



Kids' Own Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

- **Background**

Over the past twenty years, Kids' Own has operated as a unique organisation in Ireland dedicated to supporting children's individual creative expression through publishing and the arts. Since its inception in 1997, Kids' Own has sought to lead change as an innovative and dynamic organisation that places at its core a value on children's own work and co-creation with professional artists.

As we move towards our twentieth anniversary in 2017, our vision is to consolidate and harness our organisational knowledge and our unique way of working to deliver an outstanding, celebratory programme of events over the next three years, including extending and developing key flagship projects to build towards our ambitious long-term goals.

In recent years, Kids' Own has gone from strength to strength, with exponential financial growth and the development of new and strategic outputs, initiatives and partnerships. In particular, our role as the Editors of the new Arts in Education Portal – an initiative of the Arts in Education Charter, jointly launched by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2013 – has enabled us to be an influencing force within the sector; and our flagship project *Virtually There* has provided a strong exemplar and allowed us to lead out in terms of a way of working with artists, children and teachers in schools. Our library of books represents a powerful canon of work by children that is unparalleled elsewhere in Ireland and Europe.

A review of our strategic plan, 2014-2016

In 2016 Kids' Own's undertook a review of its last strategic plan (2014-16). Our four key aims were to: (1) Increase access; (2) Improve recognition; (3) Ensure quality; and (4) Build capacity. Within the review of this plan we can see that over the past two years, specifically the publication of the new Arts In Education Charter, opened up new opportunities for us, and led to a brand new piece of work as the editors of the Arts in Education Portal. This was strategically very significant for Kids' Own in terms of supporting, and having an influential role in, the development of the Arts in Education sector.

Our new partnership with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation was also a very significant development, which enabled us to secure four-year funding for our flagship project, *Virtually There*, and introduce research alongside. This is a welcome step both in terms of financial sustainability for the next four years, and also in terms of building on our own Kids' Own-initiated project, and capitalising on what we have invested in this work over the past 9 years. These two key pieces of work have prioritised our focus over the past

two years. We also maintained our regional and national partnerships to continue with collaborative publishing projects. In terms of operational capacity and governance we brought a new staff member onto our team and we achieved full compliance with the Governance Code. We also increased book sales during this period by 81%.

Please refer to the Appendix for a full review of our strategic plan, 2014-16.

Long-term Vision & Strategic Priorities

Within this three-year plan we have identified 5 strategic aims: **Engagement & Co-Creation; Visibility of Children's Work; Professional Arts Practice with Children; Research & Advocacy; and Building Capacity.**

This three-year strategic plan comprises critical first steps in the journey towards Kids Own's longer-term vision. Kids Own has set a longer vision for the organisation that it will become an internationally recognised champion of children's artwork and literature, housed in a dedicated building where we can make space for children as makers and creators. We will develop an archive of children's work that can be accessed online from anywhere in the world, and build up an international network of practitioners who are committed to a way of working with children that supports individual expression and exploratory processes of co-creation. We will foster and galvanise the expertise within this sector so that children become central and intrinsic to creative partnerships. We will also take on a leadership role in a number of other international initiatives, such as establishing an international festival for children and creating multilingual publications that reflect children's lived experiences from all over the world.

- **The Current Landscape**

Our work does not happen in isolation but is responsive to the changing environment around us. A PESTEL analysis, undertaken as part of our strategic planning process, highlights that there are key political, environmental, social, technological, economical and legal factors, which all contribute towards a climate that both supports and challenges our way of working. Kids' Own's strength lies in our versatility and adaptability, within this changing context. Our new strategic plan takes into account opportunities and challenges that are presented by these external factors.

Brexit marks a monumental shift in the political landscape and has the potential to impact on our work, since we are very active in Northern Ireland and receive funding from the UK. Internally, the political environment is in a period of flux with newly established ministers yet to demonstrate their priorities and the roll out of new policies yet to be clarified. There are opportunities for new policies to inform our work. In technological terms, new developments present continuing opportunities for innovation and different ways of working. Kids' Own seeks to stay at the forefront of technology and to embed new media into our work. But delays in infrastructure development may mean that schools and partners in certain areas have less access to broadband and, as such, cannot adopt the use of new media as readily. As technology develops at a phenomenal speed the implementation of new tools and platforms will require up-skilling on an ongoing basis.

