants' innate and unique creativity is developed, thus tapping resources they may not have known existed and expanding the bank of transferable skills available in the community.

- **Skills learned**

Skills developed ranged from writing, devising and performing to technical skills in lighting and sound.

P: At that point, the drama facilitators along with the scriptwriters worked with the young people to devise the story, to try to hone it down. The material that they came up with basically centred around issues that were what young people here are dealing with- drugs, teenage pregnancy, all that kind of thing, alcohol abuse and so on. The scriptwriter then wrote the script based on that and came back with the script, went through it again with the young people and made any adjustments that needed to be made, and honed the script right down to a proper screen story.

S: So the young people were very much involved....

P: Oh very much- they came up with the story, nobody else, it was theirs.

The importance of it is people can pick up technical skills, cos not everybody wants to be on the stage, they don't want to perform, but I'm giving them an opportunity to learn transferable skills for into the world of work, because I find even if we're putting on our own productions, it can be hard in this part of the country to find lighting technicians, to find sound technicians.

It's great that you get to work with professionals on an equal basis- the lights, sets and everything- you get asked your opinion. I like how we work with them- they don't dumb down what they're doing.

- **Qualifications**

One of the projects studied offered a FETAC qualification, while others had inspired participants to seek further training and education opportunities in the field of drama and theatre.

S: Where do you see yourself going as a result of this project?

A: Hopefully to college to study acting!

B: BROADWAY! I hope anyway. And theatre exchanges in Roscommon.

C: I would like to study drama at college.

D: Maybe working in the theatre when I leave school...or becoming a director.

S: Where do you see yourself going?

A: Join another theatre group when I move from here.

B: Looking forward to wonderful things.

C: Unicycling into the sunset.

D: I'd love to do something drama-related when I'm older.

E: In college, I hope to use the skills I have learned here, continue with drama, learn to juggle three balls. Helping out with future productions,. Learning more about theatre, read more plays, continue to be close to the people I have met

(d)Development of Transferable Skills

According to Jermyn,

It has also been suggested that participants develop creative as well as non-creative skills, such as communication or organisational skills. The attainment of these sorts of outcomes by individuals may represent progress towards harder social inclusion outcomes such as employment or education....(2001:18)

The following were seen by participants in the current study as concrete skills learned through participation in drama projects which were of benefit to them in other areas of their lives:

- Acting skills
- Ability to perform under pressure
- Creative Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Communication skills
- Physical co-ordination
- Teamwork, co-operation
- Public speaking
- Technical skills

Some of the previous discussion has touched on the transferable impacts of, for example, social skills. Additional comments include:

.....people can pick up technical skills, cos not everybody wants to be on the stage, they don't want to perform, but I'm giving them an opportunity to learn transferable skills for into the world of work

..... I love to act/ perform and so I hope to go on to study Art and Drama in University. I would like to become an actor.

A: I think our young people might come in as individuals, but they have to be part of the group,they have to get down to it, and you might feel like messing some nights, and they'd say to each other stop messing

.....

B: I found Z was very tired, you know from the effort they have to make to conform to a group, whereas they go to the clubs and they don't have to conform to anything. Here they have to knuckle down to it, and I think that's tiring.

S: So there's discipline involved.

B: There's discipline without a doubt.

S: And learning to be part of a team, and I think from what you're saying that maybe there's something about having other people relying on them as well, and knowing what it's like to cooperate.

A: And like when children are very young and learning to take their turn, they have to do that as well, you know waiting to get their piece in..... that's so important.

B: It makes them very wide awake, which they're not used to having to be.... It puts demands on them definitely..

..... a lot of people who've been in Youth Theatre are now in the process of doing degrees in Performing Arts, Media Studies, so it's really connected. And I have an example of one ex-member who's come back after a four-year degree course at Trinity, who's now doing some workshops for me. Another important part of my job is mentoring people who've come up through the Youth Theatre into leadership roles, empowering them.

It has helped me with interviews- knowing how to hold yourself under pressure

I found that too- my experience here taught me things like how to project my voice, how to address an audience. In college now..... you almost find yourself assessing other people's performance when they give a presentation...

I was a representative on the Board, going to meetings. I found that experience valuable for other meetings, interviews and so on

..... I know I want to work in an office/reception, and I can use my confidence skills there.

(v) Challenges of the Work

In discussion of the challenges of the work, the following issues arose:

- **Benefits of participation limited in short-term projects**

Those participants who had least previous exposure to arts projects, especially those from working-class backgrounds, were most likely to be ambivalent about possible social or personal impacts, especially in short-term projects. It would appear that sustainable provision is particularly vital in such cases.

- **Difficulties with the commitment required for the rehearsal process**

And having to get up at eight o'clock every morning, hanging around, waiting for other people to finish theirs, like; and then there'd be us like, and they'd be hanging around waiting for us so they can do their part, that was frustrating.

- **Feelings that the work was too demanding**

S: Were there any negative effects of doing this work?

A: My illness (epilepsy).

B: In the beginning I felt pressurized into doing something I felt I was not ready to do.

P: When it comes to performance, especially if there's a lot of traveling involved, it can be difficult to enthruse people, to get them to take part.

- **Developing new interests may alienate friends who don't share them**

S: Any negative aspects?

A: My friends get annoyed and bored because I always talk about films and acting.

- **Family members may resist efforts at personal development**

Some of my family members weren't too happy with me coming here, even though I didn't say too much about it. They were wondering what I was doing, what I might be saying about them I suppose.

Others are not always comfortable with participants' personal development. An abusive partner, in particular, may be threatened by the change implied in the power-balance of relationships. Tragically, one woman, already in a violent relationship, was killed by her partner while she was involved in a project which, according to other participants, was helping to build her self-esteem and sense of self-determination.

- **Level and number of skills required of practitioner**

Some practitioners mentioned the challenges of working with particular participant groups, the high energy level required, and the particular challenges of managing group dynamics.

And group dynamics, the facilitator has to keep aware all the time to have some sort of forum to discuss power struggles that are happening within the group, and there need to be structures in place so that if this does happen, both parties can talk about it, because sometimes a bullying situation can arise, and it's hard for us to get rid of our pasts, so the facilitator has to keep reiterating that everybody is equal, nobody should overshadow or dictate to anyone else in the group.

To be honest, a lot of therapeutic input was needed to get them to even basically listen to each other, a lot of it was working out their own issues, and you couldn't get on and do a session on drama or art or anything, because there was war going on in the rooms, or people were just not turning up because they were miserable or homesick

- **Participant Fall-off**

Although there was no cause for concern in drop-out rates of any project, I was interested to hear about participants who had *not* felt drama in community was appropriate for them; and did not access the benefits described by others.

P: ... I don't quite know why people were leaving.... There were people who were very fond of performance who left. There was one person who was very good at performance, but she always found it a struggle... and she decided to stop.

A: She went through so much agony before a performance, but she was very good on stage... she told us about it afterwards how difficult it was for her.

S: Do you know, I sometimes think when I'm speaking to groups of participants that I'm actually speaking to the converted. So could you tell me, has anybody dropped out and why do you think they might have not felt it was the place for them?

P: Yes. As far as I know ... I've had some people recommended who had home problems. they had an interest in drama, and unfortunately, I'm thinking of one girl in particular, she was very keen, but I think she couldn't cope with the level of confidence in the group, so she kept trying to undermine what was happening. She came twice, and I chatted with her and said, you know, just relax, but it was very hard for her and there were just problems with needing to have a lot of attention, and her way to do it was through negativity, so I'm very sad that we weren't able to embrace her.

