

# Kids' Own Annual Activity Report 2021



**25kids'**  
**own**  
years PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

## ABOUT KIDS' OWN

Kids' Own is a children's arts organisation and publishing house and Ireland's only dedicated publisher of books by children, for children. Kids' Own works in defence of children's right to culture and supports their individual creative expression through publishing and the arts.

**Kids' Own is driven by a passionate belief in the intrinsic value of the arts in children's lives;** as a source of joy, fulfilment and connection. We work to give children greater access to cultural expression and to be actively, creating, enquiring, communicating and making meaning through the arts.

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.

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.



# STRATEGIC AIMS:

## **1 Engagement and co-creation**

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

## **2 Visibility of children's work**

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

## **3 Professional arts practice with children**

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

## **4 Research and advocacy**

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

## **5 Building internal capacity**

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

# ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

## LEGAL STRUCTURE

Kids' Own is a non-for-profit company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

## COMPANY NUMBER

508465

## TAX REGISTRATION NUMBER

9822769G (not VAT registered)

## CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER

20082190

## BOARD MEMBERS

In 2021, Kids' Own had 7 board members:

- Mark O'Brien (resigned June 2021)
- Irene Lawlor (resigned November 2021)
- Jennifer Hennessy
- Michael Kirby
- Carmel Brennan
- Naomi Feely (appointed February 2021)
- Liz Coman (appointed November 2021)

## ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Kids' Own's Constitution sets out the following rules for election/ appointment of board members:

To qualify for appointment, a director must be nominated and seconded for the position by existing directors. Nominations must be in writing, received at the registered office at least two weeks before the board meeting at which the appointment is to be made.

## AND FOR TERMS OF DIRECTORS:

Directors shall be appointed for a term of three years and shall thereafter be eligible for re-appointment for a further period of three years, but shall then retire.

## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The key role of the board of Kids' Own is to provide leadership to the organisation by setting strategic direction and ensuring policies are in place that support this direction.

The board also:

- Approves, monitors and reviews the work programme to ensure it is effectively meeting the agreed objectives and performance indicators.
- Protects and represents the interests of Kids' Own and is accountable to the membership.
- Ensures a framework of prudent and effective controls are in place for the work of Kids' Own.
- Discharges its responsibilities in accordance with the defining rules of the organisation.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The board of Kids' Own met four times during 2021, on the following dates:

26th February

7th May

27th August

26th November

## GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

As a registered charity and publicly funded non-for-profit organisation, Kids' Own is wholly committed to fulfilling best practice requirements in relation to the governance of our organisation. In 2020, our Board dedicated particular focus to ensuring full compliance with the Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator in November 2018 and is delighted to now have a framework within which to continue operating to the highest standards of governance.

# THE KIDS' OWN BOARD

## CARMEL BRENNAN

Dr. Carmel Brennan is retired as Head of Training and Practice with Early Childhood Ireland, where she had responsibility for the organisation's work in developing curriculum, improving practice and supporting services to work with the national frameworks. She now works as a part time lecturer in Maynooth University on the degree and masters in early childhood education programmes. Her research interests are in the areas of curriculum and particularly children's play – the subject of her PhD thesis. More recently, she focusses on children's co-construction of stories through play and the relationship between play and artistic enquiry in children's lives.

## JENNIFER HENNESSY (CHAIR)

Jennifer is Regional Manager for the Dublin and East Region at Clann Credo, Ireland's largest Social Finance Provider. Jennifer has a background in finance and banking. In her role with Clann Credo she has worked with hundreds of non-profit organisations including many arts organisations. Jennifer has a keen interest in art and recently received a Diploma in Art and Design from NCAD. She has her own art practice and is part of an artists' collective called Artists L9.

## MICHAEL KIRBY (TREASURER)

Michael has almost three decades experience working in the private sector in the U.S., England, and Ireland and, since 2001, is a Partner of business and management consultancy firm Meehan Tully & Associates Ltd. He holds a B.A. from Villanova University, a M.A. in International Relations from St. John's University, New York, and a MBA from Trinity College Dublin. Michael has extensive professional experience of the not-for-profit sector and is actively involved in a number of organisations in a voluntary capacity.

## NAOMI FEELY (APPOINTED FEBRUARY 2021)

Naomi Feely is an experienced social researcher and policy analyst with over 15 years' experience working in the public, not-for-profit and private sectors in Ireland. She has carried out research in the areas of early childhood care and education, low income families, income adequacy, childhood disadvantage and ageing. She has worked for leading not-for-profit organisations such as Age Action, Barnardos and Start Strong. Naomi has a strong interest in philanthropy and is finalising her doctoral thesis on this topic. Naomi holds a BA in Public Administration, an MA in Sociology and a second MA in Political and Public Communications.

