



Creative Technology

- A Creative Ireland Programme as part of
the Creative Youth Plan

A needs analysis for youth services in Ireland to provide creative
technology opportunities for young people.

This needs analysis and report was conducted by Camara Education Ireland
in partnership with the Creative Ireland Programme supported by the
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The information in this report is based on opinions and experiences of a
sample group of youth settings in Ireland.

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Registered Charity Number: 20102418

Artwork credits

John Rushe, ESB Creative TechFest, 2019



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Forward

The Creative Ireland Programme is a 5-year all-of-Government initiative which places creativity at the centre of public policy, with the core proposition that participation in cultural and creative activity promotes individual, community and national wellbeing.

One of the main pillars of the Programme is the Creative Youth Plan – which seeks to enable the creative potential of every young person, published in December 2017. The more specific policy aims of Creative Youth have been refined as follows: expand young people’s access to creative initiatives and activities, focus on the inclusion of every child, and support positive and sustainable outcomes for children and young people through creative engagement across formal and non-formal settings.

The integration of creativity within the wider education/ learning system ensures that we can equip young people to flourish in their personal lives, as well as the social and economic circumstances in which they are likely to find themselves. Engagement with creative activities supports the development of a range of skills – being inventive and innovative; problem solving; working collaboratively and experimentally; and thinking conceptually and imaginatively.

Recognising the need to provide greater opportunity for engagement with new and emerging technologies, which can support further learning, development or education opportunities for those at disadvantage (including supporting re-engagement with or alternative access to formal education), the Creative Ireland Programme has partnered with Camara Ireland to develop this Creative Technologies initiative.

Introduction

1. Introduction

Digital Creativity takes many forms. From taking a picture with your new camera, making your own music video, building a robot with your friends or developing a video game with coding languages, technology provides endless avenues to express and channel your creative self. Being digitally creative also enables the development of key skills and experiences that can unlock opportunities and learning pathways previously not thought possible. Our vision is that these opportunities are embedded within a creative community network and accessible for all young people in Ireland.

This vision aligns with the Creative Youth Plan for Ireland or Oige Ildanach, which states the Government of Ireland's commitment to "ensuring that every child in Ireland has practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, arts and coding by 2022." ([Creative Youth Plan 2017, creativeireland.gov.ie](https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie))

To contribute towards achieving this commitment, The Creative Ireland Programme have initiated a new Digital Creative programme in partnership with Camara Ireland. Over the next two years a pilot project will provide a template for potential nationwide roll-out. The first activity of the programme was to assess the Digital Creativity landscape



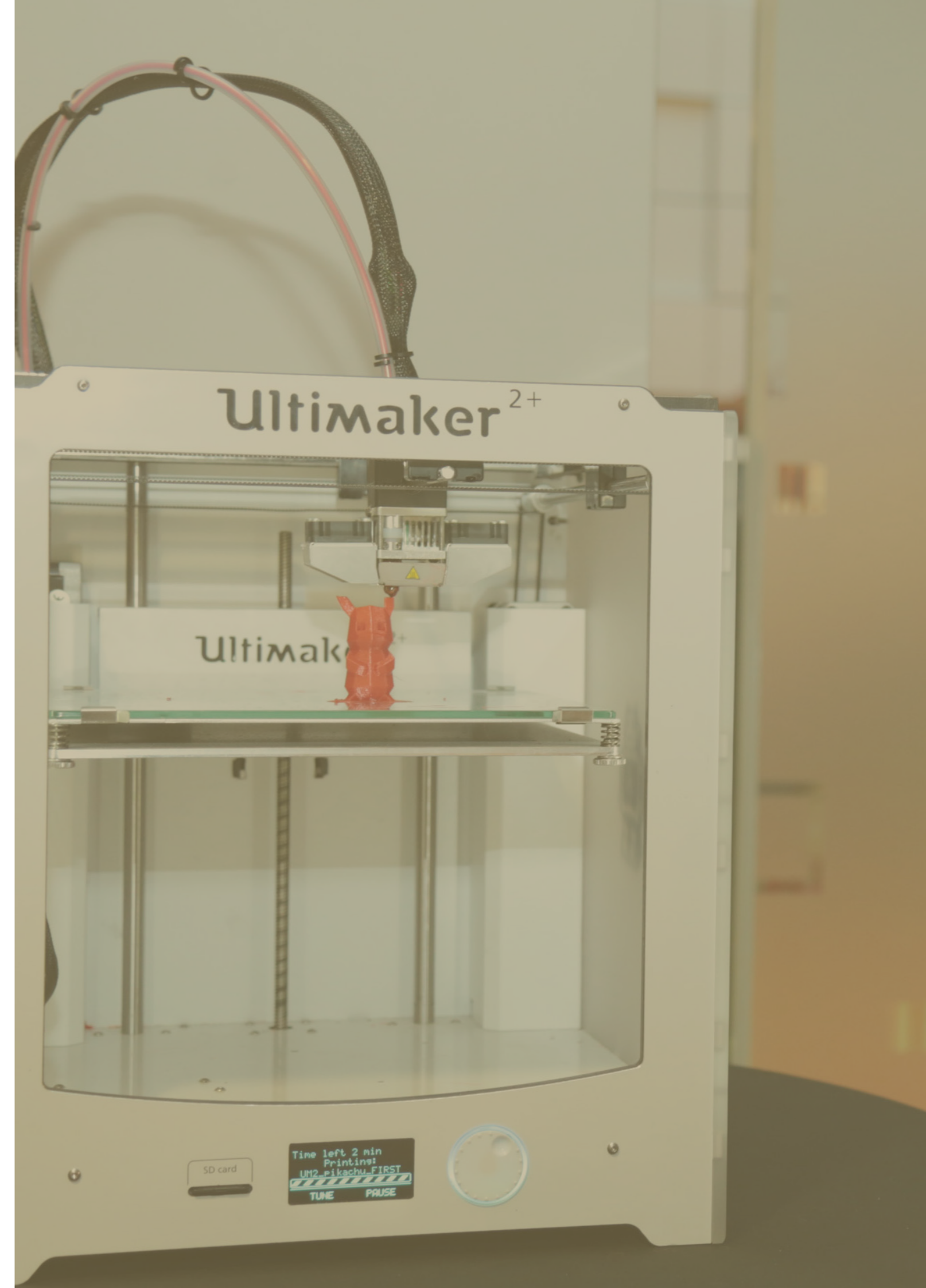
and this report highlights gaps and makes recommendations based on consultation with key stakeholders. The response to the findings is the implementation of a series of Digital Creativity skills training workshops, support sessions and resources that will be rolled out to staff and volunteers in youth settings. Engaging in this project will promote the value of Digital Creativity in Youth Settings, and allow staff and volunteers to gain competence and confidence in the provision of opportunities for young people to engage with creative technology projects. It will provide significant and measurable recreational/social, personal development, educational and career development opportunities for young people, targeting those at greatest risk of disadvantage or marginalisation. The aim is to build capacity in communities and embed Digital Creative skills and opportunities within existing practices and settings to ensure sustainability.



