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# Evaluation Report

## CREATIVE PATHS PROGRAMME for Play Resource

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## CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Operational Effectiveness</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Meeting the Needs of Funders</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4. Meeting the Needs of Member Groups</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5. Quality of Life Outcomes</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6. Policy Relevance</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>7. Value for Money</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>8. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>1. Internal Evaluation - Teachers/Youth Workers</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2. Internal Evaluation – Artists</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>3. Code of Good Practice</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>4. Project Objectives 2009-2012</b>	<b>61</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This report is Community Evaluation Northern Ireland's (CENI) response to an invitation from Play Resource to provide an independent evaluation of the Creative Paths Programme. This section sets out the context for the evaluation, the terms of reference (evaluation objectives) and the methodology adopted in order to meet the agreed terms of reference.

## 1.2 Context

Play Resource is a Belfast based voluntary organisation and registered charity. It aims to promote creative play and encourage environmental responsibility, by collecting non-toxic re-usable waste materials from industry and providing them, together with other low cost play resources, to groups working with children and young people throughout Northern Ireland. The Creative Paths Programme aims to give children and young people throughout Northern Ireland opportunities to engage in high quality creative experiences that promote learning and development. Its specific aims are to:

- Offer groups access to affordable workshops for children and young people in community centres, youth centres, pre-school groups and schools;
- Encourage children's creativity and confidence in artistic expression;
- Tailor each workshop to suit the age and ability of children in their group and ensure they enjoy high quality creative experiences that promote learning and development ;
- Offer guidance for preparation and delivery of each workshop;
- Make each workshop an opportunity for play workers, youth workers and teachers to renew their enthusiasm for creative expression;
- Support children/young people within the specific aims and objectives of individual youth and community groups.

It is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the BBC's Children in Need, and Belfast City Council's Culture and Arts Unit. The programme offers support to member groups through a diverse range of

arts programmes. These include Arts Outreach workshops, Arts and Play Training workshops, Environmental Arts projects in schools and an Early Years Arts Programme in nursery and primary schools. Specific activities include use of clay and plaster and papier mache, making models, lanterns, and masks, seasonal arts, mosaic, puppetry, textile art, glass painting, murals, printing, music/dance, and sculpture. In addition special projects aim to give children and young people an opportunity to tackle an issue or explore a concern through art. Groups participating in this programme are required to supply one piece of artwork from the project for a group exhibition in Play Resource.

In drawing up the proposal for this evaluation we were aware that there has been a steady growth of interest in and awareness of the potential of the arts to contribute to a broader range of policy goals, given impetus by the 'Unlocking Creativity Strategy' and its emphasis on the significance of creativity, including commitment to; 'providing coordinated community-based programmes for maximising individual creativity'. The roles that art might play in helping regeneration of deprived and marginalised areas, communities, and sections of the population has been a focus of attention in development work for a number of years, and have become a cornerstone of wider renewal strategies. Anecdotal evidence suggests funding arts activity in the community can help in addressing long term unemployment, crime, health and educational attainment, and can assist in building children's confidence and relationships with others and their future capacity to engage more actively and constructively in community life. Indeed, ACNI's strategic plan places emphasis on increasing opportunities for participation in the arts on this basis.

This evaluation then, navigates the complex range of factors through which the Creative Paths Programme can influence children's learning and development and make a difference to the communities and areas in which it is operating, and the benefits it may provide.

### **1.3 Terms of Reference for the Evaluation**

The following evaluation objectives (terms of reference) were agreed with Play Resource, based on background information received and discussions with the Arts Officer.

- Assess the relevance of the Creative Paths Programme to the wider strategic policy context in which it is operating;
- Assess the effectiveness of the programme in addressing the needs of its funders;

- Assess the operational effectiveness of the programme;
- Assess the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the needs of its member groups;
- Assess the quality of life outcomes of the programme;
- Assess the extent to which the programme provides value for money.

## **1.4 Evaluation Process and Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology adopted for the assignment.

### **Phase 1: Initiation of the evaluation process**

This phase was designed to reflect and incorporate a range of views to inform the design of the evaluation. It included identifying the most appropriate individuals and organisations for facilitating the information collection aspects of the evaluation.

### **Phase 2: Familiarisation**

This phase of the evaluation process was designed to ensure that the evaluator had a clear understanding of the project, its context, history and development, aims and objectives, activities and structures. It included consultation with key staff within the project, combined with a review of relevant written documentation including:

- relevant research;
- programme funding application;
- information collated by the project;
- service delivery details;
- written policies and procedures;

### **Phase 3: Production of Evaluation Framework**

This was produced following the familiarisation phase. It included a list of all those to be consulted and methods to be used in the consultation process, including questionnaires and interview guides.

### **Phase 4: Fieldwork for final evaluation**

During this phase Ceni collected information from key stakeholders to enable the evaluator to assess the programme in line with the terms of reference (as outlined above) for the evaluation. This included:

- Consultation with Play Resource's Deputy Director and Arts Officer;
- 6 Interviews with representatives from participating schools/community groups;
- Interviews with 8 of the participating artists;
- Consultation with Arts Council NI Youth Arts Co-ordinator.

### **Phase 5 Secondary Analysis**

This comprised of secondary analysis (using SPSS) of the programme's completed Artist and Teacher/Youth leader's Monitoring/Evaluation Forms. This comprised analysis of data provided by 22 artists and from 48 projects across participating schools/community groups.

### **Phase 6: Analysis**

The information gathered through all of the above was analysed through statistical and content analysis to enable the evaluator to make judgements about the programme in relation to each of the evaluation terms of reference, and to draw conclusions about the programme's achievements, strengths and difficulties.

### **Phase 7: Reporting**

The primary output of the evaluation is this written report, as structured below:

*Evaluation context, approach and methodology* outlining the Terms of Reference, and the methodology.

*Findings* presenting the substantive findings and analysis in a format which addresses the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

*Conclusions* which summarise the main findings and discuss the implications arising from them structured around key issues, particularly those pertaining to overall impact of the programme at individual, local and wider community level.

*Recommendations* providing a complete listing of the recommendations arising from the evaluation.

## 2. Operational Effectiveness

### 2.1 Introduction

This section considers the operational effectiveness of the programme in terms of its governance and also in relation to the perspective of the participating schools and community groups, as well as the artists involved. It is based on the monitoring returns for 48 projects (from schools and community groups) and monitoring returns from 21 artists<sup>1</sup> as well as interviews conducted with six school/community group representatives and eight artists, and consultation with the Play Resource Deputy Director and Arts Officer, and the Youth Arts Co-ordinator with the Arts Council

### 2.2 Planning of Sessions

#### 1. Clarity of Objectives

Table 1 below gives the responses of participating schools/community groups on whether they felt that the objectives of the programme were made clear to them.

**Table 1(a): Clarity of Objectives – Projects**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	83.3
no, but it was not a problem	8	16.7
no, and it was a problem	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> All the tables and comments included in this section are, unless otherwise stated, derived from the artist and teacher/youth leader evaluation forms that are completed and returned to Play Resource for each project

Table 1(a) shows that although over 16 percent of the projects felt that the objectives were not clear they did not consider this to be a problem.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	91	97.8
no, but it was not a problem	2	2.2
No, and it was a problem	0	0
Total	93	100.0

Table 1(b) shows that on only two out of ninety one occasions did the artists feel that they were not clear about the objectives and on both occasions they added that this was not a problem.

Tables 1(a) and 1(b), taken together, indicate that there were no occasions when lack of clarity around objectives for a project caused any problems.

## 2. Preparation

Table 2 below summarises the responses of artists to the questions pertaining to the information they got from the project during their preparatory site visit/planning process in relation to a number of factors that may have had a bearing on their planning of the sessions.

Type of Information	Number		Percent	
	yes	no	yes	no
Age group of children/young people	81	9	90	10
Abilities of children/young people	56	34	62	38
Curriculum links	15	75	17	83
Contact with teacher/youth/play leader	76	14	84	16
Space and facilities available	76	14	84	16

Although table 2 suggests that there were quite a number of cases where artists did not get information from their site visit/planning process, particularly in relation to curriculum links and the abilities of the children/young people, it should be noted that the participating artists would already be aware of curriculum links, as well as some of the other types of information included here, including the relative abilities of the children/young people. Moreover, in a follow-up question, they indicated that in 93 percent of the sessions, they got all the information they needed during the site visit/planning process. Any difficulties that were reported were relatively minor and/or fortunately able to be addressed on the day such as:

'When teachers said 3D displays they actually meant 2D wall mounted displays'

'I rang to check on materials available, told there was everything, but there wasn't. Luckily I had my own supply of extras (feathers, beads, tape etc.)'

Table 3 below sets out responses of the teachers/youth/play workers in relation to how well prepared they thought the artists were for the sessions.

	Frequency	Percent
All the time	35	77.8
Most of the time	8	17.8
Small amount of time	2	4.4
Not at all	0	0
Total	45	100.0

Table 3 shows that the teachers/youth/play workers felt that the artists were generally well prepared with none of them reporting that any of the artists were not prepared at all and only two reporting that they were well prepared a 'small amount of the time'.

Table 4 below outlines the extent to which the teachers/youth/play workers felt that the activities delivered by the artists were appropriate for the age group present.

**Table 4: Teachers/youth/play workers perceptions of appropriateness of activities for age group present**

	Frequency	Percent
All the time	33	75.0
Most of the time	10	22.7
Small amount of time	1	2.3
Not at all	0	0
Total	44	100.0

Table 4 shows that it was never the case that the activities were inappropriate for the age group present and only one of them reported that this was the case only a 'small amount of the time'.