## MARK O'BRIEN (RESIGNED JUNE 2021)

Mark is Director of axis, Ballymun, an organisation at the heart of Ballymun on the northside of Dublin. Axis is an arts centre, production company, arts development organisation & resource centre. Mark also practices as a theatre director. Credits include: Feast or Famine by Sinead Moriarty as part of 24 hour plays at the Abbey Theatre. For axis, 'Bang Bang', 'Tea Chests and Dreams' and 'The Parting Glass' by Dermot Bolger (touring nationally and internationally), 'Glimmer' by Joe Flavin, 'Stór' by Ciaran Taylor, 'The Good Father' by Christian O' Reilly, 'Cleaners' by Colm Maher, 'Waiting for Elvis' by Eileen Gibbons, Other work include 'Shorts' (Fishamble), 'Jack Fell down', (Team) 'The Welcome' (Druid), 'Pass the Parcel' (The Ark), 'Sparkleshark' (Draiocht), 'Hype' (Broke Theatre Co.), 'The Oresteia' (Galloping Cat), 'A Soldiers Tale' (Co-Opera). Mark also practices as a composer/sound designer and has facilitated theatre workshops nationally and internationally.

**LIZ COMAN  
(APPOINTED NOVEMBER 2021)**

Liz is an Assistant Arts Officer with Dublin City Council and a Visual Arts Education Curator. Liz has a Masters in History of Art and in Museum Studies, with a focus on public programming. She has led trainings in enquiry led approaches to mediating artwork for visual art facilitators in The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children, The National Gallery of Ireland, and The Turner Prize, Derry and offers ongoing mentorship for individual artists and educators. She is a certified Visual Thinking Strategies facilitator with VTS/USA and has completed training to coaching level. Liz is writer of the first Arts, Education and Learning Policy for Dublin City Council and through her work at the arts office, she designs

and evaluates supports for artists – including awards, bursaries and studio spaces. A key aspect of her role is to grow resources through strategic partnerships and budget management by being alert to funding opportunities based on an extensive knowledge of local, national and international funding infrastructure.

**IRENE LAWLOR (RESIGNED  
NOVEMBER 2021)**

Irene is Senior Communications Manager at GSK where she has worked since November 2016. Previously, she was Communications Manager at Barnardos, Ireland and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, New Media Specialist with O2 Ireland, and Instructional Designer with Riverdeep.



# OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAMME IN 2021

2021 was another successful and busy year for Kids' Own, with notable achievements across all of our strategic aims. Some of the challenges relating to the Covid-19 pandemic still remained: many of our projects and events continued online, particularly in the first half of 2021. From summer onwards, we began to facilitate projects with small groups in-person, often outdoors. However, some of our projects remained online even when restrictions on meeting in-person were lifted, demonstrating the value of this way of working in certain instances. We facilitated projects across every age group from early years to teenagers and worked with a wide variety of communities, particularly communities of seldom heard children and young people. Kids' Own continued to develop book publications with children and young people through meaningful engagement with artists, including a new project with Traveller and Roma children and young people, which included the development of two new child-authored books and the beginning of new child-led research, which will continue into 2022. This year was a particularly important one in terms of developing our fourth strategic aim "Research

and Advocacy: Strive to build evidence and lead change towards children's inclusion as active creators", as numerous pieces of research with children and young people were developed and a number of projects with youth advisory groups were facilitated.

We continued supporting the sector through our role as managers of the national Arts and Education Portal. We were also delighted to welcome nine new artists and writers to our Associate Artist panel and to support them through dedicated training and ongoing mentoring support, with thanks to our Arts Council-funded Dissemination and Visibility Plan.

We also published our new Strategic Plan (2021-2023), which provides a clear roadmap of our strategic goals and how we will achieve them in the coming years.

The following pages give a summary of our activities according to each of our Strategic Aims.



# Aim 1: Engagement and Co-Creation

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

Throughout 2021, a wide range of projects provided spaces and opportunities for children and young people to connect with professional artists, offering a platform for self-expression and the development of their voices and artwork.



### A TO Z AND BACK AGAIN

This project was developed as a pilot early-years intervention, alongside the reprinting of a classic Kids' Own title A-Z and Back Again. It aimed to put arts and creativity at the centre of early childhood learning and development. The project aimed to support young children to manipulate and engage in open-ended play with materials, and connected them with their parents and other children through verbal and non-verbal communication. Project activities evolved in response to the pandemic: the early stages of the project took place during strict lockdowns and were designed to support parent-child interactions in the home setting. The later stages of the project took place as restrictions were easing and were more community-focused and explored children's engagement within small group settings. Overall, the project aimed to facilitate children's own sense of agency and to create an environment where their learning was free and self-directed but supported.