Operating under a social change model, Kids' Own sees continual shifts in society, but there is very little movement towards our vision of a society that values children as independent and active citizens, and cultural co-creators. The language used at the political level has moved towards a more child-centric view and we now talk more about children's 'experiences' and their active 'participation' but at ground level we do not see a corresponding shift in attitudes or practice. The recession has given rise to high levels of child poverty, inequality and homelessness. At an international level, the refugee crisis has brought a general sense of instability and Ireland has committed to accept a set number of refugees. These factors give us a stronger rationale for our work, which can help combat exclusion and marginalisation and support children who are vulnerable. The economy is making a slow recovery this is felt mostly in the country's urban centres while rural areas are still at an economic and social disadvantage. This gives us a further incentive to work with 'hard-to-reach' audiences and to continue building on our partnerships with local authorities especially in rural areas.

A SWOT Analysis of Kids' Own: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats

Overall we perceive ourselves as an adventurous and flexible organisation comprising a small but committed and positive team of people. We have a good relationship with our funders; a strong value of the aesthetic and we offer something that is unique. We believe in what we do, our work reaches locally, nationally, internationally and cross-sectorally. We have a strong values-led ethos and our work has good visibility. We also have a very strong track record.

As with many small organisations we are reliant on our core staff. Our organisational knowledge is contained within a small pool of people and the fast pace of our work makes pause for reflection difficult. However, the addition of a new staff member in 2016 has been a very positive step, made possible through our four-year funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and has afforded us

time for reflection and planning. Our board is small and focused. We have four members, with a fifth member due to come on before the end of 2016. We are largely reliant on grant funding, which is awarded on a project by project basis and covers part of our operational costs. We are fortunate to be in receipt of an Arts Council grant which currently provides 16% of our core funding.

There are many opportunities for our work. Shifting demographics can make space for new partners and audiences for our work. There is potential to develop our team and expertise by engaging and training new artists. The improving economy may bring better funding opportunities. Technological developments present new opportunities. Our strategic work brings possibilities to champion our way of working at a higher level. And our four-year funding from the Paul Hamlyn Funding is an opportunity to build evidence and reflect on our work, as well as embed our way of working more widely in Ireland, north and south.

As we continue to grow and develop, we should be mindful of protecting and capturing our organisational memory, the possible impact of Brexit, the financial vulnerability of project-by-project funding, the impact of technology on traditional forms of publishing and the potential denigration of the intrinsic value of the arts.

- **Policy Developments:**

Current policy developments are important to consider as we develop our new strategy. We are cognisant of ongoing shifts and new developments in national policy.

In 2016, the Arts Council published its new 3-year plan, based on the 10-year strategy *Making Great Art Work*, and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs published a draft Culture Framework Policy to 2025. Also in 2016 the Department of Education and Skills published a Digital Strategy, which is important to consider in light of the technological dimension of our work. Also of importance is the Government's *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* national policy framework (2014) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs national strategy on children and young people's participation (2015).

There are key strands arising from these strategies, which align with the work of Kids' Own and should be considered in relation to our three-year objectives.

The Arts Council

The Arts Council's plan has a strong focus on the artist and the need to support artists "at key stages in their careers to sustain productive and economically viable careers." In response to this, Kids' Own views itself as a strong employer of independent artists and provider of professional development. These are both core strands of our strategy for the next three years.

We believe there is still a gap in the sector in terms of supports for artists who work with children and young people, to support quality engagement, and deepen understanding of co-creation and what it means to actively engage children as makers. Through our strategic planning, we identified that Practice.ie – the online space for artists' practice with children and young people, established by Kids' Own in 2008 – still represents a key principle of our work. With this in mind, we will explore how to integrate the work of Practice.ie more into our own structures and to consolidate and share the learning and organisational memory that Kids' Own holds in relation to collaborative ways of working and meaningful engagement with children. Professional development events for artists will form a key part of our plan for 2017-2020.

'Public Engagement' is a key strand within the Arts Council's three-year plan. The Arts Council identifies the need to "grow and diversify the range of people who engage with the arts as audiences and participants," and the need for children to "feel included in the cultural life of their community, and have a positive and rewarding experience of the arts."

Within Kids' Own – over the next three years – we will deliver projects that have real depth as well as being far-reaching and have a strong vision for engaging with children as active citizens and connecting with them in the context of their communities. This will involve building on, and strengthening our relationship with local authority partners – e.g. arts officers, library services and childcare committees. The audience for our work are active participants and co-creators and so their experience of working with us is bound with their own immersion and participation.

