

APT Visual Arts Project 2011 Evaluation



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APT PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The APT Visual Arts Project was a consortia response from Tallaght Youth Service (including the KEY and APT Garda Youth Diversion Projects in Fettercairn and Tymon North and the STAY project a school completion project), South Dublin County Council's Arts Office, Tallaght Community Arts and the District Approach to Early School Leaving. The STAY project did not remain involved do to a lack of staffing. Individuals from these organisations served on a steering committee, which was successfully awarded funding from South Dublin County Council's Anti Litter and Anti Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme 2010. These individuals included:

- Anne Biddulph, Dodder Valley Partnership
- Gemma Carton, Tallaght Youth Service
- Denise Masterson, Tallaght Youth Service
- Aoife Hanley, Tallaght Youth Service
- Tony Fegan, Tallaght Community Arts
- Victoria Durrer, South Dublin County Council's Arts Office

The project was based in the Tymon North area of Tallaght. Although not a RAPID designated area, Tymon North has a deprivation rate of -10.3 which is among the higher rates in South Dublin County. The aim of the initiative is to reduce graffiti and anti-social activity in the neighbourhood and to develop prevention and education measures in conjunction with existing residents young and old.

The original proposal put forward for funding from the Anti Litter and Anti Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme 2010 consisted of working with young people from the APT Garda Diversion Project and the STAY project in the neighbourhood as well as older people / adults from the area, all of whom meet in St. Aengus Community Centre.

Project aim: to promote public awareness and education in relation to litter graffiti and anti-social activity.

The **objective** was to improve the physical appearance of the identified site in Tymon North in a way that

- promotes whole-community ownership
- provides an opportunity for groups to engage in a joint creative activity
- develops strong community partnerships in an area where new houses have recently been built in an established neighbourhood.

The two groups of young people from the APT and STAY projects which operate from the local community centre were to be trained to conduct a survey in the local area to identify the most appropriate site for development. A group of adults were to be recruited to work in co-operation with these young people to undertake a community clean up which would incorporate an environmental / art project.

Young people were to be supported at all times by the co-ordinators from the APT and STAY projects both of which are integrated projects of Tallaght Youth Service.

Tallaght Community Arts planned to facilitate the development of the environmental / art process identified by the residents themselves.

The project was intended to build from learning gained from the previous two projects funded under the 2009 Anti Litter and Anti Graffiti Awareness Scheme 2009 – Scribble Skills which was a professional development day for teachers and community/youth workers and The Graffiti ACT which was an intergenerational public art project undertaken in the Fettercairn area, launched as ‘Making Our Mark’ by Councillor Mayor Mick Duff in May of that year. The APT project planned to transfer the learning from the process undertaken in Fettercairn and utilise (and test) the Toolkit developed for Scribble Skills. More information about these two projects is available upon request from Anne Biddulph, Dodder Valley Partnership.

Project Plan:

The groups would work together and

- a) consult with the wider community to identify the most appropriate site
- b) plan the community clean up of the identified site ,
- c) design the environmental/art projects
- d) work with Tallaght Community Arts to undertake the public art project and
- e) draw up a plan for the ongoing maintenance and protection of the area.

It was planned that the groups would visit and consult with the Key project and the Women’s Group in Fettercairn who participated in the previous programme. The evaluation of that project was used to inform the development of this new project and ensure that learning is not lost.

APT PROJECT DELIVERY

Project Management:

When funding was approved the Steering group met on several occasions, starting in November, to further develop the project and its practical delivery. The Steering group and their roles were as follows:

- Anne Biddulph, Dodder Valley Partnership: Co-ordination and administrative support for the project
- Denise Masterson, Tallaght Youth Service: APT Coordinator, Sourcing participants; providing support for the young and older people to participate; support artist's engagement with group; liaise with South Dublin County Council on monitoring and evaluation and cleaning of the designated area
- Aoife Hanley, Tallaght Youth Service: APT Coordinator, Sourcing participants; providing support for the young and older people to participate; support artist's engagement with group; liaise with South Dublin County Council on monitoring and evaluation and cleaning of the designated area
- Tony Fegan, Tallaght Community Arts: Assistance with sourcing, interviewing and selecting artists; assistance with the final launch event
- Victoria Durrer, South Dublin County Council's Arts Office : Assistance with sourcing and interviewing artists; conducted monitoring and evaluation

Having been involved in the previous 2009 project in Fettercairn, Gemma Carton, Tallaght Youth Service, advised on the application and project development for the APT Visual Arts Project, but did not remain on the Steering Committee who oversaw the day-to-day running of the project.