**Artist:** Naomi Draper

**Partners:** Sligo Childcare Committee, Sligo Leitrim CYPSC

**Funders:** ESB Energy for Generations

**Participants:** Children aged 3-6 and their parent/guardian

**Participant numbers:** 30

**Dates:** Throughout 2021

**Venue:** Participants' homes; online; the garden at the Yeats' Building, Sligo.

### ALL IN ONLINE ARTS PROJECT

This pilot online project was developed in response to the recommendations set out by young people in a scoping study carried out by Kids' Own on Digital and Cultural Access for Children and Young People in the Northwest (please see Research and Advocacy section). During November and December 2021, children from Sligo Traveller Support Group Homework Club and Sligo Family Resource Centre participated in a series of pilot online workshops creating digital art with Associate Artist Julie Forrester. We worked closely with both our Sligo partners to include children that

would enjoy and benefit from this project.

**Artist:** Julie Forrester

**Partners:** Sligo Family Resource Centre & Sligo Traveller Support Group

**Funders:** RTE Does Comic Relief, Community Foundation for Ireland

**Participants:** Children from the Traveller community and new communities in Sligo. Participant numbers: 18

**Date:** November-December 2021

**Venue:** Online; Sligo Traveller Support Group Homework Club

### CHILDREN AND CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT

This small-scale initiative was an exploration into ways of supporting children to engage with climate change and have their voices heard on this important issue. Through dialogue and creative activity, children worked with artist Vanya Lambrecht Ward and writer Jo Holmwood exploring issues related to their local environment. Their particular focus was on water as a central element representing the interconnectedness of global and climate change issues. Through the project, Dr. Connie Nell from Sligo Environmental Network developed some initial research and observations on children's role as climate activists, the impact of supporting children's voices to be heard on this issue, and the value of creative approaches in supporting children's engagement with climate change and climate action. From this project, Kids' Own developed a publication presenting some of the ideas and thinking that the children developed through this process.

**Artists:** Jo Holmwood, and Vanya Lambrecht Ward.

**Researcher:** Dr Connie Nell

**Partners:** Sligo Environmental Network

**Funders:** Creative Sligo

**Participants:** 2nd-6th Class children at Carns NS, Moneygold, Co. Sligo

**Participant numbers:** 24

**Date:** June 2021

**Venue:** Carns NS, Moneygold, Co. Sligo

### LGBTQIA+ BOOK PROJECT

The third of a three-phase creative project, this project gave LGBTQIA+ young people the opportunity to explore issues of importance to their lives through artwork and writing. Participants worked with writer Mary Branley and artist Andy Parsons in an intensive series of workshops in summer 2021 to develop artwork and writing that reflected their lived experience. Through creative activity, conversation, and writing, the group developed content for a book publication.

**Artists:** Martin Corr, Mary Branley, Andy Parsons

**Partners:** SMILY LGBTI+ youth group Sligo, Youth Work Ireland North Connaught

**Funders:** LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

**Participants:** LGBTI+ young people in County Sligo, members of the SMILY LGBTI+ youth group in Sligo

**Participant numbers:** 15

**Dates:** July 2021

**Venue:** outdoor space at Penny Café, Yeats' Building Sligo

Associate Artists, Francesca Hutchinson and Danny Brennan, under the guidance of mentor, Mary Branley, participating children engaged in an extended creative process to create child-authored, non-fiction books which celebrates their lives and experiences. As part of this project, researchers will measure the impact of the project on participants, from a rights-based perspective (please see the Research and Advocacy section for more detail).

**Artists:** Danny Brennan & Francesca Hutchinson; Mary Branley

**Partners:** Cork Traveller Visibility Group; Irish Traveller Movement; Cork STAR project

**Funders:** The Toy Show Appeal; Community Foundation of Ireland; Tusla Education Support Services; Cork Traveller Visibility Group; Cork STAR project

**Participants:** Children from Traveller and Roma communities

**Participant numbers:** 32

**Dates:** Autumn 2021 – ongoing

**Venue:** Cork Community Artlink

### BOOK PROJECT WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

We were delighted to partner with Sligo Leitrim Home Youth Liaison Service to create a brand-new book with young people about their experiences of living in foster care. Over a series of workshops in August 2021, young people worked alongside artist Sharon Kelly and writer Mary Branley to create artwork and text that reflect their lived experiences.

**Artists:** Mary Branley & Sharon Kelly

**Funders:** Commissioned by Sligo Leitrim Home Youth Liaison Service, funded by The Tusla Children's Participation Seed Fund

**Partners:** Sligo Leitrim Home Youth Liaison Service, Tusla

**Participants:** children living in foster care in the service of Sligo/Leitrim HYLS

**Participant numbers:** 9

**Dates:** August 2021

**Venue:** Sligo Home Youth Liaison Services office, Castle Street, Sligo



### OUR LIVES, OUR VOICES

In October 2021, Kids' Own began an exciting children's publishing initiative putting the voices of children from Traveller and Roma communities at the centre of the creative representation of their identities. Meeting on a weekly basis to work collaboratively with

### REINVENTIONS

Continuing our Reinventions series, this project allowed teenagers to be actively involved in the creative repurposing of material for the purpose of play, fun, and creativity. Over a week of workshops, the young people brainstormed the development of toys and objects that they could make for younger children from old, recycled, and waste material. Martha and Christ then supported the young people to make their idea into reality, helping them learn new skills, and giving them an introduction to the techniques required for the ideas they had.

