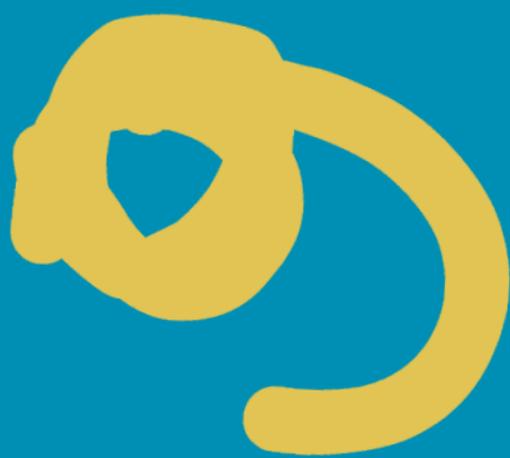




our vision is of a
community with
creativity at its heart...



the common
ground

an arts development organisation

TWO YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 – 2007



context

In 1997 Canal Communities Partnership commissioned research to explore the potential role of arts and culture in urban community regeneration and to recommend how such arts practice could best be promoted and developed.

As a direct result of that research, **Common Ground** was founded in 1998 as an arts development agency in the Canal Communities area. Immediately **Common Ground** set about developing a way of working that engaged with the communities of Rialto, Bluebell and Inchicore and that supported artists with an interest in locating their practice there. In that sense, **Common Ground** acted as instigator, mediator and promoter of quality exchanges between the artists and the communities involved.

In the early years **Common Ground** concentrated on building relationships with local groups and partners in order to respond to local needs. **Common Ground** experimented with processes that included: setting up community-based artist's residencies; arts training and capacity building with youth leaders and community workers and mentoring opportunities for artists.

Through the experience of this work, together with time spent in reflection and evaluation, **Common Ground** identified its core values and working methodologies. The results of the work were considered, by those involved, to be enormously positive and to contribute to an overall body of work in the area that empowers local people to find their voices and use them to shape the future social and economic development of the community.

Common Ground has established effective working partnerships and relationships with groups in the community that underpin all its present and future activities. **Common Ground** often works in the background as a facilitator, enabler and catalyst for exchanges between artists and communities. This relatively low profile, combined with the challenge **Common Ground** has experienced in securing adequate funding – have been influencing factors in **Common Ground's** development over the past 8 years. **Common Ground**, along with our partners, have much to contribute to debate and dialogue about the role of arts in local development. This two year plan is pragmatic and therefore has realistic aims and objectives which may, at first reading, appear modest but which have emerged from a serious ambition to provide an exemplar which others may examine in order to develop their own models.

common ground's vision

Our vision is of a community with creativity at its heart, where art matters, where people are enriched and artists work.

common ground's mission

Our mission is to provide excellent opportunities for people – young and not so young – to have the opportunities for enjoyment, entertainment, reflection, questioning and individual and communal expression that the arts provide.

The arts are essential to the renewal, development and day-to-day life of any community and our community is undergoing huge change. **Common Ground**, working directly or indirectly with partners, will continue to create exciting connections between artists and community groups and ensure that the resulting exchanges are the best that they can be.

common ground's values

The arts are a set of languages for understanding the world in ways that offer possibilities rather than limitations, inclusion rather than exclusion and diversity rather than uniformity.

Common Ground believes these languages can be learned and enjoyed by everyone and that they give those who learn them powerful means to view and alter the circumstances in which they live. **Common Ground** believes this can be achieved through building and sustaining relationships with partners over the long-term. It follows that **Common Ground** believes in the importance of working closely with artists to identify the transformative power of their own practice and support them to share their knowledge and experiences with others. In addition, **Common Ground** believes it is essential to resource the communities in Canal Communities area to actively partner artists to advance meaningful change – on an individual and a communal level.

common ground's 4 programmes of work are:

artist on the common ground

An arts programme that provides supports for artists interested in developing their understanding, knowledge and experience of working in a community context.

people, blocks and art

An arts programme that reflects and responds to how we understand ourselves as a community while focusing on individual and collective development at its heart. It includes our strategic relationship development with adults and community groups and local statutory bodies.