In our new three-year plan our key strategic aims are: engagement and co-creation, visibility, professional arts practice with children, and advocacy and research, all of which link strongly to the Arts Council's objectives.

Culture 2025

The key message from the Culture 2025 Framework that connects to Kids' Own's work is the message about "the intrinsic value of culture" and "that everyone has the right to enjoy, create and participate in the culture of their country."

This ties in with our rights-based approach and our desire to promote the intrinsic value of the arts in the lives of children.

In terms of our work over the next three years, there are some references that are worth consideration, in particular, the reference on page 14 to Local Authority investment. The document states that: “Local authorities have an important role in providing access to cultural services at local level. They provide a key link in the relationship between national policies and the cultural experience of people in their everyday lives.” This is relevant given the strong connections that Kids’ Own has with local authorities in Mayo, Kilkenny, Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal to embed long-term engagement within these communities to support children – particularly hard-to-reach audiences – and their families to have meaningful experiences of co-creation. It is worth noting that currently Local Authority funds vary from county to county and allocations towards arts provision are not consistent across different authorities.

The reference to “Education” reflects the ongoing commitment to a joined-up approach from both the arts and education sectors. Kids’ Own will develop our work within the formal education context through our *Virtually There* project in the south, and build on the long-term engagement that we have so successfully developed in Northern Ireland over the past 9 years. Our work as managers of the Arts in Education Portal is ongoing and affords us a significant role in helping to promote and develop best practice across these two sectors. Also, the research and advocacy work that we are developing will be very important in terms of highlighting the value of arts-based practices within learning environments, and has the potential to instigate new thinking in educational policy.

Finally, the Cultural Framework refers to “Rapid developments in technology, new methods of communication and the internet,” and this is an ongoing area of consideration for Kids’ Own to ensure that we continue to maximise and utilise new developments as they come on stream, and to continue leading out in our use of technology within our work.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

In 2014, the Government published a national framework – Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – setting out a road map for achieving five national outcomes for all children and young people up to the age of 24 years up to 2020. One of these national outcomes is that children will be ‘active & healthy, physical & mental wellbeing’, including the aim that children will enjoy ‘play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and nature’. Under Commitment 1.14, the Government commits to “Enable greater access to sports,

arts and culture for all children and young people, including through facilitating collaboration between sports, youth, arts and cultural organisations and schools and preschools to enrich the educational experience of all.”

National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making

In 2015, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs published the first National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015 – 2020. This strategy includes two commitment of particular relevance for the work of Kids Own. Commitment G14.8 is that “The Local Government Management Agency will ensure that children and young people (who are local service users) are included as decision makers in library design and development processes, and in the planning of child and youth centred initiatives, activities, events and actions to be held in public libraries.” Under commitment G14.9, “Children and young people will be involved in decision-making about cultural programme content and their feedback will be sought on programmes offered in national cultural institutions.”

Digital Strategy

The digital strategy highlights a number of considerations that may be useful to Kids’ Own on an ongoing basis as we continue our work in education and strive to remain at the forefront of technological advancement. The strategy is divided into four key areas: (1) Teaching, Learning and Assessment; (2) Teacher Professional Development; (3) Leadership, Research and Policy; and (4) Infrastructure.

While technology advancements present certain challenges, the strategy suggests that the Department’s vision for ICT integration in Irish schools is to: “Realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland’s young people can become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy.”

In many ways the strategy embraces the potential for technology to impact on teaching and learning and highlights the need for children be active in their use of technology rather than passive consumers of it. Inclusivity is a positive element that is highlighted by the strategy, in terms of technology’s potential to break down barriers to inclusion. This concurs with our own (anecdotal) findings from the *Virtually There* project. Other areas that were highlighted in the Digital Strategy, were “virtual classrooms”, which Kids’ Own is already exploring in great depth through our *Virtually There* project and broader technological developments.

Overall, our aim is to continue developing our understanding and skills within the digital landscape to inform our work going forward.

Funding Climate

A very significant development for Kids' Own in 2016 was the successful application for a More & Better grant from Paul Hamlyn's Arts & Learning Fund, to support a four-year programme of engagement and activity to extend and develop our *Virtually There* project in Northern Ireland. This is a very positive step in terms of financial stability for the organisation during the period of our next strategic plan. It also highlights the desirability of more long-term funding that can anchor us in developing and growing our **core flagship projects** over the coming three-year period.