**Artists:** Martha van der Meulen & Christ Spoorenberg

**Funders:** Community Foundation for Ireland

**Participants:** Teenagers aged 13-15 in Sligo

**Participant numbers:** 15

**Dates:** June 2021



### UN INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

The overall aim of this project was to support Traveller children in the Sligo Traveller Support Group Homework Club to respond to the theme of this year's UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty: "Building Forward Together: Ending Persistent Poverty, Respecting all People and Our Planet". Through creative activity, alongside a professional artist and writer, this project provided an opportunity for the group to express themselves on the difficult topic of poverty. Using participant's artwork and writings, a poster for the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty was created and published.

**Artists:** Sarah Ellen Lundy & Mary Branley

**Funders:** Department of Social Protection

**Participants:** Sligo Traveller Support Group Homework Club

**Participant numbers:** 12

**Dates:** October 2021

**Venue:** online



### HEAR OUR STORIES BOOK PROJECT

Over a period of two months and guided by mentor, Mary Branley, Associate Artist Sarah Fuller and Associate Writer Helen Flanagan worked with two groups of Syrian children and young people living in county Wexford to create a book together. This project's focus was to provide a space for their unique creative expression, their experience and their voice - one that celebrates cultural diversity and interculturalism in Wexford, in a meaningful way.

**Artists:** Sarah Fuller, Helen Flanagan, Mary Branley

**Partners:** Wexford Library Service and Wexford Local Development

**Funders:** Dormant Accounts Fund and Wexford Library Service

**Participants:** A group of Syrian children & young people living in Co. Wexford

**Participant numbers:** 22

**Dates:** Autumn - Winter 2021

**Venue:** Enniscorthy and New Ross, Co Wexford

### YOUNG WRITERS 2021

Kids' Own Young Writers project began in 2018. Designed as a long-term writing project that would support and nurture young writers, the latest stage of this project took place online in Summer 2021. Kids' Own Associate Writer, Mary Branley, facilitated a programme of three creative days with our young writers group and three invited professional creatives: London-based poet and visual artist Ella Frears, Sligo-based writer Louise Kennedy, and Sligo-based actor, theatre-maker and writer, Bob Kelly. Working and collaborating online, the project culminated in an online evening of poetry and prose in January 2022 hosted by Susanna Galbraith, poet and editor of Abridged Magazine.

**Artists:** Mary Branley

**Partners:** Donegal County Library Service; Libraries NI

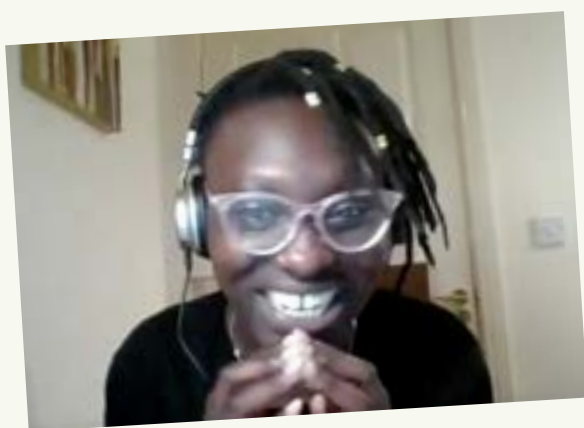
**Funders:** Reconciliation Fund (Department of Foreign Affairs)

**Participants:** Young people from Donegal and Derry

**Participant numbers:** 18

**Dates:** Throughout 2021

**Venue:** online



### CRUINNIU NA NÓG: ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Kids' Own facilitated a range of online events and masterclasses in partnership with Creative Donegal, Sligo County Library, and Leitrim Libraries for Cruinniu na nÓg on the 12th of June. All of the events were for young people aged 14-18 and provided exciting opportunities to

work alongside high-profile artists and writers based in Ireland and the UK, to try something new and test out some of their ideas! Workshops included poetry, spoken word, filmmaking, and performance. Additionally, one workshop was led by Kids' Own Young Writers group, with support from writer Mary Branley.

