

Public Libraries and the further promotion of the Arts in Ireland

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ARTS AND THE MAGIC OF THE

WORD

A report by the Public Libraries
and the Arts Committee

The Arts Council
An Chomhairle Ealaíon

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
The Library Council

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Preface

This report was commissioned by the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee, a joint initiative of The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/The Library Council. The decision to establish the Committee has its origins in the Arts Plan 1995-1997 published by the Arts Council in 1994. The plan noted that "through (a) partnership with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/The Library Council the (Arts) Council (would) seek to increase access to and expand the participation dimension of literature...in the field of arts and libraries". The appointment of a specialist executive by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna was envisaged in order to develop the arts and libraries field.

Arising out of the recommendations of the Arts Plan, the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee was established and met for the first time, under the Chairmanship of Professor Declan Kiberd, on 10 May 1996 (a full list of the members of the Committee is given on page iv). Representative of a wide range of interests (artists, librarians, arts officers, local authority management, as well as the two State bodies), it has initiated a public consultation process which included a major conference in November 1997. As part of the Committee's work, Anne Kelly and Peter Kelly were retained as consultants to carry out a number of research projects and to assist the Committee in the formulation of conclusions and recommendations for effective partnerships. The consultants were appointed in July 1997 and submitted their final report in April 1998. Important technical assistance was provided by Andy Feist, currently working with the Home Office, London and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Arts Policy and Management, City University, London, in relation to the quantitative analysis in Chapter 6. The terms of reference for the consultants' assignment are given in Appendix 1. This report summarises their work and puts it into the context of the Committee's overall objectives and approach.

Acknowledgements

The greatest debt owed by the authors of this report is to the many members of the public who made submissions to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee, and to the hundreds who entered the essay competition organised in conjunction with *The Irish Times*. To an extent which exceeded our best expectations, their feelings and perceptions shaped our research and influenced our findings and recommendations. The intensity of their emotions about libraries, and the strength of their desire to see the good news broadcast, gave an almost spiritual basis to the work.

The list of prize - winners in the children's essay competition is given in Appendix 11. Many individuals and organisations concerned with the arts and with aspects of human development also made submissions. These are listed in Appendix 4. The expert information about policies, practices and provision which they contained added to the project's factual base, while many of the recommendations draw on the proposals made by these bodies.

One of the most rewarding elements of the research was the consultation process with artists. The time spent with groups of artists in different parts of the country gave fascinating insights, not just into the experiences which they have had with the public library service, but also into the extent of possible future initiatives which could be taken in an environment where artists are working in concert with librarians and arts officers to improve access by their communities to a wide range of arts events and activities. Appendix 5 lists those artists who participated in the process.

The conference "Access all Areas" held in Dublin in November 1997 brought together artists, arts officers, librarians, representatives of arts organisations and people with disabilities, as well as community groups, civil servants and many other interested parties in an intensive day of discussion and debate. The Committee owes a special debt to the speakers, but also to all who attended and who dutifully allowed themselves to be allocated to workshops, each of which was tasked to provide answers to specific questions. Particular thanks are due to Mr. Patrick Conway of Durham County Council, who spoke of his experience of collaboration between arts and libraries in the Britain, to Ms Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, poet and writer, to Dr Alan Titley, of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and to the chairs and rapporteurs of the workshops. The programme for the conference, and a list of the attendance, is given in Appendix 10.

A critical and central part of the project was constituted by two postal questionnaires, one to Chief Librarians and one to Arts Officers. Filling in questionnaires is never an enjoyable task, especially when the objectives behind particular questions may be unclear, but we are happy to record that the vast majority of both arts officers and librarians responded, most of them displaying a degree of interest in the subject matter which added considerable substance and colour to what could have been a largely statistical exercise. The material submitted in support of questionnaires, detailing the arts and library activity in local administrative areas all over the country, was illuminating, and bore eloquent testimony to the good effects of enthusiasm, organisation and commitment.

The Department of the Environment and Local Government was helpful to the project in many ways, and was a ready source for information about national library policy and about the important changes taking place in the way that local authority services are delivered and controlled.

Finally, tribute must be paid to the staff of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council, who supported this project from beginning to end, and who never allowed the extra burden which it added to their workloads to dim their commitment to its success.

Public Libraries and the Arts Committee:

Members

Niall Bradley, County Manager, Kildare
Lar Cassidy, Literature Officer Arts Council*
Mary Cloake, Development Director, Arts Council
John Coll, Arts Officer, County Mayo
Robert Dunbar, Children's Books Ireland
Marian Flanagan, Local Arts Development Officer, Arts Council
Fionnuala Hanrahan, County Librarian, Wexford
Declan Kiberd, Professor of Anglo - Irish Literature and Drama, UCD
Mary Linehan, Arts Officer, County Kildare
Sinéad MacAodha, Literature Officer, Arts Council
Pat McMahon, County Librarian, Galway
Tom McCarthy, Poet
Norma McDermott, Director, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
Mary Morrissy, Writer
Carmel O' Sullivan, Assistant Director, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
Kevin O' Sullivan, County Manager, Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown

Secretariat:

Orla Fitzpatrick, Library Assistant, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
Stephanie O' Callaghan, Library Assistant, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
Betty Boardman, Librarian, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

* Died on 09/10/97

Foreword:

by Professor Declan Kiberd, Chairman of the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee

In an age when many churches are often locked for fear of vandals and when bouncers stand in the doorway of many a city pub at evening - time, the public library remains one of the few civic spaces which extends an equal and unconditional welcome to every member of the community. Nobody challenges you when you walk in. Nobody tells you what to do. People who still feel shy of entering a bank have little compunction about walking into a library.