S: So would kids need a certain level of confidence starting off?

P: No, I wouldn't think so. No. Because I know there have been other ones who've been incredibly, incredibly shy starting off, and who have really come into themselves. And as I say the whole thing is that nobody's forced to do anything they don't want to do. I'd be very sensitive to that. They're not going to be asked to do anything that'll expose them or put them on the spot when they're not ready. I think that was one case, and there were already a lot of problems before she came in, so she was working through a lot of stuff anyway, and maybe it wasn't the right time for her. Other people.... They find relationships, or they find jobs on a Saturday morning. You know there's not a big fall-out....

(vi) Towards Best Practice: Guidelines for Success

S: So if you were advising someone setting up youth theatre, what would be the things to bear in mind?

P: I think just to be clear about your aims and objectives, having a very clear mission statement, and I think being very clear about the criteria for membership, being clear about the relationship between process and product, having very consultative processes, make sure that young people's needs are met; that they are represented, and having a very varied programme. I think also being aware that it's a group of individual needs, and respecting that, and being flexible

S: So what do you see as the factors for a successful project? What are the possible pitfalls?

P: Yes, I think one, trust in the company, that they would have a credibility rating. Two, that the co-ordinator (myself) would have enough knowledge of excellent facilitators, and know that once that person was in position that I wouldn't have to worry about them, that the work would go on well. I think a venue that is comfortable for people to come into. I felt we fell down slightly in that sometimes our venue was cold and it was really like a workshop/rehearsal space, I think a cosier setting would have been better- but maybe then we'd get too cosy and very relaxed and lose focus! And they must know that you're with them a hundred per cent, that you're walking with them on this journey, and that when the task in hand is completed, that you reach out to them post the project and let them know that they're valued, that you just haven't dropped them, that would be important

The factors for effective projects, in the views of interview and focus group respondents, are summarized (in my words) in the table below. It must be emphasized that the table is a general summation, excluding in its simplicity the nuanced expression of research participants. As such, it is meaningful only in the context of the research project as a whole and the recommendations that follow.

It is of particular importance that funding bodies recognize that applying best-practice guidelines may be a superficial exercise in the absence of an agenda that accepts the potential of some drama approaches to produce unexpected and challenging results, and provides channels for dialogue on such outcomes.

PROJECTS	PRACTITIONERS
Clarity of aims, rationale, ethos.	Secure period of employment
User-led or user-responsive agenda	Practical experience as well as formal education to be recognized
Pursuing high- quality artistic experience/ process /product	Multi-skilled: Drama, group dynamics, sensitivity to special needs, communication, planning etc
Meaningful participation	Ethos of equality, understanding of power dynamics
Accessible	Flexible
Flexible and Reflexive	Good support structure
Ethos of equality	Wage commensurate with skills level
Sustainable- Long-term funding. Not reliant on key individual	Ongoing professional development opportunities
Good planning	
Effective partnerships with local, national or international agencies	
Effective evaluation and dissemination	
Designated building or appropriate space	

Fig. 14: Table summarizing generalized guidelines for success in community and healthcare contexts in the Northwest of Ireland²³

²³ It must be emphasized that the table is a general summation, excluding in its simplicity the nuanced expression of research participants. As such, it is meaningful only in the context of the research project as a whole and the recommendations that follow.

These findings exhibit a number of commonalities with Jermyn's summary (2001) of best practice principles for community arts as found by three major reports.

PAT 10 (DCMS, 1998)	Williams (1997)	Matarasso (1997)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defining common objectives in relation to actual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly stated objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting equitable partnerships supporting local commitment embedding local control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> group ownership, trust and co-operation meaningful levels of participation artists as collaborators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> equitable partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pursuing quality across the spectrum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pride in artistic achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> securing sustainability connecting with the mainstream of art and sport activities working flexibly with change valuing diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> degree of investment by other stakeholders in the long term outcomes degree of goodwill developed in other allied local or regional organisations and networks capacity to develop community leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shared ethical principles proportional expectations good planning joint evaluation

Source: DCMS, 1998; Williams, 1997; Matarasso, 1997.

Fig 15: Summary of best practice principles for community arts (Jermyn, 2001)


V: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA IN COMMUNITY AND HEALTHCARE CONTEXTS IN THE NORTHWEST OF IRELAND

As outlined in sub-section (i) of the previous section, a number of support organizations have played vital roles in the extension and promotion of this sector in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal in recent times, most notably the local authority Arts Offices of Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal and the Health Promotion Unit of HSE Northwest. Collaboration between these organizations, other interested bodies and drama practitioners will be central in advancing a holistic and innovative approach to this diverse field of practice in coming years, which is responsive to the expressed needs of participants and offers opportunities for experience of excellent artistic practices and processes.

My recommendations are grouped under two headings: Funding and Support and Research and Development. Examples of current initiatives in community/healthcare drama or arts that could inform future developments are included where appropriate.

- **Funding and Support**

- (i) Further work is needed on development of realistic and effective support networks, locally, nationally and internationally. The promotion of sustainable projects depends on support structures with shared understandings of practice and clear policies and visions. Forms may vary in differing contexts. The emergent Arts in Health Partnership in the Northwest for example, is building on connections between Arts sector and Health sector professionals towards a coherent Arts in Health policy; while a group of arts practitioners who have participated in the Artists in Context series are currently reviewing appropriate forms for an independent working format.

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- (ii) Practitioners require secure periods of employment, with clear job descriptions and adequate support and payment. The progression of this sector depends upon, at a minimum, the development of a recognized salary scale for arts workers in community and healthcare settings that is commensurate with the level and range of skills required for this work; and ideally the legitimization of the profession of community arts practitioner. Statutory and other bodies wishing to derive optimal outcomes from drama approaches must look towards the provision of sustainable positions for practitioners.
 - (iii) Long-term strategies must be found in terms of project planning, funding and progression or exit routes. Only sustainable projects can contribute to long-term personal or social impacts. Projects which are ‘parachuted in’ to a particular setting have limited benefits, and at worst, may frustrate participants, after temporarily raising their expectations. Effective consultation with participant groups at all stages is vital in this.
 - (iv) The tendency to subsume drama or other engaged arts programmes into the fulfillment of social policy objectives must be approached with caution. It is recommended that support strategies recognise the unique contribution of drama in community and healthcare contexts, but avoid charging projects or practitioners with responsibilities properly addressed by other means.
 - (v) Funding and support structures must be sufficiently flexible to avoid the danger of projects becoming funding-led, with overly-specific objectives curtailing the potential of applied drama. By its nature, creative work in community contexts entails the need for an element of flexibility regarding project outcomes. A genuine commitment to the potential of

this work in contributing to personal or social change must embrace the inevitability of conflict and criticism en route to meaningful outcomes.

- (vi) Practitioners whose work embodies a critical agenda could consider seeking supports from non-traditional sources, building affiliations, as Kester (1999) suggests, with organizations working towards change or social justice.

- (vii) Funding criteria and evaluation requirements need to be suited to an understanding of the complexity of this work. Depending on the focus of the practitioner and that of the funding body, emphases on utility may be problematic, as, conversely, may be concentration on product. Methods of evaluation must be found that reflect both the complexity and humanity of processes and the quality of artistic (and other) outcomes in specific contexts. This might be achieved on an interagency basis, including representatives of both arts and non-arts sectors.

