

# WHEELWORKS



## OUR STORY

Annual Report — 2022 / 23

“

THE ARTS GIVE US  
OUR IDENTITY AS  
A COMMUNITY;  
THEY ALSO DRAW  
NEW PEOPLE,  
FRESH VISIONS,  
AND RENEWABLE  
ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
OUR COMMUNITY.

”

(Gavin Newsom)

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# THANK YOU & WELCOME

*Our vision is to 'forge new creative, exciting, and inclusive spaces that inspire and empower young people and their communities to express what matters to them'.*

Reflecting on the period 2022–2023, we stand proud of our work: the creation and facilitation of innovative, high-quality arts activities which support young people aged 4 to 25 years, helping them to reach their own potential and enhance their participation in the arts; particularly, increasing participation amongst young people in areas of low engagement (e.g., rural areas, targeted social needs areas, and areas of social deprivation), thus always promoting accessibility, equality, and inclusion.

We had to weather the storm of Covid, forging ahead during the tumultuous times of the pandemic. The strains of the pandemic, coupled with the current challenging economic conditions and government funding cuts, continue to have a profound impact on marginalised young people and their communities.

We know the power of arts — how it transcends language and cultural barriers — allowing us to connect with diverse communities, building relationships and partnerships to work together to support the creative needs of the young people across Northern Ireland.



# WE BELIEVE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The expertise in our professional artists and staff members helps to progress the wellbeing of the young people through arts and technology-led interventions. By applying a co-creation model, they listen to the young people, and create the space to engage in conversations, so they can share their lived experiences and express what is important to them. The key impacts we wish to see in the young people are:

- Improved key life/work skills, such as better teamworking and communication skills.
- Attitudinal change, such as increased confidence and aspirations.
- Building personal skills by increasing participation and engagement in shared activities.
- Advancing creative skills through arts and digital technology-led learning.

By building relationships and collaborations, we make new connections, create additional creative and digital arts spaces, enhance wellbeing, increase reach and visibility, and offer activities that support creative skills and digital arts development in our young people across Northern Ireland.

WheelWorks Arts (WWA) also values the immense contribution of our volunteers, and a special thanks to them for their amazing work with young people.

We are grateful to our stakeholders and funders, and hugely appreciate their support in believing in our programmes designed specifically with young people and their wellbeing in mind. Their funding opens opportunities for marginalised young people to experience and be inspired by the arts and innovative design technologies as they take part in fun and creative activities based around the reality of each young person's situation.



# OUR FOCUS

Art and creativity are not just optional extras; they are essential components of our mission, which is to ‘work in partnership with young people and artists to enhance their voices’. Through our work, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of art on the lives of young people.

Art is a powerful force that has the potential to transform lives, create possibilities, uplift spirits, and bridge gaps; and it has an unparalleled ability to inspire, engage, and connect- through combining traditional and digital artforms, we can bring out the deepest qualities of our people.

By continuing to focus on this, we will ensure that our organisation can achieve its vision and strategic outcomes:

- 1. Access to traditional and digital arts participation.**  
To enhance the artistic and digital social inclusion of young people living in communities that experience barriers to arts participation.
- 2. Advance marginalised young people into the creative sector.**  
For marginalised young people to realise their own potential.
- 3. Increase sustainable service offers.**  
Generate new service income by offering experiential new arts/technology-led courses, activities, and training to adults/workforce (e.g., VR, AR, mocap, ChangeMaker, Tech Skills Share).
- 4. Advance artist and staff expertise.**  
Advance artist and workforce expertise locally by making available resources/ equipment to experiment, pilot, and develop new arts/digital technology-led offerings.
- 5. Improve creative capacity in the community.**  
Transfer artistic and creative skills to communities for co-design and community development initiatives.
- 6. Develop young volunteers.**  
Involve volunteers to learn new skills and promote the benefit of arts-led learning and participation.

WWA values the originality, innovation, and transformation in our working practices, and explores new ways to strengthen relationships with our artists, staff, volunteers, and young people. We do this by listening, learning, and co-creating experiences that young people are interested in and that advance their artistic, social, and digital skills.

# SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

644 CONTRACTS OF  
FERED TO OUR  
ARTISTS,  
IN BOTH DIGITAL AND  
VISUAL ARTFORMS

9,848 YOUNG  
PEOPLE AGED  
4 TO 25  
PARTICIPATED

13  
FESTIVALS

A TOTAL OF  
39,392 PEOPLE  
REACHED.

As a regional youth arts charity since 1995, WWA has been supporting children and young people's social and cultural development through accessible and innovative community-based programmes which provide a creative fusion of traditional and digital art forms, harnessing the arts for learning, change, and giving young people a voice.

