

# Youth Arts Projects Learning Leadership Skills (YAPLLS)

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Exploring Non-formal Leadership Programme  
for Young People in Creative Arts Projects  
across European Transnational Partnerships



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 léargas



Waterford Youth Arts, Teatrul National Targu-Mures and Stella Polaris undertook an Erasmus+ project to examine and advocate for the development of leadership skills that young people learn whilst creating artistic works with them. The project outline was devised by project lead Waterford Youth Arts with input from partners in Norway, Stella Polaris and in Romania, Teatrul National, Targu-Mures. The project duration was six months in 2018. Through a number of transnational project meetings, each organisation learned about the different approaches that each company has and brought back some of this learning into their own practices.

A brief transnational connection has been created between some of the young people of two of the organisations that has the potential to grow to something significant in terms of mobility and interconnectivity as young Europeans.

The mapping of skills learned and accreditation of learning of leadership skills in arts in youth work setting was the focus of this transnational project. .

*“A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level. The confidence and competence to be involved must be gradually acquired through practice.”<sup>1</sup> (Roger Hart)*

This white paper documents each partner’s approach to their youth arts projects and looks at how a non-formal, yet structured approach can recognise and legitimise how young people learn soft skills such as planning, organising, communicating, leading and collaborating in their arts projects from idea stage to completion.

## The Productions and Approaches of Organisations

**National Theatre of Târgu-Mureş** is one of the five National Theatres resourced by the Romanian Ministry of Culture. It is a professional theatre with over 60 professional actors and many more production, technical and administrative teams that produces professional theatre in in both the Romanian and Hungarian languages. Teatrul National focus also on work for young people by young people. For this YAPLLS project, Teatrul National enabled a group of young people to create a show called ‘*Offline*’. It is a devised work by young people. The approach for this project was to make a theatre show with and about young people, informed by their experiences and their fears. In dramatic and acting workshops led by Laurentiu Blaga, the young people created monologues using devised theatre as their main method. They worked with a professional director and writer to form a dramatic text from these and translated them scenically onto the stage of the Târgu-Mureş National Theatre.

A devised theatre production is work that emerges from and can be generated by a group of people working in collaboration. The process of devising is about the fragmentary experience of understanding ourselves, our culture, and the world we inhabit. It is about thinking, conceiving, and forming ideas, being imaginative and spontaneous, as well as planning. It offers the opportunity to groups of artists to try out ideas or notions that are not necessarily text-led. A lot of devised work comes from the early pioneering work of Keith Johnstone (‘*Impro and the Theatre*’) and more recently the work of Augusto Boal (‘*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*’).

Groups devise theatre for, with, or from a specific audience, and therefore the nature of the spectator-actor relationship is a very particular one. Devised theatre is a contemporary reflection of culture and society. Devising begins with the interaction between the members of a group and a starting point or stimulus chosen.

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Hart, *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*



Members of a group beginning to devise theatre must be open to each other, building and developing honesty, trust, and crucially, diplomacy!

In creating *Offline*, the target audience was not specifically young people. The stories used to create the show came from them but they reflect what happens to us all when we use social media platforms. Teatrul National, in empowering their company of young people, enabled them to form a small theatre company 'Guga Junior' which was founded to produce the show. Young people from the Volunteer Programme at the Theatre joined the production team to handle design and printing of the poster of the show, the marketing of this show including the creation of an online blog and the visual promotion package. Included in this was their opportunity to manage a budget of €2,000 offered through the Erasmus+ project. This create an opportunity for the young people to manage and control a budget of their own, that they elected to spend on dramaturgy / movement workshops and musical training. The young people had the opportunity to learn from professionals how to produce a theatre show and successfully rolled out their own design and marketing packages amongst all the other elements that they learned about and experienced working on their show. In the creation process, *Guga Junior's* actor-students participated in several workshops: dramatic writing, stage technique, acting, devised theatre etc. A big benefit of creating this show was that the young people had the opportunity to be part of and become a strong theatre team.



Guga Jnr in rehearsal #Offline at Teatrul National, Targu-Mures, Romania

*#OFFLINE* the stage play, explores young people's relationship with social media, being online, and how this might negatively affect real-life communication in interpersonal relationships among young people today.

The young people began with a sharing of their own experiences and trust to explore the issues with each other. In discussions around their fears and obsessions, they started to find endless resources for the content of the show. They improvised from the beginning.

The next step was creative writing, where everyone's monologues were discussed and improved. After several discussions and individual readings, they tackled the structure and the setting up of a scenario. Meanwhile, the marketing team of the project proposed variants of a logo, posters and other advertising materials. The blog of the project was created as well.