### 2. 3. Delivery

Table 5 below outlines the extent to which the teachers/youth/play workers felt that the children/young people were enthused by the sessions.

**Table 5: Extent to which teachers/youth/play workers felt that the children/young people were enthused by the sessions**

	Frequency	Percent
All the time	24	52.2
Most of the time	22	47.8
small amount of time	0	0
Not at all	0	0
Total	46	100.0

Table 5 shows that the teachers/youth/play workers felt that the children/young people were 'enthused' by the sessions either all the time (just over half) or most of the time (just under half). This was partly realised through the approach of the artists who, as noted above were generally well prepared for the sessions:

'Caroline was fantastic, she absorbed the interest of the group through her demonstration at the beginning of the session. Very enthusiastic, great with young people and very competent in her role'

'She encouraged and motivated the girls and brought out the best in them'.

Table 6 below outlines the extent to which the teachers/youth/play workers felt that all the members of the group were engaged in the sessions.

**Table 6: Extent to which teachers/youth/play workers felt that all members of the group were engaged**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
All the time	17	37.8
Most of the time	26	57.8
Small amount of time	2	4.4
Not at all	0	0
Total	45	100.0

Table 6 indicates that there was a high level of engagement between the artists and the members of the groups involved in the sessions. The artists themselves reported that in 96 percent of the sessions the participants 'were easy to engage'. In response to another question this extended, in 78 percent (over three quarters) of the cases, to the young people themselves contributing to the objectives of the project, although in just under half (49 percent) of the cases the artists reported that the children/young people had actually contributed to the planning of the sessions. Where this did occur, however, the children/young people were very much involved in the process:

'(They were involved) in choice of materials, workshop content and what sculptures they would make'.

'They had planned their designs in advance'.

'Children's ideas were part of the development of sessions'.

'Children decided on choice of sculpture for building site and sea themes'.

'(We had a) one hour ideas session with the children'.

This process may be exemplified by reference to the approach of the artist in the following case study:

### **Case Study 1: Early Years Project**

**The artist came in and...she had bags of props to suit every occasion and situation. The artist produced ideas and the children took to this. The artist was relaxed, softly spoken and at ease which reassured the children and she was able to give them her full attention, unlike the teaching staff who have to deal with all sorts of distractions. The artist was able to work uninterrupted with the children for 2.5 hours and it was amazing how the children became totally immersed. The children picked up on the artist's brilliant vocabulary and gained new skills around sensory issues – touch/feel and shiny objects. There were many new materials and the children gained the confidence to explore and do things for themselves. There was a wide variety of activities and lots of ideas.**

**The children concentrated better and their attention lasted for longer and this was sustainable. The work was well displayed in the school and further afield. People using the school after hours left notes to say how impressed they were with the work. The children picked up a positive attitude to art and were able to assess their own work. Their confidence and self-esteem rose and they were able to work on their own.**

Where the participants were not involved in the planning of the sessions this was largely due to the complexity of the project, limitations imposed by the children's abilities and/or ages, or time constraints:

'The planning and delivery required highly specialised experience because of the art form'.

'Work had to be devised by myself through discussions with staff on children's abilities'.

'Children aged 3-4 years. Basically they followed my plan though sometimes the plan changed according to their needs on the day'.

'Short space of time so I planned what they would make'.

'Working with two classes, 1 hour each class. (There was not) very much time for children to contribute to planning'.

'As contact time limited, a lot had to be drawn out for them'

Table 7 below outlines the extent to which the teachers/youth/play workers felt that the artists had used the time allocated well.

**Table 7: Extent to which teachers/youth/play workers felt the artists had used the time allocated well**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
All the time	34	73.9
Most of the time	12	26.1
Small amount of time	0	0
Not at all	0	0
Total	46	100.0

Table 7 indicates that the teachers/youth/play workers agreed that the artists had made good use of the time allocated for the sessions either all of the time or (to a much lesser extent) most of the time.

There were only three sessions (3 percent) where the artists reported that the space was unsuitable for what they wanted to do. Other difficulties tended to be varied and isolated instances such as attendance, not enough tasks for everyone involved in particular projects, human error, weather constraints, size of the group, and length of the sessions:

'(The) attendance varied- mostly weather dependant, according to centre staff'.

'Teachers wanted specific items made for Xmas play props, backdrops etc.- sometimes some of the kids didn't have enough to do (much more of them in the 1st hour) as there weren't enough jobs for everybody'.

'One part of project was thrown out by mistake and had to be made again'.

'Weather/painting indoors, fumes etc'.

'Although I had great help from the classroom assistant 23/24 children making something quickly over 45 minutes could be quite hectic'.

'Two hour session was a bit long, one hour then a break then the next hour might work well'.

## 2.4 Working Relationships

The 22 artists included in the analysis of project evaluation forms were asked whether they felt that they had a working relationship with the teachers/youth/play workers and in 96 percent (83 out of 86 reported) of sessions this was the case. Some of the comments offered included the following:

'Staff were very attentive with children. Very good atmosphere'.

'Very helpful in collecting materials''

'Staff and leader were very active in supporting arts sessions'.

The only specific problem reported concerned behavioural problems in the teacher's absence:

'Although the staff and school were friendly and welcoming, I was not fully prepared for the behavioural problems of some of the children. Without the teacher present it was difficult to maintain focus and complete the work'.

Overall, in ninety nine percent of the sessions the artists felt that they got all the support they needed from the receiving organisation. Similarly the teachers/youth workers were asked whether they felt that they had a working partnership with the artists and only one of them reported that this was not the case commenting that:

'Although classroom staff were present they weren't aware of project objectives so didn't feel involved in a "partnership"'

All the other comments offered were very positive and covered a range of good practice in relation to working in partnership, including the artists working as an integral part of the staff teams:

'Sally worked really well as a part of our team. She relates really well to this age group of children too'.

'The Artist was clear giving instructions to other leaders in order to help with the children crafts'.

This also involved working flexibly to suit the needs of the groups:

'She was flexible in terms of time and what she offered the parents to do'.

Others reported a sense of involvement and the learning generated through the process:

'I was very involved in the workshops and learned a lot through them'.

'Jim was very approachable open to our suggestions and mindful of our needs. With his experience, ideas and techniques we produced a wonderful project'.

'The artist worked well with all the staff and young people. Always sharing ideas and helping when needed'.

'I discussed the aspects I wished to develop and Katie responded to this. I also found it to be a learning experience as a variety of activities were introduced'.

It also extended to artists being able to empathise with and accommodate the specific needs of the groups concerned including special needs children.

'The artist worked well alongside the staff and young people, always positive in her approach and empathic towards the needs of the group'.

'We have very special needs in the hospital situation. Both artists used know our situation very well including working in isolation rooms, infection control and ever changing groups and children along with long term kids. It's a great partnership'.

'Angela (the artist) was extremely helpful with her ideas- very approachable and had an excellent rapport and understanding of Primary School children. She came to visit the school and listened to what we required and set about organising and purchasing related items. Excellent in everything!'

'He blended in with the class really well and was very caring towards our pupils. He considered their needs and abilities'.

The partnership working also extended to artists ensuring that their activities complemented other activities of the groups:

'Sally would suggest/inform me off activities and crafts she would be doing on each visit. She listened to the children and staff and linked her ideas to support themes/topics currently running in playgroup'.

All of the artists reported that, in all projects, the Play Resource Arts Officer was helpful.

Ninety percent of the teachers/youth workers reported that they would use the same artist again. However, ten percent (5) reported that they would not. The reasons given for not wanting to use particular artists again varied although punctuality was mentioned in two cases:

'Time keeping and reliability were issues. The children found the inconsistency of sessions quite difficult to cope with'.

'The artist wouldn't always arrive at the time arranged. Although always prepared, she doesn't always enthuse the children'.

In both these cases it should be noted that there were additional reasons to punctuality mentioned – in appropriate use of materials and lack of enthusing the children.

In two cases the teachers referred to what amounted to what they perceived to be inappropriate approaches for the children involved:

'While (name of artist) was good at explaining activities, she was at times quite abrupt with the children and did not always use positive reinforcement, as they are used to'.

'We felt that (name of artist) ideas were too advanced and went on too long for this age group'.

However, the reasons given for wanting to use the same artist again give an indication of how, in nine times out of ten, the experience had been a very positive one, particularly in relation to the manner in which the artists engaged with the other staff members involved as well as the children themselves:

'Great rapport with our students and "slotted in" to our working environment very well'.

'Good, great with children, fitted into class team well'.

'Fantastic to work with and inspired all the girls'.

'(Robin) professional, good manner with the young people, pleasant, prepared'.

'(Katie) is enthusiastic about her work and the children responded to this. They responded to her with interest and enthusiasm'.

'Jim had a lovely way of speaking to and connecting with our children'.

'Very friendly, engaged the children and listened to their ideas'.

## **2.5 Reasons for Success**

In 97 percent (90) of the cases, the artists felt that the sessions had been a success. The main reasons given for this (in addition to those already discussed) tended to be positive feedback from the staff and participants on the achievements, the support provided from Play Resource, and the fact that everyone

enjoyed the process, learned a lot and generally 'had fun'. Some of the specific reasons given for this are listed below:

'Very successful project, good work produced by children. Project made big difference to school as art is not on their normal schedule'

"The children and the centre staff were excited and engaged by materials and how they could be used. The workshop on the 15th had more adults coming in to see how the sculptures were being made - it was good that the adults were excited and engaged by the materials and techniques being used - if a little distraction for the children taking part. Overall the response was very positive, and has resulted in a request for a future series of workshops from a former youth leader in the centre for a group he works with....I have asked that they contact Play Resource Arts Officer for Creative Paths information'.

