

## **Too cool for school? Musicians as partners in education**

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Kenny, Ailbhe (2010) 'Too cool for school? Musicians as partners in education', *Irish Educational Studies*, 29: 2, 153 — 166

### **Abstract**

This article addresses the distinctive role that artists play in education. Although there has been a growing body of research internationally into artists involved in teaching and learning processes, the practice of artists in education in Ireland has developed in an uneven and sometimes disjointed manner. The field of 'arts in education' and issues surrounding its policy and practice in Ireland are investigated here. This article takes music as a focus in examining musicians' engagement in educational partnerships. Discussions around the role of artists in educational settings, successful partnerships and professional development are presented. Interviews carried out with a purposive sample of eight musicians are thematically analysed to provide meaningful insight into these debates drawn from actual practice. In this way, the article contributes to developing research into arts in education and, more specifically, music in education. In doing so, it hopes to underpin future policy, practice and stimulate further research in this area.

### **Introduction**

The involvement of artists in education is not a new phenomenon. Classrooms enjoying visits from artists and performers, as well as children engaging with the arts in the public domain through various means such as exhibitions or concerts, has been a long-standing practice in education. However, it is only since the 1960s and 70s that the term 'arts in education' has come to be a feature of educational discourse and analysis. This article examines arts in education policy and practice in Ireland and interrogates the several dichotomies that arise from its discussion. Taking a focus on music, issues surrounding definitions of 'arts education', 'arts in education', artists in educational settings, partnerships and professional development are all investigated. Interviews with a purposive sample of musicians all involved with arts in education initiatives provide valuable insights into the current practice of such work in Ireland and present significant findings to inform future arts in education directions. It is

hoped through this analysis to contribute to emerging research in this area of arts and in particular, music education and music in education.

### **Arts in Education: Ireland**

Within Ireland, as with many other countries, the terms ‘arts education’ and ‘arts in education’ often leads to confusion, misunderstanding and debate. It is important therefore to define what is meant by such terms. For the purpose of this article the following definitions are proposed. ‘Arts education’ referring to the arts taught as part of the mainstream curriculum within general education and ‘arts in education’ referring to artists of any art form or genre involved with initiatives in schools. This is in line with the Arts Council of Ireland definition which recognise arts in education as having two strands (Arts Council Ireland 2008, 8-9):

...one involving interventions by the arts world into the domain of formal education, and the other involving students engaging with the arts in the public domain.

This article focuses on arts in education policy and practice within schools and more specifically on musicians engaged in arts in education initiatives within Ireland.

The concept of arts in education is rooted in ideas influenced by educational writers such as Dewey, Rousseau, Froebel and Pestalozzi (Dewey 1902; 1934; Froebel 1893; Pestalozzi 1966; Rousseau and Boyd 1960) who advocate for a progressive, child-centred education. Such ideas around holistic education are inherent in the education system in Ireland and therefore arts in education fits very well within an ethos of educating ‘the whole child’. Tensions however often exist around remits and responsibilities in providing supports for arts in education in the country. This is largely due to the fact that in Ireland the Department of Education and Science (DES) are responsible for education and The Arts Council, under the

Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (DAST), are responsible for the arts.

The recent report from the Special Committee on the Arts and Education, *Points of Alignment* (2008), highlight this dichotomy in arts in education support between the Arts Council and the DES in Ireland. The Arts Council in its remit to promote the arts for all citizens including children and young people has largely supported policy and provision for arts in education. The DES have been involved in some arts in education initiatives but this has remained an under-developed area for the department and remains to be viewed as ‘sideline’ as opposed to being integrated with overall general education. Despite some successful models of arts in education work that have occurred nationwide, due to the nature of varying organisations with differing remits in Ireland, a lack of joined-up thinking as occurred both within policy and practice in this field. Coolahan points out (Arts Council Ireland 2008, 45):

One of the great deficiencies has been the lack of a coherent vision or cohesive national plan. Among other things, this has led to much fragmentation, and lack of co-ordination.

The report calls on the need for “joined-up action” (2008, 7) to ensure that arts in education is adequately resourced, informed and sustained.

### **Music Education in Ireland**

The provision of music education in Ireland is multi-faceted. It is generally perceived as a music curriculum as part of a general music education in schools and instrumental/performance tuition typically provided through private or voluntary means. Music education does of course occur outside of schools in informal settings too such as through community ensembles, peer groups and arts organisation initiatives.