Project Preparation:

The young people from the APT project, which operates from St Aengus Community Centre, were trained to conduct a survey in the local area to identify the most appropriate site for the visual art project. When the site was identified they made contact with a local resident, Vanessa Hurley. She had previously sought assistance with a clean up of the area bordering her house and the development of a community garden. This further strengthened the group's access to the opinions and consent of the local residents. To facilitate the intergenerational work a group of adults from the local men's retirement group agreed to co-operate with the environmental/art project.

The identified site was the boundary wall of two houses. This wall faced an open green and was on view to residents of newly built houses on the other side of the green. The site attracted anti-social behaviour that consisted of lighting fires in the corner of the wall on a regular basis, an environmental hazard in the area.

The Youth Arts Co-ordinator of South Dublin County Council designed a brief for a facilitating artist (see Appendix A) and the position was advertised in conjunction with Tallaght Community Arts. Short listing of the applicants was undertaken in conjunction with Vanessa Hurley the local resident along with Tallaght Community Arts and South Dublin County Council's Arts Office. Three artists were then invited to present their plans for the project and the final selection of the artist, Killian Redmond, was made in conjunction with the young people. Members from the local men's retirement group felt that it was important that the young people choose the artist and that they did not need to be involved. The final interview panel (see Appendix B) comprised three of the young people with the APT co-ordinator and the Director of Tallaght Community Arts. This was excellent experience for the young people who had also compiled the interview questions with input from the men's groups. Participation in this process was a new and exciting experience for them.

The successful artist, Killian Redmond, met both groups and over several weeks the young and older group worked on the design of the site plan. Participants seem to have enjoyed the process and the relationship between both groups developed over time with the assistance of the artist and the coordinator. Team building exercises such as a bowling trip helped with the group dynamics. This additional need to build relationships had been identified in the previous project in Fettercairn.

The artist worked with participants, asking them to describe key sites and historical moments of importance to the local area. Individuals created sketches and took photographs of imagery important to the area.

All participants gained skills in drawing. Some of the younger participants seemed frustrated not to be able to work at the wall sooner, but the artist addressed this through a 'testing' process on boards with spray paint. Many participants gained an understanding of the need for patience in developing a public art piece as well as in working with others.

It was agreed to seek the support of the local estate manager and the Parks Dept of South Dublin County Council with the clean up of the identified site. They generously agreed to schedule the clean up prior to the start of the art work on the wall. This vital cooperation avoided issues of Health and Safety and ensured that the relevant council staff were aware of the planned work for the site.

The actual creation of the art project took place during the week of 18th-21st April, while the young people were on Easter Holidays during a period of extremely good weather. This was perfect for the creation of the art piece but did mean that, as it was a public place, there were some issues with the number of younger children on school holidays visiting and wanting to get involved. This was overcome by starting the work earlier in the morning.

A Recognition Event took place on May 11th 2011 when the APT Visual Art project was showcased. A range of people from the community and statutory sectors were

invited to celebrate the occasion. Plants were given as a gift to local residents who planned to create a community garden next to the wall.