We need to build on the success of the Paul Hamlyn grant and develop a strategy for the organisation's financial sustainability and ensure that there is continuity for the *Virtually There* project beyond the duration of the funding. The Paul Hamlyn grant allows us to develop a strong structure of support and evidence, which will impact on our work more widely – e.g. building a strong network of artists; developing resources to support artist-teacher-child partnerships; developing our knowledge and skills base with technology; and strengthening our online presence.

Elsewhere the funding climate is unstable and our SWOT analysis shows that there are both opportunities and threats in the current climate. Building and strengthening our partnerships at local and national level is crucial to maintaining our current level of funding, but we also need to seek new strategic partners or sponsors to support long-term relationships and the development of new flagship projects. We will also be seeking to make contact with new European partners with a view to making an application for a pan-European collaboration grant.

- **Our Purpose: A Model of Social Change**

Kids' Own seeks to address our society's lack of recognition for the intrinsic value of the arts, and children's exclusion from cultural life as active creators.

What does the child's voice contribute to our literature and our culture? Currently, the field of children's art and literature in Ireland is dominated by an adult view of childhood and an adult worldview in general. Kids' Own believes there is a significant gap here in terms of giving visibility and representation to children's real thoughts and experiences. Our work operates within a niche that seeks to address this gap, and give status to children as equal and active citizens. Children's work is deserving of recognition in its own right. Through the publication of children's voices and experiences and through meaningful engagement with professional artists, we strive to counter the perception that publishing and arts practice are the reserve of an elite few and to present childhood within an egalitarian context.

We believe that the value of professional arts practice on children's development, confidence and resilience is underplayed, and children are not given a serious and professional platform for their creative expression. We believe that the value of professional arts practice with children is not adequately recognised or resourced.

The publication of children's work sends a message about the value we give to children and their participation in our society. Do children have a right to equal participation and inclusion or not? Are their voices important to us as a society, or not? If they are, we should consider giving children a bigger platform for their work to be seen, read, heard and understood.

KIDS' OWN VISION:

“Our vision is for a society that recognises children as independent writers, thinkers and creators and that truly values the arts in the lives of all children.”

KIDS' OWN MISSION:

“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.”

- **Our Strategic Aims & Activities**

AIM 1: Engagement and Co-creation

Increase opportunities for children to develop artwork and writing through meaningful engagement with professional artists.

AIM 2: Visibility of Children's Work

Increase visibility of children's artwork and writing through publishing, exhibition and dissemination.

AIM 3: Professional Arts Practice with Children

Strengthen the practice of artists and other professionals who work with children and young people.

AIM 4: Research and Advocacy

Strive to build evidence and lead change towards children's inclusion as active creators.

AIM 5: Build our Capacity

Ensure that Kids' Own has the capacity to achieve its strategic aims.

- **Kids' Own's Values**

- **Child-centred**

- Kids' Own works in defence of children's right to culture and to support each child's individual creative expression. The child's experience is at the heart of our work.

- **Integrity**

- We deliver our work within an ethos of openness, honesty and transparency. We champion the professionalisation of arts practice with children and in achieving this we are uncompromising.

- **Originality**

- We value individuality and ambitious approaches towards co-creation. We prize children's authentic voices and experiences. We trust in the process and let the work unfold without always knowing where it will lead.

- **Collaborative**

- We value the process of co-creation between professional artists and children. Enquiry and process-based approaches are at the heart of this collaboration.

- **Inclusive**

- We believe in children's right to culture and childhood for all children. We have respect for children as equal and active citizens and promote a culture of care for children within their communities and wider society. We value all children, regardless of background, ability, race, gender, sexuality or religion.

- **Passionate**

- We are committed, passionate and determined in our efforts to fulfil our mission and strategic aims. We love our work and are ambitious for what we can achieve.