Why is this important? There is an aspiration gap that exists for many young people in Ireland. When little or no point of reference is provided to experience the creation of a project using technology, this presents as a lack of opportunity to develop into creative or technology based future careers. This is evident in the profile of people working in a range of sectors including traditional elite professions like medicine, law, engineering and now also growth areas like technology and software development.

National and global recommendations are now clearly supporting the impact that non-formal education, delivered across youth settings, can have on engaging marginalised young people in successful educational outcomes. Research and evidence-based practice also support the development of creative, technology-based interventions in the delivery of successful programmes.

This report highlights the needs of youth settings to provide these opportunities for young people. Creativity and technology are areas that have experienced accelerated growth and are emerging as a key driver to future community development and opportunity. By enhancing the existing plans and programmes of our youth settings through the creative application of technology we hope to achieve positive outcomes and the development of future skills for young people in Ireland.



2. Who did we talk to and why?

In the early stages of partnership development and needs analysis, this Creative Ireland Programme, designed to provide creative technology opportunities for young people, received 88 responses from youth settings across 19 counties.

Through the CYPSC National Coordination Office and the Local Creative Youth Partnerships in ETBs, these responses came from Senior Managers, local CYPSC Coordinators, ETB Youth Officers, Youth Workers and Educators developing youth settings with a focus on supporting young people who may be marginalised, disadvantaged or vulnerable.

Representatives were invited to take part in the first project phase from counties Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Louth, Meath, Mayo, Dublin, Wicklow, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Wexford Tipperary, Waterford, Kerry and Cork following an expression of interest.

The consultations and surveys that were carried out provided a platform for youth settings in Ireland to voice their experience of 2020 and highlight the impact on their work through the lens of a new, digitally enhanced reality.



What are we talking about?



Coding



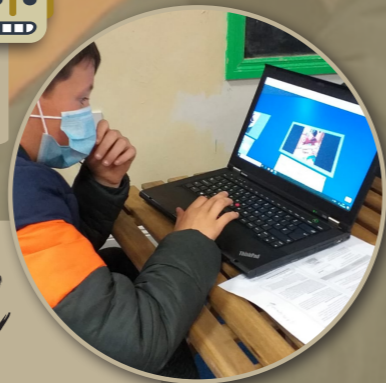
Animation



Robotics



Filmmaking



Virtual Youth Work



Sound Production



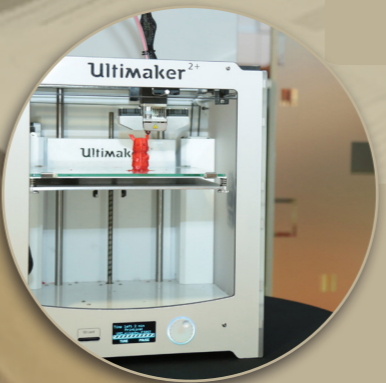
Virtual and Augmented Reality



Makerspace



Visual Design



3D Design and Printing



Who did we ask?

Project Leader SCP Project Worker
 Teacher / Business Owner Technology Enhanced Learning Officer
 Creative Co-Ordinator Youth Work Support Officer Music Coordinator Youth Support Team Leader
 Family Support Worker Receptionist Youth Information Worker
 Youth Officer Librarian Project Coordinator Regional Director Community Youth Worker
 Eastern Area Manager, Foróige Manager Youth worker Executive Librarian Social Care Manager
 Youth Information Co-ordinator C.E.O Resource Service Manager Artistic Director Migrant Support Worker Arts Education
 National Co-ordinator for Children and Young People's Services Committees Senior Executive Librarian LCYP Coordinator Art workshop facilitator/manager Senior Youth Officer
 Project Leader CYPSC Co-Ordinator Champion Youth Development Officer Founder & Manager Tutor: Art/Graphic Design
 Youth Work Manager Community Services Programme Manager Youth Outreach Manager Owner, lead photographer and educator Tutor
 Aftercare manager Senior CFSN Coordinator Creative Youth Co-Ordinator - LCYP Assistant Youth Information Officer
 Social Care Leader-Aftercare Youth Justice Worker





3. What Did We Learn?

There is a desire and willingness from staff and volunteers working in youth settings to develop the use of technology in their settings, with over 80% feeling open to using technology-based tools.

“ Somehow we need to merge into the interests of young people and support them to navigate technology.”

LCYP Coordinator

Investment is required in the digital competence and confidence of staff and volunteers:

Only 1 in 4 of the respondents felt they knew the appropriate tools to use.

Only half of the respondents have received any training to date in this area, and 95% of the respondents requested further training, support and one-to-one consultations.

“ It [technology] needs to be part of the future, not just something we did in a crisis.”

ETB Youth Officer

There is a lack of knowledge and inspirational reference points for youth settings in Ireland to realise and support opportunities for young people. Notably, many of the respondents did not recognise some of the creative technology disciplines and career opportunities that we referenced.



“ We need help to understand how we make it relevant to our work.”
—— Senior Manager - Youth Service

Resourcing of community spaces and settings is required with 95% of respondents expressing the need to improve and provide more creative opportunities for young people to engage in Technology through their local setting.

“ There are wonderful opportunities being offered in urban centres and I would love to see those opportunities to be available in rural areas.”
—— CYPSC Coordinator

There is a need for ongoing bespoke support for staff and volunteers in youth settings across Ireland. We need to support youth settings to respond to the ongoing needs of young people in relation to navigating new and existing technologies. 80% of respondents to this needs analysis highlighted training and ongoing support as what they wanted or needed.

“ Often you get kids who know a lot about it [technology]. Part of the learning is the teachers learning with the young people and looking”
—— Youth Worker - Youth Service

“ They need to be sustainable - rolling support. The “Champion” idea is not feasible given the structure of funding.”
—— Manager - Youth Service

4. The Digital Readiness of Youth Settings

Throughout the consultations, those supporting young people directly and the Senior Management of Youth settings highlighted the urgent need to collectively explore how youth settings could now resume, as restrictions were lifted making full use of the possibilities of technology.