- (viii) Definitions encompassing understandings of the new aesthetic of collaborative practice must be sought which reflect the cultural contribution of drama in community and healthcare (see Kester, 1999, Gleeson, 2004, Lacey, 1994, Gablik, 1998, Bourriaud, 2002). Current funding structures tend to strongly delineate ‘arts’ from ‘community arts’ or ‘arts in health’; and marginalization from mainstream or ‘real’ arts is perpetuated by an excessive reliance on established contextual understandings.

In the field of drama, the model of theatre companies combining professional theatre work with community-focused work has been successful, and could be further facilitated by funding structures that encourage companies to operate simultaneously in (or between) the two sectors. Likewise, practitioners focusing on discursive, process-based work in community contexts require further recognition.

- **Research and Development**

(i) Educational opportunities in applied drama practice, which tap into the extant richness of the field of practice, are vital for the future development of this sector. The inclusion of Applied Drama as a core element of the proposed degree programme in Performing Arts at Institiúe of Technology, Sligo is recommended; which could involve links to expertise in Community Drama at the University of Ulster at Magee. Balor DCA has developed a training scheme for grassroots workers which might serve as a model elsewhere.

(ii) Specific educational provision is needed for staff from non-arts disciplines planning to conduct drama projects or assist drama practitioners.

A short course, offering workshops in various art forms to community hospital staff interested in using creative approaches with older people has been piloted by Older Peoples Services and the Health Promotion Department of the HSE Northwest. Possibilities of FETAC accreditation are currently being investigated.

(iii) Specific staff appointments are recommended for both arts and non-arts organizations, for liaison with drama practitioners working on a freelance basis to ensure satisfactory facilities and artist supports.

(iv) Additional research into the impacts of drama in community and healthcare contexts would be useful in promoting this sector to funding bodies and potential affiliates in the Northwest. Dissemination of ideas on best practice is important, and new local channels could be added to the Leitrim Arts Newsletter for this purpose, as well as further use of existing Irish fora such as CREATE's journal, *Contexts*, national Arts in Health conferences (organized by CREATE in 2004) and international

sources. Continuing debate is necessary on thorny issues such as power within the participant-practitioner relationship, voice and authorship, funding models and their implications, pursuing quality in process- and product-based work.

- (v) Further structural facilities dedicated to arts in community and healthcare settings are required. In the view of many participants in this research, this would mean substantial investment by statutory agencies in provision of buildings or spaces.
- (vi) Broadening the scope of drama approaches in schools is important in furthering understanding of the learning/ teaching potential of the artform. Partnerships with schools are also vital for projects where awareness-raising outcomes are sought.

VI: CONCLUSION

As the first piece of research to concentrate on the generalized field of drama in community and healthcare contexts in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, I believe that this study has successfully mapped both the physical and structural characteristics of this sector in its diversity; as well as the perspectives, attitudes and aspirations of those involved with this work on a daily basis as participants, practitioners, organizers, managers or supporters.

However, this is a complex field, and a map is merely a beginning. If this area is to be seriously interrogated, longer-term research into the personal and social impacts of involvement of these processes are needed, as well as intensive evaluation of individual projects.

The outcomes of participation in drama projects found by studies reviewed in the literature section bear strong similarities to those evidenced in this research of the Northwest of Ireland. Particular difficulties in accessing such positive benefits, were, however, thrown into sharp focus in the course of interviews and focus groups. I would recommend that later, more specific studies pay particular attention to the social and structural factors that may hinder realization of the potential of drama projects, and look at best practice in minimizing these disadvantages. Such work would feed into the consideration of how to achieve the recommendations suggested by this study- building networks, ensuring sustainability etc- itself a major piece of work.

Given the impressive cultural and social contribution flowing from this sector, it is to be hoped that commensurate recognition and supports will be afforded to enable its further development in the Northwest.

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VIII: APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cover letter and Survey form

School of Business & Humanities
Institute of Technology
Sligo

Dear

I am conducting postgraduate research at IT Sligo, into applied, community and therapeutic drama practices in the Northwest.

At present, I am attempting to discover where, how and with whom drama is being practiced with a broad range of objectives, whether in the context of inclusion, capacity-building, community development, therapy or others.

I am enclosing a copy of a questionnaire, which is being sent to relevant groups and individual practitioners in the region.

I would be most grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete and return the form in the envelope supplied as soon as possible.

The information collected will help to map applied drama activities in the area at present; and will provide me with the basis for further qualitative research.

Please contact me at 071 9155405 if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time.

Best wishes,

Susan McDonnell

APPLIED DRAMA AUDIT

Name.....

Organisation.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone..... E-mail.....

1. Please describe the applied/ community drama project(s) provided by you/ your group at present

2. How often do these activities take place?

Weekly Monthly One-off event Other _____

When did they start? (Month/ Year) _____ / _____

3. Have you been involved with any other similar projects in the past three years? If so, please describe type and duration.

4. Who is the target group for your current project?

Approximately, how many people have participated?

5-10 10-30 30-50 50-100 100+

5. Who has been involved in organising the project?

Staff Other

External Artist

Name(s) & contact no. _____

Who has facilitated the project?

Staff Other

External Artist

Name(s) & contact no. _____

6. What are the main objectives of the project? Please number one to five (or more) in order of importance.

recreation/pastime

social inclusion

community development

learning drama skills

enjoyment

personal development

confidence-building

therapy

social outlet

catalyst for social/political

action

awareness-raising

enhance physical/ mental

wellbeing

producing quality work

other. Please

describe _____

7. How have your community-focused activities been funded?

8. Are you/ your group interested in further applied drama activities in the future? If so, what would you like to do?

What barriers, if any, do you perceive to doing this?

9. Any further comments?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Appendix B: Mailing list for survey (Community and Healthcare sections)