As a leading youth arts charity, we are known for mobilising the arts and bringing them into communities across Northern Ireland, offering innovative youth-led projects in which participants explore and express their individuality through traditional and digital artforms. We believe in the young people of Northern Ireland, and acknowledge the value of creative participation.

*'Equal access to arts and cultural programmes has the potential to help reduce inequalities through narrowing the gap of social and cultural capital between the advantaged and disadvantaged populations.'* Public Health Sector March 2020.

We are very pleased with our achievements between 2022–23, despite the many uncertainties and challenges we have faced, including political uncertainty, the cost-of-living crisis, and funding cuts. On the following page we've detailed highlights of our year across artistic, community, strategic and operational areas.



## WHEELWORKS ARTS 2022 / 23 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE:

- 9,848 young people aged 4 to 25 participated
- 370 in-person workshops
- 30,624 hours of in-person participation
- 13 festivals
- 20 exhibitions
- 47 volunteers dedicating over 100 hours of services to our charitable mission
- 4 new artists recruited
- 644 contracts offered to our artists, in both digital and visual artforms, enabling WheelWorks to broaden the diverse range of innovative and hybrid workshops to our participants across Northern Ireland.
- A total of 39,392 people reached.

In 2022–23, we nurtured our relationships with over 70 voluntary and community, youth, and school partners. These included the FIND Centre in Enniskillen, Cedar Lodge Special School in north Belfast, Marrowbone Youth Club, Scotch Street Youth Club in Portadown, Pathways in Ballymoney, Include Youth, Gilford Youth Club, Glenparent Youth & Community Group, Mainstay Day Centre, North Belfast Advice Partnership, Orchardville, Hammer Youth Club, Holiday Inn refugee support, and many more. The demand for our work outstrips our capacity; we hope to strengthen this relationship, and will be looking to also broaden our engagement, reaching out to new partners across NI.

By introducing cutting-edge technology, presenting co-created participatory models for sustained arts projects, and developing and supporting our professional artists and workforce we collaborate to deliver our vision of an excellent, professional, and youth-led creative organisation.



# SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

WheelWorks is focused on increasing its arts and digital participation and its collaborations across Northern Ireland. We believe children and young people are essential to the creation of an inclusive city, and we focus on breaking down barriers and stigmas, making connections, enhancing inclusion, increasing creativity, and embedding accessibility. Our innovative and creative activities enable us to connect with, listen to, and engage with the young people.

## **Cultural understanding expressed through digital art and storytelling**

The WheelWorks Trailblazer Digital Academy engages with primary school children to explore good relations issues while learning new digital and tech-based creative skills. We create a safe space in the classrooms for discussion and exploration of social issues such as prejudice, racism, diversity, community, shared space, and culture.

In 2022–23, Trailblazers entered its fifth successful year. We worked with approximately 130 children between the ages of 7 and 10 across two projects with partner schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey, (Greystone Primary and St Josephs), and Newry, Mourne and Down, (St Colemans's and Brackneagh West primary schools.)

Through participation on the Trailblazer programme, the children developed cultural understanding through storytelling, and were introduced to digital arts, namely filmmaking and animation. The good relations theme was used throughout the process, and the young people discussed the importance of kindness and community. With animation, they drew and brought to life their own imaged superheroes who challenged bullying and meanness, while promoting kindness, confidence and understanding.

The filmmaking is always a key tool of the programme, with the young people sharing their views, engaging in teamwork, and making new cross-community friendships while learning so many new skills in teamwork, literacy, and leadership in the process. We held four cross-community events with each school partnership – eight in total – with pupils coming together and building new friendships, building relationships, and working together. We held two site visits at Antrim Castle Gardens and Mourne Country Park for the filming part of the programme, which the children and staff thoroughly enjoyed, using the filming equipment on location, and acting out their pre-prepared storyboards.

We were also able to use the ArtCart for our final showcase events, bringing the ArtCart to the schools as part of their end-of-project celebration, showing their creative outcomes and having fun together.

Overall, the project has been hailed a wonderful success by all partners. Schools have made a commitment to bringing both classes together again in another shared education project next year to build on the work from this year.

### **Make positive connections with Future Focus:**

The Future Focus programme aims to create more accessible shared and safe spaces for hard-to-reach young people to come together with the support of their local community youth groups. It was designed to take outreach and on-the-street youth work in a new direction through our unique mobile vehicle, the ChillCart, at areas where young people meet up.

By engaging with young people out on the streets and providing a safe space for creativity and conversation, the programme helped contribute to a decrease in antisocial behaviour by intervening in at-risk activities, bringing together fragmented communities, addressing multiple sectarian barriers, and cultivating healthier relationships in a shared space environment.