After more than three months of work, the project reached the endpoint: the OFFLINE show. Within this short time frame the young people in the team acquired new knowledge of acting, dramatic writing, choreography, music, PR, and stage technique. Offline will be performed every month for a theatre season in Romania. It



will be reviewed by others as well as themselves as they grow as performers and as young people. They are also going to tour the work to a festival nearby this year which extends their experience and learning further. (Laurentiu Blaga, director of OFFLINE, edited by author Éadaoin Walsh)



*Voices of Gokstad* by Stella Polaris, Sandefjord, Norway

**Stella Polaris EVS** work with young people from right throughout Europe and the world through a special opportunity that is enabled through European Voluntary Service. They specialise in bringing young people together from throughout Europe for their projects. Stella Polaris creates work that is much celebrated in Norway and throughout Europe and are known in particular for large outdoor spectacle. For ERASMUS+ YAPLLS, Stella Polaris nominated their project, *Voices of Gokstad*, as the project where they would examine learning of young people in a youth arts project. With scenography and direction by Per Spildra Borg, *Voices of Gokstad*

enables young people aged between 18 – 30 yrs to volunteer from different countries of origin to come to Sandefjord in Norway for a number of months for an intensive creative and personal development experience.

Stella Polaris' *Voices of Gokstad* is an outdoor spectacle production that is inspired by a Norse Saga about the Ynglinge family, as written by Snorre Sturlason who said that the families originated in Troy. It is claimed that the family left for Caucasus after the fall of the city. Here they lived until the Romans attacked the lands some years before the birth of Christ. It is said that the family went through Europe and finally settled in Scandinavia. All Germanic families in Europe claimed the same origin. Modern studies carried out in Caucasus and Norway, by Thor Heyerdahl among others, make this theory a strong possibility.

The intention of the Stella Polaris project is to celebrate a common European history with a contemporary performance on a Viking mound close to their home, the famous ship grave Gokstad mound. They invite young people from 10 European countries working in the field of arts to look into this historical and spiritual world, and to share their artistic experience as well as their cultural heritage through dance and music. Also a big part of this experience is that the young people live together, share cooking, cleaning, getting the food, working and socialising together all over a four week period.

Each year, there is a similar structure to the project. It uses the same narrative and techniques but the input from the new young people each year is what forms the production and makes it different each time.

In the beginning, Per Spildra Borg and other practitioners and leaders from Stella Polaris meet the young people and give them the outline of their project. From here, they start to work physically on physical elements of the production. After this, there is a lot of group work and teamwork exercises and techniques until the group is seen as "warm and open". Stella Polaris place a big emphasis on dance and physical theatre



techniques especially contact improvisation dance work. After this, there is a presentation of their names, screaming their names, until warm and open. They work with the body to open up the senses through wave, snake and octopus movements. Paired two and two, taking and giving energy through hands, back and scull, they move together with bodies connected, making a dance. After this they split up and find new partners all the time in a big dance. There are acrobatic and impulse exercises, two and two, mixing this work into the big dance. There is also acrobatic work singular, work with shamanic animal dances and balance work. The young people learn circus skills such as stilts, juggling, tissue and trapeze. They do sword and stick fighting, acting in outdoors in nature. They also use shamanic exercises for opening the creative mind.

An important element to the time spent with each other is the exchange of culture and professions amongst the young people themselves and the organisation. Early in the process, participants show genuine parts of their work and their culture during one evening session: one evening of sharing traditional songs from the different nations and another evening of traditional dances.

As part of the project there is also a focus on subconscious work, which for this project means a focus



*Voices of Gokstad* by Stella Polaris, Sandefjord, Norway

on the Viking history and study of cultural heritage. Participants visit historical museums in Vestfold County. They get lectures on Viking life, mythology, the ship graves in the area etc. They visit different places with ship graves, like Borre mounds, Oseberg mound and are taken to a huge viking feast hall at Borre. The young people are taken out to “the end of the world”: a beautiful nature park where land and ocean meets. They are taken to row and sail the viking ship Gaia, which the transnational partners of this Erasmus+ project were lucky enough to be able to take part in. Later on in the project, the young people are taken to ride horses and shoot bow and arrow intuitively.

The Stella Polaris actors that work each year with them also give lectures in Nordic mythology. All of this aims to give the young people a real understanding of the life, the myths and the influences of Viking Culture.

The young people at Stella Polaris’ YAPLLS project had the opportunity to manage €2,000 to plan, manage and control for the project. They chose to use those resources for printed promotional material for their show, materials for sewing costumes, and to develop skills in horseback training and bicycles as part of their production.

After two weeks, they went on to build the scenography during one and a half day at Gokstad. The performance has a scenario, but every year they change some actors, songs and dances, even scenes can be changed but from experience already gained in the project, they create the performance scene by scene. The storyteller arrives four days before the premiere, the musicians three days before. Everyone rehearses right up until the



first performance. They rig down during the night after the last performance. Each person is part of the whole performance, and nobody is more important than any other.