- **Strategic Aims, Objectives and Outcomes**

Aims	Strategic Objectives	Intermediary Actions/Outcomes (2017 – 2020)	Key Performance Indicators (2017-2020)
<p>1. Engagement & Co-creation</p> <p>Increase opportunities for children to develop artwork and writing through meaningful engagement with professional artists</p>	<p>1.1. Maintain & develop relationships & embed the work within local communities to deepen and strengthen process of engagement with children & young people through the arts and literature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtually There (NI) – manage the four-year programme as per our funding application to Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) ▪ Virtually There (ROI) – Work in partnership with Education Centres to manage the roll-out of VT in four southern schools ▪ Pilot Virtually There (VT) in post-primary setting (in partnership with Creative Engagement) ▪ Build a framework of long-term support and sustainability of VT through local authority partnerships. ▪ Work with local partners to explore new forms of engagement with families and children (e.g. in Sligo, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim and border counties). ▪ Continue to foster new relationships with partners at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion and evaluation of Virtually There (ROI). ▪ Completion of four-year PHF VT programme. ▪ Publish of PHF VT research. ▪ 10 artists & 10 schools in NI maintain and develop partnerships until 2020. ▪ 3 new local authority partners in Northern Ireland for Virtually There. ▪ 3 local authority partnerships maintained or developed per year in the south. ▪ 5 new touring partners (venues) in 2017-18. ▪ Over 3000 public audiences engaged in 2017-18.

		national level.	
	1.2. Support co-authorship with young people through long-term relationships at local, regional and national level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot a long-term writing programme at local level. ▪ Seek opportunities to extend this work in the longer term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20 young people, north & south engaged in cross-border writing programme. ▪ 1 new longer term strategic partner (e.g. Peace IV) will support this work.
<p>How this Strategic Aim aligns with the Arts Council's three-year strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>"Grow & diversify the range of people who engage with the arts as audiences and participants."</i> ▪ <i>"Embed public engagement in formal investment agreements with organisations and partners."</i> ▪ <i>"Prioritise our commitment to children and young people across all art forms."</i> ▪ <i>"Work with others, including Local Government and the Department of Education & Skills, to support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people."</i> ▪ <i>"Children and young people will feel included in the cultural life of their community and have a positive and rewarding experience of the arts."</i> 			

<p>2. Visibility of children's work</p> <p>Increase visibility of children's artwork and writing through publishing, exhibition and dissemination.</p>	<p>2.1. Consolidate the practice of Kids' Own national and internationally over the past 20 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Celebrate our 20 year anniversary ▪ Seek funding to tour our books to schools and family audiences. ▪ Develop our archive towards a large-scale national exhibition and new online space. ▪ Establish ourselves as the international centre for children's artwork and literature. ▪ Develop feasibility study towards creating a physical children's centre in Sligo. ▪ Develop a charter for working with children & young people. ▪ Work with partners to develop a book about Kids' Own and our way of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered our 20 year anniversary programme to include the following: ▪ 1 corporate sponsor to fund our book tour. ▪ Increased awareness of our new status as the international centre of children's art work and literature. ▪ Feasibility study into the national children's centre underway. ▪ New charter published for working with children. ▪ 1 new book publication about our way of working.
	<p>2.2. Develop our online presence to make our work more visible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redesign the Kids' Own website as a space that showcases children's work and to better reflect the work that we do and our key strategic aims. This will include an archive of KO publications as per 2.1 above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Website redesign & launch in 2017.
	<p>2.3. Continue publishing new book titles by children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Factor publishing costs into our engagement & co-creation project budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish 4 new titles per year.

	2.4. Share and disseminate our work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend more conferences, festivals and events across arts, literature and youth sector to talk about and promote our work. ▪ Contribute papers and articles to Irish & international journals about our work, e.g. IBBY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend 1 conference and 2 festivals per year. ▪ Attend 2-3 sectoral or professional development events per year. ▪ Publish or present 1 conference or journal paper per year.
	2.5. Maintain and grow our marketing and public relations to increase recognition and public awareness of what we do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with our Marketing & Comms Officer to develop a new 3-year marketing strategy. ▪ Implement the marketing strategy. ▪ Develop new relationships with media contacts and generate more local & national coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New marketing strategy in place. ▪ Have KPIs to indicate performance of the marketing strategy. ▪ 2 new national media contacts per year. ▪ Increase local coverage to one article and one radio/tv feature per project.
	2.6. Increase our European and International visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin developing European partnerships with a view to building towards a European collaboration project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 newly identified European partners to work towards a shared project.