EVALUATION METHOD

Evaluation Objectives:

- To investigate the relationship developing among participants of different ages
- To capture the learning gained and experiences had in the arts by participants
- To assess the wider community's knowledge and impression of the project
- To gain an understanding of the role that creative processes may play in promoting positive interactive experiences for people of varying ages

Evaluation Methods:

- Observation of project and chats with the participants, youth workers and artist:
 - March 16
 - April 6
 - April 19
- Questionnaires
 - Pre-project for participants (emailed to Denise)
 - Tell us what you think? Space on the wall for the board for wider community to make comments
- Focus Group-final focus group discussion with participants after final presentation of wall

FINDINGS

The clean up of the site and the subsequent artwork has been largely warmly welcomed by the local residents and supported by those residents whose houses are built at the boundary wall. Some individuals in the area were not entirely happy with the style of the artwork, stating that it had not been what they expected. It is felt that more consistent involvement from the Residents' Association may have helped improve communication.

The area has been enhanced and hopefully the site will be protected by the input from the mixed age groups who worked on the creation of the visual art piece. The local residents have been involved in a community process and links have been built and strengthened between the APT project, the men's group, the local residents, the local estate management office, the parks department and the members of the management group who proposed and co-ordinated the project.

Participants seem proud of the work they have made and of the appearance of the wall. Through the process, the young boys and the Active Retired participants have got to know each other. The men's group are planning a fishing trip and plan to invite some of the younger people to participate. It is hoped that this will help develop future relationships and/or a greater camaraderie between the two groups in the local community centre. It may be possible to develop an informal mentoring process between both groups in the future.

Key findings from the project are:

Participant Experiences:

- Participants seem to have enjoyed the project
- All participants gained skills in drawing
- Some of the younger participants seemed frustrated not to be able to work at the wall sooner, but the artist addressed this through a 'testing' process on boards with spray paint
- Many participants gained an understanding of the need of patience in developing a public art piece as well as in working with others
- Participants seem proud of the work they have made and of the appearance of the wall
- This was the first arts experience for a number of men involved in the Retirement group.
- The older men would be willing to do a similar project again
- The older men felt that the project timetable was suitable, while the younger participants felt the project was slow at times

- A number of participants enjoyed and felt they learned from seeing examples of 'professional' mural and graffiti work

Public Perception and Engagement:

- Youth Workers supporting the project kept photo updates on progress posted on a notice board in the community centre. No comments were made on the 'Tell us What you Think' board.
- The launch event, hosted by Mayor Marie Corr, was well attended at the community centre and the wall received positive press in the local newspaper
- There was a great interest in the community while the wall was being painted.
 - With more funding support it could be possible to extend a project such as this to have the existing group mentor another in creating a similar piece.
 - More staff / volunteer support was needed to protect equipment, visitors and participants
- There was a great deal of input from some of the residents in the area who are interested in setting up a community garden, however this was not maintained, which has been disappointing from the viewpoint of the Steering committee.
- The participants overall felt this project was a useful and successful way at building pride in the local area and preventing further vandalism of the wall

Model for Building Relationships

- Developing relationships/camaraderie between the young participants and the Retirement group requires much lead-in time. Learning from the previous project in Fettercairn was put into place through the Youth Workers organising 'outings' that were more social between the two participant groups. Arts projects create a strong opportunity in which to develop such relationships, however, the funding for the project limited this opportunity. Learning from this and the previous project in Fettercairn demonstrates that if this is not possible via funding for the project, it may need to be carried out prior to the commencement of arts planning / making and via Youth Service provision
- The small amount of funding does restrict the possibilities in creating more impact on developing relationships between and the artistic skills of the participants.
- Through the process, the young boys and the older participants have gotten to know each other. It is hoped that this will help develop future relationships

and/or a greater camaraderie between the two groups in the centre.

- Participants from the Retirement Group took the learning gained and preparation work carried out for the finished artwork and entered (and won) a competition for the Bealtine Festival 2011.

Learning Applied from Past Projects:

- Scribble Skills was not fully utilised during the project, perhaps due to the high qualifications of the artist involved. However, learning from the previous project in Fettercairn was utilised, particularly in the set up of the project.
- While there were challenges in encouraging interaction between the two age groups involved in St. Aengus, it is felt that this project has served as a building block for future inter-generational work within the centre.
- Further, this project has confirmed learning gained in the previous project in Fettercairn; in some cases spending time to bring the groups together in a leisure activity where there may be more commonly shared starting points, such as bowling, may be a good place to start bringing inter-generational groups together. Activities, such as drawing, can be intimidating initially for inexperienced participants and can add to nervous-ness in engaging with one another.

