

TYAI Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

1. Vision

The artists and creatives making work for children to enjoy sustainable careers and just rewards in a valued sector.

2. Purpose

Theatre for Young Audiences Ireland serves its members by sustaining a community of individual artists and organisations making excellent performances for young audiences.

We create professional networking and development opportunities, respond to the needs of the sector and advocate for the sector's development with policy makers and funders.

TYAI is the seat of ASSITEJ International in Ireland.

3. Values

Inclusion: TYAI recognizes that participation in the cultural life of the community is a human right, and one that applies equally to all people. We recognize the right of artists to be paid fairly for their work. We are striving for a sector that is valued, where artists can make a sustainable living. We specifically recognize the right of all children to participate fully in the cultural and artistic life of their community. We believe that access to theatre gives children hope for a better future and improves their lives.

TYAI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy seeks to proactively engage underrepresented artists in our sector and in our organisation.

Ambition & Innovation: TYAI encourages its members to be ambitious for what can be achieved within the sector in Ireland. We strive to elevate the artistic quality of work enjoyed by audiences in Ireland by encouraging our members to be brave and bold and to push their artistic boundaries. We offer our members professional development opportunities via workshops and bursaries to attend international festivals, expand their networks and set their sights on international touring.

Accountability and authentic advocacy: TYAI is accountable to its funders and to its members. We have a deliberately light but effective decision-making structure, reflecting the largely voluntary nature of our organization. We do not seek to be the definitive representative of all theatre artists who make work for children and young people in Ireland, but we do strive to offer authentic leadership based on our members' experiences.

We do this by:

- Advocating for proportionate state funding for theatre for the young audience's sector.
- Advocating for fair pay and conditions for artists who make work for children and young audiences to reflect the value of their work.
- Publishing annual reports on the *impact* of our activities and on our funding sources and use of membership fees.

- Engaging in effective information gathering about the needs and experiences of our membership
- Engaging in policy fora to advance access to high quality arts participation for children and young people.
- Engaging with policy makers and other stakeholders in a way that is progressive, and solution orientated.
- Approaching all of our policies and decision-making fora through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion

4. Goals

Goal 1: Membership

- Undertake an annual survey of members experiences and concerns (Commencing in Year 1, annual)
- Use evidence from survey to advocate for members' needs with policy makers, to identify areas where TYAI can best support our members, and to make the case for sustained funding for TYAI (Commencing in Year 1, ongoing)
- Proactively engage more diverse members to TYAI and learn from their experience to improve the organisation. (Commencing in Year 2, and ongoing)
- Adapt our website and other communications with members and potential members (Commencing in and completed in Year 2)

Goal 2: Funding

- Secure sustained annual funding to ensure fair pay and conditions for part time administrator to support the work of the organisation. (Commencing in Year 1)
- Secure additional funding to enable the full participation of freelance workers in our structures. (Commencing Year 2).
- Generate additional income by increasing membership numbers by 20%, and sustain this growth (Commencing Year 3, following completion of website and marketing overhaul).

Goal 3: Governance

- Proactively examine options to be 'hosted' in an appropriate Arts Council funded organisation (Completed in Year! 1)
- Adopt new committee structure ensuring a broad mix of skills, sectoral perspectives and lived experiences (Completed in Year 1)
- Agree administrative structures appropriate to being a hosted organisation (First half of Year 2)
- Conduct a skills audit of Committee to identify gaps (First half of Year 2)

Goal 4: Diversity and Inclusion

- Devise and adopt a diversity policy (Completed in Year 2, for review at annual members meeting, ongoing)
- Increase the involvement of underrepresented artists on our committee. (Year 2. See addendum on Committee membership).

- Build our capacity, understanding and supports to artists from ethnic minorities and report on progress (Commencing in Year 2, ongoing).

Note:

Year 1: 2022, Year 2: 2023, Year 3: 2024, Year 4: 2025, Year 5: 2026

Specific targets have been set for the first three years of the strategy. We will undertake a formal review of progress at the end of Year 3.

Appendix I - TYAI's Policy on Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Our Vision is that artists and creatives making work for children enjoy sustainable careers and just rewards in a valued sector.