"Yes, the project was highly successful and eagerly received by pupils and teachers alike the unique delivery and methods used "ticked all the boxes" to quote one observer in ways that teachers sometimes find difficulties in that it fully engaged pupils brought multi-cultural links to life, gave "hands on" experience of making art, taught history and science and geography elements of the curriculum in a fluid cross curricular way'

'Excellent project with great support from staff, children and quality work produced'

'Really good project, almost a case study in good project management'.

'Huge success. Staff and pupils very pleased with results'.

'It worked well as the children enjoyed making something different every week and I was well supported by the staff'.

'It was a great day and a party too! Everyone had fun'.

In only three cases did the artists feel that it had not been successful. One felt that the 'numbers had been relatively low' and one reported that they 'didn't get everything finished' and that 'the teacher would have to finish the project'

88 percent (41) of the participating schools/groups felt that the project had been a success. Although none of them indicated that it had been unsuccessful, six of them (12 percent) indicated that it had been only partly successful. However, this tended to be for relatively minor reasons such as, in one case the length of time involved being inappropriate for the concentration span of the children involved, due to their age:

'Good project but went on for 10 weeks: Too long on one topic for 3+4 year olds'. The same teacher also felt that not enough of the allocated time was spent with the children:

'Only 3 hours: 1st hour in preparation: Only really had 1.5 hours with children'.

Another teacher reported that:

'Most children enjoyed the sensory use of clay. Some preferred the more creative side of latter lessons. Lessons created for all children but not all of the time'.

One teacher felt that there could have been more 'direction':

'The children enjoyed using clay but would have coped better with some directions'.

One referred to the project being 'quite good, although I would have liked a more collaborative approach'

On the whole, the participating teachers/youth/play workers felt that the project was successful and this was reflected in the comments they made, particularly in relation to the benefits the project had for the children involved such as building their confidence, giving them a sense of pride and providing them opportunities to enjoy themselves. These are discussed in more detail in section 5.

Suggestions for improvement tended to relate to clearer objectives and/or directions. This issue was referred to by five teachers/youth workers and included the following:

'Aims (should be) shared with staff and children. More directions for children'.

'Objectives more clearly defined'.

'Clearer objectives given to staff'.

'Some processes were introduced and developed but sometimes I felt these were not clearly defined as shown by the outcome'.

Four of the teachers/youth workers referred to time constraints:

'Longer workshops- ideally a week or several days with each group'.

'As always time is the enemy. There is always something that could be added'.

'If we had a lot more sessions with the artist'.

'More time allocated'.

One referred to 'a consistent time with regular sessions' while another thought the project could be improved by 'engaging more children and not the same one's all the time'. One referred to 'more background information before the start of the project' and one felt that the project could be 'better prepared' and that there should be 'small(er) projects to maintain interest'. There appeared to be a difficulty in one case with inappropriate premises:

'Hard to hear Louise's voice in the hall. The men were not happy about having to keep quiet while Louise spoke'.

Two of the changes suggested included promotional issues such as advertising the project more and the production of a leaflet with information on each of the participating artists interests/areas of expertise (which already exists).

## **2.6 Doing Things Differently**

Only two of the artists suggested that there should be changes to the programme, although a few more did make some suggestions for improvement. These referred to having more time (in three cases), and one suggested more publicity for the end products of the projects. One referred to what they perceived as a lack of communication - 'perhaps the contact person could have asked the group what it was they wanted to know/learn /achieve and than I would be best equipped with specific projects'. Another artist suggested that there should be a 'one to eight ratio to maximise the benefit to the children'.

Some of the artists, on reflection, and with the benefit of hindsight, felt that there may have been a few things they would have done differently. These were all very specific retrospective thoughts, pertaining to individual projects, from which it would be difficult, and unfair, to draw conclusions about general practice. They included the following:

'I hadn't anticipated level of interest from adults/leaders- perhaps a separate workshop for them would be fairer for regular attendees?'

'Hosting organisation recognise that an assistant to the facilitator would allow further benefits for receiving groups'.

'Could maybe work outside on mural using the school's walls rather than a board in future projects'.

'I reported the difficulties to the PRW officer<sup>2</sup> after the first week and we discussed options including bringing in 2nd artist. I felt it would be professional to complete the project despite the problems'.

'I might have simplified the puppets a little as we didn't have time to paint them'.

'Provided an even wider variety of source materials over more sessions'.

'I didn't like air drying clay but it was needed as 2 days were close together'.

'Made sure I had talked to someone who was actually going to be there on the day'.

'Maybe deal only with a smaller amount of children as there was quite a large audience'.

'Don't use crepe paper, papier-mâché' (as the children messed themselves up with this).

'I won't use that plywood again- MDF better surface

'Changed teachers' mind set before I started, through power of free thinking and non display bound creativity'.

'I might have smaller classes and take it month about with each group'.

'Maybe used different colours and/or materials'.

'Team work was an issue, I wanted to highlight with the children. On a large scale project ...I would like to see all the children working together with an end result'.

Some of the artists did make some comments on how they felt the programme could be improved. These included four pertaining to more time such as:

'Having more workshop time as four hours was very short'.

'An extra finishing off day by self and teacher'.

'Possibly more than an hour for each session would have helped'.

These tended to be project specific, and Play Resource need only note that each case needs to be considered separately in terms of allocating time for particular projects (which it already does) and that, in a few cases, time allocated should be reviewed.

Two suggested improvements related to difficulties with the size of the groups:

'Involving the full class sometimes children needed more attention but this wasn't possible'.

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<sup>2</sup> Play Resource (Warehouse) officer

'14 year olds should have been split into 2 groups i.e. 7-10, 11-14. The same artist also suggested 'It's better if the artist buys the extra materials needed eg. pipecleaners, feathers etc. because then they can be sure they have all the materials they need'.

Two suggestions related to having more children involved:

'More kids?'

'Would love the involvement of the whole class of children as a unit - but maybe that wouldn't work?'

Two related to working outdoors rather than indoors:

'Working outdoors'.

One suggestion related to the need for more equipment.

'The children could get more involved if there was access to more screens to work on'.

These suggestions are also very project specific and need to be considered on an individual basis by the artist in conjunction with the Arts Officer and the participating schools/groups in relation to future projects.

One suggestion was, unfortunately perhaps, beyond the control of the programme to do much about:

'A better attitude from the youth worker who booked it'.

## **2.7 Governance**

Play Resource is the largest creative resource centre in the UK and it currently has over 2,500 member groups in Northern Ireland. It has been providing these groups with information, support, and materials for over 25 years in order to pursue its mission 'to achieve a society where children and young people of all backgrounds and abilities can realise their full potential through appreciation of, and access to, creative and cultural experience'. It is a registered charity (no. XO 634/83) and company Limited by Guarantee (No. 17853), and is managed by a voluntary management committee. It has a wide range of appropriate guiding policies and procedures to cover all aspects of its complex and often sensitive work, including appropriate financial management procedures and controls. Play Resource manages an annual budget of over

£361000<sup>3</sup>. Accounts are fully audited and full copies of the organisation's accounts are available from its accountants on request.

The Creative Paths programme is managed by the Arts Officer who is responsible for recruitment and support of the participating artists, promotion, assessing booking and bursary applications, matching projects with artists, ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are adhered to, liaising with the teachers, youth and play workers from the projects, and addressing any difficulties that might arise. She is also responsible for Quality Assurance and a post project evaluation form is completed by both the artist and the group/school involved for each project (an outline of the areas covered by these is included in appendices 1 and 2).

In addition to those already discussed, the programme also adheres to the policy of Play Resource to 'safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm' and the programme adheres to the Child Protection Procedures as outlined in the document 'Our Duty To Care' published by the Volunteer Development Agency. In addition staff and artists are provided with/made aware of policies and procedures in relation to confidentiality, health and safety, grievances, complaints, planning and guidance, and equality. A Code of Good Practice, in relation to a number of these and other issues, including equal opportunities and planning and guidance, must be adhered to and a copy of this is appended in appendix 3.

## 2.8 Monitoring

Creative Paths is closely monitored through the Arts Council, Children in Need, and Belfast City Council and, as referred to in 2.7 above, the participating artist as well as the teachers/youth/play workers complete an evaluation form for each session that is held. In addition quarterly returns on expenditure are provided to the Arts Council to ensure that there is compliance with the budget set by the programme. Prior to the beginning of each financial year the programme needs to demonstrate that it has addressed the conditions of the grant in the previous year, including meeting agreed outputs. A minimum of four meetings are held with the Arts Council's Youth Arts Co-ordinator. These meetings include monitoring developments in relation to governance issues, future business planning, and development – including promotion and internal training. All of this has been described by the Co-ordinator as 'good for the planning process and identifying issues before they arise such as a shortfall in funding'

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<sup>3</sup> Based on anticipated income and expenditure for 2008/09 for the organisation.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This section has discussed the operational effectiveness of the Creative Paths programme. It has found that the programme has been very successful in the planning and delivery of the various arts projects to participating schools and youth and community groups. There have been a number of factors contributing to this success, namely the calibre of the artists involved and the support and governance provided through Play Resource – a long established organisation with a credible record of providing creative activities to disadvantaged children and young people. The approach adapted by the programme is also a key contributory factor with careful planning involving a close working relationship between the Arts Officer, artists, and teachers/youth workers concerned. The programme is also closely monitored by the Arts Council who have reported no difficulties with it, or Play Resource, over several years of programme and core funding. Some minor difficulties/suggestions for improvement have been identified but these tend to be isolated project specific issues, best addressed on an individual basis, and a few cases where, with the benefit of hindsight, artists may have done things differently, which is part of the creative process.