Professional Development

- Youth workers involved seem to feel they have learned new ways to approach intergenerational projects as well as public art projects
- The artist involved has accessed further work via new networks established during his experience working with the groups in St. Aengus Community Centre

Recommendations / Learning for future projects:

- Intergenerational projects are a good way to build relationships within local communities, but more developmental time is needed, perhaps one month with weekly meetings
- Arts activities for mural projects would benefit from more funding to carry out better development / relationship building for projects
- It appears that community arts projects that allow for local ownership of the development of art work can help deter graffiti in specific / designated area
- More direct engagement with the previous Fettercairn project could have been accessed, such as by visiting the site and seeing the work created there as a group



“I felt that it was huge breakthrough for me in terms of my career. I got a considerable amount of work as a result of that job, and it really felt like the floodgates opened. Considering it has been the first and only interview I've done in the Tallaght area, it's really led on to so much work, people call me up now to see if I can paint a wall, do a workshop, etc. and it's been a major confidence boost for me, both as an artist and a facilitator. Further, it's given me the drive to apply for large-scale tenders and projects...that I wouldn't have felt confident enough to do before.”

Project Artist

APPENDIX A: Call for Artist

Visual Artist Facilitator wanted for intergenerational community arts project

APT Visual Arts Project is looking for a visual artist to work with an intergenerational community group, made up of about 10 – 12 participants ages 14 and up, on designing and decorating a public wall adjacent to a green area in their community. Participants will be a mix of young people, members of a men's club, and local residents.

Site specifications: The wall area is Length - 15.03 meters, Height - 1.93 meters in Tymon North, D24

Time Frame:

2 project meetings, 1 public meeting

7 2-hour sessions on Wednesdays, 4 – 6pm, beginning March 2nd

4 full days week of April 18th

1 closing event

Fee: 1,200

fee includes costs for planning time and travel

Please submit

- a CV
- a Cover Letter detailing your interest in the position and
- Samples of work in jpeg format

by email only to Victoria Durrer at vdurrer@sdublincoco.ie by February 11th at noon. Applications sent after this date and time will not be accepted.

Interviews will take place on Wednesday, February 16th from 4 – 6pm. You must be available to interview at this date and time. The interview panel will include a group of participants and members of the project steering committee.

Duties:

- Work closely with project team on planning the creative development of the project
- Assist participants in designing and creating a piece of visual public art for the designated space
- Ensure that the voices and ideas of participants are foremost in the final work created
- Ensure health and safety and child protection guidelines are followed in creative tasks
- Participate in project evaluation

Essential for Post

- Experience in spray painting
- Experience working with young people
- Ability to articulate an artistic vision
- Be a practicing artist/community artist with an interest in site-specific and collaborative work
- Proven track record in facilitating and delivering community arts projects with a variety of people
- Ability to work within a tight budget
- Ability to meet deadlines

Desirable for the Post:

- Experience working within a youth service and community centre setting
- Experience working with inter-generational groups
- Experience negotiating public art projects between participants and audiences
- Ability to represent the project to the local and wider (arts) community
- Communication skills in the capacity of advocacy for the project

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ARTIST

Questions	Comments
Could you please tell us about yourself?	
Why did you apply to work with us?	
Can you work with spray paint? Can you tell us about a project you've done with spray paint?	
Are you aware of health and safety issues with using spray paint? Can you explain them?	
What age groups have you worked with? Have you ever worked with mixed ages in a group? How did you bring people's different ideas together?	
What do you think you will do in the first session of working with us?	
Which materials do you feel you're most comfortable or the best at working with?	
How do you think the work we make for the wall might include or interest the community members that are not in the group?	
Are you looking to put your own work on the wall? How are you going to work with us?	
What do you think could be done on the wall, now that you've seen it?	
Can you tell us some difficulty you may have had in working with a group? How did you deal with it?	
Do you have any questions for us?	