Music education provision in Ireland historically has come under strong reprimand in the literature. *The Deaf Ears report* in 1985, provided a largely scathing account of overall music provision in schools at the time, claiming, “the young Irish person has the worst of all European ‘musical worlds’” (Herron 1985, 41). Despite a complete revision of the music curricula in schools since 1985, music education in Ireland continued to come under heavy criticism. In *The Boydell Papers*, Deane echoes the *Deaf Ears Report* when he states: “We have the most badly educated musical public in Europe” (Music Network 1997, 29) . The *MEND report* in 2001 highlights this matter further: “The inherited and prevailing culture in education is that music is low in priority” (Heneghan 2001, 376).

The arts resource agency Music Network was set up by the Arts Council in 1986. This marked a watershed in music policy in aiming to provide countrywide access to high quality music experiences. Music Network approaches this through provision of concerts countrywide, development of musicians through activities such as performance opportunities and training courses, advocacy work, as well as acting as an information resource. In 2003, Music Network published *A National System of Local Music Education Services - Report of a Feasibility Study*. The report identified a gap within music education in Ireland, with specific reference to access to instrumental and vocal music education. It recommended the creation of Local Music Education Partnerships to deliver structured and co-ordinated music education services, which are regionally or locally based, publicly subsidised, and complement existing curriculum music education. Despite successful pilot projects and many efforts to gain support to carry out the provision recommended in the report it was not until recently in July 2009, that a national rollout was adequately supported. This came about by philanthropic funding rather than State funding from popular band U2

and the Ireland Funds who announced that they will provide €7m to finance the scheme on a phased basis to 2015.<sup>1</sup>

On tracing the history of the music education curriculum in Irish schools Stakelum now believes that due to the flexibility and teacher control afforded by the curriculum (2008, 289); “There is an opportunity for teachers to use an amount of freedom in adapting the content of the curriculum to suit their own particular educational situation”. Music in Education initiatives represent a valuable resource to teachers and schools to bolster what appears to be inadequate provision of music education in Irish schools and tailor such initiatives to their relative contexts and school environments. *The Artists ~ Schools Guidelines* (2006, 11) claim:

Many children might never have the experience of attending a live arts event or engaging with artists or the arts in a direct fashion, were it not for the professional collaboration of schools and arts organisations.

Local Government arts offices are one avenue of supporting arts in education initiatives and much valuable work in this area has been carried out under these auspices. The interview research outlined in this article highlight some examples of this important work. Further issues surrounding remits come to the fore when examining local governments involvement in educational contexts. Most of the music programmes run by local government happen within educational settings (Kenny 2009). Tensions exist here, as Local Authorities have no specified educational remit; there is no mention of education within the Arts Acts and no formal relationship with the Department of Education.

While not intending to fulfil the requirements of the formal music curriculum, the school environment is a location within which the local government arts remits can easily occur. This utilisation of local resources to support classroom teachers echoes O’Callaghan (2003, 53-54) who advocates, “...that classroom teachers deliver

the music curriculum, and that procedures be put in place at a local level to offer support and encouragement where necessary.” The existing organisational structure provides an amenable base for such arts development projects and much of the work in this area by Local Authorities to date has been extremely successful. With the ever-increasing demands on space and time in the school curricula in Ireland, the position of the local government as an arts education resource for schools is at its most relevant.

### **Artists in educational settings**

The role of artists in educational settings has stimulated much interest and debate over recent years (Egan 2005; Eisner 2002; Fiske 1999; Jeffery 2005; Spendlove and Wyse 2007; Wolf 2008). Various terms to define this role have been put forward such as collaborator, educator, role model, social activist and researcher/enquirer (Pringle 2002, 8-9).

With a focus on music, the notion of artists as ‘teachers’ is rejected by Mullen (2002) as he sees a teaching role as authoritarian, hierarchical and judgemental and so not conducive to creative music-making (2002, 2). Instead he argues for a facilitator role for musician’s engagement with schools. There has been criticism of such a perspective as maintaining a narrow traditionalist view of what a teacher role entails (Koopman 2007, 155). Koopman goes on to call for a process of ‘authentic learning’ in music making where:

...learning is not abstract but connected to the real world...and...take space in contexts that are practice oriented and relevant to the learner (2007, 157).