Local CYPSC Coordinators and ETB Youth Officers stressed the need for a greater conversation and awareness to open up around the real challenges that exist for youth settings to know how to



support young people to achieve their full potential, with a key driver being access to creative opportunities in technology. We have seen how creative technology can engage young people and are eager to take it further to embed their learning into Ireland's youth programmes and settings.



Digital Readiness and Covid -19 - The Reality for Youth Settings

Common themes that were raised by youth settings include being plunged into emergency response mode in the midst of a pandemic developing care packages and online settings coming up with new ways of engaging vulnerable young people as quickly as they could.

Youth workers and educators developed online gaming clubs, music jam sessions, film-making projects, coding clubs, and even science projects from home to continue to enhance youth development outcomes.

Young people who were marginalised and on the periphery of access to quality educational experiences prior to Covid-19 notably fell through the gaps even further during the pandemic.

Staff and volunteers who were a vital access point for these young people, pushed themselves to their limits to strengthen their digital competencies in an effort to care for those who really needed their local youth settings during level 5 restrictions.

“ There was a risk of burnout for staff and the general wellbeing of staff, we spent a lot of time trying to mitigate any fall out of that. Staff are delighted with their new enhanced level of competence when it came to technology, something that was forced on us all during the pandemic.”

— Senior Manager Youth Service

“ I see the big gap in schools is that any of our teachers who are passionate about technology are fairly maxed out at this point.”

— ETB Staff Member

Rural access to youth settings were both positively and negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. On one hand, young people who would normally have issues attending their local youth club due to transport, could now join online and feel included in developmental opportunities. Others who did not have access to a strong Broadband connection were completely isolated from educational experiences.

Given the rapid changes that were required through the new approach and the new use of technology in their setting, there was a clear desire for youth workers and educators to continue to adapt their settings, based on their new learnings through technology during the pandemic.

“ Those who were engaging in school were online all day. We got very creative about it, we are working in communities where you have feuding, drug misuse, gun use, young people living violence, we went back to giving out care packs and doing online sessions about food and about care. So it allowed us to check in in another way.”

— Youth Officer Youth Service



Given the rapid changes that were required through the new approach and the new use of technology in their service, there was a clear desire for youth workers and educators to continue to adapt their services, based on their new learnings through technology during the pandemic.

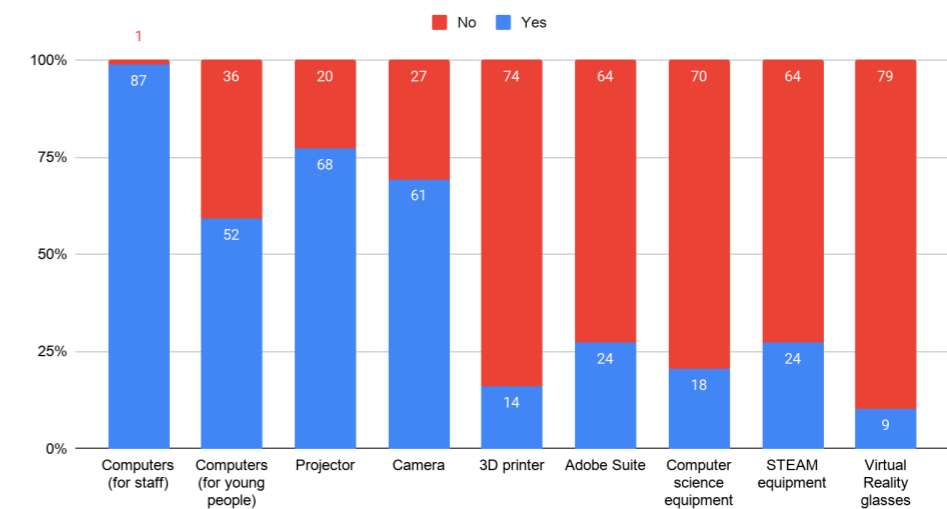
“ We can go backwards so quickly. In progress reports we are asking people what did you do during the restrictions. There is a lot of learning and we need to make it something for the future. It does move very fast so how can we ensure our policy is keeping up?”

— ETB Youth Officer

Equipment

There was a focus on the digital divide during consultations. Educators and local coordinators spoke about the fact that Youth settings never ceased to provide vital services. Working in partnership with local Youth settings, local CYPSC Co-ordinators identified gaps for families and young people regarding WIFI and laptops during school closures and level 5 restrictions. A sharing of resources, access to affordable hardware and the provision of useful hardware for young people was a key focus for many local coordinators and officers in their future plans.

Chart 3 - Equipment available for use (n=88)



Whilst the majority do have access to computers for young people, i.e. a projector and a camera, very few have access to more specific equipment that can be used for creative digital projects. Funding for equipment and equipment more broadly was mentioned by many of the respondents as a challenge when implementing digital youth work.



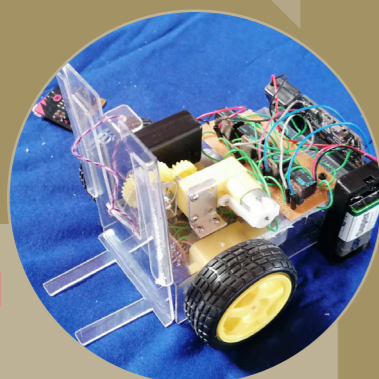
The broadband, the internet and the wifi activity was a huge issue. Not every young person has access to a computer. There were competing needs from home for some young people. They were all trying to share possibly one desktop. Trying to do online classes with the phone. It was a nightmare for them."

Local Coordinator



Young people and accessibility to equipment and WIFI was and is a huge issue. Certainly many of them have phones but we naturally made an assumption that we could still access them when many of them didn't have phones. They relied on us to come to the youth cafe for Wifi."

Senior Youth Worker
Youth Service



It doesn't matter how many support meetings and people we have trained. Unless we have access to resources, being able to access the additional stuff that costs money, we can't implement the programme. We are a rural volunteer club and we have no extra funding for equipment."