In 2022–23, we ran two projects in the following locations, Belfast (communities within west and north Belfast City Council areas), and Portadown/Craigavon (Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon council area). A total of 190 young people – typically thought of as ‘disengaged’ and ‘at risk’ – came together and participated in a range of games and creative activities, including arts and crafts, animation, illustration, digital music, spray painting, and virtual reality. We offered 12 cross-community activity days, 28 ChillCart pop-up sessions, and a total of 54 creative sessions with 16 professional artists/facilitators.

The success of the ChillCart was evident when two participating partner organisations were able to successfully connect with two different groups of some of the hardest to reach and disengaged young people via the outreach sessions. Although these groups of young people were not at a stage to progress on the Future Focus cross-community elements of the project,



they were able to continue with centre-based single identity work with the support of both community groups. This proves the value, agency, and necessity of ChillCart as a bridge for building trust and connecting with young people on the streets.

While taking part in this youth support/arts-led activity, young people shared their personal interests, expressed their views, connected with other young people from the opposing community, and embraced a shared focus for the future. Positive relationship-building activities were co-designed to increase the capacity of young people from areas of conflict, thereby increasing community understanding and tolerance, and fostering a more positive outlook.

It was clear throughout this project, when participants embraced the alternative creative activities, that it encouraged greater personal understanding, reinforcing the view that everyone can contribute to changes, enjoy each other's company, and make new friends by bringing communities together in a shared environment.



## **Making a Difference for Participant F:**

The iProgramme was a three-year work stream run by WWA that aimed to use a range of digital and traditional arts as a catalyst for improving the confidence, self-esteem, and activity of children and young people who may have been in care and/or had experienced trauma. It started in April 2020 and ended in March 2023, and was funded by several charities, but predominantly, Children in Need. In the final year of the project (April 2022 to March 2023), the iProgramme successfully delivered 67 sessions to 85 individuals in seven youth groups, all of which produced unique and bespoke creative outcomes based on their needs and interests.

With our focus and commitment to engaging with looked-after and trauma-experienced young people for creating an inclusive society, we would like to share the story of F, a member of a group of young people who participated in this expressive arts project. In the group, young people came together each week to enjoy activities such as arts and crafts, painting, 3D model making, stop-motion animation, music production, DJing, virtual reality, and animation sessions. This incorporated games and idea co-creation sessions: discussions with facilitator support, designed to encourage the participants to use new, innovative creative/digital tools, and share their work and stories, in order to build confidence, develop new skills, and improve behaviour amongst the participants.

F had only recently been placed in the care of social services prior to the commencement of the iProgramme. F has siblings, but they were placed in another foster home. Initially, F was quiet and isolated at the workshops, choosing to work alone and not mix with others, and displayed very low self-confidence, refusing to finish artwork because it wasn't perfect and trying to hide it from staff. When staff gave praise, F immediately stopped, saying 'no, it's rubbish'. Support staff informed us that F had mental health problems, experienced anxiety, and often alienated themselves from peers and adults as a form of protection. According to staff outside of the group, F displayed bullying behaviours, often insulting and confronting other children. F did not participate in any school or extracurricular activities and teaching staff found it challenging to support F in the classroom due to the defensive behaviour and a refusal to engage even on a one-to-one level.

F is a very talented individual, and these talents slowly developed each week. Support staff stated that F's passion for art was expressed after joining the programme; with encouragement each week, F started to chat to others, and informed the support staff that it was the first place they had felt accepted and appreciated mixing with others who understood similar challenges while growing up. Combined with this, F seemed able to accept constructive feedback and not see this as negative.



Over the programme's duration, F became more open with support staff, shared that they no longer felt so alone, and opened up more about what was going on at home. These creative activities allowed time for F to be more normal and relaxed and get a break from the complex issues they were experiencing, and assisted in the sharing of more open and honest conversations week after week, which supported F to cope on a more practical and emotional level.

Feedback from home was that F was now displaying a more positive attitude towards the others and engaging well with the family. Within school F reported a more proactive approach to schoolwork and an improvement in relationships with the teaching staff.

Throughout the programme, F progressed further; their confidence grew significantly, as did the ability to maintain friendships and take pride in what they created,, and F expressed how much they looked forward to coming to the sessions. F was able to find something to take a real interest in, and wanted to develop this into a career. This led to F applying to art college. This is the positive difference this programme was able to make and highlights that implementing holistic solutions through diversionary creative engagement can have positive impacts in the lives of the young people.

We acknowledge that cared for and trauma-experienced young people have complex needs; listening to them and encouraging voluntary participation in creative and digital art activities supports their personal and social development. By using creativity as a catalyst for participation, it facilitates positive conversations between the young people and their peers, allows them to try to learn new skills, and enables them to build positive relationships. The essence of our iProgramme is to place young people at the centre of their creative journey while ensuring that they enjoy themselves and get a break from external pressures.