Once inside, you can read a book, consult a reference - guide or sit and savour the unusual blend of sociability and silence. Old people sometimes frequent libraries to meet their friends or to keep warm on winter days. Young people often use the facilities in order to complete a school project. Others go there to borrow the latest winner of a Booker Prize or to discover what interesting new books on the subject of car mechanics have been published in the past year or so. To all of them, the library offers the appeal of a long - standing and trustworthy friend.

Even the most regular users are not always aware of the full range of services on offer. You can not only borrow videos and cassettes, but also books which have long gone out of print in the retail shops or rare novels which can be accessed from afar on inter - library loan. The libraries often publish lists of upcoming events in an area or mount displays on local authors or parish history. In some, budding poets exchange pages at regular meetings of writers' workshops; in others, people of varying ages practise foreign language skills; in more again, those with problems of literacy are equipped with that priceless gift; and already in a few libraries, people learn to play a musical instrument.

Apart from the checking - out of books, none of these experiences is completely quantifiable-the kind that can be entered in a sociological survey or auditors' report. Yet there is now a strong case for treating the library as a central building in many communities, in the strict sense that it is the building in which the community now most commonly identifies itself as such. In other lands, such as the United States of America, town halls have often served that function and still do, but in Ireland the local church was by tradition a weekly meeting-house, providing neutral ground on which aspiring politicians or charity activists could walk and speak, after morning service. Nowadays, with the decline in religious practice and a worrying degree of social atomisation in some places, the library can sometimes offer the one social space that is respected and accepted by all.

In recent years communities have shown a desire to use this space as one in which to debate their own meaning and ultimate destiny. For instance, following the controversy sparked off by Roddy Doyle's television series *Family*, Ballymun Library hosted a debate between the author and his critics. In Mayo there has been a lively debate concerning public policy on the Irish language.

At the same time, libraries have facilitated everything from visits by distinguished poets to meetings of amateur photographic societies, from children's painting sessions to adult sculpting classes, from lectures by members on a favourite novel to formal commemorations of historical events like 1798. Moreover, the mobile service has gone into hospitals and prisons, as well as into remote rural communities. Drop-off and collection points have been arranged for the convenience of those who live at a distance from central libraries.

The ancient Irish love of the word was based on the conviction that there is a demonstrable link between word and action, between the vibrancy of artistic debate and the psychic health of the wider society. Although libraries have updated themselves with the latest technology, the written word will remain at the centre of their concerns. The notion that the world of Internet and word-processor may herald a decline in the people's taste for narrative is probably wrong-headed: after all, there was once a time when the new print technology and its attendant genre, the novel, were both castigated by conservatives as symptoms of a philistine technology which would threaten cultural value. But technologies are strictly neutral. In many ways, the latest advances in word-processing and cheap book-production have made possible many volumes of local interest which now adorn our libraries. There is no necessary or inevitable clash between "literature" and the world of modern technology.

With over three hundred libraries flourishing in the state, there is still more good work to be done by librarians in the promotion of artistic activity and art appreciation among the community. Imbued with that ambition, the Arts Plan 1995-7 contained a proposal that a partnership be developed on a formal basis between the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) with the aim of increasing public access and involvement by means of the library system.

A committee was set up to advise both councils on how the good work already in train might be further extended. Its members were from diverse backgrounds: a poet, two county managers, a novelist, arts officers, county librarians, a scholar of children's literature and so on. It has been my privilege to chair their vibrant, often irreverent debates over almost two years. At times as I listened to the artist and the administrator reach for very different words to describe a shared world, I felt there was material there for a state-of-Ireland novel. Even more often, as I sat spellbound by the social idealism and cultural creativity of the same contributors, I wished that their exchanges could be made available to fellow-citizens who take an interest in such topics.

It is a mark of the skills of Peter and Anne Kelly, whom we chose to conduct research in the designated field, that the timbre of those varied voices is registered on many a page of this report. The quantitative research is virtually without precedent in this country and necessarily represents more a beginning than a conclusion of such study: but it is the more valuable for that. It will provide guidelines and points of departure for years to come: and it has been immensely enriched by the generous response of both individuals and organisations to our call in the national press for formal submissions. Equally precious has been the contribution of children, whose essays testify to a passionate love of libraries and a thoroughly proper desire to want them even better than they are. This was the first occasion, to our knowledge, when children were asked to make submissions to a project such as ours. The voices of all these participants - artists, users, the disadvantaged and the advantaged - reverberate through the following pages, establishing a sort of dialectic with the more quantitative investigations.