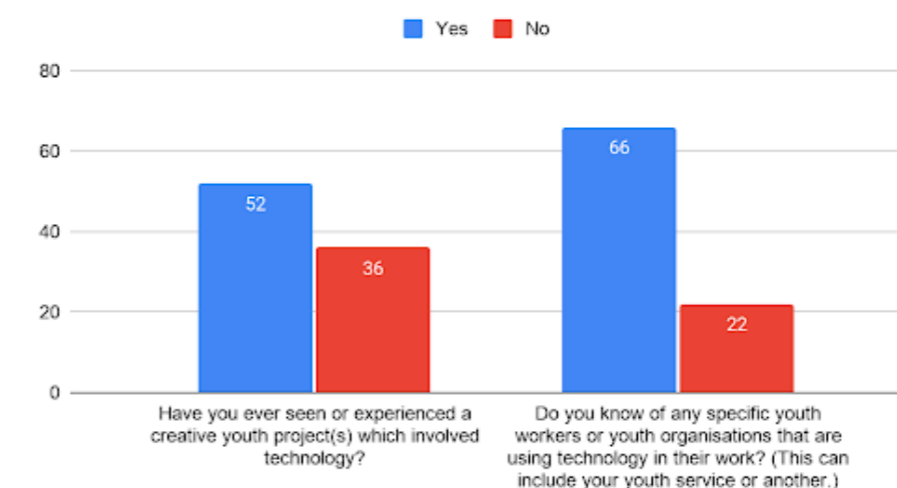
Educator - Youth Service



Our young people need to be able to access the best technology they can and have the connectivity of good quality broadband too."

CEO, Youth Service

Chart 4 - Technology use in youth work



As seen in Chart 4, the majority of respondents have seen or heard of creative youth projects involving technology. However, 50% had not received any training in using technology in their work or a related area (e.g. STEAM, Filmmaking, Music Production, Digital Youth Work management). When asked what training they had received there was a broad range. The most common was STEAM and related activities which were mentioned in over half of the responses. Filmmaking/film or sound editing and related activities were mentioned in just under 40%.

- 95% of the respondents would like to avail of future support as part of this Creative Ireland programme for their organisation.
- 80% specifically said training, one-to-one consultations and ongoing support would be beneficial to them. Funding and access to equipment were also commonly mentioned as a requirement.
- When asked what kind of support would be most useful to them and what support was needed for their organisation to fulfil their goals. Out of 171 responses across both questions training was mentioned 107 times, equipment 57 and support 38.
- 80% felt that staff needed more support or training in using the technology equipment that is already available to them in their organisation.

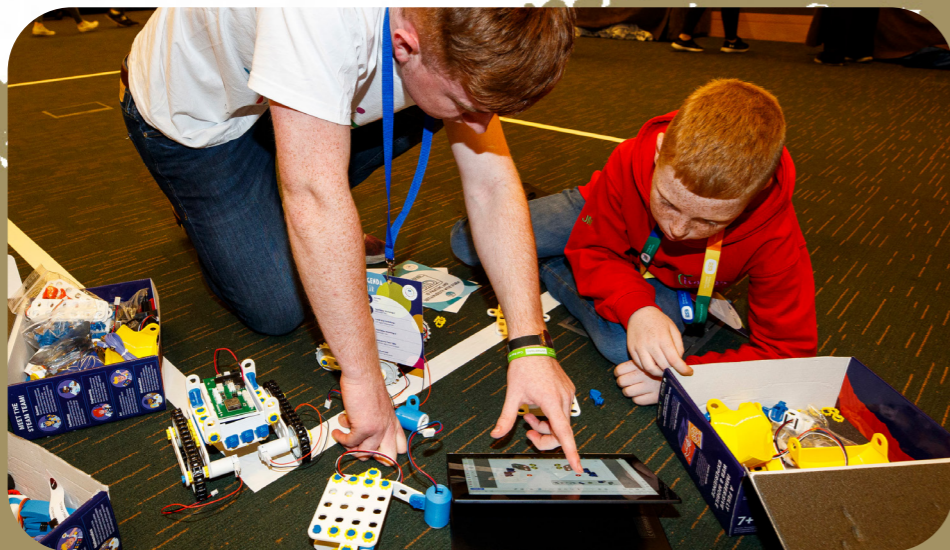
5. Digital Creativity Inspirations for Youth Setting Networks

Supports at a local level - Developing A Digital Creativity Specialist

Staff and Volunteers working directly with young people that were consulted explained that although an initial introduction to STEAM or Digital Creativity was helpful, they sometimes lacked the confidence to integrate technology into all of their youth programmes and services in order to take it that step further. Reporting to funders of their programmes also became a barrier to implementation. Similarly, senior managers in youth settings spoke about the need for and understanding from sponsors to allow for more time for staff to develop a pilot project with young people. Citing that more time to develop a project would allow staff to understand the links to youth outcomes.

“ You need a local specialist to be able to do some of the heavy lifting and give them a little bit of support and someone to help.”

— Senior Manager Youth Service



It is the lack of skill set myself that becomes a barrier, we did the scribble bots and did a workshop with the young people, but it is committing to the higher level of training and the resources to roll it out that becomes an issue. You need a certain level of time to do it. In terms of the young people, most of them would jump at the opportunity.”

School Completion Officer



Can there be an exception made from sponsors to allow us time to develop this? If we are going to develop a new programme, then we need a couple of trial sites. If you have to work with less young people to develop these projects then you are risking your targeted numbers. Investment needs to allow us to operate outside of the normal structures. If you are going to develop, you need to allow time for young people to get back to you, and for them to develop.”

Senior Manager Youth Service



I would love it if we had a Creative Worker who was there to make these things or ideas happen. The youth workers have these ideas, and it almost needs its own person to grab this creativity to attach it to all the different spheres. We sometimes think that we need loads of stuff for this, but what we need is people.”

Senior Manager Youth Service



We need a level of expertise that we don't have.”