The classroom appears to be one such place that such learning can occur and musicians as partners in education a natural way to reflect and connect to the ‘real world’ of communities outside of the school walls.

Key music educationalist, Swanwick, uses the term 'leader' as opposed to 'teacher' and believes (Swanwick 2008, 11) "a music leader can be anyone with an interest in music who someone is willing to follow." The process of learning however need not be defined in terms of teachers, leaders or facilitators but rather as Schafer (1975, 132-33) suggests the teachers, musicians and children can become a "community of learners" through music in education initiatives. Taking this theory, a partnership approach appears to be the best way forward for arts in education practice.

### **Partnerships**

The United Kingdom (UK) has paid particular attention to the notion of 'partnership' between artists and schools through such programmes as 'Teacher Artist Partnerships (TAP)', 'Creative Partnerships', and 'Musical Futures'. Such organisations can inform and promote best practice in the field of arts in education work. Taking 'Creative Partnerships' as an example, this project states, "long-term relationships between creative professionals and schools lie at the heart of the Creative Partnerships process (Creative Partnerships 2009)." To date the initiative has contracted 3,500 creative practitioners to work 'in partnership' with schools and many successful benefits of the project to both teachers, students and artists as well as contributing to the creative economy have been documented (Burns Owen Partnership 2006; Downing *et al.* 2007).

The Arts Council of Ireland strategy document *Partnership for the Arts* take on this key principle of 'partnership' in arts development, clearly influenced by other international and UK arts policies. It states (2005, 1):

Our approach...is based on partnership. We recognise that our goals can be achieved only if the Arts Council, the arts community and a wide range of other interested agencies and organisations work together to support the arts for the enrichment of Irish society.

Despite this strategy, the *Points of Alignment* report is highly critical of the lack of the provision for artists in education partnerships and argues that: “we are still at a stage where such work, while allowed to happen, is not really provided for (2008, p.4).”

The word ‘partnership’ can of course become over utilised and distorted. There may often be a disconnect between partnerships in policy and partnerships in practice. This can be especially true of partnerships within school environments which can be perceived as typically conservative working environments. Laycock (2008) identifies many difficulties within such partnerships. He points to sources of conflict such as a child-centred versus an art-form centred approach as well as issues surrounding freedom and discipline (2008, p.74). As well as this he identifies a major challenge in ensuring artists possess the skills necessary to carry out creative projects in schools and states, “the leadership of creative projects require specialist skills and qualities of leadership, and by no means all creative artists possess them (2008, p.78).”

### **Professional development**

It has been reported that difficulties often arise for artists working in educational settings due to the often competing demands of education work and individual practice (Arts Council Ireland 2005; Flynn 2005). The importance of collaborative initiatives that benefit all partners involved, including the musician’s own practice, is crucial in this regard. Wolf maintains that, “for partnerships to be truly collaborative, the stream of learning must flow both ways (2008, 93).”

Professional development for musicians to work in educational ways is of great value to ensure successful partnerships. Within the UK, good models of



professional development are present through organisations such as MusicLeader<sup>ii</sup> and Soundsense<sup>iii</sup>. These organisations act as support services for UK music leaders and community musicians respectively in the form of services such as advice, information, training events, networking opportunities, and information websites. Swanwick (2008) in particular recommends this model of professional development through such organisations like these. In the absence of such training he feels (2008, 19):

There appears to be little mutual understanding between employers and music leaders about what constitutes a reasonable code of practice, especially when the time frame of the projects happened to be short.

Wolf similarly argues for long-term training and length of projects stating, “successful teaching often occurs in long-term professional development exchanges among teachers and artists (2008, 90).”

So where does professional development of musicians in education sit within the Irish situation? In this regard, it appears the country lags behind its neighbour. Awareness amongst musicians to work in educational contexts has been reported as very low in Ireland (Arts Council Ireland 2008; Kenny 2009; Lunn and Kelly 2008; National Economic and Social Forum 2007). Due to arts in education having a low public profile coupled with poor communication this has meant that the full potential of engaging musicians in educational work has not been fully realised. In addition, a lack of documentation, evaluation and dissemination has meant that opportunities to learn from experience and inform best practice have been lost.