(Per Spildra Borg, edited by author Éadaoin Walsh)

**Waterford Youth Arts** is a regional educational, youth and community arts resource organisation based in the southeast of Ireland. The purpose of Waterford Youth Arts (WYA) is to respond to the creative, artistic and developmental needs of young people in Waterford and the southeast region's young people, in particular young people experiencing social or personal disadvantage. Established first in 1985, WYA is now one of Ireland's largest and longest established youth arts organisations. As an organisation, it works with young people and children aged from preschool (3 yrs) right through to 19 year olds. WYA has the capacity to work with up to 400 young people each week.

WYA operates an open-door policy and accepts all young people, regardless of background, experience or ability and believes that young people are art makers, creators and artists. The ethos of Waterford Youth Arts is that the arts are an integral part of everyone's lives. The arts are for all and barriers can be removed to enable increased participation. WYA believes that youth arts methodologies are a powerful vehicle for youth development.

Waterford Youth Arts believes in creating opportunities for the creative expression of young people, in creating opportunities for young people to collaborate with professional artists and practitioners and in empowering young people to become better citizens by improving their social and soft skills that enhance their ability to manage relationships with their peers and in the world around them.

Waterford Youth Arts, over the last 30 years or more, has devised a unique model of professional arts practice in a community context. Its practice is a child-centred approach, informed by the practices and methodologies of Dorothy Heathcote, (MoE/ [mantleoftheexpert.com](http://mantleoftheexpert.com)), process drama in education and the philosophies and theatre practices devised and extolled by Augusto Boal, among others e.g. Forum Theatre.

Each year, WYA runs workshops in theatre, dance, film, art and this year the organisation has started a choir and are rolling out a new music programme. Along with these workshops, there are different performance opportunities for the young people to create shows and productions and for YAPLLS, Waterford Youth Arts nominated the Summer Theatre Project, as the space to examine the learning of leadership skills in arts projects. The Summer Project is for ages 14 to 19 years.

There are three different ways that WYA runs the Summer Project: devised theatre, commission of a new play by an emerging writer or the use of a standard traditional pre-written text. It is the latter that this year's project used: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, in a stage adaptation by Peter Hall. No matter what shape



Cast of *Animal Farm*  
for Waterford Youth Arts, Ireland



the project will take, there is always a professional theatre director hired so that the young people get to experience working intensively with a professional practitioner. The contracted director for this project was Rhiann Jeffrey.

With a view to developing soft skills as well as performance potential in the young people, participants were invited to pre-production meetings to learn and create the marketing strategy, online social media content and to learn about how the various backstage and production processes work. Some of them were interested in set design and had workshops with set designer Dermot Quinn who gave them information about how certain design decisions are made, where the focus is in concept and how budget plays a part in forming ideas without entirely dictating them.

'*Animal Farm*' was in production for six weeks, performed over 6 night run, split over two weekends and staged in a professional theatre setting. During the five week production period, the cast and crew rehearsed the script, and added newly written elements to it that were led by the young people, some of whom are creative writers and spoken word artists. These were filmed and used as part of the multimedia performance that *Animal Farm* became.



Punks of *Animal Farm* Waterford Youth Arts, Ireland

A completely new score of ten songs and five instrumental sections were created by the young people that formed a band that performed on stage for the entirety of the production. In the creation process, they had professional music directors that composed some melodies but they wrote all the guitar and drum parts themselves. Three of the young people composed their own solo songs that were used in the show. All performances were led by the lead guitarist with no music director on stage.

Behind the scenes, all the promotional material for *Animal Farm* was created by the young people. This included all social media content, press releases for newspaper and all photographs for all platforms were taken by one young person C.J. Hickey who had never taken photos with DSLR cameras before the production began. The assistant stage managers were both previous WYA Summer Project participants and were helping to show this year's young people the different responsibilities that they had and they could help. In costume, the young people had to learn how to use the make-up and each night of performance they were their own make-up artists, helping each create the design as the costume designer had set out.

In the creative process, the young people of WYA learned how each department in the theatre production worked as much as they wanted to learn and was feasible within the project. They learned how to become a strong theatre team and how much collaboration and teamwork improves their own experiences as well as everybody else's. Different learning outcomes were observed by the author Éadaoin Walsh, as facilitator, but





also through the use of video diaries. Utilising the €2000 they were given as part of the YAPLLS project, the young people acquired a GoPro camera and promotional t-shirts for the cast and crew to wear to advertise the show. The GoPro was used to capture the learning of the young people in the project, to record the video diaries and in other video production elements of the show.

Video diary entries were captured once a week and were private. The young people were invited to use the camera to answer a set of questions about what they were learning, what was challenging about the process and what they liked or disliked about it in a private phone-box with the GoPro. It transpired that the young people were more inclined to use this as a safe space to vent anger, frustrations and fears. This was positive in some ways, in terms of their welfare, but not as functional as was hoped for the collection of data for Erasmus+.

An online connection was also made between the young people of WYA and *Offline* using Skype. This will hopefully grow over the next few years to continue to connect these organisations and will hopefully include Stella Polaris as well.