Address1	Address2	Address3	Address4	Address5
'Community' Section				
Bernadette Meehan	Youth Theatre	c/o The Factory	Quay St	Sligo
Bernadette Meehan	Cloonagh	Beltra		Co Sligo
Ciaran Mc Cauley	Blue Raincoat	The Factory	Quay St	Sligo
Bernadine Mc Manus	culleenamore	Strandhill	Sligo	
Maugherow Project	c/o St Patricks NS	Maugherow		Co Sligo
Sonas	c/o Jim Lynch	(private address)	Sligo	
Paul Egan	Macra Co. Sec.	Lavey	Charlestown	Co Monaghan
Catherine McCann	Youth Info Service	5A Market St	Sligo	
Marina	Donegal YouthService	26 Celtic Apts.	Pearse Rd	Letterkenny
Joanne Donaghy	Youthreach	Bethany Hse	Coneyborrow Rd	Letterkenny
Kate McCarthy	Leitrim Youth Drama	Leitrim Partnership	Church St	Drumshingaugh
Anna Ni Bhroin	Aistheoir Elaiaon	Udaras na Gaeltachta	Doiri Beaga	Co Dun na nGall
N Leitrim Men's Group	Teach Fir	N. Glens Devt. Co.	Station Rd	Manorhamilton
Eileen O'Toole	Woodview House	Cornaroy	Drumshanbo	Co Leitrim
Ricky Vandenberg	Cloncose	Cornafean	Co Cavan	
Vivienne Caldback	7 Abbey Heights	Boyle	Co Roscommon	
Chris Thompson	Hit & Myth	Shanraw	Keshcarrigan	Co Leitrim
Christophe Lombardi	Teach Siannan	Shanraw	Keshcarrigan	Co Leitrim
Deirdre Cosgrove	Macra Co. Sec.	Ballymagovern	Newtowngore	Co Leitrim
Mark Mc Collum	Balor Development Co	Main St	Ballybofey	Co Donegal
Anne Sweeney	Workshop Drama Gp	Rossbeg	Portnoo	Co Donegal
Inishowen Carnival Group	Old Schoolhouse	Malin Town	Co Donegal	
Ailbhe Hines	Makonde	Carnamuggagh Hse	Letterkenny	Co Donegal
Seima Quinn	Saol Beo Arts	Rosemount	Letterkenny	Co Donegal
Seamus Carlin	Arts Festival	Ballyhailleue	Donegal P.O.	Co Donegal
Colm O'Dwyer	Macra Co. Sec.	79 Admiran Pk	Stranorlar	Co Donegal
Youth Drama Project	The Diamond	Raphoe	Co Donegal	
Trisha Nesbitt	St Fiachra's	Training Centre	Kilmacrennan Rd	Letterkenny
Carmel McGill	Youthreach	Gortahork VEC	Gortahork	Co Donegal
MS Society	Regional Office	30 Academy Ct	Pearse Rd	Letterkenny
see BMeehan	Anna Legge	c/o Glens Centre	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim
Ultan Mulvihill	Youthreach	St Annes	Sligo	
Bridie Walsh	Sligo Family Centre	The Mall	Sligo	
Nuala Doherty	Sligo Social Services	The Lunghy	Sligo	
Antoinette	Youthreach	St Fiachra's	Kilmacrennan Rd	Letterkenny
Co ordinator	St Josephs	Training Centre	Dublin Rd	Carrick on Sha
Maura Logue	Wavelengths	Tir Hugh Resource Cr	The Mall	Ballyshaugh
Holy Family Daycentre	Ballytivnan	Sligo		
St Joseph's School	Ballytivnan	Sligo		
P.A.P.A	c/o Brid Duane	Rossylogan	Donegal Town	
Vincent Roddy	Macra Training	Lough Talt	Tubbercurry	Co Donegal
Cregg House	Rosses Point Rd	Sligo		
St Cecelia's School	Rosses Point Rd			
Re: Drama	Dolmen Centre	Collooney	Portnoo	Co Donegal
Down Syndrome Assoc.	c/o Rena Meehan	16 Cartron Court	Sligo	
Catherine Gibbons	c/o Wavelengths	Tir Hugh Resource Cr	The Mall	Ballyshaugh
Mary English	Second Chance Ed	VEC	Ard O'Donnell	Letterkenny

St Michael's Family Cr.
Rosaleen Sherlock
 Little Angels School
 Declan Gorman
 NDTI
 Rainbow
Mary Mc Kenna
 Pamela Culkin
Ann McGowan
Marie Hannigan
 see **B McManus**
Womens Centre
Sara Anderson
 Kate Fitzpatrick
 Bernadette Comiskey
Paula Gorman
 Sean D'arcy
 Kate Ramsey
Rose McGowan
 Cliodna Drury Byrne
 Eamonn Wheeler
 Travellers' Project

Church Hill
Dochas Clubhouse
 Knocknamona Park
 Upstate Theatre Co
 Letterkenny Rd
 Pastoral Centre
DV Service
 St Annes Youth Centre
Atlantic View CDP
Old Fintra Road
Training for Success
Port Rd
 saradrama@yahoo.
 Mossy Glen
 Traveller Centre
Resource House
 Nat Training & Devt
 Northside Centre
Wheelchair Assoc
 NW Parents & Friends
 Rehab Care
 Pine Hill Ind. Estate

Sligo
Kennedy Parade
 Letterkenny
 Narrow West St
 Lifford
 Letterkenny
PO Box 55
 Chapel St
Ballyshannon
Killybegs
IT Sligo
 Letterkenny
 Lecany
 STWP
2 Racecourse View
 Bridge St
 Forthill
Resource Centre
 11 St Annes
 St Annes
 Mountain Top

Sligo
 Co Donegal
 Drogheda
 Co Donegal
 Co Donegal
Letterkenny
 Sligo
Co Donegal
Co Donegal
Ballinode
Co Donegal
 Carndonagh
 Community Centre
Cranmore
 Sligo
 Sligo
Cartron
 Sligo
 Abbeyville
 Letterkenny
 Co Dor
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'Healthcare' Section

Cath McClean
 Maire Magennis
 Helen Gogarty
 Elizabeth Henry
 Siobhan Stapleton
 Sean Dunne
 Denise O'Boyle
 Julian Theseira
 Marie Nolan
 Anne Maloney
 Siobhan Taylor
 Amanda Doyle
 Margaret Wilson
 Sheila O'Doherty
 A.M. McCrossan
 Mary Brown
 Philomena Duffy
 Day Centre
 Callow House
 Bernadette O'Hare
 Carmel Maguire
 Jackie Browne
 Sheila Duffy
 Margaret Wilson
 Andrew Aitken
 Jacinta Lyons
 Kate Kelly
 Paddy McTeague

Fostering Services
 NW Counselling
 Social Worker
 Child & Family MH
 Family Primary Care
 Education Centre
 Child & Family MH
 Daycentre, JCM
 Daycentre
 Daycentre
 St Agnes
 Cleary Centre
 The Angle Daycentre
 Cashel na Cor
 St Nicholas
 Resource Centre
 Training Centre
 37 Fairgreen Park
 Ballyraire
 Sean O'Hare Unit
 Residential Unit
 Drumboe Respite Hs
 Ard Greine Unit
 St Martin's
 Piermont Hse
 Ballydevitt Hostel
 Riverwalk Respite Hs
 Ballymacool House

Garden Centre
 1 St Eunan's Court
 Community Hospital
 Molloway House
 NWHB
 St Conall's Hospital
 General Hospital
 Carndonagh
 Cuanannie
 College Farm Rd
 Donegal Town
 Donegal Town
 Dungloe
 Buncrana
 Buncrana
 Woodhill Rd
 Sean O'Hare Unit
 Letterkenny
 Letterkenny
 Stranorlar
 Bundoran
 Stranorlar
 Mullindrait
 Falcarragh
 Church Lane
 Ballydevitt
 Carndonagh
 Letterkenny