ETB Staff Member

Relevance to the Curriculum and to Youth Outcomes

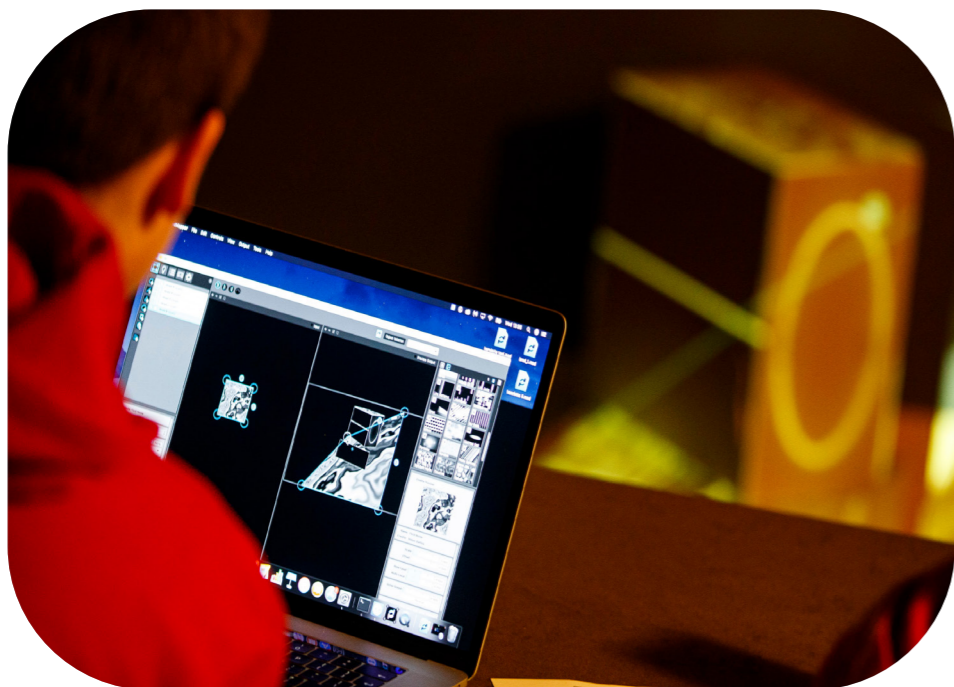
There is a need to connect creative projects to the outcomes framework and curriculum of youth settings to enable them to report to sponsors and map outcomes of projects to young people.

“I would have to be really strategic about what I put out [because of] the ability to fit it into the school day, and a lack of curriculum time. You would have one school that has been heavily into robotics, but then others who haven't had the background or experience and are really not able to see the potential.”

ETB Staff Member

“There is a lot of overlap. You are normally dealing with someone with teaching - someone being pushed out of their comfort zone. Often you get kids who know a lot about it. Part of the learning is the teachers learning with the young people.”

Educator Youth Service

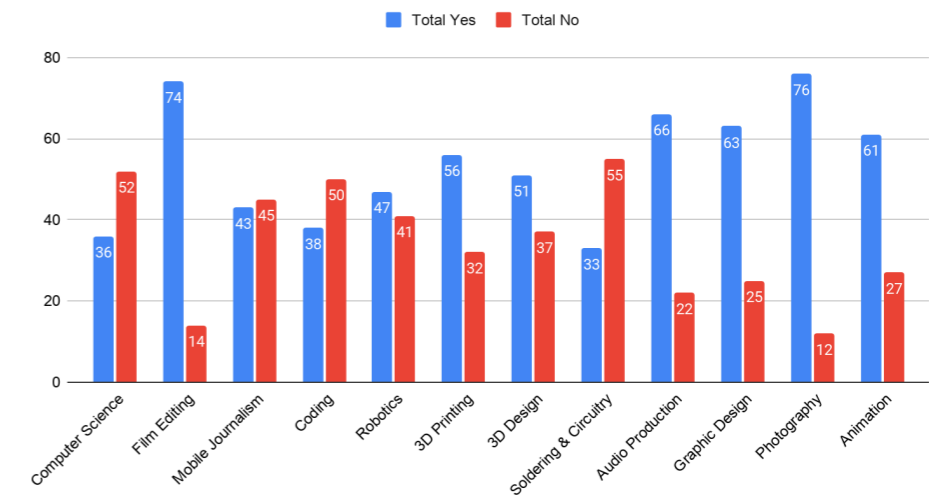


Developing Inspirations

Both a gap in knowledge of examples and a national space for young people to showcase their ideas and projects were highlighted. There is a need to recognise that young people from all backgrounds and abilities have creative potential when it comes to technology. Young people must be encouraged to share their experiences and have opportunities to showcase the impact of technology in their lives. The voice of young people is vital for inspiring future generations and future policies in Irish youth settings.

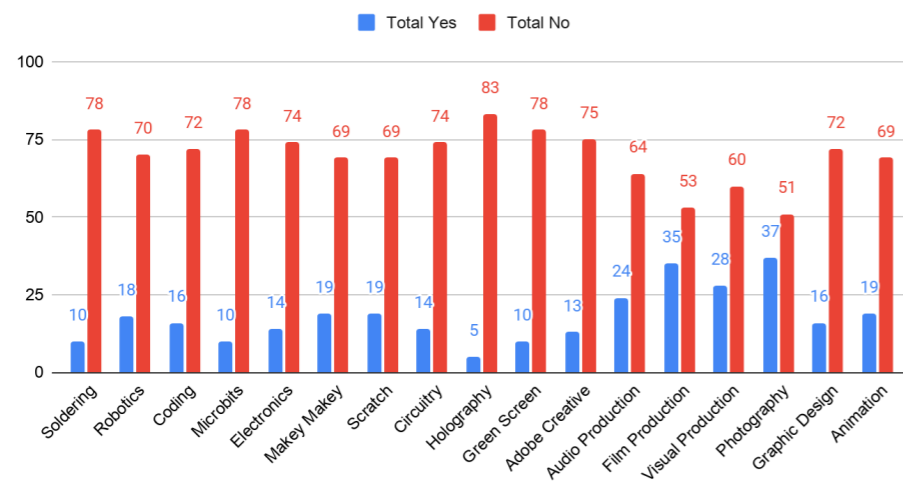
Although almost three-quarters (73.8%) of respondents felt that there are opportunities for young people to engage in technology in Irish youth settings, 96% recognised the need for more. As discussed previously, and shown in Chart 4, the majority of respondents had seen or experienced creative youth projects that involved technology. Whilst this is positive and shows that work is being done across the country in the area of digital youth work and creative technology, there is a sense that the respondents had a lack of awareness when it comes to the opportunities that exist for achieving educational and youth work outcomes using creative technology. Respondents were asked what activities inspire them, and their responses can be seen in Chart 5.

Chart 5 - Inspirations



There is a clear gap between the number of respondents inspired by various creative technology activities versus those who have actually used the same activities with young people which is shown in Chart 6.

Chart 6 - Activities Used with Young People



From a list of 17 activities as shown in Graphs 5 and 6, one third had not used any of these activities with their young people. No activity has been used by half of the respondents and only four activities have been used by 1 in 4 respondents with a bias towards Photography, Film Production, Visual Production, Audio Production. There was a clear divide in respondents' experiences with just over 1 in 4 having used five or more activities with young people but almost 49% had either used only one or none of these activities.

When this was then broken down, it became even more evident that many had not experienced any of these activities with young people. "Newer" creative digital activities such as computer science, electronics and robotics have not been widely used and educators do not seem to be inspired by them.

Other activities and areas that were mentioned by respondents as inspirations include Virtual Reality, Engineering projects, Digital arts and the integration of STEM and arts.