What the report tells us is that the library service is still prized by all, despite the quietness with which its members go about their work: and that the heroic labours of the cadre of arts officers out in the community are also valued and celebrated, especially by those whose access to the arts may in the past have been stymied by limited education or limited means. It tells us also, in that context, that equity does not always mean equality: although everybody has notionally equal access to social services (including those in the arts sector), often it is the already privileged who know how best to use them.

For me the most inspiring aspect of the work has been the deeply democratic philosophy of all my colleagues on the committee, animated by a desire to serve every man, woman and child. After a decade when the public realm seemed to have shrunk, this was encouraging indeed. Nowhere was the sense of solidarity and mutuality more evident than at the one-day conference held at the Davenport Hotel, Dublin on 26 November 1997 and addressed by a over a hundred participants from a schoolgirl to a government minister. Some of its proceedings were subsequently featured on an RTE documentary on 'The Future of the Book.' The major event of the conference was a challenging address by Patrick Conway of the Durham county system who strongly suggested that every man and woman in the community is a potential artist, a point which had already been explored with great sensitivity in position-papers tabled by Robert Dunbar, John Coll and Thomas McCarthy, all members of our committee.

After all this heady activity, I was left wondering why our public figures do not spend even more on arts and libraries, whose limited opening hours remain a source of frustration to the entire public. Some have suggested that there are "no votes" in these areas, but the evidence which we encountered would suggest the contrary. My own suspicion is that our politicians and senior administrators are so engrossed with the round-the-clock task of running our society that few of them still find time to read a book or visit a library. Most Leinster House politicians, when asked at Christmas or summertime about their recent reading, lament the fact that it tends to be confined to official reports. If they read this one, however, they may begin to wonder why they have so often seemed to take for granted the vital services discharged by libraries and arts bodies. If politics is to be about the consolidation of the community and the enhancement of the expressive freedom of individuals, then every pound spent on arts or libraries is well invested. It will be repaid not just in the continuing triumphs of our creative people or in the cash generated by cultural tourism, but in the deepening of social bonds, without which politics is only a clinical systems-maintenance.

The inventors of modern Irish democracy from the Young Irelanders through Michael Davitt down to W B Yeats and Arthur Griffith were all upholders of the reading-room ideal. Out of their libraries an entire nation was born. And out of the library system that selfsame nation can be reborn in the next millennium. That rebirth or renaissance will occur every time a discerning librarian places the right book in the right pair of hands and every time an arts officer helps a roomful of children to make their dreams incarnate in a work of their own creation.

All of my colleagues on the committee hope that this report will be read as widely as possible. It is as readable as it is rigorous and we trust that it conveys some sense of our pleasure that went into its making. We welcome all comment, the critical as well as the celebratory.

I should like, as we disband, to pay a special tribute to two persons without whom the project would not have come to fruition. It was the late Lar Cassidy who, with that audacity which characterised his too short life, devised the challenge in his role as Literature Officer of the Arts Council: and it was Norma McDermott of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna who showed that mixture of sympathy and steel which ensured that Lar's often-fragile concept would take a clear shape. It has been a new form of continuing education for this willing conscript from the groves of academe to work with them. I also own more than I can say to the peerless work of Orla Fitzpatrick and Stephanie O'Callaghan, both of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, who performed daunting and repeated tasks with high intelligence and obvious enjoyment: the enthusiasm of these young people eventually energised all who came into contact with it. The new Literature Officer of the Arts Council, Sinéad MacAodha, has been creative and helpful throughout the project, which owes much to her sensitivity, tact and great good humour.

My understanding of Ireland has been complicated and enriched by the contributions of other committee members: Pat McMahon from Galway, John Coll from Mayo, Fionnuala Hanrahan from Wexford, Mary Linehan from Kildare, Mary Cloake and Marian Flanagan both from the Arts Council, Carmel O'Sullivan of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, not to mention the wonderful blend of the visionary and pragmatic which I found in our county managers, Niall Bradley of Kildare and Kevin O'Sullivan of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. Their shrewd counsel has saved the bohemians among us on more than one occasion from peril but it is only fair to add that that kind favour has been equally returned. Our artists, Mary Morrissy and Thomas McCarthy, have been as creative as we had hoped, but they also served with amazing industry as adjudicators under the chairmanship of Rosemary Hetherington in the children's essay competition.

The sheer volume of work done by all these talented people has been awesome. They have shown great patience through long, sometimes anarchic, discussions, but they have also proven that a truly comprehensive and honest debate does eventually conduce to an orderly world. I thank each and every one of them for a signal service to our people.

Declan Kiberd
28 March 1998
Dublin

Executive Summary

This report has its origins in the Arts Council's *Arts Plan 1995-97*, which identified the use of *strategic partnerships* to secure maximum benefit for the arts as one of the Plan's strategic objectives. A number of such partnerships were proposed, among them a partnership with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/The Library Council "in the field of arts and libraries". Arising out of this proposal, the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee was established to explore how it might best be implemented and this report, drafted by the consultants retained by the Committee, summarises the findings of the project. The report

- outlines the present and potential roles of arts and of libraries in cultural life;
 - describes the present organisation of both in Ireland;
 - summarises the findings of research carried out among artists and arts organisations;
 - presents the views of the public (including young people), and arts and library professionals;
- and
- having summarised the key findings of the project, puts forward a series of recommendations which are designed to facilitate access to and participation in the arts through the public library system.