There have been recent attempts to fill this professional development gap for musicians through organisations such as Music Network, the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance and some local government arts offices. For example, Music Network offer a continuing professional development 8-month programme for

professional musicians who wish to work in community and outreach settings through the use of interactive workshops delivered by a team of specialists. A main aspect of this course is focused on musicians working with schools at both primary and post-primary levels. While programmes such as this are hugely welcome developments, greater and more widespread opportunities for musicians to engage in this way are needed countrywide to build capacity in the field of arts in education.

### **Research Methodology**

In its investigation of musicians as partners in education, a qualitative approach is described in this article within a social constructivist worldview of focusing on the musicians' views and the ways they make meaning from and interpret their experiences and interactions, within music in education initiatives. This perspective is built on the theory that reality or 'truth' is socially constructed and has multiple perspectives and realities (Crotty 1998; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Schwandt 2001). The role of the researcher then is to "understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge (Robson 2002, 27)."

As part of a wider research brief to investigate local government and music within Ireland a selection of musicians who had worked with Irish local authority arts offices were interviewed (Kenny, 2009). These interviews involved 10 musicians from a wide variety of genres, roles and contexts that went beyond school settings. For the purposes of this article, exploring artists in educational settings, the raw data from these interviews are re-analysed to reflect musicians who have worked in the area of arts in education under local government funded initiatives. The ten musicians were interviewed either through face-to-face or telephone interview in late 2007/early

2008. Eight of those musicians interviewed were identified as relevant to this article as the other two musicians were not engaged with arts in education practice.

The eight musicians were a purposive sample representing the musical genres of classical, contemporary classical, traditional Irish, jazz, blues, popular, world and choral music respectively. There was a mix of musicians interviewed between musicians of local, national and sometimes international standing. The interviews took a “semistandardised approach” (Berg 2007) to allow for predetermined topics while also admitting a degree of flexibility in the interview to such things as wording and order of questions. Using this approach the interviews could be further classified as “qualitative research interviews” (King 1994, 16-17) so chosen due to focus on meaning, perceptions and human interactions and relationships.

The interviews typically lasted 45 minutes to an hour and “interview notes” (Creswell 2009, 182) were taken. The interviews focussed on the topics of: what route musicians took to first engage in educational setting work; why other musicians might be reluctant to work in this way; the type of relationship between the partners in these projects; their perspective on what makes a music initiative successful and difficulties encountered; the benefits of such initiatives to both musicians and the partners involved; and the ways they would like to see musician in education projects developed in the future. Using a thematic analysis these categories gave insight and focus to the data analysis process. Computer assisted software was not utilised for the data analysis due to the relatively small sample interviewed.

Trustworthiness was achieved through “member checks” (Lincoln and Guba 1985) where all of the musicians interviewed were given the opportunity to review the interpretation of the data. Anonymity is maintained throughout this article. The interview research also had the expertise support of an Irish contemporary composer,

who provided a written response to the interviews and analysis. In this manner, the research benefited from this outside perspective challenging the research to provide solid evidence for any interpretations or conclusions.

## **Findings**

The range of arts in education partnerships these musicians engaged in spanned musician residencies, performance, workshops, choir support, professional development and instrumental teaching. The type of work with schools varied in length, structure and activity. This was often dependent on factors such as funding, project aims, age-level and availability of the musician themselves. The initiatives involved both first and second level schools and varied greatly between one-off projects to long-term initiatives over many years. The thematic analysis of the interviews found the following substantive themes relevant to this article as: routes into educational settings; partnerships; benefits of musicians in education partnerships; and planning for the future.

### ***Routes into educational settings***

The ways in which musicians became first engaged with arts in education work differed between the musicians interviewed. Three of the musicians regularly worked in educational settings and so due to their suitability are often invited to take on further work in this area. One musician began working with young people after finishing her studies through a residency in the local area that incorporated a commission for a local youth orchestra. Her enjoyment of this type of work fuelled a passion to continue to work within youth settings and so led onto carrying out

initiatives in schools. This work had mainly been funded through local government, arts organisations and music organisations in Ireland as well as Northern Ireland.