### **Arts and coaching: a catalyst for staff development:**

ChangeMaker is a cultural empowerment programme to upskill youth and community workers by engaging them in an art and coaching-blended learning process to enhance self-expression, social connections, and cultural intelligence. The programme aims to empower and excite participants as they dive into a creative journey to explore their own thoughts and feelings (self-expression), and develop a group purpose (social connections) to become positive influencers in their social and work life.

In 2022–23 the ChangeMaker programme was delivered in the Antrim and Newtownabbey and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas. We engaged 40 youth leaders, community workers and volunteers in a mentoring and cultural empowerment training course addressing equality, inclusion, and diversity.

We attracted local councillors, community workers, volunteers, health and social services employees, and youth leaders to the course, who all appreciated our unique approach to equality inclusion and diversity in the community and workplace.

ChangeMaker offered the opportunity for the participants to discuss cultural differences and good relations through group discussions and coaching, and by using creativity to address the issues facing communities. This ethos brought down barriers between the group members and allowed them to open up and be more forthright with their own fears, as well as addressing wider community issues.

*"Dedicated to the invisibles, who opened my eyes to what is now visible".* A community worker created this quote about their own feelings, demons and discrimination after completing the course. They created a large sculptural piece to accompany the quote.

We also addressed cultural understanding through shared experiences, group exercises, body language, and combined understanding. Using these methods, we reignited an appreciation of good relations within the participants' own workplace, their community, and beyond.

*"Things are changing so much, and this course is excellent in understanding the changes, how not to offend people, but still have beliefs. It's about respecting choices – culture, identity, class. This made us look at ourselves before judging others so much"* (course participant).

ChangeMaker also supported personal development through a better understanding of cultural differences and similarities, as well as communities working together. The course was delivered over four weeks, working with each group and an additional group session for the creative aspect of the project (banner making, inspirational signs, positive images). Another participant shared, *"the creativity element made us all the same. It made us all equal, which was a great way for us to experience bias. It also made us think differently and express ourselves in a different way."*

The programme culminated in an exhibition of participants' work, sharing their collective vision of an inclusive and united community, held at Millenium Court, Portadown, which was opened by the Director of Good Relations and Inclusion from the Executive Office, and attended by the ABC Mayor, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, local MLAs and councillors, and local community groups.

# OUTREACH & ACCESSIBILITY



WheelWorks exists to bring the transformative power of participatory arts to individuals, groups, and communities. This reachability and access to creative participation is our focus. The ArtCart and ChillCart are both key, associated mobile facilities which increase reachability and accessibility in traditional and digital arts participation. The vehicles support our outreach and creative work with the young people and their communities regardless of location making them accessible spaces for arts participation and fun. The vehicles are fitted with state-of-the-art technology, including a fold-out performance stage. By utilising the vehicle's stage and working areas, large numbers of audiences can be reached at any one time, creating a dedicated safe space for the young people to explore their inquisitiveness and the possibility to be inspired by creativity.



## ArtCart

ArtCart is an inspirational, versatile vehicle that transforms into a mobile arts studio: a fully accessible workspace with state-of-the-art technology and creative resources for children and young people to participate in creative fun.

Unique to Northern Ireland, this mobile space for people of all abilities and backgrounds enables participants to come together for creative learning while exploring the possibilities in arts-led activities. As covid restrictions eased, we were in an excellent position to meet the demand for social interaction, creativity, and wellbeing by using the ArtCart. In 2022–23, the ArtCart programme offered over 131 workshops with 4747 young people taking part in the programme across Northern Ireland.

From the outset, our core vision was, and is, to increase the reach and improve accessibility of arts participation. Through the ArtCart programme, we have been able to continue to provide mobile arts and technology-led activities to children and young people who would otherwise never access high quality, participatory arts projects in collaboration

with professional artists. This vision represents a key focus of WheelWorks activities, and for the past 28 years the organisation has delivered a balanced programme of work in both rural and urban areas, always working directly with young people in communities which are marginalised and disadvantaged in some way, be it from cultural and social exclusion, geographical isolation, or economic deprivation.

Our colourful and exciting menu of innovative workshops, themed activities, tailored projects, and events is delivered by professional artists, allowing participants to explore their creativity and increase their confidence, all while having lots of fun.

Through large scale events, such as Belfast Pride, or community-based multicultural events like Good Relations Week, participants celebrate the values and experiences of others in a creative way. WE build relationships with private and public sector organisations to deliver creative engagement activities at events and festivals, and find new audiences to experience the possibilities the arts offer.



## ChillCart

Equal access to arts and cultural programmes for the most at-risk young people is critical to address inequalities and to narrow the gap of social and cultural capital between advantaged and disadvantaged young people. The ChillCart is our second mobile space, used to increase and deepen creative participation amongst the 'on the street' and 'at-risk' young people in our communities.