Arts in the community

Access to the arts has been a key concern of the Arts Council since the 1970s and the *Arts Plan 1995-97* highlighted access as one of its six strategic objectives. The potential of the library service for facilitating arts access was reiterated in the context of provision for exhibitions, community arts facilities and for the active engagement of children. Previous Irish studies had identified access and participation as issues, particularly for low income groups and disadvantaged areas, and the library system as significant in terms of access. International research has suggested that inter-agency work, although not without difficulty, can be synergistic and innovative in the development of new services, new ways of working and new values. In Great Britain, where the library/arts partnership has been described as an evolving one, a number of characteristics of the library, including the free, neutral and safe identification of the physical space, are regarded as conducive to access. It provides young people with an introduction to civil society, and community librarianship and community arts have certain shared values, both being needs rather than demand led. However, the very democracy of public usage, and the local nature of the service provided, goes hand in hand with a low level of national prestige and this has tended to reduce the advocacy role of the library service internationally.

Public libraries: existing provision

There are 322 branch libraries in Ireland, under the control of 32 city and county library authorities, which are part of the local government structure. Current expenditure on libraries is of the order of £37.4 million and capital expenditure over £4 million. 1320 staff are employed. Collections in public libraries amount to 12 million items. In terms of book loans and expenditure on library materials per capita of the population, Ireland is around the middle of the European spectrum - higher than Germany and Spain, for example, but much lower than Denmark, the Netherlands, or the United Kingdom. A survey of 1400 adults carried out as part of this project found that 32% of the adult population were library users.

The arts: existing provision

The administration of the arts in Ireland received a major boost from the appointment of a Minister with responsibility for the arts at Cabinet level and more recently from the adoption by Government of the second Arts Plan 1999-2001 which commits to expenditures on the arts amounting to £100 million over the plan period. This injection of funds, combined with the energy of national and local arts organisations, and supported by the growing interest in the arts of the local authorities has led to a new dynamism in cultural activity at all levels.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The main themes which emerged from the research were:

- **Access and Participation:** the public library system is seen as an exceptionally appropriate host for community arts activities. For national arts institutions which are concerned with the engagement and empowerment of communities, libraries are ideal partners in programmes which deal with information and imagination, as well as for many non-literary arts. The position of trust enjoyed by libraries provides a reassuring and unthreatening environment. However, the atmosphere of some libraries was seen as needing improvement for their arts potential to be realised, while some artists held that one of the library's greatest advantages in other respects - its democratic nature - could in some instances limit its value for some professional artists. Unsuitable and inflexible opening hours were identified as a limiting factor. It was widely felt that most libraries made excellent provision for the needs of young people and people with disability, and many suggestions were made in this regard. However, the overwhelming impression gained through all facets of the study was the **suitability** of public libraries in general for the practice and enjoyment of most of the arts, and the **value** which participants had derived from their library experiences.

A virtually universal perception is that the library is a central agent in the cultural and civic life of the community. To the artist in particular, it has three roles:

- through its collections, to be a source of *information and inspiration* in terms of the artist's profession and its development;
 - again through the quality and range of its collections, to be a key agent in *developing the audience for the art*; and
 - by making its facilities available, as an important *venue* for arts events and activities, sometimes the only one in a locality.
- **People:** at least some of the variations in arts/libraries achievement may be put down to differences in individual interests, inclinations, motivation and training on the part of librarians, arts officers and local government officials. **But throughout the different strands of the research, we found time after time that children, community arts groups, professional artists, organisations representing people with disabilities, and individuals who made submissions, had had most positive and life-enhancing experiences with libraries, and experienced the warmest feelings towards the librarians they encountered.** Combined with the obvious success which local authority arts officers have had in helping to energise the arts in their areas, this is a very strong foundation on which to build a partnership. At the same time, the significant differences between the two professions - in culture, training, strategic objectives and day-to-day focus - must be recognised, as must the extent to which librarians may need support through training and otherwise if they are to achieve their objective of making libraries a central part of arts delivery.
 - **Infrastructure:** in every part of the country, libraries are used for arts activities and events. Most were not built with this in mind, although through considerable ingenuity on the part of library staffs, many are dynamic centres for wider cultural development. The limited availability of suitable space in libraries was identified in the research as the most important obstacle to the full realisation of the library service's role in the arts. Restricted opening hours and days compound the problem. At least equal importance must be attached to the *atmosphere* and "*friendliness*" of public library spaces.
 - **Collections:** while in general the literature collections held by the public library service for adults are seen as adequate, criticism was voiced of children's collections, and, more trenchantly, of collections suitable for young adults. Literature in Irish is also seen as inadequately represented, and many artists were disappointed by the range and timeliness of specialised materials relating to their art forms. Given that the core artistic and cultural roles of libraries are in the literature and information fields, these are significant findings. It seems that the book funds in public libraries have not recovered from the cut-backs of the 1980s, something which needs attention if the potential of the library service to contribute to the personal and artistic development of the individual is to be fully exploited.
 - **Partnerships:** there are fruitful opportunities for partnership not just between arts and libraries, but also, and very importantly, between both disciplines and a wide range of other agencies and groups. Prominent among these are the other departments and functions of local authorities. It is hoped that the establishment of Strategic Policy Committees within local authorities will help develop many and varied

strands of collaboration which will make possible greater arts inputs into every facet of local administration.