St Conall's
 Hospital
 Convent Road
 Donegal Town
 The Mall
 Ballyshannon
 Letterkenny
 Letterkenny
 Co Donegal
 Ballyraie
 Letterkenny
 Co Donegal
 Co Donegal
 Co Donegal
 Co Donegal
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 Stranorlar
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Teresa Gordon	Sea View House	Dromore	Mountcharles	Co Dor
Carmel Boyle	Milltown house	Carndonagh	Co Donegal	
Mary McHugh	Day Unit for Elderly	Tubbercurry	Co Sligo	
Teresa Dykes	Cloonamahon Centre	Collooney	Co Sligo	
Margaret Higgins	Suaimhneas Respite	Pearse Road	Sligo	
Oliver Davitt	Mulholland House	Tubbercurry	Co Sligo	
John Sexton	Gniomh Lann Centre	Ballinode	Sligo	
Mary McHugh	Gallagher House	Tubbercurry	Co Sligo	
Janet Gaynor	Health Promotion	NWHB	Saimer court	Ballyshar
Ann McAteer	Health Promotion	NWHB	Saimer court	Ballyshar
Deirdre Coyle	Health Promotion	NWHB	Saimer court	Ballyshar
David Simpson	Health Education	NWHB	Letterkenny	Co Dor
Michael McCole	MH Service	Tirconail Hse	Letterkenny	Co Dor
JL Bonar	Park View Hse	Day Hospital	St Conalls	Letterk
Pauric McHugh	Day Centre	St Conalls	Letterkenny	Co Dor
John McCardle	Psychiatric Unit	General Hospital	Letterkenny	Co Dor
Hugh McFadden	19 Solomons Court	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
Mags Kerlin	20 Solomons Court	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
Moira Mills	St Eunans Court	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
Geraldine Meehan	MH Service	Primary Care Centre	Stranorlar	Co Dor
John James Mc Bride	Worklink	Pearse Rd	Letterkenny	Co Dor
Liam Glenan	Mountsouthwell	Social Club	Letterkenny	Co Dor
Breda O'Driscoll	SRU	East End Hse	Donegal Town	Co Dor
Denise Curtin	SRU	Convent Rd	Carndonagh	Co Dor
Sally Doherty	Worklink	Buncrana	Co Donegal	
Brid McKelvey	SRU, Park Hse	Carnmore Rd	Dungloe	Co Dor
Peggy Scanlon	Linden Hse	Keash Rd	Ballymote	Co
Tommy McDonald	Benbulben Lodge	Cashelgarron	Co Sligo	
Eugene McGovern	Castle Court	Cliffoney	Co Sligo	
Mary Harkin	Cypress Lodge	Holy Well Rd	Sligo	
Noel Rooney	Caltragh Hse	Caltragh	Sligo	
James Cogan	Sliabh Ban	Slish Wood	Sligo	
Phil McGovern	Bank Hse	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim	
Ger McLoughlin	Ashbrook Hse	Mohill	Co Leitrim	
Carmel Gunning	Lord Edward St	Ballymote	Co Sligo	
Margaret Glennon	Ben View	Ballytivnan	Sligo	
Sean Creaven	St Columbs's Hosp	Ballytivnan	Sligo	
Caroline Owen	MH Day Hospital	Markievicz Hse	Sligo	
Eileen O'Brien	Rasheen Day Centre	Sligo		
Phil Mc Gowan	Arun Breffni Centre	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim	
Carmel Loughlin	Kilgar Day Care Club	Leitrim Lakes Hostel	Kiltyclogher	Co L
Easkey Health Centre	Easkey	Co Sligo		
Denis O'Brien	Summerhill Lodge	Carrick on Shannon	Co Leitrim	
Dr Geraldine McCarthy	Charter Hse	Market St	Sligo	
Maura O'Donnell	Teach Trasna	3 Lower John St	Sligo	
Siobhan Healy-McGowan	Alzheimers Daycare	Dunally	Co Sligo	
Evelyn Carbury	Autism Services	17 Mail Coach Rd	Sligo	
Jerome McGirl	Resource Centre	JFK House	JFK Parade	
Bernie Meers	Nu-Haven	51A John St	Sligo	
Enda Moloney	Club91, Chez Nous	NWHB Resource Ctr	St Columbas Rd	
Mary T Gallagher	100 Knocknamona	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
Danny Meenan	Residential Manager	Millenium Court	Pearse Rd	Letterk
Judith McLaughlin	Lios na nOg	1 Glendallen	Ballytivnan	
Coreen McShea	9 Hazelwood Dr	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	

Appendix C: Additional contacts

Active Age Groups								
ID	Title	First Name	Surname	Full Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	County
5	Ms	Pat	Nicholson	Ms Pat Nicholson	Sligo Active Retirement, Bellevue	Upper Pearse Road	Sligo	Co Sligo
7	Ms	Joan	Kelly	Ms Joan Kelly	Chairperson, Glenfarne Active Age Group	Mullaun	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim
8	Mrs	Mary	McGurrin	Ms Mary McGurn	Treasurer, Rossinver Active Age Group	Cortoon	Rossinver	Co Leitrim
9	Ms	Bridget	Fitzpatrick	Ms Bridget Fitzpatrick	Chairperson, Club Cluainin Active Age Group	Boggaun	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim
10	Ms	Tessie	McSharry	Ms Tessie McSharry	Secretary, Active Age Committee	Coolegraine	Dowra	Co Leitrim
11	Ms	Mary Ellen	Ward	Ms Mary Ellen Ward	Chairperson, Active Age Group	25 Drumlease	Dromahair	Co Leitrim
12	Mrs	Alice	McGowan	Mrs Alice McGowan	Chairperson, Tullaghan Active Age Group	Kinlough		Co Leitrim
13	Ms	Annie	Gallagher	Ms Annie Gallagher	Chairperson, Active Age Committee	Health Centre	Kiltyclogher	Co Leitrim
14	Mrs	Lil	McMorrow	Ms Lil McMorrow	Drumkeerin Active Age Group	Sheena	Drumkeerin	Co Leitrim
16	Mr	Alfie	Banks	Mr Alfie Banks	Active Age Group	Sligo Road	Ballymote	Co Sligo
17	Ms	Phil	Flannery	Ms Phil Flannery	Active Age Group	The Mount	Tubbercurry	Co Sligo
18	Ms	Margaret	Pilkington	Ms Margaret Pilkington	Strandhill Active Age Group	Strandhill	Sligo	Co Sligo
19	Sr	Pascale	McMoreland	Sr Pascale McMoreland	Banada Family Centre	Tourlestrane		Co Sligo
20	Mrs	Ena	Domoney	Mrs Ena Domoney	Kiltyclogher Active Age Group	Glenfarne Road	Kiltyclogher	Co Leitrim
21	Ms	Bernadette	Doherty	Ms Bernadette Doherty	Bundoran Afternoon Club	3 Church Road	Bundoran	Co Donegal
23	Mr	Paddy	Doyle	Mr Paddy Doyle	Active Age Group	Carrick-on-Shannon		Co Leitrim
24	Ms	Annie	Sweeney	Ms Annie Sweeney	Geevagh Senior Citizens	Geevagh		Co Leitrim
26	Ms	Patricia	Kearns	Ms Patricia Kearns	Skreen Active Age Group	Skreen		Co Sligo
29	Ms	Dympna	McKeon	Ms Dympna McKeon	Drumnacool	Via Boyle		Co Sligo
31	Ms	Kitty	Holahan	Ms Kitty Holahan	Drumcovra	Ballinamore		Co Leitrim
32	Ms	Anna	Bredin	Ms Anna Bredin	Tullys Kearney	Manorhamilton		Co Leitrim
34	Ms	Mary B	Kerrigan	Ms Mary B Kerrigan	Twilight Zone Active Age Group	41 Tir Connail Street	Ballyshannon	Co Donegal
35	Ms	Kitty	Youds	Ms Kitty Youds	Cliffoney			Co Sligo
36	Ms	Geraldine	Flanagan	Ms Geraldine Flanagan	Calry Active Age Group	Hazelwood	Sligo	
37	Ms	Catherine	Carney	Ms Catherine Carney	Ben Wisken Active Age Group	Ballintrillick	Sligo	
38	Mr	Lewis	Griffith	Mr Lewis	Ballyshannon	Lowertown	Ballyshannon	Co