## 3. Meeting the Funders Needs

### 3.1 Introduction

This section assesses the extent to which Creative Paths meets the needs of its funding agencies – ACNI, Children in Need, and Belfast City Council's Culture and Arts Unit – through considering how it has promoted an interest in the arts as well as contributing to the creative thinking of the children and young people involved.

### 3.2 Promoting the Arts

Creative Paths serves to promote an interest in the arts in a number of ways and the Case Study produced in section 2.3 offers some insight into how an artist's particular approach can contribute to this. Table 8 outlines the teachers/youth/play workers responses in relation to whether they felt that the programme had changed their views about the role of the arts in youth development.

**Table 8: Extent to which Teachers/Youth/Play Workers felt that Creative Paths had changed views about role of art in youth development**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes, more positive	18	38.3
Yes, more negative	0	0
no, already very positive	29	61.7
Total	47	100.0

Table 8 shows that none of the teachers/youth/play workers involved felt that the programme had a negative impact on them in terms of their views about the role of art in youth development and that, for over a third of them, it had changed their views positively in relation to this. This was being achieved in a number of ways such as one artist having 'encouraged parents to get involved and try new things'. Another referred to some health aspects of the experience – 'I was able to "incorporate more healthy eating" aspects as the girls were encouraged to drink only water during the dance'. One respondent reported how the programme had helped

them to understand more clearly the potential of those involved, and how it could be developed – ‘Perhaps we had underestimated the girls’ potential so will try to draw more from them’. Another noted how ‘I can see how the staff could extend story telling sessions with a lot more art activities’.

Most of the teachers/youth workers involved, however (almost two thirds), felt that their views had not been changed because they already had very positive views about this, some of them because they had already worked themselves in, or had previous experience of, this field:

‘As a community arts worker I already understand the value of arts in youth development’.

‘I already work within this area so I am aware of the benefits’.

‘I know the value of working with artists and incorporating ‘living artists’ into our young children’s environment’.

One reported on how the experience had reinforced their views on this:

‘I have always had a high regard for artists working with young children and youth. Jim reinforced this’

88 percent (38) of the teachers/youth workers involved also felt that Creative Paths had helped them to feel more confident about integrating arts activity into their other work, although most of them indicated, through their comments, that art was already an integrated component of their programmes/curriculum:

‘It is an integral part of the youth work curriculum and important that young people can experience many forms of art’.

‘Due to the nature of the class group, arts activity is already very integrated into our work’.

‘We have been using art activities in our work for a while now. It is good to use various artists and different ideas’.

‘Art has already been integrated into my ongoing work.’

‘We do a lot of art/creative work already and were looking for new ideas to continue’.

‘Although I have ticked “yes” we integrate arts/crafts into our routine on a daily basis.’

Two in particular did, however, expressly refer to the role of art in developing other skills as well as motivating children to be more creative generally (see section 3.3 for more evidence of this):

'Through more art projects I can see that not only would the children develop skills but the staff would also gain extra skills'.

'I can see now how children can be involved at a variety of different levels in the creative process...this motivates them'.

'Art is a tool that helps young people find words to express themselves'.

A participating nursery was able to illustrate how the programme might help to promote art in the wider community:

'The children got very involved in creative arts as did their parents. This could eventually resurface in community arts programmes and spark work in local community projects. It exposes a lot of people to new experiences in the area of art and creates a very positive attitude'.

All of the teachers/youth/play workers indicated that they would take part in future arts projects and most of them, generally, felt that the programme had the effect of developing more positive attitudes to the arts, as indicated in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Extent to which children/young peoples attitudes to art had become more positive**

	Frequency	Percent
None in the group	0	0
A few in the group	2	4.2
Most in the group	28	58.3
All in the group	8	16.7
Difficult to tell	10	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 9 shows that, although in one case in five it was difficult for the teacher/youth/play worker to tell whether the programme was having the effect of developing more positive attitudes to art, the rest of them (80 percent) felt that it was having some effect in relation to this, with three quarters indicating that this

applied to most (almost 60 percent) or all (almost 17 percent) of the children/young people in their group(s). One teacher referred to how the approach of one artist was able to promote the inclusion, of an otherwise disinterested group of children:

‘Sally was able to engage a small number of children in the group that do not often participate at arts/crafts no matter what is provided for them. It may have been only for a small period of time but it all helps’.

### 3.3 Creative Thinking

Table 10 below outlines the responses of teachers/youth/play workers in relation to whether they felt that the sessions had encouraged the children/young people to think creatively.

	Frequency	Percent
All the time	25	55.6
Most of the time	18	40.0
Small amount of time	2	4.4
Not at all	0	0
Total	45	100.0

Table 10 shows that the programme was achieving this at least to some extent but in the overwhelming number of cases (over 95 percent) either all the time (in over half of the cases) or most of the time.

One participating school illustrated this process well:

‘The children loved the experience and explored every media. The artists had good expertise and skills, good personalities and they allowed the children more freedom than there would be in the normal classroom situation. This allowed the children to be more creative. The children responded very well and there were a lot of ideas which sparked off creativity. Some kids are restrictive and feel they can’t do things. Here however they were encouraged to take part and this was strongly promoted. It was very free, there was no

structure and a “can do” attitude was promoted which led to a very creative experience’. One of the artists added that:

‘The children reacted very positively to this (creativity). Creativity is defined as taking separate elements and combining them in a new way. The children gain an understanding of the process and the product. There is the joy of discovery and each child makes their own discoveries in a direct and hands-on way. The programme generates anticipation, and surprises, for example in the mixing of colours. The children can express themselves through art for example drawing pictures of the local fish factory following a walk and talk tour’.

Furthermore, as indicated in table 11 below, the sessions were, generally, developing more positive attitudes to learning.

**Table 11: Extent to which teachers/youth/play workers felt that the programme was having positive effect on attitude to learning**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
None in the group	0	0
A few in the group	3	6.4
Most in the group	26	55.3
All in the group	8	17.0
Difficult to tell	10	21.3
Total	47	100.0

Table 10 indicates that, although a fifth of the teachers/youth/play workers felt that it was difficult to tell, all of the rest of them thought that this was the case with at least a few of the children/young people in the groups with over seventy percent expressing the view that this was the case with either all of those in the groups or most of them.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This section has assessed the extent to which Creative Paths has contributed to the needs of its funding agencies. In relation to the ACNI it has achieved this through promoting an interest in the arts as well as contributing to the creative thinking of the children and young people involved. It has been achieving both of these goals through, firstly, promoting an interest in the arts through changing the views of teachers/youth/play workers in relation to the role that the arts can play in the development of children and young people and making them more confident about integrating arts activities into their other programmes. It has also had a positive effect on the attitudes of young people and children towards the arts. Secondly, the programme has contributed to the development of creative thinking for those children/young people involved as well as helping to facilitate a more positive attitude to learning generally. It should also be noted that the type, form and content of the activities delivered through Creative Paths are also relevant to ACNI's Youth Arts programme which believes in the 'entitlement of all children and young people to participate in a diverse range of arts-led cultural opportunities in safe and enabling environments'. It refers to youth arts as 'a whole range of creative activities, involving children and young people...both in and outside of formal education settings...(and with)...any kind of art form or creative activity' (including those offered through Creative Paths – see 1.2 above).

In addition, it should be emphasised that the programme also provides the children involved with opportunities for other crucial aspects of their development, including developing their confidence and self esteem, and helping them to enjoy themselves (see 5.2 below). Furthermore, these activities often take place in disadvantaged communities where such opportunities would not otherwise be available, and this is an important aspect of Children in Need's mission to 'positively change the lives of disadvantaged children and young people'. (See also the policy relevance of the programme in terms of funding priorities in Section 6).

## 4. Meeting Needs of Member Groups

### 4.1 Introduction

This section of the report assesses the extent to which Creative Paths meets the needs of the member groups involved in the programme. It does this through considering the reasons for their involvement, how it had contributed to their professional practice, and how it has complemented their other work/core curriculum.

### 4.2 Reasons for Involvement

Table 11 below outlines the reasons for the teachers/youth/play workers becoming involved in the programme.

<b>Table 12: Reasons for teachers/youth/play workers becoming involved in Creative Paths</b>		
Reason for Involvement	Number	Percent
To give children/young people new experience	43	90
To develop skills	17	35
To work with a professional artist	22	46
To support the curriculum	12	25
To release time for other duties	0	0

Table 11 shows that by far the main reason (as reported by 9 out of 10 of those involved) for becoming involved was for the schools/groups to be able to give the young people/children a new experience. To take up the opportunity of working with a professional artist was a reason reported for almost half of those involved, while to develop skills was given by just over a third of the teachers/youth workers. Although lower in the scale in terms of prioritisation, to support the curriculum was still cited by a very significant quarter of those involved. None of those involved reported 'to release time for other duties' as a reason for being involved, suggesting that there were no negative reasons for involvement. The table therefore indicates that there were a number of very important benefits for the schools/groups involved – particularly in relation to

giving children/young people new experiences, developing and skills, and supporting other aspects of the curriculum (given that 87 percent of the participating teachers/youth workers felt that the project was a 'success' and the rest reported that it had been 'partly' so).