A model of strategic partnership development was presented, in which partners may move from **simple transactions** through **joint ventures** to the development of **information-sharing networks** and finally to **co-ordinated tasks**, initially on an ad hoc basis, but leading later to **ongoing collaboration**. Currently, examples abound of library/arts partnerships of all these types, and the challenge is to build on the best partnership experiences.

- **Public image:** Libraries seem to have achieved high esteem in the public eye almost in spite of themselves. They are slow to publicise themselves, or to exploit their vast "market". Raising the profile of the public library service through its involvement in the arts will enhance its ability to expand and to fulfil its broad civic role. In return, using the existing infrastructure of the library service to promote the arts will enhance the position of the arts in the community and proclaim them more widely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that action is required by a number of policy-making bodies, individually and in partnership, if progress is to be made in developing arts and libraries services. These are as follows:

Recommended actions by the Arts Council

- Review writers-in-libraries policy with a view to enlarging budgetary provision
- Improve the availability of musical instruments in libraries and consider the appointment of musicians-in-the library programme. It is particularly appropriate to consider the appointment of a musician-in-residence.
- Provide for a number of cross-disciplinary residencies in appropriate libraries

Recommended actions by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

- Encourage the formation, in the area of each branch library, of a Library User Committee, which should include, as well as library staff, a number of active library members (of whom at least one should be a young adult) and representatives of local organisations and individuals active in civic affairs, the arts, education, social exclusion and other areas, in order to help maintain the relevance of the library's services to the community, and to enlist support (including resources) for its activities. The local Arts Officer should participate in the work of such Committees as deemed appropriate and necessary. Such an initiative would assist in involving library users who are not generally encouraged to contribute to or participate in the development of services
- Encourage library authorities to develop in conjunction with young people mission statements outlining their aims and objectives for young people and to distinguish in their policies between children and young adults
- Review with representative organisations for people with disabilities how library policy in relation to disability access can be co-ordinated with the Arts Council's policy in this area
- Provide quarterly newsletter for users, detailing arts activities

Recommended actions by the Department of Environment and Local Government

- Review of library staffing and service delivery, including opening hours, to ensure flexibility
- Correction of built infrastructure deficiencies, including capital investment backlog

- Consideration of opportunities for arts/libraries provision in mixed public/commercial building developments such as shopping centres and urban renewal projects

Recommended Joint Actions

- the appointment of an arts officer based in An Chomhairle Leabharlanna with responsibility for the co-ordination of projects and reporting to the Committee.
- the development by the Arts Council, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the local authorities of a national arts and libraries strategy to optimise the utilisation of scarce national resources. This would include an arts input to Library Development Plans and the provision of designated arts spaces in new library buildings and the development of guidelines for such spaces. A strategic approach is appropriate at this time with the emergence in local authorities of Strategic Policy Committees, which will provide a forum for the closer co-ordination of arts not just with the library service, but also with other elements of local administration
- an initiative by the same two bodies focusing on training/human resource issues for arts/library services for all levels of arts and libraries provision in local authorities
- a national plan for access to arts and library services for disadvantaged groups and areas. This would involve the two Councils, Department of the Environment and Local Government, Combat Poverty and CAFE and would build on existing research. It is particularly important to address the issue of equality versus equity in access to arts and libraries, and to this end we recommend that a pilot survey be initiated to test how the problem can be addressed
- a specific library-based national project aimed at children and the visual arts, identified frequently during the research as a neglected area, to be developed by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council
- a capital investment study involving the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna which would evaluate existing exhibition/general arts spaces in the libraries where they are available (identified in 16 libraries by the research) with a view to upgrading these and developing guidelines for their use
- the preparation of guidelines (to be agreed with the Department of the Environment and Local Government) to be applied to the design of new library buildings or to the reconstruction of existing buildings which would allow for appropriate arts space to be planned into all new capital spending

Introduction

The Public Libraries and the Arts Committee first met in May 1996. Its brief was to advise the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna on how a partnership should be developed between the two bodies with the purpose of increasing access to and participation in the arts through the public library system.

From the outset, the Committee determined that its deliberations and the framing of proposals would be guided by two over-arching principles: the maximisation of public consultation, and the avoidance of imposed, or "top-down", solutions. The emphasis was to be on an *organic process* which would make full use of the expertise of library users and arts and library professionals.

In accordance with these principles, a number of methodological tools were identified to secure the involvement of all sections of the community and to benefit from the experience of workers in the field. Consultants were retained to carry out specific research tasks, support the project generally, and draft the Committee's report. The project then proceeded in a number of separate, but overlapping and intertwined, strands.