Three of the musicians approached their respective local government arts offices with specific proposals to work with schools. For example, one musician proposed a popular youth music project that would incorporate music making as well as education and information about the music business to his local authority. He explained, “I was a casualty of the music business...I wanted to inform young musicians about the opportunities as well as the pitfalls of the music industry while also respecting any dreams they might have” (Musician 2 interview). ‘The School Of Rock and Pop’ emerged as a thirty-week project in a second-level school followed by a showcase performance. Since then, other opportunities in second-level schools have developed out of the project for this type of initiative. The two remaining musicians responded to national media advertisements to engage in work with schools. One musician commented that the financial assistance with the residency and the opportunity to experience a different type of work was very attractive; “I wanted to diversify my skills outside of solely performance” (Musician 4 interview).

Anecdotally, local government arts officers often speak about the difficulties in trying to engage musicians with the work of Local Authorities. As part of the interviews, the musicians were questioned about this. Many of the musicians commented on a general lack of awareness amongst musicians about the supports and opportunities that are available through local government due to arts offices within local authorities being a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland. Furthermore, some musicians commented that the administrative work often involved with local authority projects was off putting for some musicians. One musician commented, “some

musicians are interested in performance only and so are simply not interested in this type of work” (Musician 6 interview).

### ***Partnerships***

All of the musicians interviewed reported very positive experiences of working with schools. Often the success of the initiative was due to the musician involved they believed. One musician felt that music initiatives involving facilitators of a musically high standard facilitated high quality music projects; “to have a good music experience you need a really good music facilitator” (Musician 1 interview). She also drew particular attention to the value of flexibility and trust between all partners involved as crucial to the success of working with schools. Other musicians believe that making clear the expectations from all partners at the beginning of a project was a strong enabler to successful projects. In addition many musicians commented on the importance of preparatory work in such partnerships as highly beneficial to the subsequent running of an initiative. For example, one musician did a lot of informal research before embarking on the specific in-school initiative;

I looked into what other music residencies were going on in schools and talked to musicians I knew who had been involved in such residencies...I found out about the arts background of the schools I was going to be involved with (Musician 5 interview).

Very few of the musicians could identify difficulties with their experiences of arts in education music initiatives. One musician did comment that she finds the geography of working in different schools around the country the greatest challenge for her. This is in relation to travelling a lot but also, in not being local to an area and school, “the personnel looking after a project is really important especially if you are not from the area to give you extra support and confidence” (Musician 1 interview). This musician

relies a lot on partners such as local government arts office staff for support in this regard.

Another challenge mentioned was that sometimes support is lacking in schools which can act as a barrier to a successful project, for example, inadequate rehearsal time and lack of commitment. All of the musicians commented on the value of sustained long-term music projects in schools rather than short-term once-off initiatives for all partners involved. Many of the musicians further commented on lack of funding as a major challenge to continuing successful initiatives. One commented, “there has been an incredible improvement in music development nationally...but we [Ireland] still have the idea that art is an optional extra” (Musician 7 interview).

### ***Benefits of musicians in education partnerships***

All of the musicians interviewed felt that working with schools in all of their varying capacities provided them with broader opportunities and new ways of working as a musician. One musician commented that through his musician residency he has been afforded the opportunity to work in a more lateral way and diversify his skills. Another commented, on the development of his facilitation skills; “Before the project, I didn’t know I had that quality” (Musician 2 interview). One of the popular musicians felt that the workshops gave him a broader perspective on his own work commenting, “It made me take a step back from my busy gig schedule” (Musician 8 interview).

Financial assistance, as well as the development of further opportunities for musicians following their involvement in these initiatives, was also experienced by many of those interviewed. One of the musicians felt that more work in this field was available to him due to the status his project initially enjoyed. It was also commented

that working with an organisation such as a local government arts office gives a statement of recognition and confidence for a musician. Others interviewed felt that the initiatives provided them with opportunities to up skill and learn new approaches to music and in particular music in educational settings.

All of the musicians claimed that access to high quality music experiences was the most significant benefit of the music initiatives to schools, teachers and the children involved. The difficulties surrounding the affordability of musical instruments and music tuition in general was commented on by some of the musicians who feel musicians in education initiatives can involve young people musically in a non-elitist accessible manner and felt that the class teachers must always be involved in this process. One commented further by stating, “the balance between the teacher and musician input needs to be handled sensitively in classrooms” (Musician 5 interview).