## Demonstrated Soft Skills

In planning this project for transnational partnership certain skills were chosen for focus such as planning, managing, controlling and creating. While some of these skills were captured, other leadership and valuable soft skills have stood out across the three organisations. We focus here in this paper on the skills that were captured and not on ones that were not: not for the sake of brevity but acknowledgement of the different projects and the approaches, the different ages of the young people and the reality that each year projects change because of the different people involved in them and that is perfectly natural in the artistic world.

A significant point to note across all three partner projects is that the focus is not entirely about young people being awarded an academic piece of paper, it's about their experience through participation in any creative art-form and how that enables them to become stronger individuals. We have looked at how we might be able to accredit that learning however, without changing the means with which it is delivered or experienced. Per Spildra Borg says in *Voice for Gokstad* that "it's through group development that the individual grows and this is clear across all three projects. Therefore, young people can shine in many ways e.g. if they like singing / acting / dancing / making music / photography / pr etc. "

In Teatrul National's *#Offline* project there was a dedicated production team that were not part of the performance, they were part of the production company 'Guga Junior'. Oana Chirila, Andi Bercea, Raluca Cordos and Oana Nemes were the four primary members of this production team and they planned, managed, controlled and created the marketing, visual promotion, the poster and the blog for the *Offline* project. During the three months they learned how to produce a theatre production.



*Animal Farm* in rehearsal, Waterford Youth Arts, Ireland



In Waterford Youth Arts project, there was also a dedicated team of young people planning, managing, controlling and creating all of the marketing material for *Animal Farm*.

In all three organisations, teamwork was highlighted as an extremely valuable element and one that a large amount of young people said that they either learned, improved or changed in their understand of.

Chloe Jacob from Waterford Youth Arts is the first to talk about teamwork in the WYA Film '*Animal Farm Capturing the Learning*'. Chloe, a participant, observed a break-down in co-operation during rehearsals. Recognising the break-down, Rhiann Jeffrey the director of '*Animal Farm*' played a game with the young people to show them the value of teamwork. It was to simply bringing a softball into the rehearsal room and only allowing progress once everyone had made contact with it. This was then transferred to the creative process and everyone understood the necessity and value of their own contribution to what they were trying to achieve. Teamwork is also discussed by Becca Flynn and Grace Long on the WYA film.



Sharing approaches at Teatrul National, Targu-Mures, Romania

Becca says that it become most evident to her in the week of technical preparation for the show where young people were involved in getting the live music and projections ready for performance. Grace Long gives her experience of learning the importance of teamwork, specifically in the last two weeks of production where everyone worked together to get the show ready for stage. She mentioned how certain musicians and actors were given their own space to take charge of their roles, whilst being supported in what they were doing.

In the *#Offline* project, Ionut Stoinea who is a young actor spoke about the importance of teamwork in their production and for him in his development as an actor. This was developed through their devised theatre process where they began singularly writing monologues but then developed the work together from there. He loved that process because it made it real for him, because the text was not already written but also because it is important for him to work with other young people.

In Stella Polaris, teamwork is vital for the project in as much as it is for any artistic project and then some extra demand comes with participation because the young people learn aerial acrobatics and other skills that absolutely require trust in the group and trust in each other for safety and to achieve the intended result. Virag Csiki from Hungary talks about this challenge in their film '*Voices of Gokstad*' where she describes how she found it challenging to not keep saying 'no' to the opportunities offered to her in the beginning. Where someone would offer her a leg to jump on or shoulders to get up on and she would worry about falling, in the project she learned to see them as opportunities and to trust the other young people she was working with. This kind of experience is life changing when you consider how it can be transferred to other areas of life.

Skills of communicating and collaborating are evident across all three projects. In Stella Polaris, the young people are asked to evaluate their time in the project towards the end. These young people come from ten



different countries and often don't have a common spoken language to communicate with. When they are evaluating their time, nobody mentioned a language barrier as a challenge, nobody mentioned it at all. This highlights many positive attributes of the project and makes it clear that they have learned or used other skills of communication and collaboration to work together and form strong bonds that carry on to create networks of young adults across Europe.

At Teatrul National, the majority of the young people participating in the volunteer programme with GUGU JNR speak Romanian, it being their first language. When the transnational partners met with these young people, they used the English to communicate with us but also showed heightened abilities in communication that they said that they are learning from writing and acting. This was clear to us in the workshops and rehearsals that we observed during our visit there.

In WYA, communication and collaboration were paramount in the creation of the musical score. It was achieved in two and a half weeks and was only possible through the will of the young people to participate and to take leadership over their department.

In terms of evaluation, Stella Polaris spends considerable time on this as part of *Voice of Gokstad*. This is done to complete the YouthPass element of their project, which is separate to this one and also to further that skill amongst the young people. They do this via conversation and in group settings. The young people think about their experiences and evaluate what they have learned. This allows them to take stock of their learning and to inhabit it, be aware of it before their departure.