At the outset, it was decided to use an **essay competition** to secure the involvement and contributions of **children and young adults**. Organised in conjunction with the "Irish Times", which published the winning entries, this was announced in December 1996. Entries were invited in two categories, under 18 and under 14, and in all 355 essays were submitted. Chapter 4 describes the entries and identifies the themes which came across most strongly in them and which influenced this report's findings in relation to the place of libraries and the arts in the lives of children and young adults.

In May 1997 the Committee placed advertisements in the national newspapers soliciting **submissions from interested organisations and individuals** in relation to its work. Between individuals and organisations, many of which represented areas of the arts or were concerned with access issues affecting particular groups (for example, people with disabilities), 55 submissions were received. These are summarised in Chapter 3, which also identifies the important themes contained in the submissions.

Formal surveys of the experience and ideas of **arts officers and librarians** were carried out in the last quarter of 1997. Detailed questionnaires were distributed to all 32 library authorities in the Republic, for completion by the Chief Librarian of each authority. Similarly detailed questionnaires were circulated to the 26 local authority Arts Officers which were then in place. These surveys sought to illuminate important questions relating to arts in the community, the existing arts-related activities of the public library service, the opportunities which the professionals perceived for increased arts/libraries collaboration, and how difficulties might be overcome. Chapter 6 summarises the findings of this exercise, while the questionnaires used are reproduced in Appendices 2 and 3

A **public conference** or "open day" was mounted in Dublin in November 1997 under the slogan "**Access all Areas**". The conference, which was opened by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Mr Noel Dempsey T.D., brought together librarians, arts officers, local authority members and managers, civil servants, artists, arts organisations, and representatives of groups with special needs and interests. Altogether, more than 120 attended. The morning session was devoted to a number of presentations, including the perspectives of artists and a leading British authority on arts and libraries, as well as a summarisation of the research results to date. In the afternoon, participants divided into six workshops, in which critical questions on the future of arts/libraries collaboration were discussed. The findings of the workshops are summarised in Chapter 6, while full details of the conference, including the speakers and the attendance, are given in Appendix 10

The Committee attached particular importance to sounding the opinions and experiences of working **artists**, especially those who had experience of working in or with libraries. It was felt that formal questionnaire surveys would not get the best of these opinions and experience, so the research method selected was a series of **focus group discussions**. Three of these were held, in Castlebar, Dun Laoghaire and Enniscorthy, and in all twenty artists participated. The results of these discussions are summarised in Chapter 5.

At an early stage of the research, the Committee became aware of a fundamental issue likely to affect the success of initiatives designed to use the library service to improve access to the arts, namely the fact that many people do not use libraries at all. It was decided, therefore, to attempt to learn more about the attitudes of **non-users of public library services**, and with this objective Irish Marketing Surveys were commissioned to ask a number of questions related to libraries and the arts as part of an omnibus survey of 1400 adults carried out in November 1997. The findings of this research are described in Chapter 7.

Finally, there is considerable **existing research and academic literature** on the problems of access to and participation in the arts, both in Ireland and internationally. A continuing activity of the consultants throughout the project was to search for, collate, screen and analyse such information, both to strengthen the basis for the research findings and to identify models of development which could provide useful pointers for the Committee. In the course of this work, many examples and case studies of **arts activities and programmes in public libraries** were identified. Chapter 1 summarises the current state of thinking on access and participation issues, while Chapters 8 and 9 place many of the project's research findings in an international context. A full bibliography is provided in Appendix 12.

These research efforts provided the consultants with a very comprehensive and wide-ranging data base. Important themes could be discerned which were supported by findings from all strands of the project. The themes related to current activities, achievements and constraints, to problems of access and participation, to opportunities for partnerships, to infrastructural and organisational issues, to relationships within the wider local government and community development spheres, and to institutional and national arts and libraries policy issues. In this report, while the separate research strands are individually analysed in Chapters 1 to 7 inclusive, a holistic perspective was maintained throughout. Chapter 8, therefore, brings the main themes together, while Chapter 9 seeks to use these themes in an organic way to present policy proposals which are firmly grounded in the research, and most particularly in the consultation exercise.

Chapter 1

Background: Arts and Libraries in the service of the Community

The desirability of strengthening the association between the arts and the public library service, although most recently articulated in the Arts Plan 1995-1997, had already been identified in previous reports on the arts in Ireland. The Arts Plan is the first strategic approach to planning for the arts in Ireland, but as far back as 1976, it had been recognised that local libraries had a beneficial role to play as centres of multiple arts activities - for example in promoting poetry-readings, lectures, small concerts and recitals. Although it was recognised that such initiatives depended on the availability of facilities and, importantly, the interest and "enthusiasm" of the librarian, they "should be encouraged in all ways possible." (Richards, 1976:77) Some thirteen years later, a study in Britain (Heeks, 1989) found that progress on public library involvement in the arts depended too often on personal enthusiasm, and that this led to a lack of consistency and continuity in the events organised. The Richards report, which resulted from an enquiry set up in 1974 by the Arts Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation into the organisation and financing of the arts in Ireland, indicated that there was "room for growth here, particularly in the new county headquarters buildings some of which have lecture and other rooms suitable for arts activities". (Richards, 1976:26) At that time there were plans for 18 new branch libraries and for four reconstructions and this represented "an opportunity the Arts Council should not miss of arranging regular consultation with local authorities, through the Library Council, on the subject of provision for the arts in the plans of new library buildings."