How this Strategic Aim aligns with the Arts Council's three-year strategy:

- *“Embed public engagement”*
- *“Grow and diversify the range of people who engage with the arts as audiences and participants.”*
- *“Children and young people will feel included in the cultural life of their community.”*
- *“Organisations will report positively on our initiatives and actions to improve artists’ remuneration.”*
- *“Organisations will have increased the international dimension of their practice.”*
- *“Recognise the value of international practice and relationships, and support those who pursue such opportunities.”*

<p>3. Professional arts practice with children.</p> <p>Strengthen the practice of artists and other professionals who work with children and young people.</p>	<p>3.1. Support artists and professionals working with children and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver more training and events for artists and locate training within our practice to create a cycle of continuous improvement. ▪ Establish an annual away day/retreat for artists to share, experiment and play together within a framework of best practice. Evaluate its success each year. ▪ Bring the ethos of Practice.ie into our core work at Kids’ Own through the delivery of more events for artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver 2 Kids’ Own artist training events per year. ▪ Deliver an inaugural two-day artists’ retreat as part of our 2017 programme, and repeat in 2018 and 2019. ▪ A more developed space on our website to support our artists.
	<p>3.2. Demonstrate best practice working with children and young people to set a recognized standard of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following consultations with key stakeholders, develop a KO charter for working with children & young people. (See 2.1 above.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish our new charter for working with children and disseminate widely (see above).

	practice.		
<p>How this Strategic Aim aligns with the Arts Council’s three-year strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Identify the different kinds of support needed by artists at key stages in their careers to sustain productive and economically viable careers.”</i> ▪ <i>“Recognise the value of international practice and relationships, and support those who pursue such opportunities.”</i> ▪ <i>“Continue to support work of ambition, collaboration and experimentation in a range of settings.”</i> ▪ <i>“Artists will be better and more fairly remunerated for their work.”</i> 			
<p>4. Research and advocacy</p> <p>Strive to build evidence and lead change towards children’s inclusion as active creators.</p>	<p>4.1. Interrogate what we are learning, including the fault lines and fractures within collaborative practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to integrate documentation & reflective practice within our projects to capture and share learning. ▪ Develop a PhD programme in partnership with DIT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal reviews on all of our projects to identify learning. ▪ Publish our research from Virtually There. ▪ Publish a new book about our way of working. ▪ Kids’ Own PhD research will be mid-way through. (By end of strategy period.)
	<p>4.2. Engage in more advocacy with strategic partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities to collaborate with cultural partners on advocacy actions to seek to inform public policy developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an advocacy agenda with 2 advocacy partners. ▪ Participate in at least 2 policy consultations. ▪ Deliver at least 1 advocacy event (with advocacy partners).

	4.3. Build our understanding about co-creation and meaning making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the Virtually There research through the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and publish the findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete and publish Virtually There research.
<p>How this Strategic Aim aligns with the Arts Council’s three-year strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of decision-making.”</i> ▪ <i>“Prioritise our commitment to children and young people across all art forms.”</i> ▪ <i>“Introduce a new programme as part of the Framework for Collaboration with Local Government [...] specifically advancing children and young people’s provision, cultural diversity and arts and disability.”</i> ▪ <i>“Continue to advocate full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter.”</i> ▪ <i>“Continue to support work of ambition, collaboration and experimentation in a range of settings.”</i> 			
<p>5. Build capacity</p> <p>Ensure Kids’ Own has the capacity to achieve its strategic aims.</p>	5.1. Develop a sustainability plan to support Kids’ Own to diversify its income stream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain & grow current levels of funding. ▪ Revise annual funding plan – maintain margins of 25%, 50% and 80% percent. ▪ Annually deliver at least 3 projects in the lower tier, two in the middle tier and one in the higher tier. ▪ Seek one corporate sponsor for our 2017 programme & beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a financial growth plan. ▪ Deliver at least 3 projects in low margin tier, 1 in middle tier and 1 in high margin tier.