It is a versatile unit that can engage with young people on their terms, in their areas. It is used for many different purposes: a place to share a cup of hot chocolate, meet with friends, use the free Wi-Fi, experience art-based activities like graffiti, DJing or virtual reality, listen to music, enjoy games, and much more.

ChillCart, as a unique mobile and fully accessible social space partners with and supports organisations that deliver outreach and detached youth work in the heart of the community. These partnerships enable us to reach out to post-primary young people who are not attending any local youth or arts groups, as well as those hanging out on the street without any focus or engagement in arts, sports, or other participatory activities.

By using the ChillCart in 22-23, we worked with 1115 young people and offered 66 arts-led drop-in participatory activities in eight designated locations across Northern Ireland where the young people met up to address and share their lived experiences of issues affecting their lives, the choices they make, and their aspirations.

Being facilitated by youth engagement officers and artists, this provision allowed time for these young people to be more relaxed, and it assisted in the sharing of more open and honest conversations week after week, which through regular support and creative participation assists them to cope on a more practical and emotional level and to influence others positively.

The ChillCart programmes assist us to be more inclusive in our ability to reach out, engage, listen, and provide drop-in creative activities, which in turn enables these young people to develop their trust, tolerance, awareness, and understanding of others while being in a space which is engaging, exciting and safe too.



# OUR IMPACT

A key part of this is our monitoring and evaluation processes, which are vital for measuring quality, outcome, impact, and driving continuous improvements of our programmes.

Our monitoring and evaluation system engages all stakeholders before, during and after programmes. Young people complete baseline forms, and we monitor participant progress, measuring soft skills improvements and how these are achieved via a Case Study Observation form. Facilitators and youth leaders capture feedback throughout each session using our Prep and Eval form, while co-ordinators take site visits to observe and gather qualitative evidence with artists, young people, and youth leaders. We gather post-project surveys from all stakeholders to capture everyone's experience.

As part of their engagement, young people share with us their artwork, animated stories, and film; they express their identity through music; they celebrate their culture through graffiti art murals; and they spray-paint artwork as an expression of shared community and developing new friendships. WWA can provide creative consultations for collective social action (for example, to

design a garden/play area/social space etc.) All these creative outcomes, when shared and combined with young people's creative journeys, act as expressive and powerful platforms for celebrating culture, people, and place.

In 2022–23 we delivered 370 workshops to 9848 young people. We also helped to support the arts in Northern Ireland by hiring freelance artists for 644 hours, giving back to our professional community. This year, our iWill programme flourished, as we engaged with 47 volunteers over the course of the programme, supporting their transition from young participants to adults.

In our Future Focus project, young people aged 11-16 were asked to rate the artist they worked with, and gave an average of 4.5 out of 5 stars – a particularly positive result from young people who struggle to engage.

In the ArtCart outreach support programme, artists were rated 4.7 out of 5, and the artforms were rated 4.6 out of 5 stars.

For Trailblazers digital arts programme, participants aged 8–9 years old rated the artist 4.4 out of 5 stars.

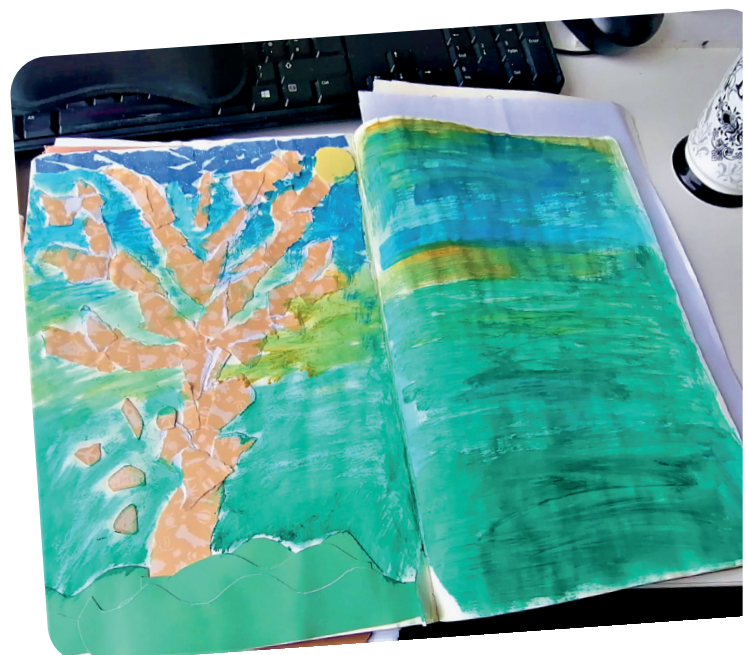
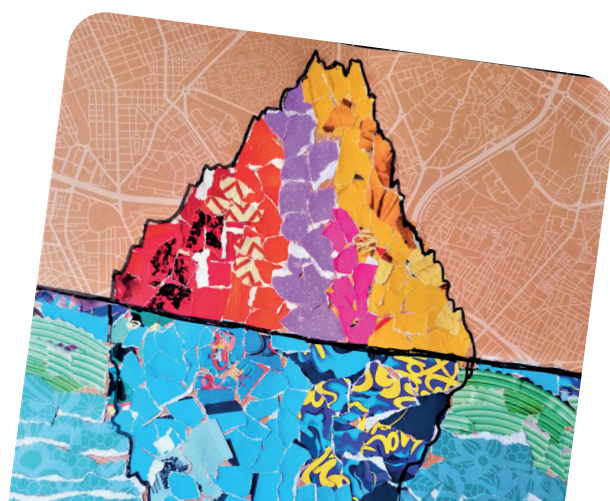