Any links between the arts and the public library service in Ireland necessarily involve the local authority infrastructure and the cultural benefits of the library service for the Dublin City and County area were outlined in 1992 (Dublin Arts Report, 1992). This report, which was a European City of Culture project funded by the Dublin local authorities and the Arts Council, indicated that the public library service represented "a significant element" in the cultural provision for the city and county, and the research concluded that "there is insufficient knowledge of, and therefore regard for, this service among the arts community, and more significantly, an incomplete understanding within the Arts Council of the distinctive contribution of the...service to the fabric of arts and culture within the city and county." (1992:73) One of the recommendations of the study was for the appointment of a City Arts Officer who would "work closely with, and be consulted by, other relevant sections and departments and the Dublin Public Libraries so as to ensure coherent and cost-effective arts provision on a city and community-wide basis" (1992:182). This appointment was subsequently made. As part of a developing policy on access and participation, the Arts Council had been emphasising a dual approach to investment in "infrastructure - human and physical - throughout Ireland" (Arts Plan, 1994:6) and with the local authorities had begun appointing Arts Officers from 1985 as well as investing in dedicated arts centres. The potential of the library service for facilitating arts access was reiterated in terms of its provision for exhibitions, community arts facilities and scope for joint programmes between library and arts authorities to engage children actively in the arts. (Fitzgibbon, 1995)

More recently, the library system was again identified as "a useful point of access for low income groups" (Combat Poverty/The Arts Council 1997:115). This research indicated that greater use could be made of such "access points" in improving access to the arts. Access to the arts has been a key concern of the Arts Council which has, since the 1970s, emphasised its aim of developing and implementing policies concerned with making arts accessible to sections of Irish society which had been 'culturally disenfranchised.' This issue was by no means a purely Irish concern at that time, but was also engaging other European cultural policy makers from the early 1970s. This followed UNESCO advice to governments of the member countries to strengthen cultural activity, not only in extrinsic economic terms, but also in terms of intrinsic personal investment and as a basis for democracy and greater freedom. Facilitating participation in the arts thus became one of the central themes of the cultural policy of many European countries. In Ireland, from the mid-1980s, the concept of horizontal and vertical access was developed: horizontal referring in this context to the geographical spread of population and vertical to the need to penetrate the multiple layers and strata of society. (O'Hagan and Duffy, 1987; Arts Council, Annual Report 1987).

The term 'access' became part of the title of a Government White Paper in 1987 (Access and Opportunity) and the mission statement of the Arts Council in 1993 provides the strongest endorsement so far of the Council's role in this regard:

As the statutory body entrusted with stimulating public interest in the arts and with promoting their knowledge, appreciation and practice, the Arts Council believes that everyone in Ireland has an entitlement to meaningful access to and participation in the arts.....

However, a study the following year (Clancy et al, 1994) indicated that while there had been a substantial growth in aggregate attendance among all social classes since 1981, the gaps between the classes remained, and that in relation to certain types of live events, categories of arts goods and aggregate participation levels in amateur arts activities, "there is somewhat of a widening of the class differential, particularly in relation to the semi-skilled/unskilled working class." The Arts Plan 1995-97 has also highlighted access as one of its six strategic objectives. However, the complexity of the 'access' issue which had been raised in the ACE report (Benson, 1989) has also drawn attention to the fact that access is not simply an 'arts' problem but might be described as "broadly cultural, having as much to do with education, social policy and local government as with the arts." (Clancy et al, 1994:89) A solution would involve "the combined attention of government departments other than simply that of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht and of agencies other than the Arts Council alone....if this issue is to be addressed meaningfully."

The inter-agency partnership between the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna was identified as a measure in the Arts Plan. The background to the measure is that the Arts Council recognises the necessity for inter-agency work while also developing a working relationship with the local authorities. Such collaborations have also evolved with the Department of Education, Combat Poverty Agency, Macra na Feirme, Údarás na Gaeltachta among others. The measure was developed to address concerns about literature development in priority geographical areas, and it gave birth to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee.

