


Evaluation and legacy- our lessons from Playwriting project with Up Cork LGBTI+ Youth project





SLIDE 1- Setting the scene




Creative Writing Programme with
Up CORK LGBTI+ Youth Project


SETTING OUR JOURNEY


Setting the scene

-  **UP CORK LGBTI+ YOUTH GROUP**
-  **PROJECT- CONTEXT & RATIONALE**
-  **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**
-  **STAGES & TIMELINE.**

October 2019-March 2020 (in person) June-July 2020 (online) November 2020-Jan 2021 (online)

 Youth Work Ireland **Cork**
Be Part of It

 UP CORK

 **retold narratives**
crafting stories, ideas to resist

What we do as global youth workers is to be found in the purpose of our engagement for a better world.

UP Cork LGBTI+ youth Group

- The aim is to unpack with the young people at the individual, local, national and global levels the implication of such frames and the dehumanisation they might cause.
- But also, to respond through actions with an informed understanding and knowledge of the world with a view to bringing about social justice.
- Personal and social development while raising awareness among young people in comprehending their agency but also connecting their circumstances to others and to invite empathy and hope and seek actions.

- Global youth work is to “provoke consciousness” while assisting in a supportive way the young people in their active engagement in relation to where they are at. This active participation is on “actions that bring about change towards greater equality and justice”.
- The underpinning principle approaches to the practice of global youth work lies in the creation of spaces and tools to be able to develop the capacity to hold difficult conversations in this Global Citizenship Education (Andriotti, 2020).

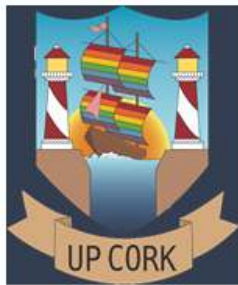
What We Offer

Spaces to Experience;

- Inclusion
- Acceptance
- Social Justice
- Safety
- FUN!

Through;

- One-To-One Support
- Group Support
- Peer Support



What We Do

- Hang Outs
- Activities & Events
- Community Projects
- Trips
- Educational Workshops
- Leadership Training
- Music, Arts & Culture Projects
- Youth Exchange/Erasmus+
- Community Collaborations



How the project came about

Phase1: Young people engaged critically with the National LGBTI+ youth strategy (2018) and met with minister to give their feedback.

Phase2: young people use creative theatre methods to explore the issue of inequality using a broader frame of reference than the National Strategy.

Rationale of project

- common paradigm behind Youth Work and Creative Writing Facilitation, namely the transfer of power
- fundamental principle that Creative Writing is not a subject to be thought
- Participants are not passive recipients of information they are active participants who, at most, need the stimulation, the tools to trigger, enhance and creatively shape the knowledge that is already there=> meeting young people where they are at

Aims and objectives

Overall AIM: to provide a safe space and tools for creative exploration and negotiation of self vs society

Objectives:

- to encourage agency and accountability through fiction writing inspired by real stories
- to engage critically and creatively with LGBTI+ Youth Strategy by bringing the group contribution to LGBTI+ youth narratives through writing a collective play/script
- to support collaborative work and cooperation by forming a team of playwrights that will write and eventually direct a collective play based on their lived experiences

Goals and objectives in alignment with LGBTI+ Youth Strategy and BOBF

Timeline:

First stage- OCT. 2019- March 2020- in person we have focused on:

- self-awareness and reflection (creative writing activities that support self-awareness)
- group needs, fears, worries and expectations- creating a safer space of creativity
- meaning-making: mediums and perspectives
- exploring generational needs and specific youth group needs through collective manifesto
- playwriting activities and exploring LGBTI+ Youth strategy

First stage online: June-July 2020 Young people have worked on:

- Group collaboration
- the collective VISION

- the key messages the group wants to send to the audience through their play
- Who and why are they addressing their key messages?
- how to create a character
- how to develop a plot and main 'ingredients' of a play
- scene writing and first draft of play

Second stage: Nov.2020- March 2021- online

- building dramaturgy and adaptation to enable participants to make an impact in their communities by preparing them for working on a performance based on the draft resulted from our first phase of the project
- re-writing of the core work resulted
- theoretical and practical notions on dramaturgy, theatre object, and theatrical space (focus on HOW to send their key messages?)

