

Kids' Own
Publishing Partnership



1997 - 2017

'Virtually There' Opportunity for Action Researcher Brief

Summary

Kids' Own is pleased to invite applications from suitably qualified individuals for the role of **'Virtually There' Action Researcher**.

Kids' Own seeks an Action Researcher to join the 'Virtually There' project, which takes place in Northern Ireland. This is a long-term piece of work, running until 2020. This phase of this project is funded through a 'More and Better' Grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Arts-based Learning Fund.

Deadline for receipt of applications is **Weds 23rd August at 5pm**. Shortlisted applicants for the post of Action Researcher will be invited to interview on **31st August or 1st September 2017**, with a view to starting work in September. The successful applicant will be required to attend a two-day creative planning meeting in Belfast on **28th and 29th September 2017**.

About Kids' Own

Kids' Own's core objective is:

To benefit the community in Ireland by advancing education in children through developing, producing, presenting and publishing work created with children for children and their wider communities, guided by professional artists.

Since its inception in 1997 Kids' Own has emerged as a key organisation that supports the provision of exemplary arts practice with children and young people in Ireland. An integral part of this work is the commitment to supporting professional artists in developing their practice with children and young people and all other professionals working with children through the arts.

Kids' Own is primarily focused on supporting the engagement that occurs between artists and children and in developing a way of working with children and young people that develops their own individual creative expression through the creative process. The outcomes from this engagement serve to further promote the arts in the lives of children in terms of resources that support practice, or work in itself that supports children and young people as active cultural creators in their own right. Kids' Own is located in Sligo. We work locally and across Ireland and Northern Ireland in partnership with many schools, venues, arts organisations, local authorities and government departments.

Our Vision is for *"A society that truly values the arts in the lives of all children and recognises children as strong readers, writers, thinkers and creators."*

Our Mission is to *develop, publish and promote artwork and writing created by children for children and their communities, through meaningful engagement with professional artists.*

About the 'Virtually There' project

Virtually There is a long-term virtual artist-in-residence project, currently running in ten Northern Irish schools. Over the past ten years, the project has been funded on a year-by-year basis by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. In 2016, the project expanded and was developed with thanks to additional funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The project is rooted in Kids' Own's belief in the intrinsic value of the arts in children's lives and the value of embedding arts-based practice within educational settings. A unique aspect of the project is the virtual dimension with the artists connecting live from their studios. This places emphasis on the teacher's role and requires very strong artist-teacher relationships where planning and communication are key. The teachers have a central role in the project and work closely with the artists on the planning and development. The children connect with the artists once a week, but the teachers plan and evaluate regularly with the artists outside of this engagement. Participants on the project use dedicated online journals, which provide a platform for documentation from the artist, teacher and child perspectives. <http://projects.kidsown.ie>

Structure of the Virtually There project

The Virtually There project was initiated in one school in Northern Ireland in 2007. In 2009, it expanded to a second school, and by 2011, six schools were involved in the project. In 2016, with thanks to funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the project has expanded to ten schools in Northern Ireland. This additional funding has also enabled us to develop a strong framework of support around the project. In addition to the weekly engagement between artists, teachers and children (one session per week), and the action research, the project structure also provides space for the following elements:

- Reflection and documentation time for artists and teachers
- Creative planning meetings between all participants
- Mentoring supports
- An online platform for reflective journals (<http://projects.kidsown.ie>)
- Artist response time in the studio
- Regional and province-wide sectoral events for teachers and artists in Northern Ireland

As part of the action research, the researcher will be required to observe and consider all the elements of the project, as part of his/her exploration of the impact of the project on all participants.

Responsibilities and desired outputs of the research

The responsibilities of the researcher and desired outputs are outlined in the following table. Please note this is a guide and details may be subject to change, and are open for discussion.

Timeframe/ Date	Project activity	Researcher activity	Researcher deliverable
28-29 th September 17	2-day creative planning meeting with 20 artists and teachers.	Attendance required. Facilitation of focused discussion about research.	Submission of observational notes from meeting.
Sept-Dec 17	1 st residency phase: 7 weeks of engagement across 10 schools. Ongoing mentoring, reflection and studio practice. Afternoon sector event for teachers, organised by Kids' Own and project steering group.	Observation, in person and online, of a select number of engagement sessions (minimum 7). Targeted interviews/ focus groups with select participants. Attendance at teacher event. Commence research of relevant literature. Monthly check-ins with Kids' Own (in person or online).	Notes from observations and interviews/ focus groups, including questions/ key observations arising. (Present at monthly check-ins with Kids' Own)
Jan 18	Interim review meeting. Kids' Own to review and provide feedback on Literature review submission.	Attendance, and co-facilitation of a focused discussion with participants to support research.	Submission of preliminary literature review, and collated findings from first phase.
Jan–April 18	2 nd residency phase: 7 weeks of engagement across 10 schools. Ongoing mentoring, reflection and studio practice.	Observation, in person and online, of a select number of engagement sessions (minimum 7).	Notes from observations and interviews/ focus groups, including questions/ key