Young people in *#Offline* evaluate their work via participation in the film element of the project but also in repeated performances of it. At the beginning when they first wrote their monologues, these were evaluated by their director Laurentiu but also by each other. They worked on these and developed the show together. This ties their evaluation, communication and collaborative skills together very well.

Waterford Youth Arts participants evaluated their experiences, skills and work via the aforementioned confidential video diaries and a survey distributed by Ollie Breslin, Artistic Director of WYA. Film-maker John Loftus also had some on and offline interviews with the young people to get a sense of how they were feeling and how they would evaluate their skills and growth.

## Transnational Value and Further Development between Partner Organisations

A major outcome for the partners in this project was the opportunity to see how other people are making art in different places in Europe, with young people as a focus. Learning about the different systems in each country, each partner could take some influence home with them and leave their own impact behind them also.



H.E. Else Berit Eikeland, Ambassador of Norway to Ireland (centre) with Stella Polaris EVS, Thorunn Hagberg (L) and Per Spildra Borg (r)





Mayor of Waterford Cllr. Declan Doocey with H.E. Manuela Breazu, Ambassador of Romania to Ireland with representatives of Teatrul National, Judit-Andrea Kacsó and Laurențiu Blaga together with Waterford Youth Arts.

Theatre in Romania seems to get a lot of support governmentally and from the community. They have large theatre and audiences and specifically in Teatrul National, it's split between Romanian and Hungarian styles that seem to split contemporary to traditional in style. Norway also has regional theatres as well as theatre approaches and buildings similar to the WYA experience.

WYA is looking at the volunteer model that the partners have seen in Romania. Waterford Youth Arts has begun talks with two theatre making companies in Waterford

about adopting a similar model, advocating for it as a model of engaging and empowering young people to be involved in professional theatre setting.

Stella Polaris has for some time utilised EVS as a powerful and important way to engage young people with fewer opportunities in creative and cross cultural learning. The other partners examined how Stella Polaris has utilised programmes like ERASMUS+, EVA and YouthPass as ways of engaging and accrediting the learning of young people while creating powerful and creative arts projects and important cross-cultural learning and sharing.

WYA is connecting with Stella Polaris and EVS so that they can become a sending organisation and awaits approval for this. It would mean that WYA will be able to send young people and young leaders to Stella Polaris that might not have as many opportunities as others. This broadens their horizons and the scope for their working lives and careers. They can be part of an international network of young people working together.

This might be of value to the young people in our organisations and also to young people and youth arts organisations across Europe because it removes a sense of borders creating barriers. It gives a great sense of the European project connecting people and ideas and allows access to different styles and teachings across the continent and attached countries and islands.

For Stella Polaris, they see lots of young people that wouldn't normally get the chance to get into performance schools or to work with big theatre companies. Per wants people to connect - he sees that they have something to offer and he can help to develop this - "small steps to change the world".

The trust of community in the organisations as a result of these projects can make their next productions easier to support. This Erasmus+ project has given great visibility to all organisations taking part and its success makes other funding applications more positive. This has value to the young people as well because the companies have trusted them with participation and the project was a success because of all their participation. This can make college and job applications easier, or at least position the young people more positively.

In WYA's observation of the work that Stella Polaris do, it was wonderful to see multicultural interaction of music and dance, people bringing songs and dances from their different countries and teaching them to each



other. This is something that they have taken home with them and will investigate further in their creative practice.

Stella Polaris young people tend to stay together even after the project is over - the network is large and they have places to live and go to across Europe. When WYA is confirmed as an EVS sending organisation it will allow their young people access to this network. Theatru National is already a sending organisation so this will connect all three organisations once more.

There are many differences between the three organisations: simple ones that are to do with what age groups are involved, how long the projects last and bigger ones like child protection policies and their absence in some countries. Where in Ireland we are legally bound to have policies in place, it is not the same in Romania. This allows the Romanians to have bigger, more flexible volunteer programmes but it does also mean that they might not be considered to be as safe.

With regards to future development, WYA has begun to talk to third level institute of education: Waterford Institute of Technology and Theatre Royal Waterford about the possibility of progression towards accreditation and training of youth leaders and a mentorship programme for young people.

The learning outcomes of the young people could be accredited by an established system in Ireland and Europe, like for example, QQI. QQI's model is informed by a wide variety of national and international projects, initiatives, agreements and networks which aim to improve the quality of education and training across Europe and the world.

QQI are host and the contact point in Ireland for a number of these initiatives. Dissemination of information at national level is a key part of this function. They are also the contact point for the EQF in Ireland and are on the international advisory group developing the framework. The EQF (European Qualifications Framework) is used to compare awards from qualifications systems throughout Europe. It consists of eight reference levels for awards from national qualifications systems and frameworks.