## OUR IMPACT

In our ChangeMakers cultural empowerment programme, frontline staff rated the artist/facilitator 4.5 out of 5 stars.

We are pleased with the consistency of the feedback from the young people and their support teams as it reflects the quality of arts and creative engagement we are providing with our services.

Our work shows that when participants embrace alternative creative participation, it encourages greater personal understanding, and emphasises that their voices are important and their contribution is important and valued, as they continue to enjoy creativity, make new friend and foster positive connections with others.







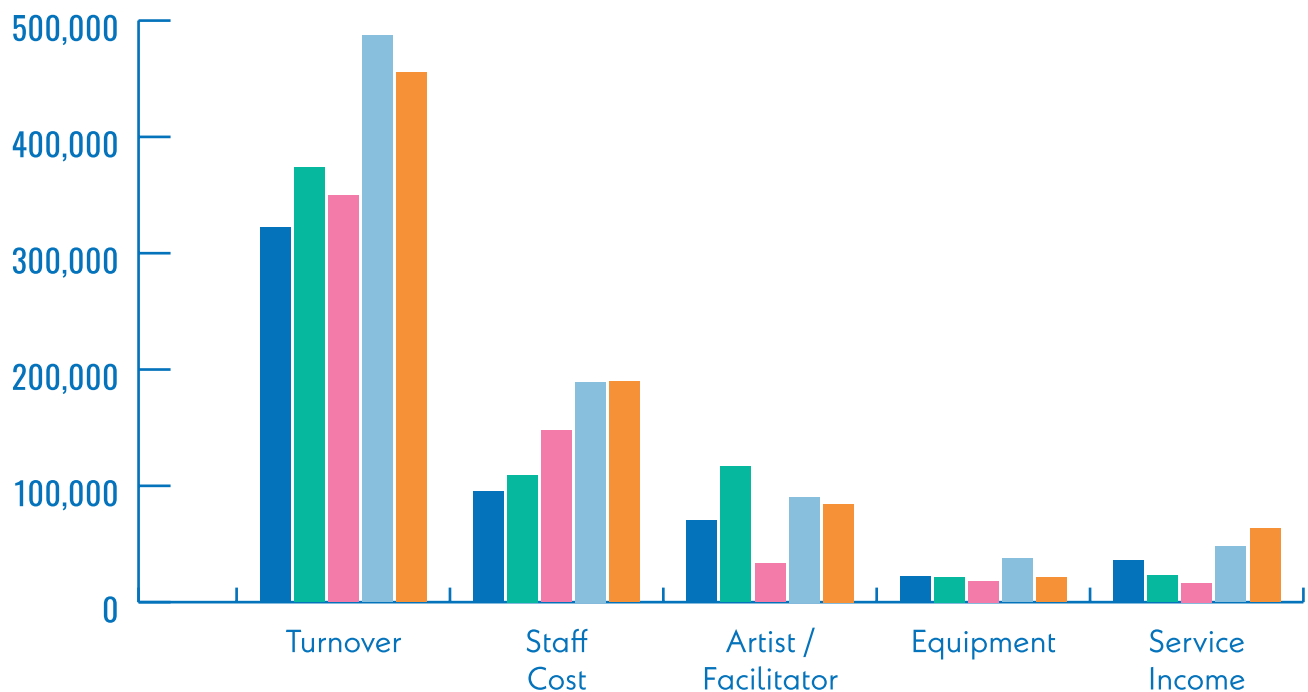


# FINANCIAL POSITION

WheelWorks staff and management teams continue to be proactive in pursuing new opportunities, co-designing and co-creating innovative funding proposals, and submitting funding applications to secure much needed resources to meet the organisation’s charitable mission. In 2022–23, we nurtured our relationships with over 70 voluntary and community, youth, and school partners. The demand for our work outstrips our capacity.