Third stage- directing and performing the play- in future

This stage will be focusing on the long impact of the project in the wider community as it seeks to bring awareness through the performance of the play. **Funding is sought for this phase.**

SLIDE 2: ACT 1- How do we measure impact?



Witnessing change IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Observation

- change in behaviour, attitude and skills
 1. skills: in their writing abilities, incorporating the learning techniques
 2. a higher awareness on own situatedness within the global frame
- Social interactions/emotional and mental wellbeing
 1. Found their voice to speak their views with more confidence but also can relate to others and their story in and outside the gender identity scope
 2. Contributing by leading but also collaborating within a team to enhance the content with different perspectives also bringing the voice of the absent in the room
 - informed observation/as trained professional and engaged practitioner
 - Feedback- spontaneous

Evidence

What does it mean to you to be creative in these times?

How would you describe your experience in the online workshop till now?

Recorded Feedback

Thoughts and feelings about today.

Please write 5 key words describing your overall experience in the second part of Creative writing programme (online).

My creative writing journey

My creative writing journey

1. What was your experience in this creative writing journey?

2. How was it for you to write about the issues addressed in the play?

3. How was it for you to write

Lights are fading away, in this way the last line is said in complete darkness.

MATT: The Rainbow is there
LIAM: It's secluded and bare
HAILEY: Life is not natural
CLEO: It will never be fair.
XANDRIA: But we can improve it
MATT: With small little steps.
LIAM: We discriminate and hate
HAILEY: We steal and isolate
CLEO: But in the future we will be equal
TOGETHER: As we will never fall.

- Recorded evaluation- qualitative and quantitative, emphasis on qualitative
- Feedback as storytelling

- Example: ongoing -feedback and evaluation to address arising of new needs=> ment& padlet slides

1. What was your experience in this creative writing journey?

It was very enjoyable. It helped me unlock my creativity. It was a nice steady engaging thing to do throughout the pandemic. It was great to gain new knowledge and develop new skills. It has definitely improved my writing in other areas too not just playwriting.

2. How was it for you to write about the issues addressed in the play?

It wasn't too bad overall. While some scenes brought up past memories, it was almost therapeutic to write those scenes and to deal with those issues.

3. How was it for you to write a collective play?

It was challenging at some points. Everyone has different ideas, viewpoints and experiences. Overall it made it more enjoyable though because I had to write and had to do the work, which if I did it by myself I might not have done. It definitely improved my teamwork skills.

1. What was your experience in this creative writing journey?

I learnt a lot doing this workshop and writing this piece. About dialogue, about expressing oneself, about putting myself into other people's shoes. The experience itself was constantly changing, due in part to the world changing. Saying that, online was just as enriching as offline just different in a way. I have never written such a long and complex narrative. It was fun and I'm quite proud of it. Writing is difficult but worth it and I'm very glad I took part in it. :)

2. How was it for you to write about the issues addressed in the play?

Difficult at times. The issues are close to home. Homophobia, transphobia and family. It did provide a space to think about things that have effected me. Through writing and adapting and seeing all characters points of view, it helped give me a little perspective. It is also comforting in a way. In the end, although their lives are not perfect they find strength in each other.

3. How was it for you to write a collective play?

Great! It was teamwork, push and pull. Having other people in the story pushed the narrative in ways it wouldn't have if it was me on my own. We all had different ideas and different things to bring to the table. It was frustrating at times, compromises had to be made. It was for the best in the end.

- The play itself as action of the group- themes the characters decisions, development, actions=> slides- snapshot of final monologue, menti with ranking themes

Lights are fading away, in this way the last line is said in complete darkness.

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TOGETHER: As we will never fall.

Which 3 of the following themes you consider most likely to become the CLIMAX (highest tension) in our play?



- recognition of young people's work:

1. young people's critical voice was invited by other drama group to give feedback
2. own work is brought to a drama student group to engage with (public reading of play)

Impact transcending project

- legacy of youth work-understanding its complexity and extend
 - Snapshot
 - not the full picture as impact goes beyond the project itself
1. increased participation of the young people in other creative projects
 2. also reaching out to other projects and creating their own projects. Ex Ben :

1.What was your experience in this creative writing journey?