Active Age Groups								
ID	Title	First Name	Surname	Full Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	County
				Griffith	Bowling Club	Cavangarden		Donegal
39	Mr	Pierce	Ferriter	Mr Pierce Ferriter	Ballintra & Laghey Senior Citizens	Tullywee	Laghey	Co Donegal
41	Mr	Eddie	Gavin	Mr Eddie Gavin	University of 3rd Age	9 The Sheep Haven	Portna Bla	Co Donegal
42	Ms	Catriona	Ni Kelly	Ms Catriona Ni Kelly	Tir Boghaine Teoranta	Udaras Buildings	Kilcar	Co Donegal
43	Ms	Maura	Cannon	Ms Maura Cannon	Active Retirement Association	Serenity House	Moville	Co Donegal
44	Ms	Mary T	McLoughlin	Ms Mary T McLoughlin	Active Retirement Association	Malin Road	Carndonagh	Co Donegal
45	Mr	Dermot	McDermott	Mr Dermot McDermott	Retired Persons Group	Moyleurg	Knappagh Road	Sligo
46	Ms	Margie	Cornyn	Ms Margie Cornyn	Active Age Group	Balinaglera Health Centre	Ballinaglera	Co Leitrim
47	Ms	Geraldine	Healy	Ms Geraldine Healy	Ballinacree Active Age Group	Carrowkeel	Castlebaldwin	Co Sligo
48	Ms	Ann	Wimsey	Ms Ann Wimsey	Northside Senior Citizen's Group	Forthill	29 Old Bundoran Road	Sligo
49	Mr	Charlie	Devine	Mr Charlie Devine	Bornacoola Active Age Group	Bornacoola		Co Leitrim
50	Ms	Frances	O'Reilly	Ms Frances O'Reilly	Drumreilly Active Age Group	Drumreilly		Co Leitrim
51	Ms	Teresa	O'Dowd	Ms Teresa O'Dowd	Active Age Group	Donegal Town		Co Donegal
52	Ms	Eileen	Curran	Ms Eileen Curran	Ionad Lae Group	Gweedore Day Centre	Derrybeg PO	Co Donegal
53	Ms	Maureen	O'Sullivan	Ms Maureen O'Sullivan	Widows Association	Roshine	Burtonport	Co Donegal
54	Ms	Rose	Farrell	Ms Rose Farrell	Older Women's Group	Downings		Co Donegal
55	Ms	Claire	Laird	Ms Claire Laird	Friday Active Age	Volt House	Raphoe	Co Donegal
56	Mr	Patsy	Friel	Mr Patsy Friel c/o Sam Gallagher	Drop in Group	St Vincent De Paul	Castlefinn	Co Donegal
57	Sr	Mercedes		Sr Mercedes	Family Enrichment Centre	Stranorlar		Co Donegal
58	Ms	Brid	Bonner	Mr Brid Bonner	Buncrana Active Age Group	Buncrana		Co Donegal
59	Ms	Carmel	Loughlin	Ms Carmel Loughlin	Kilgar Active Age Group	c/o Our Lady's Hospital	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim
60	Ms	Betty	Hasslet	Ms Betty Hasslet	Active Retirement Group	Airport Road	Charlestown	Co Mayo
61	Mr	Des	Kerrigan	Mr Des Kerrigan	Glencar Active Age Group	Drummonds	Gurteen PO	Co Leitrim

Community Hospitals Sep 01						
ID	Full Name	Title	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	County
1	Mr Pauric McLoone	Director of Nursing	Carndonagh Community Hospital	Carndonagh		Co Donegal
2	Ms Marie McGarvey	Matron	Donegal District Hospital	Donegal Town		Co Donegal
3	Ms Ann Brady	Matron	Dungloe District Hospital	Dungloe		Co Donegal

Community Hospitals Sep 01						
ID	Full Name	Title	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	County
4	Ms Mary Rooney	Matron	Sheil Community Hospital	Ballyshannon		Co Donegal
5	Mr Paul Hume	Matron	St Joseph's Hospital	Stranorlar		Co Donegal
6	Mr Eamon Glacken	Director of Nursing	Buncrana Community Nursing Unit	Buncrana		Co Donegal
7	Ms Geraldine McLeen	Director of Nursing	Falcarragh Nursing Unit	Falcarragh		Co Donegal
8	Ms Mairead Quinn	Matron	Ramelton Community Nursing Unit	Ramelton		Co Donegal
9	Ms Gwen Mooney	Acting Matron	Lifford District	Lifford		Co Donegal
10	Ms Jacinta Feeney	Matron	St John's Hospital			Sligo
11	Mr Frank Morrison	Director of Nursing	St Patrick's Hospital	Carrick-on-Shannon		Co Leitrim
12	Ms Mary Gallagher	Matron	Our Lady's Hospital	Manorhamilton		Co Leitrim
13		Matron	Killybegs Community Hospital	Killybegs		Co Donegal
18	Ms Bridie Marren	Matron	Ballymote Nursing Unit	Ballymote		Co Sligo
19	Ms Clare Reynolds	Matron	Nazareth House	Sligo		
21		Matron	Nazareth House	Fahan		Co Donegal

Day Centres						
ID	Full Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	County	
1	Supervisor	Day Centre	Ballymote		Co Sligo	
2	Supervisor	Day Centre	Enniscrone		Co Sligo	
3	Supervisor	Day Centre	Easkey		Co Sligo	
4	Supervisor	Day Centre	Gurteen		Co Sligo	
5	Supervisor	Day Centre	Riverstown		Co Sligo	
6	Supervisor	Day Centre	Tubbercurry		Co Sligo	
7	Supervisor	Day Centre	Cliffoney		Co Sligo	
8	Supervisor	Day Centre/Day Hospital	Mohill		Co Leitrim	
9	Supervisor	Day Centre	Blacklion		Co Cavan	
12	Supervisor	Day Centre	Banada		Co Sligo	
13	Ms Breid Gallagher	Supervisor	Day Centre	Annagry	Co Donegal	
14	Ms Eileen Curran	Supervisor	Day Centre	Gweedore	Co Donegal	
15	Ms Fiona McDwyer	Supervisor	Day Centre	Glenties	Co Donegal	
18	Ms Eithne McFadden	Supervisor	Day Centre	Carrick	Co Donegal	
19	Ms Nora Flanagan	Supervisor	Day Centre	Arranmore Island, Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
20	Supervisor	Day Centre	Carrigallen		Co Leitrim	
21	Supervisor	Day Centre	Carrigans, Ballinful		Co Sligo	
26	Supervisor	Day Centre	Collooney		Co Sligo	
27	Supervisor	Day Centre	Kiltyclogher		Co Leitrim	
28	Supervisor	Day Centre	Churchill		Co Donegal	
29	Ms Kathleen Kelly	Supervisor	Day Centre	Creeslough	Co Donegal	
30	Ms Patricia	Day Centre	Tri A Loch	Fanad	Co Donegal	