**Artists:** Mary Branley; Ella Frears; FeliSpeaks; Paul Mahon; Anthony Anaxagorou

**Funders:** Cruinniu na nÓg, Creative Ireland

**Partners:** Creative Donegal; Sligo Libraries; Leitrim Libraries

**Participants:** Young people aged 13-18 in counties Sligo, Leitrim, and Donegal

**Participant numbers:** 45

**Dates:** June 2021

**Venue:** online

### REALLY HERE

Kids' Own began a new virtual artist-in-residence programme 'Really Here' in three schools in Northern Ireland that ran from January to June 2022. This project builds on long-term relationships we have nurtured between schools and our Associate Artists during our Virtually There programme. The project took place primarily online, with occasional physical visits by the artist to the school. The creative sessions were hosted by the class teacher and the artist, and supported the children to work creatively and collaboratively through process- and enquiry-based approaches that exposed them to professional art practices, while also supporting their learning through many cross-curricular strands.

**Artists:** Sharon Kelly; Ann Henderson; Ann Donnelly

**Funders:** Arts Council of Northern Ireland

**Participants:** children from St Patrick's P.S., Crossmaglen; Donaghey Primary School; and Ballydown Primary School

**Participant numbers:** 75

**Dates:** January to June 2021

**Venue:** St Patrick's P.S., Crossmaglen; Donaghey Primary School; and Ballydown Primary School

# Aim 2: Visibility of Children's Work

*Increase the visibility to  
children's artwork and writing  
through publishing, exhibition  
and dissemination.*



### TADA! ARCHIVE EXHIBITION

Curated by a panel of children and young people from across Ireland, in collaboration with our Associate Artist, Vanya Lambrecht-Ward, this touring interactive exhibition presented an exciting opportunity to present a space for children that highlighted their creative ideas, artwork, and children's voices. Responding to 24 years of collaborative art-based projects managed by Kids' Own, the work focused on themes of play, people, place and pondering. The exhibition was hosted at Galway Arts Centre as part of Baboró International Festival for Children and the Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar.

**Artists:** Vanya Lambrecht Ward

**Partners:** Baboró International Festival for Children, Galway Arts Centre, Linenhall Arts Centre

**Funders:** Arts Council of Ireland

**Participants:** Visual Thinking Team, aged 10-18, from all over Ireland

**Participant numbers:** 15

**Dates:** October and November 2021

**Venue:** Galway Arts Centre and Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar

### LAUNCH OF A SPLASH OF BLUE

In June 2021, St Angela's Castlebar, Mayo County Council, and Kids' Own held a virtual launch of A Splash of Blue. A Splash of Blue is a resource developed with 4th class children in St Angela's National School, Castlebar throughout 2020 to accompany Mayo County Council's Schools Exhibition to make it accessible to primary schools and show children how to explore artworks through looking, thinking, talking

and responding in creative ways such as art, writing, music and more. As well as the virtual launch of this wonderful resource, participating children, partners Mayo County Council Arts Service, and Kids' Own took part in an outdoor, socially-distanced photocall to mark the publication.



**Artists:** Kiera O'Toole

**Partners:** Mayo County Council Arts Service

**Funders:** Mayo County Council Arts Service; Creative Mayo

**Participants:** 4th class children, St Angela's N.S.

**Participant numbers:** 24

**Date:** June 2021

**Venue:** online and St. Angela's N.S., Castlebar



### VIRTUAL LAUNCH OF CANT LOSE CANT REPRINT

On the 29th April, Kids' Own held a very successful virtual launch of the reprint of our book *Can't Lose Cant*. This is a classic Kids' Own publication which celebrates and promotes the importance of the Cant language, also known as Gammon or Shelta, reprinted in 2020 as part of our visibility and dissemination plan. The launch was co-hosted by Sligo Traveller Support Group on their Facebook page and was made available to view on YouTube after the event. The book was officially launched by Senator Eileen Flynn, and was followed by a panel discussion featuring Kids' Own Associate Writer Mary Branley, writer Oein DeBhairduin, primary school teacher Annmarie Collins, and manager of Sligo Traveller Support Group, Bernadette Maughan.

The discussion was chaired by Creative Director of Kids' Own, Jo Holmwood, and Men's Development Worker at Sligo Traveller Support Group Jamie Murphy.

**Funders:** Arts Council

**Date:** April 2021

**Venue:** Facebook live

**Attendees:** 45

### ONLINE LAUNCH OF ON THE BRINK

On Wednesday 24th of March, we were delighted to launch our new publication *On the Brink*, a collection of poetry and prose by young authors from Counties Derry and Donegal. *On the Brink* is the result of Kids' Own's Young Writers project, a cross-border initiative developed in partnership with Donegal County Library Service and Libraries NI and funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund. At the launch, several contributing authors read from their work, which was followed by a lively discussion – led by the young people – about their influences, and how they support and provide feedback on each other's work.