All charities, including the voluntary and youth arts sector in NI, face financial challenges, such as heavy reliance on funding sources, the cost-of-living crisis, a competitive environment, high inflation and uncertainties post-Brexit. All these threaten our ability to provide vital services to vulnerable communities and ensure long-term sustainability. The reality is that the current funding situation will not improve in the foreseeable future. In 2022–23 we lost funding from Education Authority, Housing Executive, and the European Social Fund. Hence, in 2022–23, our turnover was £455k — down by 32k from the previous year.

## Overview of Key Financials



Even though staff, volunteers, and artists continued to be committed, and the support from Arts Council NI, Belfast City Council, Children in Need and NI Executive was secured, our sector continues to face economic and financial volatility, rising inflation, increased staffing, materials and service costs (including energy costs), and this is compounded in NI by the uncertainties with public sector finances due to the lack of a functioning NI Executive .

As the above table displays, we have not been able to sustain our upward trajectory. In 22-23, our turnover was £455,552, down by 32k from the previous year, and this resulted in the reduction of our artists' support which was down by £6K to £84k in 2022-23. Our expenditure remained similar, due to the increases in our key overhead costs, such as materials, ArtCart maintenance, IT, energy, and rent.

Going forward, we will continue to advance our strategic vision by sharpening our focus on the needs of young people, co-designing creative activities that are of interest to young people, increasing income for the freelance artists, championing the value of our creative sector, and developing and supporting the workforce to enable the organisation to remain innovative, relevant, and transformative.

WheelWorks will continue to be proactive in researching and updating its funding model and mapping out the funding/income generation opportunities. Moving forward, Wheelworks acknowledges that flexibility, opportunity awareness, diversification, and collaboration will need to be a major element in reshaping our current funding model and mitigating some of the risks and impacts of future funding cuts.

Following the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, the organisation acknowledges that nothing is certain and further challenges may be ahead. As we rely on public sector funding, this is a challenging time for them too.

The reality remains that we must continue to provide support to the young people and their communities who are on the margins of our society. This is essential to ensure inclusion, accessibility, equality, and a sense of hope for the young people and their communities across Northern Ireland.

# WAY FORWARD

We know that the third and voluntary sectors are in an extremely tough financial landscape, at a time when more and more young people find themselves at the margins of our society, and need our support more than ever. To ensure these youths, and the communities they live in, are not left to fend for themselves, and to ensure that we continue to collaborate to empower the youths through arts and innovation, WWA will work to secure appropriate investment and emphasise the importance of culture in addressing our most complex social and economic challenges.

## OUR FOCUS IS TO:

- Support the cultural life of the city by enabling youth and their communities to be active, dynamic, and creative agents of change.
- Continue to secure investment and funding to progress arts, new media, and creative sector skills development among young people facing disadvantage.
- Increase capacity to offer quality participation, co-designed production, and innovation to young people and communities on the margins of our society.
- Build partnerships, resilience, and capacity in the wider arts/community/youth sectors through best practices, training, and mentoring of artists/workforce and other organisations.
- Facilitate local communities to engage in high quality arts experiences, particularly in areas of low engagement (e.g., rural areas) and areas of social deprivation.

To achieve this, we will need to respond to the changing needs, be flexible, work together with the arts community, and creative the sector. We will continue to advance our strategic aims to enable us to progress our future direction and strategic vision, explore investment needs, increase service income, and action plan implementation. These key aims are listed below with actions we need to take to advance the strategic vision.

STRATEGIC AIM

ACTIONS NEEDED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

1

**Promote organisational stability, WWA's external influence and public visibility**

- Roll out new online portal/systems to manage and track activity on programmes to help with evaluation, communication, and quality monitoring.
- Aim to secure long-term funding (e.g., from government, charities, funders) to create organisational stability.
- Promote the organisation's public and digital profile.
- Develop a range of partnerships with umbrella organisations (e.g., forums, alliances) to advance mutual endpoints collectively.
- Promote and enhance youth activism through iWill volunteer development and campaigning.
- Develop staff skills and expertise to research, develop and co-design activities with younger people.
- Consult with stakeholders and young people to ensure voice, perspective, influence, and representation.
- Build on the value of investing in corporate social responsibility and the social value it offers to the private sector.
- Review, monitor and continue the influencing strategy, podcast, and other communications activity via digital, broadcast, and new media.