“ There is a piece of work to do in terms of what digital technology is and how we can be inspired to have our minds open a bit. I think that there is a real opportunity in whatever way we are using it to engage with young people, to think about the fact that technology isn't confined to young people who are just interested in technology. That we don't need to be afraid of our own abilities... Technology is relevant across sport, drama, music and many subject areas. Whatever a young person is interested in, it is about building the capacity of the youth services in Ireland and supporting them to integrate technology.”

ETB Staff Member



6. Aspirations to Digitally Enhance Youth Services

“ We have a couple of people thinking about Tech Fest. Mobile Journalism is running quite well, everybody is dabbling in producing videos in one way or another. It’s how to coordinate that together that is the next step for us. How do we get it that there is a bit of uniformity across the service?”

Senior Manager Local Youth Service

At a national level, the need to be aware of reference points and best practice examples from across Ireland in the field of creative technology projects was discussed in order to heighten aspirations to carry out this type of work with young people. National youth settings such as the ETBI noted that local youth settings require a coordinated policy at a governmental level in the fields of Creativity and Technology in Youth Settings. They noted that there is a need for a greater awareness of the possibilities to enhance any form of youth development and education. Respondents also referred to the need for conversations for strategic transformation within youth settings and to commence at 3rd level institutes for youth settings also.

“ It’s about the education of youth workers and their own professional standards being improved at 3rd level also.”

ETB Staff member

The need for local specialised creative technology experts to build capacity was highlighted. Someone who could be available and confident enough to support youth settings or schools with ambitious projects, driving innovation and supporting staff to use the equipment they have available to them in a creative way. Staff and volunteers in youth settings stressed the need for more time to be dedicated to allowing educators to develop skills with young people.

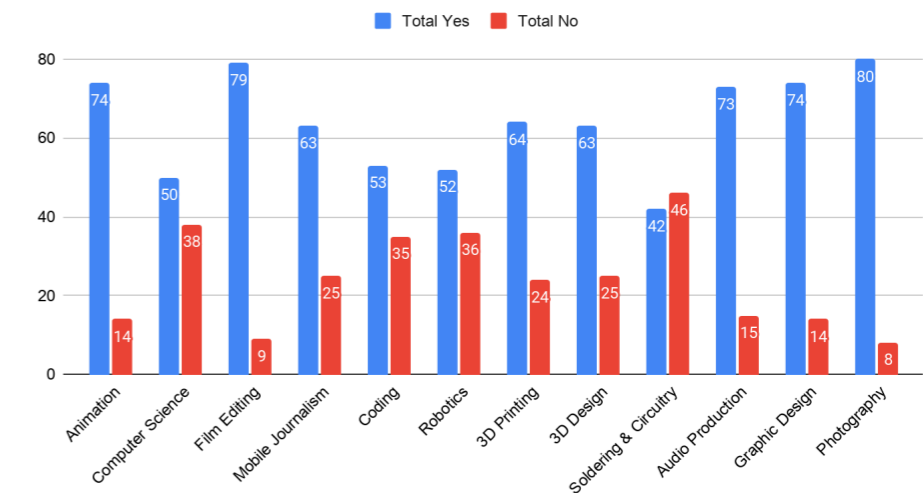
“ The capacity building is so important. Technology and capacity... you could get all the teachers in the room and someone there working with them who could light some fires.”

ETB Staff member

“ How do we showcase the way that technology enhances your enthusiasm and interests? How do you showcase the practical application of technology? Somehow we need to merge into the interests of young people and support them to navigate technology.”

LCYP Coordinator

Chart 7 - Aspirations



It is clear from Chart 7 that respondents aspired to many of the activities described. However, as with the inspirations, the least popular responses might be considered “newer” digital activities such as soldering, computer science, coding and robotics. This could be down to a lack of exposure to these or a lack of equipment (as discussed above) which will prevent this from taking place.

Other areas and activities that respondents listed as aspirations include Virtual Reality, Green Screen and improving and incorporating digital skills as part of programmes and activities, not just as an end to themselves.

7. Creative Confidence and the Ability to Learn How to Learn in the Field of Digital Creativity

A Need for a National Co-ordinated Approach

Throughout the course of this needs analysis research, senior managers and coordinators were consulted from youth setting networks across 19 counties in the ETB and CYPSC areas. A need for a coordinated approach for youth setting structures in Ireland to understand the possibilities of technology was highlighted.

“ [We need] a coordinated approach to understand the opportunities and the gaps in our county when it comes to creative technology. We would love to link into them on a 1:1 basis.”

Local Youth Service Coordinator

During consultations, co-ordinators and senior managers spoke of the opportunities which exist for young people and emphasised the need to develop a learning community of practice in this area.

From both the survey and consultations, it is clear that there is a confidence and desire to learn about creative digital activities and for educators to improve their skills in this area. Three-quarters of those who filled out the survey rated their confidence to learn as high but felt that they lack confidence in delivering digital creative activities to young people. There was a significant difference in ratings across all respondents with more than 1 in 5 respondents rating their confidence in delivering creative skills as low. This is further supported by the data displayed in Chart 8 and 9. 83% felt they were flexible, open and adventurous in using different media creation tools to engage young people, but only 26% felt they were able to use the most appropriate tools.

The majority (58%) felt they demonstrated courage in using technology and digital tools to enhance creativity and innovation in young people, but only 41% felt they knew the appropriate tools to use to do this.

“ Everything is possible. There are incredible opportunities for young people if you introduce them to technology. How can the bridge be gapped for creative technology provision? If you can see the creative technology opportunities it helps - if you didn't know what the possibilities are, then it would be difficult to promote it. It is about stimulating the imagination of the person.”