### 4.3 Contributing to Professional Practice

Nearly half (47 percent) of the participating teachers/youth/play workers reported that there was something about their professional practice that they would do differently because of the experience of the programme. Much of this related to 'doing more art' such as:

'I think I would be more comfortable doing work with the children outside of the 'normal' art work- more modelling etc'.

'Offer the children more experience in art and creative activities'.

'More art and different areas of art'.

In one case, the teacher was considering involving the parents more:

'I think I might try to get the parents to do such a programme together with their children'.

In a few cases though it was felt that the programme had contributed to the development of new ideas about activities or ways of working such as being encouraged to 'look for new ideas'. Some specific forms of work referred to 'Try to include more dance as the children really enjoyed it' or 'perhaps more 3D work with newspapers'. Other innovatory practices suggested included incorporating 'more "demo" workshops of different specialist skills', and another referred to 'it brought about a renewal of interest. I would approach some activities in a different way'. Another added, 'engage more outside creative tutors' while another intended to be 'more adventurous in our outdoor art'. One had been given ideas for using recycled materials in future: 'Use Sally's ideas and think about how I could use recycled resources and existing materials in the group more often'.

### 4.4 Contribution to School Curriculum

The projects contributed to other aspects of the school curriculum in a number of ways. One nursery teacher referred to one particular (Early Years Access Arts) project:

‘There was language enrichment (textiles), real clay was used and there were talks, discussions, processes and ecological information. Art crosses all of the curriculum, for example flowers relate to the world around us and the environment, clay expands terminology and the programme adds to language skills and there is also the benefit of enhancing fine manipulative skills’. One of the artists referred to how the skills learned through art are transferable to other areas of the curriculum:

‘The children can engage their own abilities and thinking faculties and can see the value in their work. Art is a problem solving tool where they have to figure out the best way of approaching a subject. The skills are transferable and the children make individual and group contributions. Confidence is enhanced and there are feelings of pride and achievement individually and collectively’.

The transferability of skills was a common theme raised in our interviews with participating schools/groups particularly in relation to stimulating creativity, problem solving, language development, environmental issues and learning about the world of animals, shapes, and objects as well as practical skills. Another artist explained how this process works:

‘The children can be taken into the school grounds and use masking tape to pick up petals and other colourful items and bring them back into the class and put them on prepared surfaces. They can then observe the different colours and parts of plants. The children learn about pencil and stencil skills drawing the outline of their hands and using it to represent a spider for example and learning top tips for example how to hold scissors and how to move paper. Other skills include brush painting and stamping with potatoes and other vegetables, seeing textures and colours, mixing colours and knowing when to refill the stamp. Shape recognition of stars for example, fit with the curriculum and some individual work can be created into a collage showing teamwork and linking themes, storylines etc through puppetry. Shapes can be suggested by holding two hand outlines together to represent a spider with straw and tape as a group activity. This links into spider stories and rhymes repeating words and strengthening vocabulary’

Another added that:

‘The programme has been really successful with the children identifying colours, shapes and tone as well as features such as noses, eyes and arms. There is a noticeable widening of vocabulary, especially with the younger ones’.

One artist indicated how the programme could help to develop social as well as other ancillary skills:

'The age group of those involved in the nursery school project meant they were able to acquire ancillary skills as well as those artistic skills that were displayed. Children gained practical skills like scissor skills alongside social skills of looking, waiting and taking turns. The children were able to explore different kinds of paint such as diluted paint which could be blown across different surfaces with a straw to represent animals or plants etc and this links directly into the school curriculum'.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

Creative Paths can be seen to effectively meet the needs of its member groups in a number of ways. Through developing work with a professional artist it enables the schools and groups to give children/young people a new experience and provide both the children and members of staff with skills and ideas about ways of improving their practice. It also makes a significant contribution to other curricular activities, through including providing children with transferable skills and knowledge about the world around them, stimulating their approach to problem solving, and developing their language and sense of colours, shapes and sizes.

## 5. Quality of Life Outcomes

### 5.1 Introduction

This section discusses the quality of life outcomes, or benefits, that the programme has for the children/young people involved as well as the outcomes in terms of wider community benefits.

### 5.2 Benefits for the Children/Young People

As well as the many developmental and creative benefits already discussed, the programme also provides the children with opportunities for enjoyment, to have fun, and to develop their confidence and self esteem. These are all crucial aspects of a child's/young persons development and it has been noted that some of these projects take place in disadvantaged communities and localities where there is little or no opportunities for these outside of the school/youth group.

The teachers/youth/play workers made frequent references to the ways in which the participants enjoyed the experience, including the following:

'Children produced work they were proud of. It helped them build confidence'.

'The project had a purpose and the children could see this. They enjoyed their trip to the exhibition at the Play Resource and the one that followed to the site of the proposed park'.

'Participants enjoyed silk painting - loved end result'.

'The children really enjoyed it and the work was appreciated'.

'Very worthwhile and all the girls were delighted with their finished mirrors'.

'15-20 young women attended every Tuesday. They loved learning the new moves and were very inspired'.

'Young people proud of the "pieces" that they produced with Robin'.

'It gave the children the opportunity to work in a variety of mediums. As the year progressed they became more confident and were able to make choices about the resources they wanted to use'.

'Everyone who took part, had fun. Jim was very friendly and developed a great relationship with our pupils'.

'Children are very proud of this mural. It is there for everyone to see and talk about it. There have been many spin offs'.

'All the children enjoyed being involved in the project'.

Some of the participating artists related to us some of the ways in which they had witnessed similar benefits in the participants:

'It makes them stronger, improves their social skills and allows them to work with others and someone new. As an artist, I am a clean slate when working with the children and this helps to engage them. I expect them to do well and they do not come to me with any baggage. They respond well and gain confidence, negotiating skills, and an enhanced vocabulary'.

'They can have silent moments or be singing and happy. The children become involved and increase in confidence as well as expanding their social skills'.

'Some of the children came out of themselves and showed talent and achievement'.

One of the artists referred to how these benefits evolved over the course of one particular project that also included, at a critical phase, parental involvement:

'The children have a block of time and they can see their work advancing. They know that themselves and they are able to develop personally. They can see their achievements and involve their parents. The parents' attitudes change in relation to the capabilities of their children. The children get involved in advanced thinking and manipulation. They are given time and allowed to grow and can see and do things gaining practical experience and feeling a sense of pride'.

Another artist has described how the children of one youth club have gained confidence and pride, as well as helping to address a pressing problem through making a piece of artwork that promoted an anti-drugs message to their local community. This involved a mural project whereby the artist worked with a group of about 25 children aged between 6 and 16 for 4 days during their summer scheme which is presented in case study 2 below.

### Case Study 2 – Anti-Drugs Mural – Holy Trinity Youth Club

'We began by talking about why people take drugs, and why it's best not to. The youth club is based in the same building as the local sports club so everyone thought it would be good to promote the positive reasons for living drug free by using sporting images. It was also important to show some kind of contrasting warning image. The kids spent a morning taking photographs of each other doing sporting activities like basketball, boxing, and images expressing friendship, as well as some pictures creating the effect of someone falling. They chose the most interesting images and traced them out onto acetate. Then they traced the acetate outlines onto plywood boards using a projector'

The artist then described how this was followed by 'much enthusiastic painting!' and how 'the idea of reaching for a star' was inspired by two leaping figures at the top of the mural. 'The kids also wanted to make a mosaic, which is how they made the star. The star in turn inspired the words... "Reach for your Dreams". It was incredible what we achieved in just 31/2 days. The young people involved addressed the serious issue of drug abuse; they learnt new art skills; how to make collective decisions; and to work creatively and co-operatively as a group. I could see each individual's confidence was significantly enhanced. They were all clearly very proud of what they'd achieved'.

From *ScrapRap* <sup>4</sup>

## 5.3 Community Benefits

The case study outlined above clearly illustrates some of the quality of life, as well as creative skills, benefits to the children concerned. However, it also describes how the process had a wider community benefit in the sense that the project highlighted a pertinent anti-drugs message. Other projects have described how the art work has contributed to local communities through murals that are 'admired by the whole community' and the participation of parents in intergenerational art projects with the children. Other projects, such as the

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<sup>4</sup> From article by Caroline Jeffrey in *ScrapRap* (April 2008), Play Resource, Belfast. P.6

'Ards Puppet Fest' included involved the children as part of a larger project which benefited the wider community.

There can be little doubt that the confidence, knowledge and skills gained by the children – and the role of these in contributing to their wider educational, personal, and social development – will be a valuable future asset for their communities.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This section has shown how Creative Paths has had a number of quality of life outcomes for the children/young people involved, including providing them with opportunities for enjoyment and developing their self esteem, sense of pride, and confidence. It has also provided them with opportunities to become more aware of wider community issues and become involved in initiatives to address some serious problems such as drug misuse. Intergenerational projects have also contributed to enabling children/young people to develop projects in conjunction with parents, helping to develop a sense of community, and the skills, confidence, and sense of pride gained by those involved will also provide valuable social assets for the future development of the wider communities.

## 6. Strategic Policy Relevance

### 6.1 Introduction

The arts have been established as having relevance for the realisation of a number of other policy areas, including having implications for the health and wellbeing of those involved. This evaluation has already highlighted a number of ways in which Creative Paths has relevance for a number of these, including education and early years' development. This section considers the key policies and strategies that the programme has made a contribution to.