2

**Develop a creative space and diversify income generation**

- Expand social enterprise activities to diversify income options.
- Develop the WWA creative space / Tech Studio for the delivery of WWA digital and other programmes.
- Tech Skills Share TS3 courses and offers for wellbeing/corporate days/creative team building.
- Changemaker /EDI cultural empowerment courses to progress staff development and improve productivity.
- Expand income generation by increasing ArtCart bookings in festivals, corporate days, and council events.
- Offer iWill volunteers the creative space to develop their skills

STRATEGIC AIM

ACTIONS NEEDED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

3

**Promote visual and digital arts for skills, education, and wellbeing for young people.**

- Continue to promote access to traditional and digital artistic activities within the marginalised youth.
- Promote the value of art and creativity and its value in economic development and to the wider society.
- Progress creative sector by inspiring young people to look for further opportunity, courses, and careers.
- Advance career possibilities for younger people through developing OCN/ASDAN qualifications in art/digital creativity.
- iWill volunteers collaborating with innovation officers to test and design offers for the young people.
- Keep up to date with the latest technological developments to enable latest software and hardware to be employed in digital and creative activities with young people.
- Develop best practices in digital technology and arts-led practices and upskilling artists/educators/youth workers/teachers.
- Promote the development and upskilling of staff and artists in areas such as facilitation, art practice and working with children and young people.

We will continue to progress our strategic vision to support future developments in innovative project designs. We want to capture fresh ideas, opinions, and approaches to service delivery; we know that developing, promoting, and implementing these new strategic aims will assist the organisation to continue to adapt and be innovative, so we can enhance stability and stay relevant with our target groups.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT.

IF YOU HAVE ANY  
QUESTIONS OR WOULD  
LIKE TO SEE MORE OF  
WHAT WE'RE ACHIEVING,  
FOLLOW THE CONTACT  
POINTS BELOW.

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# Thanks to all our funders for their support in transforming the lives of young people



Belfast  
City Council



## VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Our programmes and activities create new possibilities with children and young people across Northern Ireland. From age 4 through to the emerging Generation Z, we will continue to engage through arts, design, and digital technology.

Here are just a few of the great things that were said about WheelWorks Programme

"THE YOUNG PEOPLE EXPRESSED TO ME HOW THEY HAVE NOWHERE TO GO, AND USUALLY SPEND THEIR EVENINGS IN THE FOREST OR THE LOCAL PARK PARTAKING IN DRINKING AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR. THE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE HAPPY FOR SOMEWHERE TO GO AND TO GET HOT DRINKS AND SNACKS."

"WE WERE TAUGHT ABOUT CHARACTER BUILDING, STORY MAKING AND HOW TO END OUR STORIES. IT WAS SO INTERESTING, AND WE MADE IT HAPPEN."

"THE NEW SKILL I HAVE LEARNED IS TRYING DIFFERENT THINGS. THIS WILL HELP ME BECAUSE I WILL GIVE THINGS A GO

"I ENJOYED THIS THE MOST BECAUSE THEY SHOWED ME HOW TO MAKE ART I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DO BEFORE. I THINK THIS PROJECT HELPED ME BE MORE PATIENT AND FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS."

"I WISH IT DIDN'T HAVE TO END; WE WANT TO DO MORE!"

"I LIKED MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND MAKING FRIENDS THE MOST."

"IT WAS FUN IN THE CHILLCART, I HADN'T REALLY DONE VR BEFORE. THE GAMES WERE FUNNY, AND IT WAS FUN TO MEET EVERYONE. I LIKED MEETING THE OTHER GROUP, I LIKED MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND HAVING FUN."

"USING THE IPADS AND CAMERAS WAS GOOD. I DIDN'T HAVE A TABLET, SO I LEARNT HOW TO USE IT."

"AWW CLASS PLAYSTATION! THE HOT CHOCOLATE IS SO NICE. I'M HAVING SO MUCH FUN, I LOVE THE VR! THIS IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN HANGING AROUND THE PARK LADS, ISN'T IT?"

"CAN WE DO IT AGAIN AND MEET MORE PEOPLE FROM MORE GROUPS?"

"IT WAS FUN OF THE CHILLCART, I HADN'T REALLY DONE VR BEFORE. THE GAMES WERE FUNNY, AND IT WAS FUN TO MEET EVERYONE. I LIKED MEETING THE OTHER GROUP, I LIKED MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND HAVING FUN"

"THE ANIMATION WILL HELP ME WITH MY FUTURE CAREER."

"I LIKED SEEING THE OTHER SCHOOL ONES. WE LIKED EACH OTHER."

"WE TALKED ABOUT SAYING SORRY AND BEING KIND TO PEOPLE, BUT ALSO ABOUT HAVING FUN AND SHARING. WE SHARED OUR IPADS AND WORKED IN TEAMS."

"MY FAVOURITE ART ACTIVITY WAS PHOTOGRAPHY. I ENJOYED THIS THE MOST BECAUSE THE PHOTOGRAPHER HELPED US LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF CAMERAS. I HAVE NEVER USED A CAMERA BEFORE. IN THE FUTURE, THIS NEW SKILL WILL HELP ME TAKE PICTURES OF MY FRIENDS."

"I LOVE BEING SOMEWHERE WHERE I AM THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE."

### PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



[www.wheelworksarts.com](http://www.wheelworksarts.com)