Local LCYP Partnership Coordinator

Chart 8 - Digital Creativity with Young People

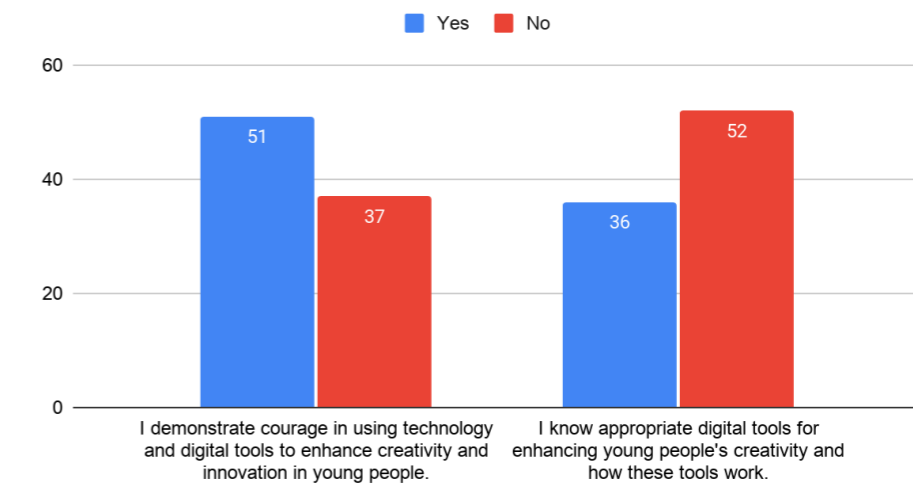
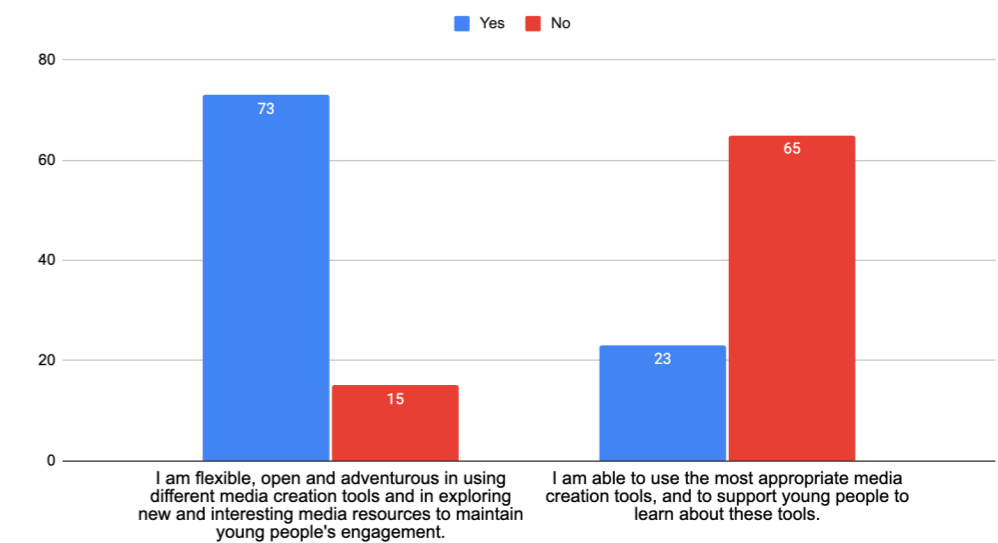


Chart 9 - Digital Creation with Young People





Conclusion

1. Youth setting providers at all levels require an awareness of the opportunities that exist in using creative technology to reach educational outcomes.

2. Staff and Volunteers in Youth Settings require ongoing resources and support to provide creative technology opportunities that evolve with the needs of the young people with whom they work.

3. There should be a clear developmental and career pathway that recognises how all young people can create and innovate using technology.

4. A localised approach is needed to develop community partnerships and expertise, in order to evolve the use of technology within youth settings.

5. There is a need to connect the potential of technology to deliver cross-departmental strategic outcomes for young people.

1. Youth setting providers at all levels require an awareness of the opportunities that exist in using creative technology to reach educational outcomes.

Local coordinators and staff facilitating those working with young people noted that they required further support to feel confident to open up the conversations with youth settings and to be able to identify the gaps in terms of creative technology opportunities for young people.

“ Awareness raising on opportunities, range and scope of the digital world. Efforts to reduce/remove digital poverty. Highlighting pathways and gateways within the digital landscape for fun, creativity and general interest - broaden the narrow benefit focus perception.”

————— CYPSC Coordinator



2. Staff and Volunteers in Youth Settings require ongoing resources and support to provide creative technology opportunities that evolve with the needs of the young people they are working with.

The rate, pace and accessibility of new technology has meant that a new era of using technology in youth development has emerged. To close this gap all young people need a connection that unlocks their potential. This connection can happen in any learning space or developmental context. However, to make this a reality youth settings require resourced learning environments and ongoing professional development.

“ At a staff team level, upskilling and awareness and demonstration that appear to make teaching and learning easier as a result of using technology, without this buy-in at teacher level, it gets lost at the learner level!”

————— Educator - Youth Service

3. There should be a clear developmental and career pathway that recognises how all young people can create and innovate using technology.

Young people need to be recognised for their creative projects and their interests celebrated. Technology can provide a powerful platform to demonstrate newly learned skills, community contributions and the persona and professional development of young people. There is a need for services that provide these credentials to enhance their training opportunities for young people and harness technology based skills such as coding, digital design, film-making and engineering.

“ [We need a] progression path for youth services - e.g. at age 10 this is where you begin and by late teens this is what you could have achieved [and] accredited programmes for young people. [A] peer education programme [where] young people mentor/teach other young people.”

————— Youth Project Leader



4. A localised approach is needed to develop community partnerships and expertise, in order to evolve the use of technology within youth settings.

Senior managers in youth settings emphasized the need for a co-ordinated and strategic approach across their youth setting. To date, many of the training programs offered have focused on developing one type of technology. When taking part in consultations, local CYPSC Coordinators, ETB Youth Officers and School Directors all expressed interest in being able to support the vital work that youth workers, teachers, educators and support staff carry out..

“ LCYP needs access to creative experts who have been trained and are aware of the potential of creative technologies in youth work settings. We need these people now in Kerry - it is urgent in nature.”

————— LCYP Coordinator ETB

“ I think networking with creatives who are maybe new to this space. Opportunities for us to connect would be fantastic!”

————— Educator - Youth Service

“ I feel that there is greater awareness required about the opportunities that are available. I am unsure of the level of digital creativity in the county or what the youth organisations are offering in this regard. Personally, my knowledge of digital creativity is very limited (I felt unable to answer many of the questions) and I would like to build my capacity in this regard.”

————— CYPSC Coordinator

5. There is a need to connect the potential of technology to deliver cross-departmental strategic outcomes for young people.

Schools already have a Digital Strategy Framework, however, the challenge is supporting the formal and non-formal education sectors to take on an area with which they are unfamiliar to enhance their curriculum using available resources. Many of those supporting schools spoke about a scenario where one champion or educator with an interest in technology would be “maxed out” or relied on to be the main person to deliver technology in a local school. Similarly, respondents in coordinating roles such as CYPSC, noted that there were real gaps in the provision of creative technology for young people. Whilst some young people were fortunate to have creative technology opportunities, others did not have this option at their local youth club, youth setting or school.