### 6.2 Children and Young Persons Strategy

**Our Children and Young People - Our Pledge: A ten year Strategy for Children and Young people in NI** was published by OFMDFM in 2006. This interdepartmental strategy aims to assist all children and young people to fulfil their potential with an emphasis on the need to target support to those children and young people who fare worst in society to improve their health and education outcomes. The strategy asserts the importance of childhood as an enjoyable time for children. It also re-iterates and adds to key themes evident in recent policy direction in Northern Ireland with its statement of its supporting themes as follows:

- the need to adopt a 'whole-child' approach, which gives recognition to the complex nature of children and young people's lives;
- working in partnership with those who provide and commission children's services, taking account of the future arrangements following the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland;
- securing and harnessing the support of parents, carers and the communities in which children and young people live;
- responding appropriately to the challenges faced by a society emerging from conflict and recognising that children and young people are key to securing a more stable and peaceful future;
- making a gradual shift to preventative and early intervention approaches without compromising those children and young people who currently need services most;

- developing a culture where the views of children and young people are routinely sought in matters which impact on their lives;
- ensuring that the needs of children are fully assessed using agreed frameworks and common language and that the services they receive are based on identified needs and evidence about what works; and
- driving towards a culture which respects and progresses the rights of the child.

Creative Paths is a programme that contributes to most, if not all, of these themes in some way.

Furthermore, it should be added that there are clear linkages between this strategy, what Creative Paths is providing, and ACNI's Youth Arts initiative which refers to 'the entitlement of all Children and Young People to participate in a diverse range of arts-led opportunities in safe and enabling environments'. It also refers to: 'Underpinning the artistic work that the Arts Council supports is the view that the arts need to be recognised as central to the effectiveness of future policy for Children and Young People across all dimensions; educational, social and economic'.

## 6.3 Creative Connections

Related to the above is the ACNI's five year strategy for the arts<sup>5</sup>, particularly its third theme that focuses on 'Growing Audiences and Increasing Participation', and its recognition that 'an education which involves arts contributes to achievement in other areas of learning and life'. It also gives a commitment to 'encourage more young people to experience the arts'. Creative Paths has demonstrated that it meets all three criteria for assistance from the Arts Council – public benefit, quality of artistic activity, and financial viability and quality of management - as detailed in *Creative Connections*<sup>6</sup>.

## 6.4 Unlocking Creativity

The prime responsibility of the Department of Culture Arts' and Leisure's (DCAL's) Creativity Section (created in 2000) is to co-ordinate work on the implementation of the *Unlocking Creativity* initiative. It has a wide brief, working across Departments, principally with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning, to harness and

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<sup>5</sup> ACNI 'Creative Connections: A 5 year plan for developing the arts, 2007-2012'

<sup>6</sup> See; Play Resource's ASOP application to ACNI

mainstream creativity within the cultural, educational, training and economic areas. These Departments have been partners in *Unlocking Creativity* since 2000 and are committed to a cross-cutting strategy to promote creativity in Northern Ireland. Their mission statement is:

*To develop the capacities of all our people for creativity and innovation and so promote and sustain the social, cultural and economic well-being of Northern Ireland.*

A strategy document has been produced that recognises that:

‘Creativity is not only at the heart of our arts and creative industries but underpins our ability to innovate, to create and exploit new economic opportunities and to compete more effectively’.

## 6.5 Lifetime Opportunities

*Lifetime Opportunities: Government’s Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland* (OFMDFM, 2007) which has replaced New Targeting Social Need, is a cross-cutting priority across government departments which has specifically targeted children and young people (aged 5 to 16) to:

‘ensure all children and young people experience a happy and fulfilling childhood, while fulfilling them the education, skills and experience to achieve their potential to be citizens of tomorrow’.

This strategy recognises that poverty has a negative impact on children’s upbringing and can reduce the chances of children enjoying a happy childhood, achieving skills and qualifications and therefore affecting outcomes in later years. It refers to research that demonstrates that the chances of escaping poverty are greatly improved by educational attainment and commits the strategy to a focus on ‘breaking the link between poverty and educational underperformance’. It also commits itself to the goal of ensuring that Early Years (0 to 4 year old) children have the ‘chance to develop their full potential in infancy regardless of social background’. It recognises the importance of the Early Years experience in helping shape positive, social, psychological and educational development and that ‘maximising provision and support, therefore for children in their early years is an investment which will lay a solid foundation for their future’

## 6.6 Equality of Opportunity

All of Play Resource's activities are guided by its equality policy, including adherence to recognition of Section 75 of the NI Act (1998). It should also be added that Creative Paths contributes, through its bursaries, to actively promoting the participation of disadvantaged groups of children and young people including those; with any kind of disability, with behavioural or psychological problems, living in poverty or situations of deprivation, who are ill, in distress or have experienced abuse or neglect. It also extends its bursary scheme to enable groups based in rural areas to more easily participate in the programme.

## 6.7 Forthcoming Play Policy for Northern Ireland

Currently under consultation, this intends to provide an overall play policy for Northern Ireland (OFMDFM, NICCY, Playboard, and the Early Years Project [formerly NIPPA]).

## 6.8 UN Convention on the Right of the Child

Article 31 of this Convention enshrines play as a child's right.

## 6.9 Neighbourhood Renewal

This strategy was developed by the DSD to address social need and social exclusion in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland<sup>7</sup>. One of its key targets is to 'develop confident communities that are able and committed to improving the quality of life in the most deprived neighbourhoods'. Creative Paths has particular relevance to this strategy in that it provides participants in a number of the targeted areas with opportunities to become more aware of wider community issues, and to develop a sense of community (see 5.4 above). The skills, confidence, and sense of pride gained by those involved also provide valuable social assets for the future development of their communities. The strategy also emphasises the need to improve educational attainment and attitudes to education in its targeted communities.

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<sup>7</sup> DSD 'People & Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal'

## **6.10 Sustainable Development**

Play Resource, with its aim of promoting 'environmental awareness through the re-use of non-toxic waste materials for play and arts' is an organisation that makes a clear and direct connection with environmental issues including through its contribution to sustainable development – which the Northern Ireland Assembly, in conjunction with the other UK administrations, has committed itself to through a number of shared principles for all other policies to adhere to. At the centre of this strategy is the need to re-cycle resources and materials and Creative Paths provides an important vehicle for this, not only through using recycled materials, but also through raising the awareness of children and young people, at an impressionable age, of the value and usefulness of such materials. In addition the projects themselves often had environment themes that stimulated the participants to consider the local and wider global environmental issues.

## **7. Value for Money**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This section of the report assesses the value for money provided by Creative Paths in relation to a number of efficiency, effectiveness, and cost effectiveness indicators relating to its processes, outputs and outcomes. These are summarised below:

#### **Efficiency Indicators**

- Extent to which resources are broadly focused on meeting key programme objectives/outputs;
- Extent to which programme is well managed;
- Extent to which programme is well staffed;
- Extent to which costs that can be compared are competitive;
- Efficiency in use of buildings, technology and other resources;
- Extent to which skill development measures are taken to maximise capability;
- Extent to which service vulnerability issues have been addressed.

#### **Effectiveness Indicators**

- Performance against key programme targets/outputs;
- Extent to which user groups and artists indicate satisfaction with key aspects of programme;
- Outcomes achieved;
- Policy Relevance.

The rest of this section contains an assessment of value for money against these eleven indicators. This requires cross-referencing with other sections of the report and, where appropriate, any references to other sections of the report are contained in brackets.

## **7.2 Efficiency**

### **7.2.1 Resources are broadly focused on meeting key programme objectives/outputs**

Consultation with the Play Resource Deputy Director and Arts Officer, as well as the Arts Council's Youth Arts Development Officer has indicated that the programme has concentrated its resources on the areas outlined in its funding application to National Lottery Fund - Access and ACNI's Annual Support for Organisations Programme (ASOP). Expenditure has been focused on delivering key aspects of the service, namely artists' costs and the salary of the Arts Officer.

### **7.2.2 Programme is well managed**

As stated in section 2.7, Play Resource manages an annual budget of over £360000. It is fully audited and full copies of the organisation's accounts are available from its accountants on request. Expenditure against the Access grant, ASOP grant and other sources of grant income is closely monitored by ACNI (whose Youth Arts Development Officer has described its financial management arrangements as exemplary), and the other funding agencies.

The programme is managed by the Play Resource Arts Officer, who has primary responsibility for ensuring that the comprehensive list of guiding policies and procedures (see section 2.7), covering all aspects of the programme, are adhered to. She also, in conjunction with the Deputy Director, provides Quality Assurance through circulating and scrutinising the artist and teacher/youth leader evaluation forms (see appendices 1 and 2), and taking appropriate action to address any issues identified through these.

### **7.2.3 Programme is appropriately staffed**

At present the Arts Officer is the primary member of staff responsible for the programme, although support is also provided through the Deputy Director. They each between them have over 25 years experience of managing arts programmes and, while current staff levels are appropriate for meeting the demands of the programme, it should be noted that there is considerable potential for additional demand for this programme in future (see 7.3.1 below). This may have implications for staffing levels if the programme is to be more actively promoted (as planned). The exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the programme support, as expressed by the member groups and artists (see section 2), suggests that the current staff involved are appropriate for the job. In particular, comments from the groups, as well as the artists, have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the advice and support provided through the Arts Officer.

#### **7.2.4 Costs that can be compared are competitive**

As stated in 4.2.1 above the main costs incurred by the programme are mainly for staff and artists and related costs, such as training, and essential expenses. This is a unique programme that no other organisation in Northern Ireland is providing. However, payments (to the artists) are based on Arts Council NI rates.