**Funders:** Department of Foreign Affairs, Reconciliation Fund

**Partners:** Donegal County Library Service and Libraries NI

**Participants:** 12 young people from our Young Writers project. 60 people in attendance on Zoom.

### PUBLICATION OF FACE-TO-FACE



In 2021, Kids' Own published *Face to Face: A book about our experiences of Covid and our vision for our communities by children from County Sligo*. This book was commissioned by Sligo PPN with additional funding from Creative Ireland Sligo. This project aimed to gather children's stories about their experiences of 2020, of the pandemic and public health restrictions. The project was also framed within a wider lens of health and wellbeing, focusing on the children's local environment and sense of community.

**Funders:** Commissioned by Sligo PPN with additional funds from Creative Sligo

**Partners:** Sligo Family Resource Centre; Cloghogue National School; Castlebaldwin; Our Lady of Mercy Primary School, Sligo; Soeoy National School

**Reach:** 1000 copies printed

# Aim 3: Professional Arts Practice with Children

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

In 2021, Kids' Own continued to assume an important role in the children's cultural sector as a provider of professional development supports, always striving to raise the status of children's work through the sharing and connecting of expertise and the interrogation of practice.



## THE ARTS IN EDUCATION PORTAL

In 2021, Kids' Own continued to manage the Arts in Education Portal on behalf of the Portal Committee. The Arts in Education Portal is the key national digital resource of arts in education practice in Ireland. Throughout 2021, Kids' Own continued to bring our critical knowledge of the sector to our continued management and development of the Arts in Education Portal and to promote excellence of practice through this resource.

The Portal is live at [www.artsineducation.ie](http://www.artsineducation.ie)

### Portal Events

- Spring Regional Day – a series of virtual events over a week in March featuring presentations, panels, and creative workshops focusing on the Mid-West region
- National Day – the Portal's annual, national conference was a virtual event in 2021 with a range of events for teachers, artists, and arts professionals over a week in November 2021.
- Documentation Awards: two arts-in-education projects were awarded the opportunity to document their project through video and imagery
- Dedicated commissioned content: including guest blogs.

## ARTIST TRAINING

Kids' Own issued a call-out for artists in Spring 2021 to expand our artist panel membership specifically for collaborative book-making and publishing projects with children and young people. Applications were sought from people who wished to participate in a unique two-day training programme in order to learn more about Kids' Own's way of working and method of collaborative arts practice. A group of 9 artists and writers from across Ireland gathered in the Model Arts Centre, Sligo in September for two

days of thought-provoking presentations and creative activities, as well as time to explore and understand each other's respective creative practices.

**Funders:** The Arts Council of Ireland, as part of Kids' Own's Dissemination and Visibility plan

**Participants:** 9

**Venue:** The Model Arts Centre, Sligo

## 2021 TAP SPECIAL INITIATIVE

In partnership with The Teacher-Artist Partnership CPD Programme, Kids' Own managed a special initiative that aimed to support teacher-artist pairs in developing resources to document and engage collaboratively online. Applications were sought from Lead Facilitator/TAP Design Team teacher-artist pairs who wished to further their partnerships and enhance their arts-in-education practice through an exciting and practical programme of training, mentorship and documentation supports. This programme plays an important role in contributing towards the collation of a body of high quality documentation that will support and profile the process, learning and outcomes from the Teacher-Artist Partnership CPD programme to date.

**Funders:** Creative Ireland Programme – Creative Youth

**Participants:** 14

**Venue:** Online

## WRITING MENTOR

Long-term Associate Writer Mary Branley, provided valuable support and expertise to new writers and artists working collaboratively on Kids' Own projects in 2021. Mary took part in new book projects and provided follow-up mentoring for artists and writers in 2021. Her work in this role will continue into 2022.

This role was generously funded by an Arts Council Capacity Building grant.



# Aim 4: Research and Advocacy



### STUDY ON DIGITAL AND CULTURAL ACCESS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NORTHWEST

Kids' Own recognised the huge impact of Covid-19 on all aspects of children's lives and wanted to explore the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's engagement with the arts in particular. On behalf of Kids' Own, Children's rights researcher Dr Amy Hanna, designed and facilitated a piece of youth-led research exploring digital and cultural access for children and young people in the northwest. With support from Kids' Own, Amy established a Youth Advisory Group to advise on the research and how it should be conducted. A group of research participants met with Amy and Kids' Own Project Manager Ciara, to share their thoughts and experiences on their engagement with and access to the arts during the pandemic. This research will be published in 2022.

**Funders:** RTE Does Comic Relief; Community Foundation for Ireland

**Participants:** Children and young people age 8-16 living in the northwest

**Numbers:** 16 participants

**Dates:** Throughout 2021

**Venue:** online

### INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

Our cross-border Young Writers project has been running since 2018 and has become an integral part of Kids' Own's yearly programme. As part of our 2021 programme, Kids' Own received funding to conduct independent evaluation of this project and its impact on participants. Dr Bryonie Reid attended various Young Writers workshops and spoke with participants about their experiences and thoughts on the project over summer 2021. This research will be published in 2022.