TYAI recognizes that participation in the cultural life of the community is a human right, and one that applies equally to all people. We recognize the right of artists to be paid *fairly* for their work, and for artists to make a sustainable living in a sector that is valued.

We specifically recognize the right of all children to participate fully in the cultural and artistic life of their community. We believe that access to theatre gives children hope for a better future and improves their lives.

TYAI is a small body with a voluntary Committee and one part time member of staff. While our resources are limited we recognize that our contribution as a community which artists can join is significant, and we are striving to make that community open, supportive and diverse.

In order to make our organisations more open and responsive to people who face barriers to participation we have adopted the following actions:

- Our Committee will specifically include people from non-white Irish backgrounds and people living with a disability as well as freelance arts workers.
- We will value the contribution of any freelance workers in our Committee structure through paid remuneration
- Our website and public communications will be audited to ensure maximum accessibility
- Our annual survey of members will include date to ascertain diversity and we share insights with our members and our donors
- We will seek opportunities and resources for our Committee members and our membership to build their capacity and understanding of EDI issues
- Our operational plan will be devised through an EDI lens and will be assessed on a quarterly basis
- Each Committee member is committed to mentoring one person who is not currently engaged in TYAI towards active membership.
- This policy will be debated with our membership annually and updated accordingly.

Mindful in particular of the growing diversity of ethnic backgrounds among our younger population in particular, and with the aspiration that children will see their own lives and experiences reflected on stage, we will pay particular attention to supporting artists from ethnic minorities over the first three years of our strategic plan.

This work will commence in 2023 with the following actions:

- Ensuring that we have at least one person from a non-White Irish background on our committee
- Engaging with artists from ethnic minorities to learn from their experiences
- Ringfencing a proportion of training and bursaries to artists from ethnic minorities

Appendix II – TYAI Committee Structure

TYAI is not a company or registered charity. It has a small annual operating budget from the Arts Council, currently administered through the kind cooperation of Theatre Forum.

Committee Membership is currently by invitation. A new structure for our committee was adopted in January 2023 and will be communicated with all membership to encourage maximum participation.

A Committee handbook describing roles, responsibilities, core policies and operational procedures is being finalized in 2023, and will be available to all members – in brief:

- The TYAI Committee will comprise of a minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 members.
- While decision making is ordinarily by consensus, where a decision is put to the vote, a majority of 5 of 8 members, or 7 of 10 is required to approve a decision.
- The term of office is 3 years, and a maximum of two consecutive terms may be served.
- In the case of the Chair and Vice Chair, one additional year is permissible to ensure succession planning.
- The Committee met four times a year, with set agenda items including:
 - Report against Operational Plan
 - Progress on EDI
 - Declaration of any conflicts of interest
- There are four formal roles on the Committee
 - Chairperson (must be a serving Committee member)
 - Vice Chairperson
 - Treasurer (This post has a specific duty to support administrative officer with accountability and budgeting)
 - ASSITEJ engagement officer
- The part time administrator of TYAI, currently employed on an annual freelance contract, is a non-voting member of the Committee and also the recording secretary.
- The Committee will ideally always have at least one member from each of the following sectors:
 - Festivals/Venue with a policy of programming work for children’s
 - Theatre companies that make work for children/young people
 - Freelancer artists / producers
 - Graduates or early stage professionals
- Reflecting the make-up of our membership, at least 4 members of our Committee will be freelance workers

- TYAI will pay a fee of €250 per quarterly Committee meeting to each freelance member of the Committee . This policy is being adopted in 2023. TYAI will make the case for the contribution made by freelance workers to the leadership of our sector in our funding applications, with a view to securing additional funds to ensure freelancers can contribute more fully in the work of TYAI, including taking on roles like Chairperson that require a significant investment of time.
 - Where the Chairperson is in a full time paid role the Vice Chairperson will be a freelance worker, and vice versa.

The Committee will also ideally always have at least one person who identifies as

- A person from an ethnic or linguistic (not including Irish) minority
- A person living with a disability

In terms of additional skills and perspectives, the Committee will also, ideally have members who have expertise in:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Voice of the Child and Children’s right to participate in the cultural life of the community
- Advocacy
- Financial management & governance*
- Arts and Health / Wellbeing
- Irish language
- Communications/Marketing

An annual skills and experiences audit of Committee members will enable the transition to this new model.