

YAP Limerick Mural Project

Autumn 2014

Youth arts Facilitator : Mary Hughes



Group profile

This project brought together 7 young people involved in YAP – some had met each other on a participation outing and others had never met before we commenced the workshops. The group included pre-teens and teens from Limerick City and County.

Aims

I felt that the success of this project would require a steady approach that would instil confidence in the young people and to encourage and facilitate relationship building between all involved.

Through this project my aims were to introduce and encourage the participants to:

- to use games and activities to explore their feelings and opinions of YAP and its importance in their lives.
- to share their ideas and stories in a safe environment.
- be creative through a design process.
- to participate in a collaborative manner in the creation of the mural.
- to keep a visual diary and add their own artwork and stories.
- discuss the content and progress of the session/project.

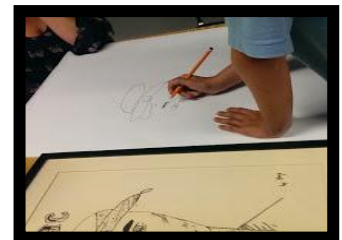
Participants: Audrice, Brendan, Rhys, Darren, Shannon, Joshua and Debbie.

Theme of Project

The theme behind this body of work was to explore how the young people felt about YAP and what they get out of it. What YAP means to them. We had two preliminary workshops which included brainstorming, exploring words, meanings and feelings through games and storytelling.

It was decided amongst the group that we would grid out the wall and that the background colours would span the spectrum going from yellow to orange, red to purple, from blue to green.

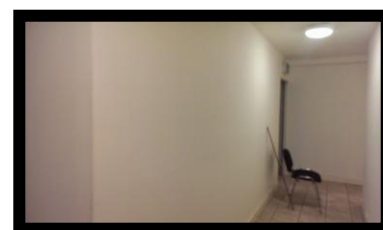
Each participant took ownership of 4 squares from the grid and decided themselves if they would use it as one large square or as 4 small squares.



INTERACTION	GOOD MOOD
FUNFAIR	HURLING
FREEDOM	YOUTH CEO
CARING	SWIMMING
BEING HEARD	
POSITIVE	
SPACE	
WALK	
CHATS	
RELATIONSHIPS	

FUN	
HOPEFUL	
EXPLORATION	
HAPPY	CINEMA
OUTLET	TRUST
FUTURE*GOOD MEMORIES	
BOWLING	RESPECT
DISCOVERY	INSPIRE
FOOTBALL	ACTIVITIES
ADVENTURE	LAUGHTER

LEARNING * PLAY * RESPECT	
LIBRARY * GYM * TRUST * FAIR	
CINEMA	SPORTS
CARING	HELPFUL
LAUGHTER* COOKERY	
TOLERANT	
LISTENING	
SAFE PLACE	
FRIENDSHIP	
ENTERTAINMENT	



The words that are included in the letters YAP were chosen by the Young People and the advocates. Some of the words chosen are obvious when thinking about the ethos of YAP but some were more poignant - "Safe Place" for instance was a phrase that struck me as particularly sensitive one.

Words that were suggested were – Respect – inspire – outlet – positive – trust – good memories – laughter – to name a few!

Themes

Audrice - her love of music and the main topic of conversation when she's with her advocate.

Joshua – His shopping bag represents the value of YAP – it simply cannot be bought!

Brendan – His love of horses and hurling and the signposts show how YAP allow him to explore many different things.

Rhys – YAP makes him happy – Smiley face!

Darren – he would spend time with his advocate just watching the horses in his area. He simply loves YAP too!

Shannon – Her piece was about the happiness she feels when with her advocate.

Debbie wrote the following about her piece -

Why Debbie picked what she did: I am part of the youth CEO and want to give them information about the youth CEO. Wanted to raise awareness about the youth CEO to the people who come into the office and let the young people know that we are there for them. Personally I like drawing flowers and I put my own little touch into it!

The project allowed 7 very different responses to what YAP meant to them each equally valid and powerful.



Monday 15th Sept

Present: Audrice – Joshua - Brendan

This workshop was poorly attended for various reasons but it was still valuable to those who attended. All three enjoyed each other's company and were at ease chatting and making suggestions.