**Funders:** Department of Foreign Affairs, Reconciliation Fund

**Participants:** young people aged 13-17

**Numbers:** 14

**Dates:** Throughout 2021

**Venue:** online

### RESEARCH ALONGSIDE NEW PUBLISHING INITIATIVE WITH TRAVELLER AND ROMA CHILDREN

Research was a key part of new Kids' Own project 'Our Lives, Our Voices' with Traveller and Roma children in Cork. Following an open call for a researcher to measure the impact of the this creative arts and publishing project on participants from a rights-based perspective, Dr Tamsin Cavaliero and Dr Susan McDonnell, both based in IT Sligo, were selected. Their research began in November 2021 and will continue in 2022.

**Partners:** Cork Traveller Visibility Group; Irish Traveller Movement; Cork STAR project

**Funders:** The Toy Show Appeal; Community Foundation of Ireland

**Participants:** Children from Traveller and Roma communities

**Participant numbers:** 32

**Dates:** Autumn 2021 – ongoing

**Venue:** Cork Community Artlink

### CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON BEHALF OF THE ARTS COUNCIL OF IRELAND

In autumn and winter 2021, Kids' Own worked with the Arts Council of Ireland to facilitate consultations with children and young people so that their voices can be heard and taken into account in the work that the Arts Council does in the future. Kids' Own established two youth advisory groups: one group of children aged 7-12, and one group of 13-18 year olds to advise on the creation and design of a questionnaire that the Arts Council will use to ensure children across Ireland will have a say in the work that they do and in shaping the arts for children in Ireland. The children and young people involved took part in creative activities and conversations with artist Vanya Lambrecht Ward and children's rights researcher Dr Amy Hanna, to help inform the creation of this survey for other children and young people.

# Aim 5: Building Internal Capacity



# APPOINTMENT OF EDUCATION ADVISOR AND WRITING MENTOR

Kids' Own were delighted to receive funding to appoint an Education Advisor and Writing Mentor through an Arts Council Capacity Building Grant. In order to develop and expand links with teachers, schools, and academics involved with teaching and learning, Dr Bernadette Ní Áingléis was appointed Education Advisor. This role built on the increased interest of teachers, academics, and educational bodies in Kids' Own, to develop new connections with all of the above so as to ensure Kids' Own's work remains linked with sectoral developments. Bernadette's work will continue in 2022.

As outlined under Aim 3, "Professional Arts Practice with Children", Mary Branley was appointed writing mentor for new Kids' Own Artists and Writers who joined Kids' Own's panel in 2021. This role ensured our new artists and writers were supported in the development of their artistic practice as it intersects with Kids' Own's ethos and methodology.

**Funder:** Arts Council Capacity Building grant



# Achievements and Outputs



# ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTPUTS

## AUDIENCE FIGURES

In 2020, Kids' Own engaged with:

- 397 children and young people through direction engagement and co-creation;
- 2305 children and parents as public audiences for our work;
- 152 sector professionals;
- Online audience of 8323 + 16, 724 Portal users
- Book audience of 4678
- Kids' Own video views: 478
- Books published: 4



# TESTIMONIALS

This reproduction [of Can't Lose Cant] continues along that same vital thread of reclaiming, giving space and word to an age-old tongue, set alongside the beautiful creative creations, ideas, thoughts and art of children – children who continue to be custodians of our language to yet another rising generation. I give note in appreciation to the work of Kids' Own, that has always sought to give a platform for the understanding of many children, and in this enduring and utter rarity, the voices of Traveller children.

## **Oein DeBhairduin, foreword to Can't Lose Cant**

"I like art and I like the way we created the boxes, and it gave us the feeling of being creative and we don't want it to end."

## **Participant, Hear our Stories project, Wexford**

"He loved the whole thing [...]. He's very cautious about new things. But once he got going, he was flying it, loved it! He put it all over the walls, all over the cupboards, it was great craic. We had so much fun"

## **Parent and participant in A-Z project with their young children, aged 2 ½ and 10 months.**

*"I think you should also like paint a picture in people's heads because it is annoying when you go around and someone says on the news 'we're killing the planet' like it's*

*not gonna make me hope for anything. If you make me feel bad, I want to ignore it so..."*

## **Participant in Climate Action Project, Co Sligo**

"I was waiting for an art [lesson] but there was no art. I was waiting all the lockdown like in a day who comes we do art, but we didn't."

## **Participant in child-led research "Digital and Cultural Access for Children and Young People in the Northwest"**

"The box was spectacularly designed, the magic of placing it on the floor, of tidying the room, getting the timing right, opening it, the discussion about the materials... We had a beautiful hour and a half or two hours of play."

## **Parent and participant in A-Z project with their young children aged 5 and 2.**

"Art is important but their [children's] feelings are more important".