One musician believes that providing local schools with opportunities to engage in something musical and participatory is vitally important to promote inclusion and positive self-identity. Some of the interviewees believed that confidence was built in both an individual and communal way through the initiatives with schools. One musician felt that through his initiative the children’s interest in music was taken more seriously by the school and by the wider community. Socially, this musician also witnessed many new relationships developing over the course of the initiative between students and related, “several small bands have started up as a result of getting involved” (Musician 2 interview).

A musician commented that by providing support to musicians and schools for partnership projects, such supports are not just contributing to music development in local schools but also to music development nationally. It was commented by one



musician that local government arts offices have provided good models on how music education can occur in the most rural and disadvantaged communities to a very high standard through musician in education initiatives. One commented, “the school was alive for the first time with live music” (Musician 3 interview). The importance of linking musicians with schools to provide children countrywide with access to live music was particularly felt amongst the musicians to be of vital importance.

### *Planning for the future*

Funding for music in education initiatives was a strong concern from all musicians interviewed. One musician remarked that with the Irish economic boom<sup>iv</sup> there was an incredible improvement in music development nationally but that we are still lagging behind other European countries that have integrated the arts into the fabric of society to a far greater extent than Ireland. He clarified that local government models are “going in the right direction but far more is needed” (Musician 6 interview) in order to continue to support music in schools. Another musician similarly believes that while there is a perception that Ireland has a vibrant musical culture that this is not actually the case. He feels such vibrancy cannot occur without adequate funding. Many of the musicians expressed the need for long-term sustained music education projects in the future and worry that in an economic downturn that music will be the first area to lose funding from both national and local government.

One musician specifically feels that the musician in residence model should be duplicated widely where the musician builds a relationship with a school community. In this way she believes that, “the musician goes beyond just imparting skills onto people” (Musician 5 interview). She also stressed the need to support musicians through professional development supports to allow musicians working in educational

settings to continually up-skill and develop appropriate strategies for working in educational contexts. Effective feedback and evaluation for these initiatives was also seen as missing from current music in education projects.

## **Discussion**

The interviews with the musicians provide great insight and understanding into individual music education projects and more broadly the involvement of musicians in music education work. The commitment of these musicians in their engagement with music in educational contexts was made very apparent throughout the research process. Six of the eight musicians interviewed became involved in arts in education projects through either approaching local government arts offices themselves or through direct invitation from these arts offices. The finding raises some issues regarding awareness amongst musicians of opportunities to work in this manner. This corresponds to much of the Irish research in this field which found that outside of performing and private instrumental tuition, musicians are largely unaware of further work opportunities (Arts Council Ireland 2008; Kenny 2009; Lunn and Kelly 2008; National Economic and Social Forum 2007) Potential partnerships are surely lost then due to lack of awareness of these opportunities and an over-reliance on a small number of musicians to work in educational settings.

Partnerships emerged as an important feature of these interviews. The musicians felt that an enabling partnership of flexibility and openness impacted very positively on an initiative. The most significant finding of the interviews was the multiple benefits such partnerships afford to the musicians, teachers, schools, arts organisations/offices as well as the development of music education on a national level. The musicians most frequently spoke of the opportunity the projects offer to be

assisted financially, work in new ways, diversify their practice and learn new skills. The status of being supported by local government or an arts organisation also emerged as important to musicians for validation in their practice and work but also for gaining future supports and opportunities from other organisations.

From a community and national perspective the musicians thought that the initiatives improved access to high quality live music and music making opportunities in education. Furthermore, they felt the initiatives with schools had the potential to promote and create an awareness of various musical genres that often are underrepresented such as jazz, world, choral and classical music.

With regard to the future of musician's involvement in education initiatives, the musicians had very particular insights and recommendations to contribute. The predominant issue was regarding continued funding for such projects. A lack of trust in sustained government and local government support of these partnerships was a consistent finding amongst those interviewed. The musicians were often involved in highly successful music education partnerships that were not repeated in other schools or continued long-term due to a lack of support and funding.

## **Conclusion**

By engaging musicians as partners in education initiatives, this article has argued the many benefits to not only the musicians themselves but to schools, teachers, children/young people as well as the knock-on effect in the wider community. This research was limited to the views of the musicians involved in music in education initiatives and so future research involving all partners such as the teachers and children themselves would prove very worthy of further investigation. Christopher Small (1998, 208) relates:

The big challenge to music educators today seems to me to be not how to produce more skilled professional musicians but how to provide that kind of social context for informal as well as formal musical interaction that leads to real development and to the musicalizing of the society as a whole.