## Proposed New Programme Development

A new programme can be designed using modules already in place in the QQI Framework that support our findings to create a framework for young people to develop through the arts in ways that are recognisable and quantifiable. The director of UNESCO Chair in Children; Youth and Civic Engagement Pat Dolan conducted three years of research that showed 'learning through the arts builds confidence, encourages critical reflection and creative thinking and provides a powerful base for teamwork, problem solving and future development'. (the BEAST project Baboro International Arts Festival). We can deliver modules via informal learning where



In conversation - H.E. Manuela Breazu  
Ambassador of Romania to Ireland,  
Mayor Cllr. Declan Doocey of Waterford and Mr. Leslie Jones



the skills and competencies to be a creator, an artist and a leader can be learned, accredited and recognised across Europe.

The fundamental difference to what available arts courses currently offer and what we're suggesting after our research is that we can offer the learning informally and still have the positive outcomes for the young people. We can remove the barriers to entry that some of the young people experience and offer them training and opportunities that are not on offer at the moment.

It could also take the shape of a performing arts and leadership course in Waterford Youth Arts perhaps in partnership with other agencies locally with progression connected to Waterford Institute of Technology (W.I.T.) or any other higher education institution. W.I.T. may also assist in the formal accreditation of learning, being a recognised centre.

Discussions have opened and the next step would involve the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with an accrediting body like W.I.T. with the hope that there would be a direct link with several of their undergraduate degree courses for graduates.

The full programme would be written to be shared with Department of Education and Skills funded providers who are registered with FETAC and wish to offer certification to their learners in a Level 5 FETAC Certificate Performing Arts and Leadership Course. The overall aim of the programme is to provide the learner with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and competence in a range of core disciplines in performing arts and leadership studies to work independently and under supervision in a range of those disciplines.

There would be several programme modules in this programme. Upon successful completion of a minimum of 7 programme modules the learner may achieve the required 120 credits for a level 5 FETAC major award. The programme may be offered to the learner on a full time or a part time basis and would be designed to be sufficiently flexible so that it may meet the needs of the learner who accesses programmes through many different avenues in Waterford Youth Arts and partner organisations. Overall the programme is based on a duration of 1200 hours (typical learner effort), to include both directed and self directed learning. Upon successful completion of this programme, the learner will have many transfer and progression options available to them. The learner may transfer to a programme leading to certification in one of the other level 5 FETAC major or special purpose awards either with other registered providers. The learner may also progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next level of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with another FETAC registered provider. Alternatively the learner may be eligible to apply to progress to the next or higher levels of the NFQ with a higher education provider.

## Duration Description

The programme may be offered on a full time or part time basis, depending on the needs of the learner and the funding mechanism available to support the programme delivery. The programme is based around an overall duration of 1200 hours (typical learner effort) to achieve a minimum of 120 credits. This duration includes time for both self-directed learning by the learner and directed learning activities provided by Waterford Youth Arts. For the learner following the programme on a full time basis it is expected that the learner may achieve certification in the major award within one year. For some full time learners a longer duration than one year may be required to achieve the major award in exceptional circumstances. For the learner following the programme on a part time basis the duration to complete the programme will depend on how many programme modules the learner undertakes within a specified timeframe. This will be determined by the mechanism used to make the programme available to the learner. For example, the learner may complete



only one or two programme modules each year and will build credits over time. This programme is structured so that there is flexibility for the learner who does not wish to complete the whole programme and only has an interest in completing one or more programme modules. In this case the learner may achieve a FETAC Component Certificate.

**NFQ Level(s)**

5

**EQF Level(s)**

4

**Location**

Waterford City

**Delivery Modes**

Centre-based experiential learning

Apprenticeship/Traineeship

Workplace Learning

Workplace Training

Distance Learning

In Company Training

**Delivery Methods**

Directed Learning

Group Discussions/Interactions

Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions

Work Experience/Simulated Work environment

Tutorials/One on one supported learning

Self Directed Learning

On the job Training

Irish National Framework for Qualifications Level 5 is what we're suggesting to begin with. This is comparable to the European Framework for Qualifications Level 4. Our tutors and assessment methods would all need to be verified by QQI but the modules being suggested here all have assessment methods like portfolio submissions and skills demonstrations that fit into what we're suggesting as a learning model that could be more accessible to our young people.

Some example modules would be:

**Personal Effectiveness Module 5N1390 offered by QQI<sup>2</sup>**

Component Specification NFQ Level 5 Personal Effectiveness 5N1390

Award Type Minor

Code 5N1390

Level 5

Credit Value 15

Purpose The purpose of this award is to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to apply a range of personal and learning skills in a variety of personal, civil and vocational contexts, operating with autonomy while under general direction.