all about me, all about us

An arts programme with children and young people's development at its heart. It embraces our short and long term arts development work, the role of the artist and our relationship with organisations that are identified as voluntary youth clubs, homework clubs/after school projects and community youth projects.

ground work

A programme that increases and develops the capacity of **Common Ground** to vision, plan and manage its ongoing development.



artist on the common ground

aim one: work with and support professional artists to develop their practice within the context of the canal communities

objectives:

- 1.1** develop a range of artist residencies that focus on and explore community identity within:
 - [a]** local flats complexes
 - [b]** **studio 468** [Artist Studio, Rialto]
 - [c]** youth groups

- 1.2** support the professional development of the artists we engage through:
 - [a]** providing opportunities for mentoring
 - [b]** providing appropriate tools and methodologies to artists for
 - analysing and locating their work in socio-cultural contexts
 - self assessment of their work
 - collective assessment
 - evaluation involving participants
 - evaluation involving co-workers
 - [c]** employing artists under contract
 - [d]** clearly defining a range of professional roles e.g. artist as mentor/collaborator/trainer/facilitator
 - [e]** developing written working agreements between the artist, Common **Ground** and collaborative partner(s)

- 1.3** chair and administrate the **studio 468** (Artists Studio, Rialto) team, paying particular attention to new opportunities that deepen its artistic scope

- 1.4** practically inform artists' professional development by engaging with influential stakeholders including but not limited to NCAD and IMMA



people, blocks and **art**

aim two: build the capacity of community groups and residents in local authority flat complexes to access, enjoy, participate in and harness the arts as part of the regeneration of civic life in the canal communities

objectives:

- 2.1** form strategic alliances with relevant representative groups within Fatima Mansions, St Michaels Estate, Bernard Curtis House, Dolphin House and other relevant stakeholders including Dublin City Council, Local Drugs Task Force, Canal Communities Partnership, RAPID in order to work together to promote the arts as an essential resource and practice within the Canal Communities
- 2.2** develop a two year arts and cultural strategy with Dolphin House Community Development Association including the progression of the current adult drama programme and the community arts and cultural festival
- 2.3** establish working relationships with Bluebell CDP and St Michaels Family Resource Centre/Regeneration Board that progresses arts and cultural partnerships and processes
- 2.4** participate in arts and cultural planning in Fatima Mansions through the Arts and Cultural working group of Fatima Regeneration Board