In this way, musicians in education are crucial in the development in what Small refers to as ‘the musicalizing of the society’.

Serious questions were raised throughout the article regarding sufficient professional development for musicians and all artists to work in learning contexts. Artists typically have not been through a process of teacher education. Caution is needed therefore to ensure that artists involved with schools are not seen as a replacement for the teacher but rather an additional support and resource. Professional development courses for artists in education need to take cognisance of this and reflect it in the training provided. Furthermore, wider opportunities for such professional development, needs to take place in Ireland as this seems to be currently lacking at present.

Taking this notion further, a partnership approach between artists and teachers would be required in order to maximise the impact and quality of arts in education initiatives but also to serve as an excellent professional development model. Swanwick outlines such a partnership as “the one [teacher] mainly providing structure and quality assurance, the other [musician] giving energy and authenticity to the musical transactions” (2008, 20-21). In such a way both teacher and artist are up-skilling in ‘real contexts’ through mutual learning processes. Effective evaluation and feedback mechanisms were also identified as an area of priority within this article. Continuing development of arts in education evaluation may also serve as a form of professional development and focus within such training.

The benefits of an organisational partner such as a local government arts office or arts organisation was very obvious in the interviews with the musicians. These partners are often key enablers to successful initiatives due to their expertise, experience and funding supports. However, it was also revealed that such organisations are not always working in collaboration with each other and a ‘reinvention of the wheel’ in arts in education practice is often apparent. Greater communication and public awareness of such initiatives would serve to encourage more innovative projects and move arts in education pedagogy forward within the country.

The crucial importance of sustained funding for long-term projects was also highlighted in this discussion. Partnerships as seen from the UK examples presented as well as the lessons learned from Irish models, may prove the best way forward to ensure a sustainable future for arts in education. The Arts Council maintain (2008, 15):

The challenge now...is to move from piecemeal provision to a system of arts-in-education that takes account of contemporary notions of educational equality and cultural entitlement.

As well as this, continued research, debate and dialogue will serve to develop both the theory and the practice of arts in education and inform the development of successful partnership approaches in education.

## Notes

1. The Music Network national music education project seeks tenders for funding under the scheme each year up until 2013. Local/regional Music Education Partnerships will with successful tenders will then receive annual funding under this scheme for a 3-year period. The funding will subsidise teacher and administration costs. See [www.musicnetwork.ie](http://www.musicnetwork.ie)
2. MusicLeader is a UK Youth Music funded initiative dedicated to the professional development of music leaders. The organisation provides support, training & networking opportunities as well as online resources & information. See [www.MusicLeader.net](http://www.MusicLeader.net).
3. Soundsense provides support to organisations and individuals involved in making music within communities through professional development courses, events, conferences and workshops, opportunities to network, advice and information, lobbying and raising awareness of community music. See [www.soundsense.org](http://www.soundsense.org)
4. The Irish economic boom often referred to as the Celtic Tiger led to massive economic growth beginning in 1994 and continuing through to 2007. In 2008 the Irish economy entered recession.

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<sup>i</sup> The Music Network national music education project seeks tenders for funding under the scheme each year up until 2013. Local/regional Music Education Partnerships will with successful tenders will then receive annual funding under this scheme for a 3-year period. The funding will subsidise teacher and administration costs. See [www.musicnetwork.ie](http://www.musicnetwork.ie)

<sup>ii</sup> MusicLeader is a UK Youth Music funded initiative dedicated to the professional development of music leaders. The organisation provides support, training & networking opportunities as well as online resources & information. See [www.MusicLeader.net](http://www.MusicLeader.net).

<sup>iii</sup> Soundsense provides support to organisations and individuals involved in making music within communities through professional development courses, events, conferences and workshops, opportunities to network, advice and information, lobbying and raising awareness of community music. See [www.soundsense.org](http://www.soundsense.org)

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<sup>iv</sup> The Irish economic boom often referred to as the Celtic Tiger led to massive economic growth beginning in 1994 and continuing through to 2007. In 2008 the Irish economy entered recession.