#### **7.2.5 Efficient use of buildings, technology and other resources**

The artists work primarily from their own homes/studios and this ensures that office space costs are kept to a minimum. Also, materials are usually available through the Play Resource Art Shop which also provides a range of equipment for hire at a nominal cost. The programme also promotes efficiency in terms of shared administrative support (and technology), management, professional and human resource development and IT.

#### **7.2.6 Skill development measures are taken to maximise capability**

The Arts Officer has undertaken a Diploma in Management with the University of Ulster as well as Child Protection training, Keeping Safe Designated Officer Training and Keeping Safe - Awareness Raising Workshop on Child Protection Issues. The programme has provided information days for artists about Vetting and Barring procedures and artists can attend Child Protection Training, which is offered by the Arts Council, for free. Play Resource is currently organizing multi-cultural awareness and curriculum training for artists.

#### **7.2.7 Service Vulnerability**

This programme is subject to the same policies and procedures that govern the financial management, human resource development, and management processes of Play Resource. Training is provided in all policies to all appropriate members of staff, and the artists, who have indicated an awareness of policies and procedures in relation to all of those contained in the Code of Good Practice for Creative Paths – including supervision and child protection and planning and guidance. Complaints are referred to and addressed by the Arts Officer.

The programme also benefits from the increasing sustainability of Play Resource which has reduced its dependence on public sector support through generating income more effectively through its shop and membership fees. This strategy has seen the organisation annually generate 55 percent of its own revenue.

Given that the programme has been very successful (and the number of children and young people in Northern Ireland in need of this particular type of intervention is likely to increase in the foreseeable future) the lack of capacity to meet demand may be an issue if the programme is to be further developed to meet the increase in demand.

## **7.3 Effectiveness**

### **7.3.1 Performance against key targets/outputs**

The programme did not have any set targets in terms of how many projects it aimed to support. Rather it set out to provide as many sessions to member groups as it could within the resources it had available. However, it did manage to disburse of its funding, including bursaries to disadvantaged groups, before the end of the funding period. While demonstrating the demand for this work, and illustrating effectiveness by Play Resource in responding to this demand, it does suggest that the programme is under-funded and/or needs to set clearer performance targets, within realistic limits relative to resources, in future<sup>8</sup>.

### **7.3.2 Satisfaction with key aspects of programme**

Section 4 has indicated that there was a consistently high level of satisfaction with all key aspects of the programme expressed by all or almost all of the teachers and youth/play workers. This included satisfaction with the process for accessing the programme, the professionalism and general demeanour of the artists and the helpfulness of Play Resource staff. In the few cases where there were any problems they also tended to be very satisfied with how these were addressed. They also expressed a high level of satisfaction in terms of the extent to which they were prepared to use the programme again.

### **7.3.3 Outcomes**

The findings from this evaluation, as discussed in section 5, indicate that the programme can demonstrate a high proportion of positive quality of life outcomes in key areas, particularly in relation to the enjoyment, self esteem and confidence of the children and young people involved, as well as a number of community benefits, including developing social assets for the future development of the participating communities.

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<sup>8</sup> We understand that it has, in fact, done this (see appendix 4)

### **7.3.4 Policy Relevance**

We have already discussed the relevance of Creative Paths for a wide range of policy areas in section 6 and these include policies and strategies pertaining to; the arts, education, health and wellbeing, children and young people, equality of opportunity, targeting social need, neighbourhood renewal, and sustainable development.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

Overall, the assessment of value for money indicates that Creative Paths is providing very good value for money in terms of the indicators which were used to consider efficiency and effectiveness. It is evident that it has achieved considerable success, in providing key activities to children and young people at a relatively low cost and with considerable added value brought through its approach (including providing employment to artists and enabling disadvantaged communities to avail of arts projects for the first time), the artists and organisational support involved, and its relevance to the wider strategic policy context. It has, in addition to meeting the needs of its main funders, been successful in achieving a number of key outcomes in relation to the development of the participants and their communities, as well as in complementing other initiatives designed to promote environmental improvement, educational achievement, personal and social development, and health and wellbeing.

## **8. Conclusions**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Creative Paths is a programme that has considerable relevance for the enhancement of quality of life and the creative and social development of those involved. It is a well managed and organised programme that is closely monitored and planned and it has exhibited good working practice and relationships between the key players involved – namely Play Resource personnel, the member groups, and the artists. The programme has also shown that it meets the needs of both its member groups and funders as well as contributing to a number of other related policy areas. It also provides value for money, through drawing on the expertise, experience, support, and governance provided through Play Resource. In addition, Creative Paths is particularly important in that it allows schools to access the expertise of artists at reasonable cost which is valuable in implementing the revised curriculum where creative skills are predominant.

### **8.2 Operational Effectiveness**

Creative Paths has delivered an effective programme of arts activities to its member schools and youth groups. This has involved developing and maintaining good working relationships between the key players involved, ensuring that the programme is well planned, that preparation is meticulous and that each activity is closely monitored according to the needs of both the participating groups and the artists involved. This all contributed to a high rate of success in the delivery of the activities as reported by both artists and school/youth group personnel, and was exhibited by the high level of positive outcomes from the programme, satisfaction with the support provided the calibre of the artists involved, and the fact that generally everyone involved appeared to enjoy the experience as well as enhancing their learning.

While some minor difficulties/suggestions for improvement have been identified, these tend to be isolated project specific issues, best addressed on an individual basis, and a few cases where, with the benefit of hindsight, artists may have done things differently, which is part of the creative process.

## **8.3 Meeting Members Needs**

Members groups became involved in the programme for a number of reasons, but mainly because they felt that it gave children and young people 'a new experience' and this was undoubtedly related to another reason in that a quarter of them reported that it was due to links it had with the (school) curriculum. This pertained to other aspects of the curriculum (including how the arts projects could contribute to learning and development in other subject areas) as well as its overall contribution to the revised curriculum with its emphasis on creative skills development. The programme was making a significant contribution to the development of professional practice for the teachers/youth workers involved (as well as enabling the participating artists to develop their own work). Creative Paths can therefore be seen to effectively meet the needs of its member groups in a number of ways. Through developing work with a professional artist it enables the schools and groups to give children/young people a new experience and it provides both the children and members of staff with skills and ideas about ways of improving their practice. It also makes a significant contribution to other curricular activities, through including providing children with transferable skills and knowledge about the world around them, and stimulating their approach to problem solving.

## **8.4 Meeting the Needs of Children**

Creative Paths has also provided a number of other quality of life benefits for the children and young people involved. These quality of life outcomes include providing them with opportunities for enjoyment and developing their self esteem, sense of pride, and confidence. It also provides them with opportunities to become more aware of wider community issues and become involved in initiatives to address some serious problems such as drug misuse. Intergenerational projects have also contributed to enabling children/young people to develop projects in conjunction with parents, helping to develop a sense of community, and the skills, confidence, and sense of pride gained by those involved will also provide valuable social assets for the future development of their wider communities. This has particular relevance for the many disadvantaged communities where the activities take place, including those where there are few if any opportunities for the participants to avail of opportunities to attain these benefits otherwise.

## 8.5 Policy Relevance

Creative Paths makes a substantial contribution to the implementation of a number of key cross-cutting strategies and policies as well as contributing to the development of the revised (school) curriculum with its emphasis on creative thinking. These include the *Children and Young Persons Strategy* with its aim to assist all children and young people, but particularly those who 'fare worst' to fulfil their potential. This, in turn, is related to other key strategies, for which Creative Paths has significance, including *Lifetime Opportunities*, with its emphasis on *Targeting Social Need*, particularly the needs of children and young people, and *Neighbourhood Renewal*, particularly in relation to its emphasis on community renewal and educational attainment. The programme also has significance for DCAL's '*Unlocking Creativity*' initiative which is itself related to strategies to 'exploit new economic opportunities' as well as ACNI's five year strategy for the arts, *Creative Connections* - for which it has demonstrated that it meets all three of its support strategy criteria. Creative Paths, also has relevance for advancing the rights of children as enshrined in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* as well as in Northern Ireland specific legislation such as *Section 75 of the NI Act (1998)*. The project is also likely to have relevance for the forthcoming *Play Policy for Northern Ireland*. Finally, Creative Paths, as with the work of Play Resource in general, has a strong emphasis on promoting environmental issues, including the use of recycled non-toxic materials in keeping with the agenda for *Sustainable Development*.

## 8.6 Value for Money

Creative Paths has been shown to provide value for money in relation to a number of efficiency and effectiveness indicators. In terms of efficiencies it has kept its resources broadly focused on meeting key project objectives (through mainly staffing and artist costs) and the project is well managed in keeping with accepted standards of good governance. Costs are also in keeping with those applied by the main funding agency and further efficiencies are produced through the use of the Play Resource as a base and artists working mainly from home or their studios. Skill development measures have also been taken to maximise capability and appropriate steps have been taken to address issues connected with service vulnerability. In terms of effectiveness, Creative Paths has made a valuable contribution to a number of key strategies and policies. It has also achieved a number of significant outcomes for its users and the participating artists and user groups have indicated high levels of satisfaction with key aspects of project. Demand for this programme, however, is likely to increase in future, and this may have implication for future staffing levels.