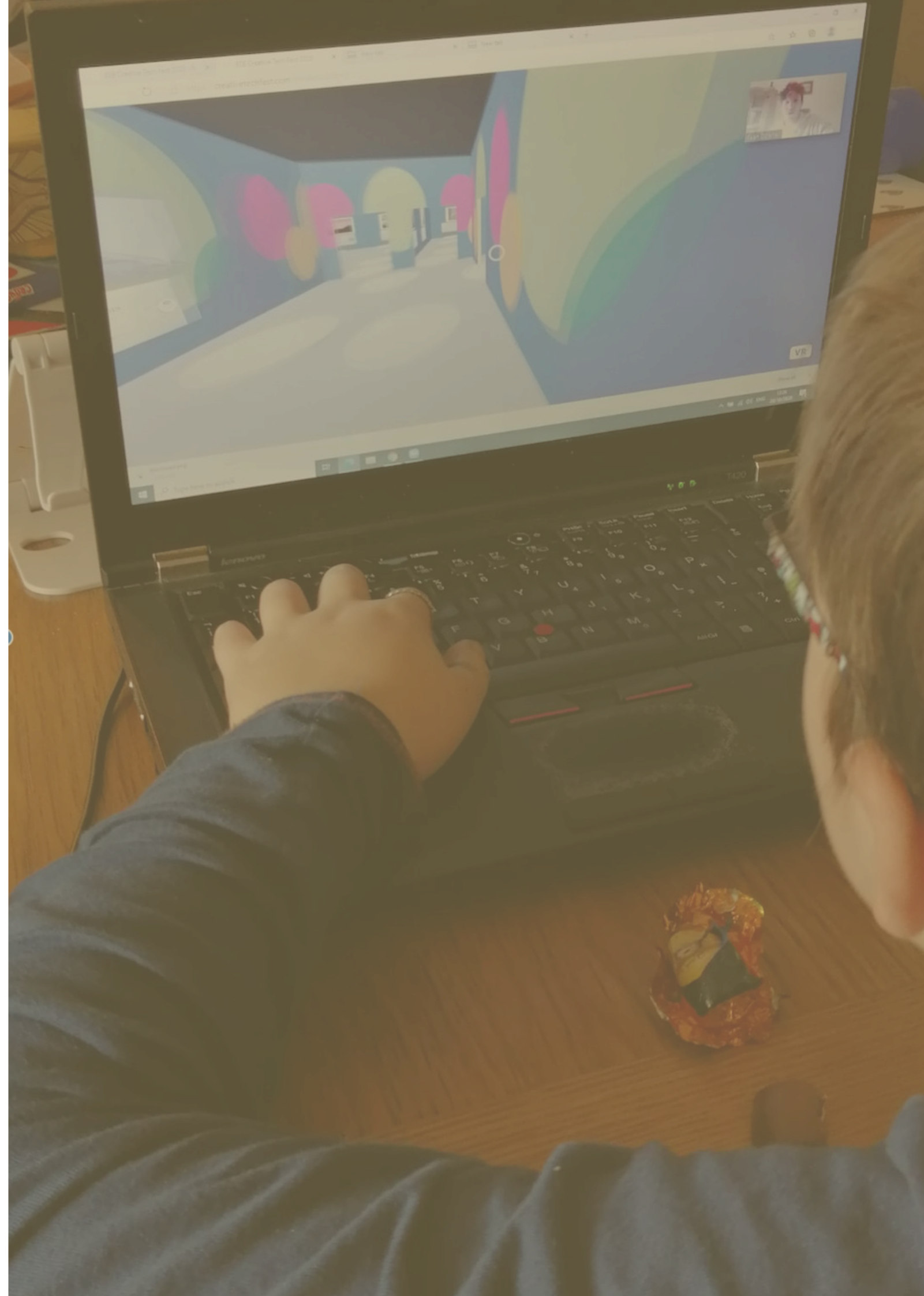
“ I would welcome a conversation to build connections between schools & youth services”

Technology Enhanced Learning Officer, ETB

Technology has always been used by youth services to enhance their youth development projects and programmes. From the introduction of the fax machine, to the first dial-up computer in a youth café, youth development careers have evolved to meet the needs of young people based on the tools that were available. It is now time to support youth services in Ireland to take the next steps and integrate the positive development of technology and the opportunities it can bring to young people.

“ There is a lot of learning and we need to make it something for the future. It does move very fast... how can we ensure our policy is keeping up?”

ETB Staff Officer



9. Recommendations

The following are recommendations arising from the needs analysis and report that will contribute to filling the gaps identified by roles and organisations across the sector. They are tangible and actionable and will contribute to the development of a national, digital creative culture that supports all young people to unlock their creative potential for a future focused society.

Implement a digital creativity awareness campaign and digital creativity strategy consultation process for senior managers and coordinators in youth settings.

Roll-out an annual programme of opportunities that is supported by accessible, curated resources aligning with youth setting outcome frameworks and influenced by the voice of young people

Develop a system of credentials that recognise achievements and skills development for young people and educators

Build a sustainable structure that hosts a professional learning community, driving partnership, collaboration and development in every county

Evaluate impact to inform future education and development programmes for young people.

Celebrate digitally creative youth outputs through showcase events and opportunities

10. Supporting Documentation:

Youth Work Act, 2001 - <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/act/42/enacted/en/html>

Creative Ireland 2017 - Óige Ildánach / Creative Youth Plan - https://creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2019/12/CI_ChildrensPlan_Screen_1.pdf

Department of Education 2016 - A Report on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Analysis and Recommendations The STEM Education Review Group - <https://www.education.ie/en/publications/education-reports/stem-education-in-the-irish-school-system.pdf>

National Youth Council Ireland 2021 - Review of the Youth Work Sector Response To The Covid - <https://www.youth.ie/documents/review-of-the-youth-work-sector-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Council of Europe and European Commission 2021 - Young people, social inclusion and digitalisation. Emerging knowledge for practice and policy -

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/young-people-social-inclusion-and-digitalisation>

Department of Children, Disability, Equality and Integration 2021 - Young Voices

During COVID-19, HOW'S YOUR HEAD? Report of a national consultation with young people on mental health and wellbeing. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/91f4b-hows-your-head-young-voices-during-covid-19-september-2020/>

Department of Education 2020 Digital Learning 2020 - Reporting on practice in Early Learning and Care, Primary and Post-Primary Contexts - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c0053-digital-learning-2020-reporting-on-practice-in-early-learning-and-care-primary-and-post-primary-contexts/>

Digitalyouthwork.eu 2019 - European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work - <https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/european-guidelines-for-digital-youth-work-web.pdf>





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Programme
2017-2022