	5.2. Recruit, retain and continue to develop a high quality team of staff & artists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invest in supports including training opportunities to retain existing staff. ▪ Seek to develop new relationships with artists nationally. ▪ Provide opportunities for artists to train and engage in sharing and exchange days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 corporate sponsor supporting our 2017 book tour programme.
	5.3 Continue to build a high-performing and effective Board of Directors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grow the Board to bring on another 1 member – bringing the total to 5. ▪ Provide the Board and Chief Executive with governance training. ▪ Carry out an annual audit of skills on the Board and implement any findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 board members in place in 2017. ▪ Governance training held in 2017. ▪ Annual audit of Board skills complete.
	5.4. Ensure Kids' Own complies with the highest standards of governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain compliance to the Governance code. ▪ Comply with SORP standards and charity regulations and document our compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full compliance with the Governance code & SORP regulations.
	5.5 Review and develop the Kid's Own membership structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review our membership structure and develop a plan to create a new membership structure by 2020. This will involve consultation with key stakeholders and an assessment of how a new membership structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of membership structure and consultations completed. ▪ A membership development plan is in place and being implemented.

		would impact on governance, sustainability and strategic planning.	
	5.6. Implement operational management systems to enable Kids' Own to work effectively and cost efficiently (staff handbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update our policies, procedures and documentation on a yearly basis. ▪ Continue to review our impact through our sustainability policy • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated policies and procedures annually. •
	5.7. Develop new partnerships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain link with the Sligo Enterprise Board and Sligo Leader. ▪ Build relationships with new potential partners/ funders on an ongoing basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New funding partnership with Sligo Leader.
	5.8. Ensure the Strategic Plan guides the direction and work of the Kids' Own through 2017-20.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review progress against the Strategic Plan on a quarterly basis. Adjust and amend as appropriate. Conduct a mid-term review in 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy and KPIs reviewed by mid-2018.

APPENDIX

Strategic Plan 2014-16 – Review of achievements

Aims	Strategic Objectives	Achievements-Outcomes 2014 – 2016
<p>1. Increase Access</p> <p>Increase access to Kids' Own projects and books</p>	<p>1.1 Develop and maintain outreach/touring programs (Travelling Library, festivals and other book projects)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kids' Own maintained a strong publishing strand, with 7 new titles in 2014-15. We had a presence at 2 festivals in Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon (Sligo Children's Book Festival & Wild Words Festival) and also toured the Book Factory to the new Lexicon Library in Dun Laoghaire. ▪ Touring of the Travelling Library is funding dependent and the library services with whom we have strong partnerships – e.g. Donegal, Roscommon and Sligo, do not have budgets to support collaborations at present.
	<p>1.2 Increase access to Kids' Own projects using technology (Virtually There)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We secured funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to maintain and grow the Virtually There project in Northern Ireland. Because of this, we increased the number of children and schools involved in the VT project from 180 to over 300 children. ▪ We secured funding from the Arts Council to develop VT into Republic of Ireland ▪ We are developing partnerships with 4 Education centres for Virtually There in the south – Tralee, Kilkenny, Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon. ▪ We toured the Virtually There project to six venues North & South including art galleries and Mary Immaculate Training College Limerick. Through associated workshop programmes and professional

		development events we engaged 300 children over 750 practitioners and indirectly we reached a public audience of 6420.
	1.3 Ensure Kids' Own titles are available in libraries, schools and through ecommerce and the general book trade	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We redesigned the Kids' Own website to accommodate e-commerce. 2. The library audit began but has not been completed. 3. We had a presence at the 'Buzzing with Books' Conference at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick in 2014. Our level of activity meant that we could not attend other school or book conferences.
	1.4 Maintain existing and build new strategic partnerships, and develop a legacy of good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We developed new strategic partnerships in 2014-16, most notably through our funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation & the Arts in Education Portal (an initiative of the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Rural, Regional & Gaeltacht Affairs). ▪ We maintained strong partnerships with other national agencies – principally, the HSA, Early Childhood Ireland and the HSE and government funding partners, e.g. the Department of Foreign Affairs (through the Reconciliation Fund). ▪ We have maintained good cross-border partnerships with ACNI and Early Years Northern Ireland, the Void Gallery Derry and F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio Banbridge. ▪ We maintained very strong working relationships with regional and local agencies & organisations, including: Waterford & Kilkenny Childcare Committees, Kilkenny Education Centre, Sligo Education Centre and the wider ATECI, The Dock Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim Arts Office, Carlow Childcare Committee, axis: Ballymun, West Cork Arts Centre, The Model, The Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo, Highlanes Gallery Drogheda.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are also developing new working partnerships with The Ark, Roscommon Arts Centre, The Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork and Galway Library Service. ▪ At European & International level, we have made contact with some European organisations and will be developing this further over the next four years.
	1.5 Develop a permanent Centre of Excellence for children’s artistic and written work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is now part of our long-term goals within our new strategic plan.
2. Improve Recognition Improve the visibility of Kids’ Own projects and books	2.1 Increase visibility to key stakeholders (parents, teachers, artists, policy makers, funders, general public) by implementing the annual marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall book sales increased by 81% between 2014 and 2015.
	2.2 Use the media to increase public awareness of KO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We developed new relationships with the media – especially at local level through the VT tour. ▪ We gained national coverage in INTO magazine and Irish Times in relation to the Portal. We also published an article in Education Matters. Our book <i>Bouncing Away</i> was reviewed on Shannonside’s Charlie Flanagan’s show.
	2.3 Develop an advocacy agenda around children’s publishing and engagement in the arts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This has been incorporated into our new three-year plan with a view to developing a Kids’ Own Charter in 2017.
	2.4 Produce process and resource documents to increase visibility and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have developed new resources and support sections within our new publications: e.g. The Ocean Safety Teacher Resource Document; parent & practitioner pages in Starting School and Bouncing