2 [https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/AwardsLibraryPdf/5N1390\\_AwardSpecifications\\_English.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/AwardsLibraryPdf/5N1390_AwardSpecifications_English.pdf)



Learning Outcomes Learners will be able to:

1. Examine the principles and practice of personal effectiveness
2. Comment on the structure and purpose of a chosen organisation, to include its mission and the functions and interaction of sections within the organisation
3. Reflect on their own personal role in an organisation, to include the skills needed for their job, personal strengths and weaknesses, and the people, issues and work practices which influence how they do their work
4. Explore the concept of problem-solving, to include distinction between different types of problems, methods of collecting information, use of problem statements, and the advantages and disadvantages of a range of analysis methods
5. Investigate the features and objectives of meetings, to include different types of meetings, the roles of key participants, the impact of personal attitude and participation, and the issues that can affect the conduct and productivity of a meeting
6. Examine the objectives of working in groups, to include the factors contributing to effective groups, different roles of group members, possible barriers to participation and sources of conflict, and reflection on personal experience, including groups which were effective and those which were not
7. Find solutions for particular problems using a range of techniques, to include constructing a problem statement, selecting analysis methods and making a decision on the best resolution
8. Prepare a presentation on a chosen topic or issue, to include its content, structure, likely questions that will be asked, aids to support the presentation, optimum room layout, and designing a feedback or evaluation sheet for use at the end of the presentation
9. Organise a meeting on a chosen topic or issue, to include purpose, agenda and time limit
10. Carry out a presentation, to include interacting with the audience, responding to questions and comments, and self-evaluation of own performance
11. Participate in a meeting in an appropriate role, to include contributing to discussion and decisions, taking personal notes, evaluating how the meeting went and the impact of their own personal contribution
12. Participate in a group, to include communicating effectively, assessing personal strengths and weaknesses in their own contribution and evaluating the overall achievement of the group.

### **Assessment Techniques**

In order to demonstrate that they have reached the standards of knowledge, skill and competence identified in all the learning outcomes, learners are required to complete the assessment(s) below.

The assessor is responsible for devising assessment instruments, criteria and mark sheets, consistent with the techniques identified below and QQI's assessment requirements.

Programme validation will require providers to map each learning outcome to its associated assessment technique. All learning outcomes must be assessed and achieved in accordance with the minimum intended module learning outcomes set out in the validated programme.

Portfolio / Collection of Work 50%

Skills Demonstration 50%





### **Portfolio / Collection of Work**

A portfolio or collection of work is a collection and/or selection of pieces of work produced by the learner over a period of time that demonstrates achievement of a range of learning outcomes. The collection may be self-generated or may be generated in response to a particular brief or tasks/activities devised by the assessor.

### **Skills Demonstration**

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge. A skills demonstration will require the learner to complete a task or series of tasks that demonstrate a range of skills.

## **Teamworking Module 5N13673 Offered by QQI**

Component Specification NFQ Level 5 - Teamworking Module 5N1367

Award Type Minor

Code 5N1367

Level 5

Credit Value 15

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this award is to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to work as an effective member of a team, operating independently while under general direction and within a range of diverse, team-oriented environments.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Learners will be able to:

1. Examine the concept, features, types and impact of teamwork within diverse formal and informal structures, for organisations, systems and individuals
2. Analyse the roles, responsibilities, characteristics and skills of team members, including leaders, coaches and trainers
3. Analyse the elements and stages of team development
4. Summarise key opportunities and challenges of inter and intra-teamwork or of multi-team environments
5. Participate in setting team objectives and subsequent evaluation, to include control mechanisms such as ongoing feedback and documentation, and performance measurement
6. Participate in core team working activities, to include negotiation, problem-solving, finding solutions, decision-making and conflict resolution
7. Demonstrate appropriate communications, problem solving and negotiation techniques in a range of team working situations and roles, to include leadership roles and giving and receiving feedback
8. Monitor personal strengths and weaknesses as a team participant, including interpersonal communications skills and problem-solving skills.

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3 [https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/AwardsLibraryPdf/5N1367\\_AwardSpecifications\\_English.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/AwardsLibraryPdf/5N1367_AwardSpecifications_English.pdf)



## Assessment

Portfolio / Collection of Work 60%

Skills Demonstration 40%

## Description

Portfolio / Collection of Work

A portfolio or collection of work is a collection and/or selection of pieces of work produced by the learner over a period of time that demonstrates achievement of a range of learning outcomes. The collection may be self-generated or may be generated in response to a particular brief or tasks/activities devised by the assessor.

## Skills Demonstration

A skills demonstration is used to assess a wide range of practical based learning outcomes including practical skills and knowledge. A skills demonstration will require the learner to complete a task or series of tasks that demonstrate a range of skills.

Grading Pass 50% - 64%

Merit 65% - 79%

Distinction 80% - 100%

## Other Modules

As part of QQI, there are several other modules that have already been created that we could use to complement these learning opportunities, meet the assessment requirements and maintain the informal approach. These would be:

Stage Management and Administration 5N1550

Communications 5N0690

Music 5M2011

Graphic Design 5M1995

Theatre Production 5M5152

With further research and collaboration between WYA, Stella Polaris and Theatru National at Targu Mures, we could design our own module for inclusion in QQI that would be accredited across Europe. The NFQ Level 5 certificate that we could create here would be considered NQF Level 4 in Norway. Ireland and Romania appear to have the same NFQ level course standards.