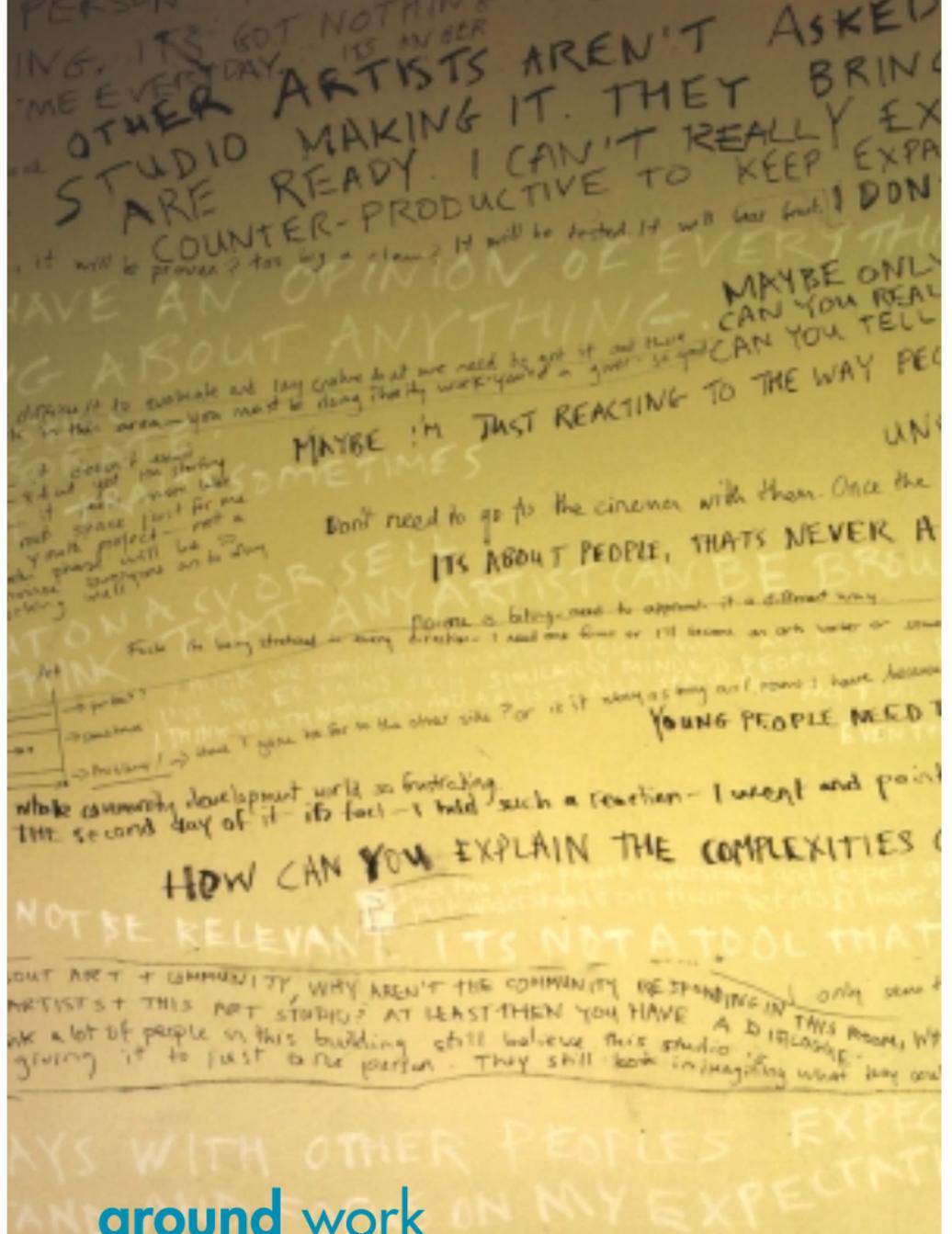


all about me, all about us

aim three: create quality opportunities for children and young people within the canal communities to gain fluency in the arts and to become comfortable with expressing themselves creatively

objectives:

- 3.1** form working agreements with community youth projects, youth clubs, after school clubs, in Rialto, Bluebell and Inchicore which describe the partnership involved in:
 - [a]** pre development
 - [b]** planning
 - [c]** programme delivery
 - [d]** evaluation
- 3.2** provide playful arts and cultural experiences for children and young people that stimulate social expression and development
- 3.3** evaluate, monitor and measure the value and impact of the work with young people, youth workers and artists



ground work

aim four: strengthen common ground's effectiveness as an arts development organisation

objectives:

- 4.1** review and update existing systems and methodologies for:
 - [a]** consistent documentation, monitoring and evaluation of our programme
 - [b]** financial management
- 4.2** improve organisational capacity by
 - [a]** reviewing and developing staff structures
 - [b]** providing staff support systems and supporting ongoing professional development
 - [c]** annually reviewing the operation and composition of the board
- 4.3** devise a communications strategy that supports:
 - [a]** engagement with the community through local fora and consultation
 - [b]** opportunities for providing sectoral debate and dialogue
 - [c]** engagement with funding stakeholders
- 4.4** invite 'visionary' thinkers to share their ideas, experiences and methods as a means of maintaining energy and motivation and stimulating **Common Ground's** practice

acknowledgements

Thank you to all our supporters over the years, local groups, artists, past board members, friends and families.

Special thanks and good bye to board member Sinéad Connolly, thank you for your commitment and passion for the last seven years. We wish you well.

A big welcome to Stuart McLaughlin and Mary Hanlon who join the Board of Common Ground in 2006.

the common **ground**



Board of Directors, June 2006: John Everett [Chairperson] | Susan Coughlan
Stuart McLaughlin | Bronagh O'Neill | Mary Hanlon | Irene Ward

Common **Ground's** hard working staff are:
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