It was very enjoyable. it helped me unlock my creativity. it was a nice steady engaging thing to do throughout the pandemic. It was great to gain new knowledge and develop new skills. It has definitely improved my writing in other areas too not just playwriting.

- The evaluation of a project is arguably to be measured in the repercussion it has on subsequent engagement and higher motivation it might generate for

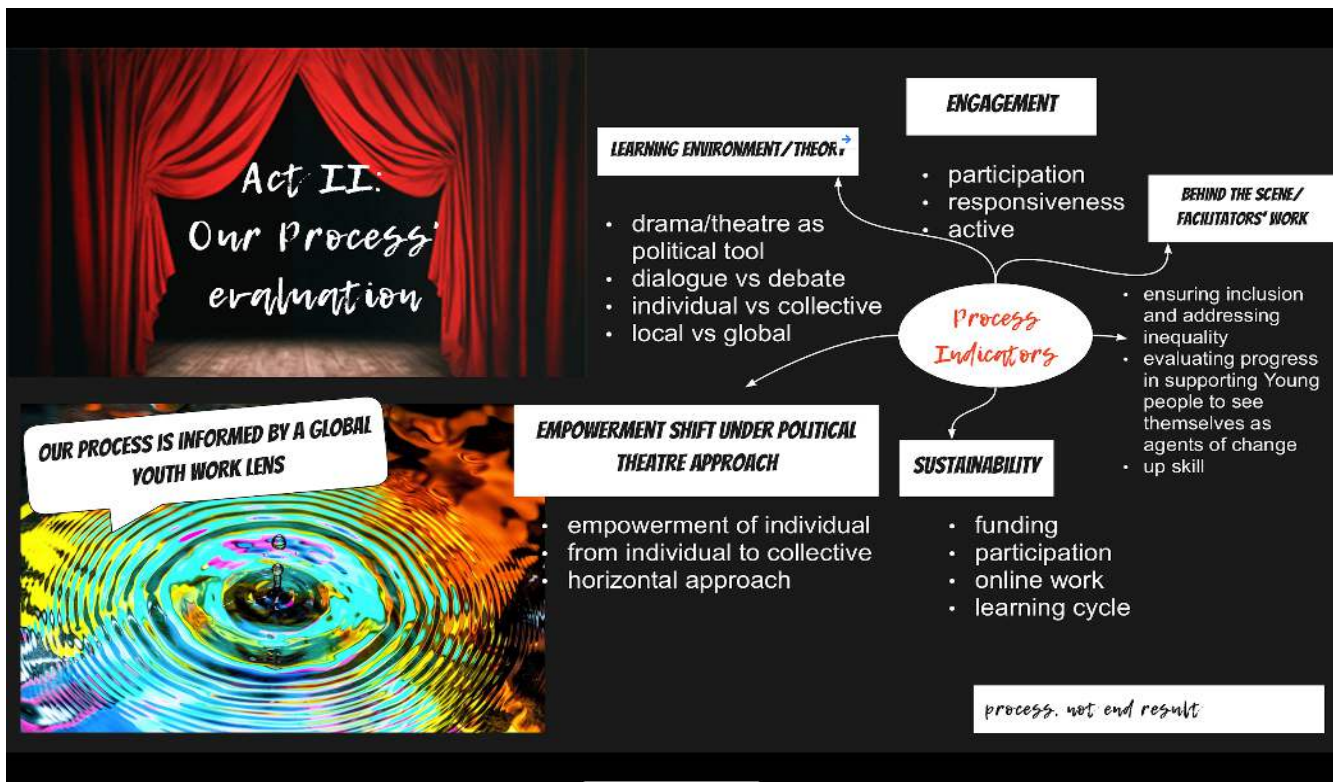
subsequent endeavour young people might lid on. Impact across time as we are just planting seeds.