	Afternoon sector event for teachers, organised by Kids' Own and project steering group.	Targeted interviews/ focus groups with select participants. Attendance at teacher event. Ongoing research of relevant literature. Monthly check-ins with Kids' Own (in person or online).	observations arising. (Present at monthly check-ins with Kids' Own)
May 18	End-of-year review meeting with all participants.	Facilitate a focus group session to gather data and feedback from participants. Mid-way review meeting with Kids' Own to discuss findings so far and direction of research in year two.	Submission of an update report to Kids' Own.
Sept 18			Submission of mid-way research report, supported by expanded literature review.
Sept/Oct 18	2-day creative planning meeting.	Meeting with Kids' Own to discuss mid-way report and consolidate focus for year two. Facilitate focused conversation/ activity session.	Submission of notes from the 2-day planning meeting.
Oct–Dec 18	3 rd residency phase: 7 weeks of engagement across 10 schools. Ongoing mentoring, reflection and studio practice. Afternoon sector event for teachers, organised by Kids' Own and project steering group.	Observation, in person and online, of a select number of engagement sessions (minimum 7). Targeted interviews/ focus groups with select participants. Attendance at teacher event. Ongoing research of relevant literature. Monthly check-ins with Kids' Own (in person or online).	Notes from observations and interviews/ focus groups, including how findings respond to research questions. (Present at monthly check-ins with Kids' Own)
Jan 19	Interim review meeting	Attendance, and co-facilitation of a focused discussion with participants to support research.	Submission of notes from review meeting.
Jan–April 19	4 th residency phase: 7 weeks of engagement across 10 schools. Ongoing mentoring, reflection and studio practice. Afternoon sector event for teachers, organised by Kids' Own and project steering group.	Observation, in person and online, of a select number of engagement sessions (minimum 7). Targeted interviews/ focus groups with select participants. Attendance at teacher event. Ongoing research of relevant literature. Monthly check-ins with Kids' Own (in person or online).	Notes from observations and interviews/ focus groups, including how findings respond to research questions. (Present at monthly check-ins with Kids' Own)
March/April 19		Work on draft structure for research report. Meeting with Kids' Own to review draft structure.	Submission of draft structure for final research report.
May/ June 19	End of year review meeting with all participants.	Facilitate a focus group session to gather data and feedback from participants.	
May–Aug 19		Work on full research report.	
2 nd Sept 19			Submission of draft research report
Sept 19		Meeting with Kids' Own to review and discuss report.	
Sept–Dec 19		Work on revisions to report.	Submission of final report (Dec 19)
Jan–Mar 20	Kids' Own to work on presentation and publication of research.		

Key research question:

The key overarching aim of the action research is to **explore the impact of the Virtually There project on all participants: artists, children and teachers**. Within this, certain elements of the project are of particular interest, for example:

- The technology as a core component of the project.
- The artist-teacher-child relationship.
- The artist's professional studio practice.
- The impact of sustained engagement.

The researcher – in collaboration with Kids' Own – will formulate a series of key questions in the early stages of the research, that will inform the focus of their work within the wider question of the project's impact.

The field of professional arts practice with children and young people:

Kids' Own wishes to site the research within the context of professional arts practice with children and young people.

The researcher will be required to develop a literature review that references current contemporary research in this field, both Irish and international.

Depending on the researcher's own interests and expertise, they may also wish to cross-reference with research across fields, such as:

- Arts practice and cultural value
- Arts and education policy/ research
- The collaborative context of art practice
- Digital technologies and the arts
- Child psychology

Fees & costs:

A total fee of £21,000 is payable to the Action Researcher over the three-year period. This is inclusive all costs and expenses. Payments will be phased over the course of the project.

The researcher will be contracted as an independent contractor and, as such, should have their own professional indemnity insurance and be responsible for his/her own tax contributions.

Publication of the research is the responsibility of Kids' Own and costs associated with this will be covered by a separate budget.

Making a submission:

To make an application, please submit a current CV, an expression of interest, links to relevant experience, e.g. previous research reports, and an overview of your approach and/or methodologies.

Interviews will take place on **31st August or 1st September 2017**.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to make a short presentation at interview of their vision for how this work can be sited within the current context of contemporary research in the field.

Please send your submission to arrive no later than **5pm on Weds 23rd August 2017, by email** to:

Jo Holmwood
Project Manager, Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
jo@kidsown.ie

For enquiries, please contact us at: info@kidsown.ie +353 7191-24945

This project is supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation



The 'Virtually Project' has been funded by Arts Council of Northern Ireland Lottery Funding, 2007-2017



LOTTERY FUNDED