		Away; Tips for family engagement in ‘I can taste the rain.’
<p>3. Ensure Quality</p> <p>Take steps to ensure creative processes with children are meaningful, transparent, honest, aspirational, rigorous and collaborative.</p>	<p>3.1 Increase the reach of Practice.ie and readership of the Practice Journal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our plans for Practice.ie were put on hold as we have never been resourced for this project and meanwhile, we were presented with the opportunity to manage the new Arts in Education Portal, an initiative of the Arts in Education Charter funded by the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of AHRRG. We believe that Practice still has a critical role in terms of supporting artists who work with children and young people, and our goal is to integrate this more into our own work as part of our next strategic plan.
	<p>3.2 Develop a resource space on Practice.ie</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See above.
	<p>3.3 Continue and develop training programs for working with children and young people in the Arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through our work on the two national touring exhibitions and the Arts in Education Portal, we have delivered: 1 national day, 2 symposia, 1 seminar, 3 online training programmes, 3 professional development days for artists and/or teachers and training for artists and teachers as part of our Virtually There project.
	<p>3.4 Continue research program to develop evidence base for the quality of Kids’ Own practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have developed a link with DIT to begin working towards a PhD that explores co-creation and Kids’ Own’s approach. ▪ We have integrated research as part of our four-year Paul Hamlyn programme for Virtually There, which will explore what we are learning from this project.
	<p>3.5 Develop tangible high quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have begun introducing support sections within

	resources with/for practitioners with in the targeted sectors.	some of our publications to support the use of our books by practitioners, teachers and/or parents.
	3.6 Develop a Charter of Best Practice for the sector, including a set of quality standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is being developed as part of our new three-year plan.
	3.7 Build relationships with education centres and teacher training colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We developed a partnership with Mary Immaculate Training colleges through Virtually There Tour. ▪ We strengthened our relationship with the ATECI and are working with four educations centres directly.
4. Build Capacity Ensure Kids' Own has adequate capacity to achieve its Strategic Aims	4.1 Develop a Sustainability Plan to support Kids' Own to diversify its income stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the last three years we have had three levels of margin on our projects: 25% 50% 80% ▪ We have annually delivered at least 3 projects in the lower tier, at least one project in the middle tier and one in the highest tier. ▪ We have secured funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which offers security for four years, but financial sustainability is an important part of our new three-year plan, to look beyond this period of funding.
	4.2 Recruit, retain and continue to develop a high quality team of staff and artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through our touring programmes we have engaged and trained many artists over the past two years. Our goal is to continue building a strong team of artists over the next three years to extend capacity. ▪ We have recruited a new staff member – Emma Kavanagh – to work with us as Office Administrator.
	4.3 Continue to build a high-performing and effective Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have rotated the board and brought on four new members since our last strategic plan. ▪ One new member is being sought for appointment.

	4.4 Ensure Kids' Own complies with the highest standards of governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have rigorously maintained compliance to the Governance code.
	4.5 Develop new partnerships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are re establishing links with Sligo Leader Partnership with a view to developing our website in 2017.
	4.6 Implement operational management systems to enable Kids' Own to work effectively and cost efficiently (staff handbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have maintained compliance to the Governance Code and rigorous management systems.
	4.7 Ensure the Strategic Plan guides the direction and work of the Kids' Own throughout the 2013-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We reviewed progress against our Strategic Plan and conducted a mid-term review in 2015.