- This mirror the framework itself as global youth work is never a done job as the process of consciousness raising is always ongoing and because of its nature it might and probably should create uncomfortable spaces but let us see them as brave opportunities
- legacy of youth work-understanding its complexity and extend
- Snapshot- not the full picture: increased participation of the young people in other creative projects or even creating their own projects
- evaluation of young people happened across time, transcending the project

Flexibility as methodology

- ongoing evaluation is conducive to this
- based on an agenda that has been negotiated with young people
- Aim didn't change- response to needs: change and adaptation of programme content, methods and pace
- Why are we evaluating: to shape and improve our practice; to support development of critical thinking- not establishing the content of dialogue
- wider toolbox for supporting critical thinking lense towards emancipation

SLIDE 3- ACT II- OUR PROCESS EVALUATION



Empowerment shift/processes :

- the medium itself caters for creator's/individual empowerment through increase confidence and skills (global view through theatre)
- process of power shift from individual to collective
- horizontal approach

Learning environment/Theory

- drama/theatre as political tool => understanding construction of social reality
- theoretical material incorporated in the making of the play that supports discussions regarding dynamics of power, relations between micro and macro, between personal and collective
- how characters' decisions impact the others and the world
- moving from discussion to dialogue
- dialogue as medium and a tool for measuring- participatory observation
- nourishing them with international references/drama as a global tool
- connect, challenge- encourage to challenge themselves to gain a more critical understanding of the world around them, change-support to take action towards a more just and sustainable world
- Snapshot of type of tasks & discussions that are supporting previous points

Our MOTIVATIONS

1. What drives me to write in this collective project?
2. What demotivates me?

Which 3 of the following themes you consider most likely to become the CLIMAX (highest tension) in our play?

1st	100%
2nd	80%
3rd	60%
4th	40%
5th	20%
6th	10%
7th	5%
8th	2%
9th	1%
10th	0%
11th	0%

Our (collective) vision, Messages we want to share with the world

MIND MAPPING OUR PLAY

1. Looking at our characters types:

- caregiver, explainer, regular etc
- actor of change, receiver of change, supportability,
- resistant/opponent, neutral (if so, what is their role and what does Neutrality mean in this specific context)

2. Characters goals, status quo, decisions and how their decisions will influence the point of no return and the appearance of new status-quo

15 min- in a separate room

WE ARE GOING TO START WITH MAIN CHARACTERS THEN WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE OTHER, and 3rd step will be DYNAMICS in the play

AUDIENCE: Reflection time

Who are we addressing this?

Why?

Laboratory/ Discussions/Tasks/ knowledge

What do you think VISION refers to (in PLAYWRITING)?

Share your ideas!

VISION

- "... each one, by inventing his own ideas, invents himself (person, themselves), Man (human being) must be invented each day." Jean-Paul Sartre, What is Literature?
- A writer needs something to say, an attitude about life, a POINT OF VIEW about EXISTENCE
- A drama without IDEAS and ATTITUDES is a work without substance
- But the best playwrights DON'T PREACH- they weave ideas into the fabric of their work
- Before plunging into writing, a dramatist must decide WHAT to write about.
- What gives life order and meaning? How should a person behave in extreme circumstances?-> by contemplating both the trivial and the momentous problems of existence, a writer ponders SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS and EXAMINES possible responses

RELATIONSHIPS and INFLUENCES DYNAMICS OF PLAY

Inner circle: Connect with arrows the relationship between main characters

Second circle: Look for all characters that enter in relationship with each of your main one name them and show with arrows their relationship with whom interact and have potential to influence

Second circle: identify what type of characters are: actor of change, receiver of change, supportability, resistant/opponent, neutral (if so, what is their role and what does neutrality mean in this specific context)

Third circle: secondary characters motivations, goals, and how they influence main characters actions/decisions. Type of relationships

Third circle: consider all society pressure VISIBLE IN THE PLAY that determine responses/motivations/decisions etc of secondary and main characters.

Drama is character in action: let's take a look on main characters series of important decisions

Clara, Matt, Liam, Haley

CONCLUSION: New status quo

MIND MAPPING OUR PLAY

1. looking at our characters types:

-Caregiver, explorer, regular etc

-actor of change, receiver of change, supporter/ally,

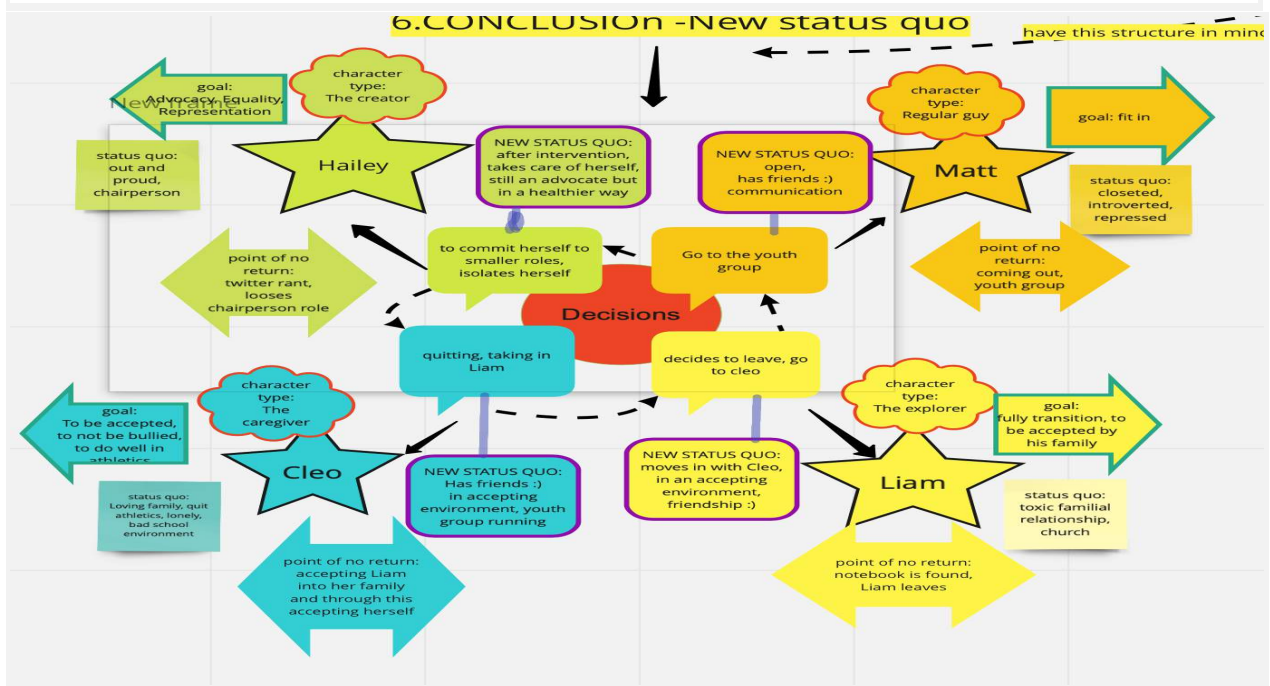
resistent/opponent, neutral (if so, what is their role and what does

Neutrality mean in this specific context)

2. Characters goals, status quo, decisions and how their

decisions will influence he point of no return and the

appearance of new status-quo



3rd step- RELATIONSHIPS and INFLUENCES .DYNAMICS OF the PLAY-25 min in rooms

1. Inner circle: Connect with arrows the relationship between main characters
2. Second circle: Look for all characters that enter in relationship with each of your main one. Name them and show with arrows their relationship/with whom interact and have potential to influence
3. Second circle: identify what type of characters are: actor of change, receiver of change, supporter/ally, resistent/opponent, neutral (if so, what is their role and what does neutrality means in this specific context)
4. Second circle: secondary characters motivations, goals, and how they influence main characters actions. decisions. Type of relationships
5. Third circle/outer circle: all society pressure VISIBLE IN THE PLAY that determine responses/motivations/decisions etc of secondary and main characters

Engagement:

- participation-to come to group
- responsive to tasks and to messages (good communication)
- participate in the creative process
- giving feedback
- active in the group
- consistency throughout time

Behind the scene/Facilitators' work

- reflective meetings
- strategy planning- move and adapt to young people's aims changes
- development of individuals
- dynamic and addressing issues
- to ensure inclusion
- group progress in their collaboration
- Upskill- theory and practice (Global Youth Work)

Sustainability:

- funded at different times, by different entities to bring to life the first 2 stages
- it takes usually more than one funding to complete the learning cycle
- vision is impaired by the sporadic process of funding
- learning cycle in this project will be completed once play will be arriving on the stage- more skills/learning to be developed in this process
- Participation: less young people in online sessions
- Online work : change of the **Environmental/space** :
 1. increased capacity: technology adaptation to respond to needs
 2. more organised writing process
 3. dynamic changed, as less young people online
however the size of group made it easier to work in some aspects
 4. brought different set of methods of feedback collection