ay Centres						
ID	Full Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	County	
	Shiels					
31	Supervisor	Day Centre	Meevagh/Carrigart		Co Donegal	
32	Ms Eileen Kelly	Supervisor	Day Centre	Moville	Co Donegal	
33	Ms Marian Mahood	Suprvisor, Day Centre	Oliver Plunkett Road	Letterkenny	Co Donegal	
34	Ms Bridie Bradley	Supervisor	Day Centre	Downings	Co Donegal	
35	Ms Mary Devlin	Supervisor	Day Centre	Clonmany	Co Donegal	
36	Ms Pauline Davies	Supervisor	Day Centre	Newtowncunningham	Co Donegal	
37	Ms Imelda Callaghan	Supervisor	Day Centre	Gartan	Co Donegal	
38	Ms Elma McClane	Supervisor	Day Centre	Manorcunningham	Co Donegal	
39		Supervisor	Day Centre	Ballinaglera	Co Leitrim	
	Full Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	County	
1	Day Hospital Labels	Day Hospital	St Joseph's Hospital	Sligo	Co Sligo	
2	ID	Day Hospital	St Patrick's Hospital	Carrick-on-Shannon	Co Leitrim	
3	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Our Lady's Hospital	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim	
4	Sister in Charge	Lifford Day Hospital	Lifford		Co Donegal	
5	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Shiel Hospital	Ballyshannon	Co Donegal	
6	Sister in Charge	Carndonagh Day Hospital	Carndonagh		Co Donegal	
7	Sister in Charge	Stranorlar Day Hospital	Stranorlor		Co Donegal	
8	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Buncrana		Co Donegal	
9	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Donegal District Hospital	Donegal Town	Co Donegal	
10	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Dungloe District Hospital	Dungloe	Co Donegal	
11	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Falcarragh		Co Donegal	
12	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Ramelton		Co Donegal	
13	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Killybegs		Co Donegal	
14	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Arus Breffni	Manorhamilton	Co Leitrim	
15	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Arus Carolan	Mohill	Co Leitrim	
16	Sister in Charge	Day Hospital	Ballymote Nursing Unit	Ballymote	Co Sligo	

Appendix D: Guide Questions for semi-structured Interviews with practitioners

Type of projects, type of organisation, are you full-time/ part-time etc

How is the project managed? How is it funded?
How is it different from other projects?

How did you come to be involved in this work?

What do you see as the primary aims of the work?

What kinds of outcomes have you seen from the work?

How do your projects come about? Who initiates them? How are participants selected?

How much input do participants have in process?

Relative importance of process and product?

What do you see as the factors for a successful project?
What are the possible pitfalls?

In what ways do issues of funding effect objectives and/or outcomes of your projects?- ie the dangers of being funding-led

What supports are available for you, the worker?

How important are partnerships in your work?

How do you evaluate projects?

What kind of feedback have you got from the wider community?

What if any strategic policy exists in the Northwest on this work currently, in your view?

What is the future? Is there anything you are thinking of changing or doing differently?

Appendix E: Information sheet for focus group participants

RESEARCH PROJECT FOCUS GROUP
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT???

I'm Susan McDonnell

The IT in Sligo has asked me to do a piece of research to discover how drama is being used in different ways and contexts around the Northwest (Sligo, Leitrim & Donegal); as an MA project.

I'm interested in hearing the stories, opinions and comments from the people involved, and I will be talking to about 6 groups from around the region. I'll also be talking to some of the facilitators, organizers and representatives of funding and support bodies.

From all the information I collect, I will be attempting to create a fair account of what the feelings and opinions are around different kinds of drama work. Sometimes I will quote what people have said, but I will not use names and I will try not to make any person identifiable. If you decide that you don't want to be quoted, you have the right to withdraw from this process at any time- just contact me to let me know your wishes. The minidisks I am using today will be kept safely, and will not be given to anyone else. Before I finalise my research I will be checking back with groups (if they are available to see me) on whether they think I have given a reasonable account of what they have told me, and if they want to change anything.

The thesis I write will be examined by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council; after this, sections of it could be published in journals for people working in the field of Community Arts or Social Care.

If you want to contact me with any comments, or have more questions about what I'm doing, e-mail me at [laluz @eircom.net](mailto:laluz@eircom.net)

Thanks for your time!

Appendix F: Focus Group Format

1. Introductions, explanations of the research, assurances of confidentiality and consultation.
Names and “How I got involved...”
2. Changes Map Selection by participants of ‘Photospeak’ visual images to represent “ two changes (either positive or negative) that have happened for me as a result of being involved in the group”. Discussion of themes and group creation of a Changes Map, identifying common categories and linkages.
3. Personal Map. Participants each draw a ‘stick person’. Reflecting individually, they map in words or images:
Head: “Things this project has caused me to think about”
Heart: “My feelings as a result of this project”
Hands: “New things I have done through the project”
Feet: “What I will do next as a result of the project”
Discuss if wished.
4. Any other comments?

Appendix G: SPSS Coding of Quantitative Data

case	county	type	freq	start	past	targetgp	no	organise	facilita	mainobj	secobje	thirdobje
1	Donegal	Community Development	other	>5 years ago	yes	women adults with learning disabilities	50-100	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	community development	catalyst for social/political action	awareness-raising
2	Sligo	Theatre Workshop	other	>3 years ago	no	learning disabilities adults with learning disabilities	10-30	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	learning drama skills	recreation/pastime	catalyst for social political action
3	Sligo	Dramatherapy	weekly	>5 years ago	yes	disabilities	10-30	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	therapy	personal development	enhance physical mental wellbeing
4	Sligo	Personal Development	weekly	>2 years ago	yes	youth	100+	staff & others	external artist	personal development	learning drama skills	producing quality work
5	Donegal	Community Development	other	>5 years ago	yes	older people	10-30	other	external artist staff & external artist	social outlet	recreation/pastime	personal development
6	Donegal	Community Development	weekly	>5 years ago	yes	youth	100+	staff	external artist	community development	personal development	confidence-building
7	Leitrim	Personal Development	other	>1 year ago	yes	children	50-100	external artist staff & external artist	staff staff & external artist	personal development	confidence-building	enjoyment
8	Donegal	Community Development	weekly	>2 years ago	yes	women	10-30	external artist	external artist	community development	personal development	awareness-raising
9	Sligo	Personal Development	weekly	>2 years ago	yes	women	10-30	staff	staff	personal development	awareness-raising	confidence-building
10	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	>4 years ago	yes	youth	10-30	staff staff & external artist	staff	personal development	personal development	confidence-building
11	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	>6 months ago	yes	youth children with learning disabilities	10-30	external artist staff & external artist	external artist staff & external artist	personal development	personal development	confidence-building
12	Leitrim	Personal Development	weekly	<6 months ago	yes	disabilities	30-50	external artist	external artist	personal development	personal development	confidence-building
13	Donegal	Community Development	one-off event	>3 months ago	no	women adults with learning disabilities	10-30	staff	staff	personal development	personal development	social outlet
14	Sligo	Personal Development	other	>3 years ago	yes	children with learning disabilities	10-30	staff	staff	confidence-building	personal development	social outlet
15	Donegal	Dramatherapy	other	>4 years ago	yes	learning disabilities people with physical disability	30-50	external artist staff & external artist	external artist	therapy	personal development	confidence-building
16	Donegal	Community Development	monthly	>4 years ago	no	physical disability	30-50	external artist	external artist	awareness-raising	community development	social inclusion
17	Sligo	Personal	other	>1	no	farming	5-10	staff	staff	personal	social outlet	confidence-building