The proposed new module could be based on interconnectivity and mobility in Europe, connecting the three organisations together where young people from each country travels for a time to the other places to learn different skills, is observed and assessed. A somewhat more traditional Erasmus connection but with observation being assessed on several levels: arts learning, leadership development, network and communications building, as examples. It would be described as a leadership programme, as proposed and informed by this Erasmus+ project.

### Leadership Programme for Young People

This five step programme would be used as a module that would need to be accredited by QQI for inclusion in a Level 5 NQF course. Elements are flexible to allow for interconnectivity of the programme or project. It can include drama, film, media, creative writing, dance or any arts based discipline that has a start and end date that produces a finished work. The emphasis would be on the work and social involvement of the team. The tutors would guide the project through the various steps in a collaborative arts form. This Erasmus+ project is the primary example of research to support this programme, examples given in italics.



The five steps would be as follows

**Planning stage** – This phase is subdivided into three areas -

- Vision – developing the idea
- Strategy – what is the main objective and time scale
- Detailed plan and business case for project.
  - *Devising Theatre in Teatru National and creation of Guga Junior*
  - *Intercultural exchange in Stella Polaris with EVS support*
  - *Pre-production meetings in Waterford Youth Arts, choosing script with consultation with young people and hiring emerging director Rhiann Jeffrey.*

**Organising stage** – This phase is subdivided into three areas -

- Mapping and assigning resources (people) to the plan
- Mapping and assigning material resources to the plan (stage set, tools, facilities, graphics, etc.)
- Training, health and safety associated with above.
  - *Covered in pre-production and production meetings across all three organisations in accordance with best practise.*

**Influencing**– This phase is subdivided into five areas –

- The leadership role
- A clear plan for team building.
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the team
- Influencing and motivational techniques to encourage and include team members in advancing the project, communication and feedback system etc. across multicultural and multi-disciplined team.
- How to deal with team weaknesses and maintain morale within the team.
  - *Creation of teams within the greater team happened across all three organisations. Those who wanted roles in production, PR, marketing, design and social media were assigned these roles either entirely or along with performance opportunities.*
  - *Separate welfare and production meetings were held weekly to ensure that timelines were being met and team members had a safe space to air any difficulties, challenges or positive experiences they were having.*

**Measuring** – This phase will be subdivided into three areas –

- Understanding the importance of measuring progress against programme time scale.
- Developing a review spreadsheet of dates and goals achieved
- Actions required when measurement is out of line with programme
  - *Ticket sales versus marketing and PR goals were used here successfully.*
  - *New plans and strategies were developed across the board to combat any difficulties encountered, for example, in Stella Polaris Norway, a YouTube video of the team singing a song from the Ukraine went viral and was featured on Russian and Ukrainian television channels. Waterford Youth Arts used artworks from Waterford Walls as backdrop to some of their photography for press as it suited the work and Guga Junior continuously updated their blog with news and features to maintain interest.*

**Controlling** – This phase will be subdivided into three areas

- Establishing a budget for the project



- Financial review of budgetActions required when budget is out of line with original plan.
  - *The team members across all three projects were aware of their €1500 allotment for the projects and choses where this money was spent:*
  - *WYA money spent on GoPro Camera / T-Shirts*
  - *Stella: Printed Promotional material / Materials for sewing costumes / Horseback Training and bicycles*
  - *Targu Mures spent on: Dramaturgy / Movement workshops / Musical Training*

At the end of this programme each team should present their completed work and review how the steps taken to achieve their objective were utilised and feedback on their use or otherwise. This final presentation would highlight their understanding of what it takes to bring order, planning and leadership to any project. These would be transferable skills that would benefit the young person in many other roles in their life

The finished work would be adjudicated and marked as per the above steps with certificates awarded according to the success of the project. These certificates should also be mapped to national and European education guidelines and be used to supplement 'points' or 'credits' in established formal educational structures.

## **The Role of the Youth Leader/Tutors and Mentor**

Whilst any new module/s would need to be accredited by QQI and NQF, so too would the training and development of the personnel delivering the modules in the programme. Currently, the author Éadaoin Walsh is embarking on NUI accredited Certificate in European Youth Mobility Project Management. This might enable further research into developing the interconnectivity of a leadership programme and the three organisations young peoples network. NQF and QQI have verified courses in leadership and arts programme management offered by Foróige and other organisations that can be accessed by all youth leaders, tutors and mentors and this would be an added benefit to the development of a new programme.

## **The Role of an Education Body**

The principal role for the education body would be to work collaboratively with Waterford Youth Arts and its partners, to develop a fit for purpose and bespoke leadership training course that is specific to our programmes requirements. Also, to work with european network educational bodies to map the course to 'points' and 'credits' that would give weight to the certification of these course and create graduate pathways to higher education and employment opportunities, with currency across Europe.