## 8.7 Conclusion –meeting the needs of funders

Creative Paths has demonstrated its relevance to the wider strategic policy context within which it and, to an extent, its funders operate. It has also shown that it is providing a quality, value for money service that is well managed and governed in line with tight monitoring requirements set by the funding agencies. Through meeting the needs of its members as well as the children and young people, and artists involved (including providing the latter with over 3000 hours of employment between 2005 and 2007), it is also making a significant contribution to the development of the arts. Perhaps its most significant achievement in this respect is the extent to which it has contributed to promoting an interest in the arts, as well as contributing to the creative thinking of the children and young people involved at a key formative stage in their development. This has been a crucial dual role delivered by the project. Firstly, Creative Paths has promoted an interest in the arts through changing the views of teachers/youth workers in relation to the role that the arts can play in the development of children and young people and making them more confident about integrating arts activities into their other programmes. It has also widened the interest of young people and children towards the arts. Secondly, the programme has contributed to the development of creative thinking for those children/young people involved as well as helping to facilitate a more positive attitude to learning generally. In this respect it has enhanced the role of the Arts Council in contributing to the development of the arts within the wider context of developments within communities, and society in general in Northern Ireland (including those pertaining to Belfast Council's culture and arts remit and Children in Needs strategy for engaging with disadvantaged children).

## 8.8 Recommendations

These tend to be project specific relating to the issues raised in Section 2 of the report – particularly those points contained in paragraph 2.6 which relate to ways in which individual activities might be better approached in relation to specific groups in future. This is something which we understand the project manages on an individual basis and we recommend that this should be continued. We would also recommend that.

- The programme implements an ongoing process for bringing artists together to discuss these and other pertinent issues.

- Play Resource considers the staffing implications for future increased demand for the project. We are aware that both these recommendations have resource implications and so we also recommend that the programme should seek additional resources/funding from the Arts Council or elsewhere – to enable these changes to be made.

## Appendix 1. Creative Paths Teacher's /Youth Leader's Internal Evaluation Questions

**1.Name Group**

**2.Name of play/youth leader/teacher**

**3.Name of project 4.Date of project**

**5.Name of artist(s)**

**Providing us with the following information will help us develop our programme. Please tick the appropriate boxes. Thank you!**

### **Before the Project**

**6.Were the objectives of the project clear?**

Yes

No, but it was not a problem

No, and it was a problem

**7.What was your reason for being involved?**

To give the children/young people a new experience

To develop your skills

To work with a professional artist

To support the curriculum-

To release time for other work duties-

Other, please specify:

**8.Did the young people contribute to the objectives of the project?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

### **The Project**

**8.Did you attend the sessions?**

Yes

No, please go to next section

**9.Was the artist well prepared for the sessions?**

All the time

Most of the time

small amount of time

Not at all

**10.Was the activity appropriate for the age group present?**

All the time

Most of the time

A small amount of time-

Not at all

**11. Were the children/young people enthused by the sessions?**

- All the time
- Most of the time
- A small amount of time-
- Not at all

**12. Were all members of the group engaged?**

- All the time
- Most of the time
- A small amount of time-
- Not at all

**13. Did the sessions encourage the children/young people to think creatively?**

- All the time
- Most of the time
- A small amount of time
- Not at all

**14. Did the artist(s) use the time allocated well?**

- All the time
- Most of the time
- A small amount of time-
- Not at all

**15. Did you feel that you had a working partnership with the artist(s)?**

- Yes
  - No
- Please explain:

**16. Did the project change your view about the role of the arts in youth development?**

- Yes, more positive
- Yes, more negative
- No, already very positive
- No, other

Please explain:

**17. Is there anything in your own professional practice that you would do differently because of the experience of the project?**

- Yes
  - No
- Please explain:

**18. Do you feel more confident integrating arts activity into your ongoing work?**

- Yes
  - No
- Please explain:

**19. Would you use the same artist again?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

**22. Would you take part in future arts projects?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

**Effects on the Children/Young People**

**20. Were their attitudes to the arts more positive?**

None in the group

A few in the group

Most in the group

All in the group

Difficult to tell

**21. Were their attitudes to learning more positive?**

None in the group

A few in the group-

Most in the group

All in the group-

Difficult to tell

**Your Evaluation of the Project**

**22. Do you think the project was a success?**

Yes-

Partly

No

Please explain:

**23. How could it have been improved?**

**24. Is there anything about Creative Paths that you think should be changed?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

## Appendix 2. Creative Paths Artist Evaluation Questions

**1 Name of Group Number Participants**

**2 Name of play/youth leader/teacher**

**3.Name of project 5. Date of project**

**6. Name of artist(s)**

Providing us with the following information will help us develop our programme. Please tick the appropriate boxes.Thank you!

### **Before the Project**

**7. Were the objectives of the project clear?**

Yes

No, but it was not a problem

No, and it was a problem

**8. What information did you get from the site visit/planning process?**

The age group of children/young people

The abilities of children/young people

Curriculum links

Contact with the teacher/youth leader

The space and facilities available

Other, please specify:

**9. In retrospect, did you get all the information you needed during the site visit/planning process?**

Yes

No: what else did you need to know?

**10. Did you feel you had a working partnership with the teacher/youth leader?**

Yes

No, please explain

### **Delivering the Project**

**11. Was Play Resource arts officer helpful?**

Yes

No

No Contact

Please Explain

**12. Did you receive the support you needed from the receiving organisation?**

Yes

No

Please Explain

**14. Did the space available suit what you wanted to do?**

Yes

No

Please Explain

**15. Did you find the children/young people easy to engage?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

**16. Did the children/young people contribute to the planning of the sessions**

Yes

No

Please explain:

**17. Did you encounter any other problems in delivering the project?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

**18. Do you think the project was a success?**

Yes- Partly

No

Please explain:

**19. In retrospect, is there anything you would have done differently?**

**25. How could the project be improved?**

**26. Is there anything about Creative Paths that you think should be changed?**

Yes

No

Please explain:

## Appendix 3. Creative Paths Code of Good Practice and Planning and Guidance Sheet

### Supervision & Child Protection

It is important groups participating in our programme see the artist's role as providing **additional** creative opportunities and that they are supported by a staff member that knows the children **well** throughout the project.

The level of supervision provided by your group must always be adequate – the ratio of staff plus volunteers to children with disabilities is dependent on the individual needs of the child. .

The manager of a group must identify a member(s) of staff that will collaborate with, and work alongside the artist throughout the workshop/project. This is in line with the **Child Protection Policy** that Play Resource operates.

Discipline attendance and group management is the responsibility of the staff member and not the artist(s).

Children must be supervised at **all** times with the member of staff in the room. This does not mean leaving the door open and supervising from another room. Artists are required by Play Resource to withdraw from a workshop if the policy is not adhered to, particularly in regard to supervision.

The supervising staff member(s) must know the children/young people or venerable adults in the group and discuss in advance with the artist the specific needs of the group, how these needs can be met.

For a project that runs 4 hrs or over the artist must make a visit to the receiving organisation.

For workshop(s) a total less than 4 hrs a telephone conversation is sufficient.

Ensure that your procedures for responding to concerns are discussed with the group during the planning meeting or pre workshop phone call and that a process for doing this is agreed.

The relevant member of staff at the Play Resource must be informed of any problem arising during 'Creative Paths' workshop(s). This includes cancellation or postponement of a workshop/project by your group or artist.

### Planning & Guidance

To help this planning process we have provided a planning **guidance sheet** that must be completed by the artist delivering the project and the group representative.

Good planning should ensure adequate notice of cancellation is given to all parties but in the event of a project not going ahead as planned, the first step is to find another date suitable to all concerned. Should a group cancel at short notice (less than a week before its commencement) 50% cancellation fee will be paid to the artist. In the event of the artist cancelling at short notice, every attempt will be made by Play Resource to make alternative arrangements.

### **Promotion**

For the purposes of promoting our programme to funders or showcasing the groups work to our members through our Annual Report, ScrapRap or promotional materials we are required to get consent from parents/guardian or carers to show case the arts work by asking groups to complete a Release Form for the use of visual work.

Play Resource requires recipients of our Creative Paths programme to acknowledge our support in their Annual Report or any other publicity material related to the project. We can supply our logo on request.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Participants must adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy operated by Play Resource.

Artists employed to deliver our workshops are not permitted to undertake work of a political or sectarian nature.

Any arts work generated by a group through our Creative Paths Programme will remain the property of the group.

## **Planning & Guidance Sheet - *Creative Paths***

This sheet should be read in conjunction with the *Code of Good Practice*

### **Planning & action points Agreed project/workshop details**

**Purpose** Agree aims & objectives of workshop, e.g. curriculum links

**Participants** Age Number Adult to children ratio

**Special needs**

**Previous arts experience (group)**

**Procedures** Confirm awareness Code of Practice & Child Protection

**Agreed work plan**

**Identify how/if the project will be recorded**

**Check List**

timetable

workspace/storage

check permissions, e.g. consent/release forms

equipment/materials-

**Clarify and agree roles/actions**

**Share contact details**

## **Appendix 4. Project Objectives 2009-2012**

- To develop a programme of support for 40 support officers across Belfast in arts and play development activities by Year 1
- To annually run 150 Creative Paths projects targeting children and young people in the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland
- To develop arts and creative play training aimed at enhancing the skills of the sectors working for children and young people in arts and creative play development using recycled materials by Year 1
- To maintain at least 25 arts and play practitioners on the PRW list of approved trainers, enabling the development of the Creative Paths Arts Programme; and to support these practitioners with advice, information, training and expertise from within PRW
- To further develop the Creative Paths Programme through special projects such as the Early Years and Youth Programmes, setting up a panel of experts and advisors to support the development of these programmes.
- To provides ideas & information through a range of craft sheets linked to the seasonal calendar (2 craft sheets per month).