	Development	year ago	community	development	development							
18	Donegal	Community Development Personal Development	other one-off event	years ago >5	yes	women	100+	staff	staff external artist	personal development personal development	social inclusion confidence-building	confidence-building enjoyment
19	Donegal	Community Development	other	years ago >5	yes	youth	50-100	staff & others	staff & others	community development	awareness-raising	personal development
20	Sligo	Community Development	other	years ago >1	yes	intergenerational	100	other staff & external artist	external artist staff & external artist	community development	confidence-building	social inclusion
21	Donegal	Personal Development	other	year ago >3	yes	youth adults with learning disabilities	10-30	staff	staff	personal development	confidence-building	enhance physical mental wellbeing
22	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	years ago >3	yes	users of mental health services adults with learning disabilities	10-30	staff	staff	personal development	social inclusion	personal development
23	Sligo	Personal Development	other	years ago >6	no	users of mental health services adults with learning disabilities	10-30	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	personal development	social inclusion	personal development
24	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	months ago >2	yes	youth adults with learning disabilities	10-30	external artist staff & external artist	external artist staff & external artist	personal development	personal development	learning drama skills
34	Leitrim	Personal Development	weekly	years ago >2	yes	children with learning disabilities	5-10	others staff & external artist	other staff & external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion
27	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	months ago >6	yes	users of mental health services	10-30	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	personal development	social inclusion	confidence-building
28	Sligo	Personal Development	other	years ago >5	yes	children with learning disabilities adults with learning disabilities	50-100	staff & external artist	staff & external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion
29	Sligo	Personal Development	other	years ago >1	yes	people with physical disability children with learning disabilities	30-50	staff & external artist	external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion
30	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	year ago >5	yes	children with learning disabilities	10-30	external artist staff & external artist	external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion
31	Donegal	Personal Development	weekly	years ago >2	yes	children with learning disabilities	5-10	external artist	external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion
32	Sligo	Dramatherapy	weekly	years ago	yes	children with learning disabilities	5-10	external artist	external artist	personal development	confidence-building	social inclusion

SPSS Coding (continued)

	funding	future	barriers
Dept of Education	yes		funding
Arts Co.	no		.
NWHB	yes		require further staff training
Arts Co.	yes		funding
NWHB	yes		funding
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		public perceptions of work
Arts Co.	yes		funding
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		difficulty recruiting participants
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		funding
VEC	yes		.
VEC	yes		difficulty recruiting participants
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	.		.
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		time
VEC	yes		.
NWHB	yes		.
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		time
Charitable organisations	.		.
VEC	yes		.
.	yes		funding
FAS	yes		funding
Arts Co.	yes		funding
ADM/CDP/ Peace & Reconciliation	yes		funding
NWHB	yes		.
NWHB	no		.
VEC	yes		.
No funding	.		.
NWHB	yes		funding
NWHB	yes		.
NWHB	yes		funding
NWHB	yes		funding
County Council	yes		funding
.	yes		.
NWHB	.		.

Appendix H: Interview excerpts showing coding stripes (NVivo)

Document '2 Sligo Youth Theatre Group 12', 5 passages, 970 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 10, 126 characters.

Talking new friends- you meet people here who become friends outside Youth Theatre. Everyone accepts you here- it's comfortable

Section 1, Paragraph 19, 20 characters.

Jeans are more myself

Section 1, Paragraphs 28-29, 264 characters.

Confidence- I'm capable of professional work, worthy of appreciation of my skills. I think this is the best thing I have ever been in. It has had a huge impact on my life- **freedom to act in my own style. I feel capable of anything, I can be myself without judgement**

Section 1, Paragraphs 32-35, 157 characters.

Warmth, cohesive, self-reflecting, fulfilling
 Togetherness, belonging, expressive
 I feel great as I'm doing new things
 Friendship, confidence, fun, energetic

Document 'Balor Developmental Community Arts', 8 passages, 2508 characters.

Section 0, Paragraphs 46-58, 422 characters.

Like meeting new people
 F1: It's good fun
 F2: A good hobby
 F4: What parts do you most enjoy?
 F2: Working on plays
 F1: Sometimes it gets kind of boring as well
 F4: It's a lot of work
 S: When you're not doing plays, what would you be doing?
 F1: Playing games and stuff
 S: What kinds of things?
 F1: Talk about what's going to be happening
 F2: Or we might go into groups and make up short plays
 F1: Do scenes for short scripts

Section 0, Paragraphs 64-76, 649 characters.

Since you've been involved, would you say anything has changed in your life or your personality?
 F1: It gives you more confidence
 F3: I'd talk to more people
 F4: More sociable like
 S: How do you know that's happening in your life?
 F4: When you're going to different places, trying to meet new people, you wouldn't be as shy

Document 'Bernie Meehan', 5 passages, 2757 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 10, 405 characters.

aim of Youth Theatre work would be to provide opportunities for young people to develop self-responsibility, being able to collaborate and co-operate and to come to a place where they will feel accepted, where they will feel their ideas are appreciated, where they can share with their peers. On the one hand these two things go hand in hand- personal development stuff and acquiring skills-

Section 0, Paragraph 14, 256 characters.

because it's not about training people for professional theatre, even though that is a step in that direction as well, and if they want to take it further that's great, but really that is not the primary objective. It's a developmental, educational process

Section 0, Paragraphs 17-20, 1388 characters.

What would you say the outcomes have been for the young people? Is there anything else...
 Again, there's some nice quotes there (in brackets) but I think they will always say that it's a safe place to be, these young people can go and enjoy themselves, I realized I can make a complete fool of myself and it was OK, I got enough confidence, no longer shy, made a huge number of wonderful friends, no longer bored on a Saturday evening, learn to take part in something I enjoy without stress, share ideas... build confidence... to more...
 gain... explore my creativity... Do and say things that in everyday situations would be thought of as strange, but there it's quite normal... so it's a real chance... I think theatre is such a great leveller in a way, because you can be the cool and do theatre. And even if they come in as the cool, after a few sessions either you or you...
 ... So I find I have a lot of young Gollins who come in at the moment. And one of them has the black...
 ... what under the eyes... But of course after a while he can't help himself, the cool goes and whatever they're...
 ... getting into just improvising or whatever, it's lovely. It keeps that element of creativity, fun and breaking down...
 ... many self-conscious thing, and the image thing, one that doesn't work, and they can have loads of images, it...
 ... makes it more...
 ... if playful and flexible....

Code: /Positive~ Personal Development

Sections: Paragraphs

15:09

Section 1, Paragraphs 52-58, 267 characters.

Gained a lot of confidence
 I enjoyed very much
 Feel better about myself
 Good- gained a lot of confidence
 Taking part has brought me out of myself
 Met a lot of lovely people and travelled around the country north and south. Got to Dublin
 How I really enjoyed the drama

Section 0, Paragraphs 62-63, 143 characters.

I got great confidence in myself and lost the shyness of appearing on stage
 Joined computer class, second chance education, writing radio plays

Section 0, Paragraphs 69-72, 194 characters.

Travelled a lot and met new people
 I have travelled more in the last year and enjoyed every minute of it. Met some nice people
 Got me out of the house
 Made a lot of friends through this project

Document 'Wavelengths Women as Peacebuilders p', 5 passages, 1635 characters.

Code: /Positive~ Personal Development

Sections: Paragraphs

15:11