Monday 22nd Sept

Present: Audrice - Brendan – Shannon – Debbie

These workshops allowed for us to discuss what YAP means to both the advocates and the Young people and this was a great exercise to remind us all why we are involved in this organisation. There were wonderful affirmations and great expression shown.

Recordings were made of the young people telling stories using the story cubes as prompts. This was very enjoyable.

I equipped the participants with sketchbooks and pencils and allowed them to take them home so they could doodle their ideas. I had brought Banksy and other urban art books into the workshops and the participants enjoyed looking through them and I lent the books to some of the Young people so they could have a look through in their own time.

These two weeks set up the participants for healthy relationships with each other.

Monday 29th Sept

Present : Audrice - Brendan – Shannon – Darren – Rhys

Darren and Rhys hadn't been part of the preliminary workshops so the boys spent time with their advocates brainstorming and reviewing what we had come up with during the previous weeks. The boys were happy to get started and very quickly started to come up with concepts for their space.

Audrice and Brendan did spectacular work prepping the wall and applying the background colours. Both Audrice and Brendan were always ready to lend a hand and to work on other aspects of the mural outside of their own allotted space.

We began to map out the wording on the wall. Each young person chose a segment and took responsibility for that area. They took ownership of how it would be filled and what positives from YAP they would highlight in their space.



Shannon had used her sketchbook during the previous week to design and create her artwork and was prepared to get her work on her part of the wall immediately. Shannon concentrated on her piece and with the help from Michelle had it close to completion by the end of the workshop. Shannon and Michelle worked really well as a team and achieved a huge amount during this session.

Monday 13th Oct

Present : Audrice - Brendan – Joshua – Darren – Rhys – Debbie

This was a very productive (and crowded) workshop.

All of the young people were working on their spaces this week.

The advocates played a supporting role to the young people. For instance Erica would help Darren mix the paint he needed and Dominic would help Brendan get set up to do his artwork.

It became apparent over the weeks that relationships were forming and there was great encouragement given by each participant to everyone else.

Monday 20th Oct

Present : Audrice - Brendan – Joshua - Debbie

Each participant is making great progress and offer great encouragement to each other.

Joshua finished his piece during this session.

Every week there was great progress made and the participants were eager to get stuck in and get working on their space. They were happy to fill in the blanks and help each other.

Monday 3rd Nov

Present : Audrice - Brendan – Rhys - Debbie

Audrice took on the responsibility of doing the lettering while the others worked on their spaces. Once Debbie completed her space she was happy to help do some of the background work. Rhys had been practicing some graffiti style lettering and took the opportunity to do some on the wall.

Monday 10th Nov

Present : Audrice - Brendan – Rhys - Debbie - Darren

There was great enthusiasm from the minute we arrived. Darren and Rhys finished their graffiti additions and Brendan put the finishing touches to his piece. Debbie and Audrice did some work on the background also.

We worked on the mural for about an hour and then spend the second hour discussing how they felt about the project as a whole.



Reflection

Upon completion the young people expressed how they felt about the project and the how they felt that interaction like this with other YAP participants was really valuable.

Debbie - "I enjoyed meeting new people and I feel that we really bonded throughout the few weeks that we spent there. It was fun and I looked forward going in there every Monday."

Rhys - "Liked putting graffiti on the wall and messing about!"

Audrice- "Loved getting covered in paint and flicking it everywhere!"

Brendan - "Liked painting and meeting new friends!"

Learning

The group as a whole gained a lot out of this project. They learned that it's ok to be part of the YAP programme and there are many other young people just like them who are "regular and normal" involved in YAP. They young people said that the project changed what they thought of YAP and it made them realise what they get out of YAP.

When asked what they learned from the time they spend working together some of the responses were not about team building etc. but instead it was life skills. For instance Brendan learned how to make tea and coffee!

Rhys learned that paint doesn't come off!

Darren loves to draw and enjoyed spending time doodling in his sketchbook and copying images of rappers etc.

All involved expressed their interest in doing a project together again.

They were a lively interested and interesting group of young people.

They were happy to get involved and took pride and ownership of what they produced.

Their dedication and determination to achieve and produce the best work they were capable of was evident at all points.

There was great camaraderie in the group, plenty of laughs and singing and even dancing on occasion. It was delightful and a privilege to work with these wonderful young people.