## **Participant in child-led research "Digital and Cultural Access for Children and Young People in the Northwest"**

"We can't just like...let other people do it [...] The world. Everybody. We have to unite and think of something together"

## **Participant in Climate Action Project, Co. Sligo**

The writing group's very supportive. And... I feel like... there's not a lot of judgement, if you don't want to read, or if you don't want to read right

away, and wait for other people, because I think a lot of people in the group understand, a little bit more than how maybe other people would – that it can be hard, just talking... and sharing things that could be quite personal.

**Participant in Young Writers project**

“I really know how to open them up from the wrapper. You just have to kind of rip and pull”.

**Participant in A-Z project, aged 4**

“Getting to make stuff with people you can relate to was the best part.”

**Participant in LGBTQIA+ book project**

“The children enjoyed playing and experimenting with art materials. It was all their own work. We would recommend this process to other teachers, i.e. creating a very open atmosphere where every answer is listened to and valued”

**Teachers from the St Angela’s N.S., Castlebar**

*“It’s so amazing to find a group, and everyone’s so different, but also so like-minded”.*

**Participant in Young Writers project**

“While this book [Face to Face] is a collection of emotions and feelings about a specific period in time when the whole world was impacted by Covid-19, it is also a unique way of finding out what matters to children the most and what they want their futures to look like”.

**Sarah Wetherald, Sligo PPN Resource Worker**

“The young people trust Mary (and each other) to attend to them, to see and hear them and to

treat them and their work with kindness. I see the trust Mary offers the young people, meanwhile, as very significant. Unusually for an adult, she trusts them to do their own learning and their own growing. She not only holds open, but holds back, imposing neither her writing expertise nor her life experience. She knows that the young writers do not need criticism to hone their craft. Space, time and support are more effective.”

**Dr Bryonie Reid, Evaluation of Young Writers Project**

*“Many of the projects I have had the pleasure of working on, over the many years with Kids’ Own, strived for this exchange of ideas, mutual learning and listening: holding children’s autonomy in high regard and listening and sharing in the experiences”*

Vanya Lambrecht Ward



# EXECUTIVE TEAM

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR/CEO:  
JO HOLMWOOD**

Jo has worked with Kids' Own since January 2009 and was appointed Director in early 2019. During her time with the organisation, she has managed dozens of collaborative projects with children and young people and published numerous titles representing their real voices and experiences. As director, she holds responsibility for the creative direction of the organisation, the successful delivery of Kids' Own's strategic plan, sound governance and financial stability of the organisation, fundraising, HR, sustainability and creative planning.

**DIGITAL CONTENT MANAGER:  
EMMA KAVANAG**

Emma graduated from NCAD in 2004 with a Bachelor of Design. In 2009 she earned an Honours Postgraduate Diploma in Arts Policy & Practice at the NUIG and since then has been working in the professional arts and cultural sector with a particular focus on digital media. In her current role as Digital Content Manager, Emma is responsible for the management of the technical needs of Kids' Own including the Kids' Own Archive, alongside continuing management of the Arts in Education Portal on behalf of

the Portal Editorial Committee, including the successful delivery of the Portal Content Strategy and Portal events.

**PROJECT MANAGER: CIARA GALLAGHER**

Ciara's background is in third-level education in the Arts and Humanities, including postdoctoral research in children's literature and culture. This background allows her to bring a recognition of the ethical and cultural value of the work that Kids' Own leads and develops and the centrality of children's voices within this work. In her role as Project Manager, Ciara is responsible for planning and implementing a range of Kids' Own projects, as well as fundraising and developing new partnerships.

**ADMINISTRATOR/PUBLISHING  
ASSISTANT: ÉILÍS MURPHY**

Éilís is a bookbinder, visual artist and educator who studied Fine Art Print in NCAD. She is passionate about books and loves creating and helping others to create books as an accessible art form. In her role as Administrator and Publishing Assistant, Éilís is responsible for digital content creation for Kids' Own's website and social media, project management and general publishing duties.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

Our planning for 2022 is focused on continuing to increase the visibility of our work in order to bring our work, particularly our books, to bigger audiences across communities and sectors. As 2022 is our 25th anniversary, we intend to extend and deepen our reach through key sectoral events discussing and celebrating Kids' Own's work. We want to continue our strong focus on research and advocacy that was firmly established through various projects in 2021; we believe this is important in understanding the impact of our work beyond audience numbers

and readership figures. Kids' Own will continue supporting children and young people to have their voices heard through new projects and publishing initiatives, including new forms of publishing such as digital publishing and podcast publishing, for example. We also want to continue to extend the diversity of the children and young people we work with so that every child and young person in Ireland can see something of themselves and their experience reflected in our publications.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**Total income: 342,243**

**Total expenditure: 338,325**

**Total assets: 30,647**



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