The Committee seeks to address access to the arts through the library service as an issue in the research. The growth in the use of strategic partnerships in the industrial and service sectors during the 1980s and 1990s has been identified (Bergquist et al 1995; Stiles, 1996). Inter-agency networking has been used successfully in the social sciences, in such areas as health care and in community access to services. "The term inter-agency work is used to indicate co-operative and collaborative working in joint initiatives by different agencies, both voluntary and statutory...." (Hall, 1988:82) Inter-agency work is neither easy nor straightforward but such partnerships are concerned with "establishing a culture of innovation." (Trevillion, 1992:57) They can involve "developing new services, new ways of working together, and very often, new values." The synergistic benefits include the provision of opportunities for collective planning and best use of resources in the delivery of public services. In Ireland the significance of the partnership model is well recognised at the public/private/voluntary level, for example in area-based partnerships. Pilot partnership initiatives in local community development have also been established and their strategic planning methodologies outlined. (Combat Poverty, 1995)

A number of studies in Britain have identified the benefits which the library/arts partnership can provide and models of good practice have been outlined. (Heeks, 1989; Hinton,1990) The evidence gathered in one study (Heeks, 1989) identifies three phases of library involvement: co-existence with other agencies; co-operation with other agencies; and commitment to co-ordination of effort. It was found that roughly one third of U.K libraries were at each of these stages, and the study highlighted the concept of the library/arts partnership as an "evolving" one nationally. The transfer of library services, sometimes into new education or leisure directorates with broader remits than libraries following the reorganisation of local government in 1974 has facilitated joint programmes. For example, County Durham now has as part of its mission statement the objective of providing and promoting "a vigorous and challenging programme of arts, libraries and museum services" to the local population, visitors and inward investors. (Policy Statement Durham County Council) In 1990 it was suggested (Hinton, 1990) that the Library Association and the Arts Council needed to espouse the value of partnership between libraries and the arts in the context of the development of library services to meet a wider range of community needs. The report of a Working Party on Public Library Services in Wales reiterates the broad access theme: "One of the objectives of a public library service should be to encourage and promote the arts and other cultural activities and especially to make them available to those communities which are otherwise denied access to them and to provide experiences which are not available elsewhere in the community." (Hinton, 1990:12) The British experience contrasts with that of Denmark where although the library functions as a cultural centre it has suffered funding cutbacks from municipalities while spending on theatres, music, museums and arts centres has increased. (Skot-Hansen, 1996) One reason for this has been the attraction of arts provision for tourists and the outcome has been a competitive rather than a co-operative climate between library and arts services.

(This seems less of a threat in Ireland, where libraries have a broad information role for tourists interested in genealogy and local history and archaeology.)

Research in Ireland (Clancy et al, 1994; Arts Plan 1994; Combat Poverty/Arts Council 1997) indicates that while horizontal gaps continue to decrease, rural access to the arts still presents a problem and contrasts between regions still exist. It may well be therefore, that the library infrastructure can facilitate access as it has in the UK where no other agency is regarded to be as well placed to help overcome the cultural barriers created by rural deprivation. (Hinton 1990) In Denmark too the library acts as a "cultural dynamo" in rural areas. (Skot-Hansen, 1996) The research findings presented later in this report will provide indications of the potential of the Irish library service in relation to the development of access to the arts.

The British library service has been described as "a genuinely successful decentralised cultural institution" (Greenhalgh et al, 1995:44) and as "potentially the most important cultural and educational network that will take us into the twenty-first century." (1995:48) From the arts access perspective a number of characteristics of the library service are significant. For example, the library space itself is regarded as a sanctuary where one may sit, read, browse, visit an exhibition, meet people etc. The space is a free, open, welcoming, neutral and safe one, and at the physical level many librarians in the study felt the ideal library to be as open as possible with interiors visible from outside, reflecting a wish to reduce any barriers to entry. The library was regarded as a social place as much as a book place. There are no fixed boundaries on the kinds of material or information that may be stocked, ranging from books, CDs, videos, paintings, newspapers, on-line information etc. Librarians are regarded as "non-judgmental, unlike their peers in other cultural institutions who may adopt partisan artistic positions as a matter of professional and artistic principle." (1995:52) A Mori poll in Britain (Conway, 1997) also confirms the positive image of the library, with over 80% of the sample impressed with the service, approving of public investment in libraries and willing to pay higher taxes for improvements. In terms of another key target group of the present research – young people - the library service, with "its espousal and encouragement of early childhood literacy and enjoyment of reading" (Greenhalgh et al, 1995: 52) can provide young people with a "welcoming entry" into civil society.

The civic role of the library service, in a world in which commercial interests are often predominant, is also a legitimate area of the research and "the public library.....embodies a principle of rights of access to knowledge and the power that the acquisition of knowledge implies." (Greenhalgh et al 1995:59) In Britain, the democracy of the public library service owes much to the emergence of "community librarianship" in the 1970s. This reflected the need to make the service more relevant to people in disadvantaged communities where welfare rights information, basic literacy and numeracy texts, or a community group meeting place could be as important as the traditional book stock. Community librarianship had certain shared values with the community arts movement of the 1970s, although it is suggested that "the cutting edge of radicalism has gone out of both of their movements with their assimilation into mainstream practice." (Hinton, 1990:135) However, both ways of working continue to have a role to play in community development which is concerned with enabling the development of individual self-awareness and enriching the life of the community. Both are "needs" rather than "demand" led.

However, it has been suggested that the very democracy of public library usage in Britain "militates against its national prestige." (Greenhalgh et al, 1995:44) One reason for this, which also has relevance in the Irish case, is the essentially de-centralised nature of the service, which is both managed and delivered locally. This contrasts with mainstream cultural provision such as theatres, concert halls, museums and other cultural venues. These tend to be located in large cities and therefore attract the attention of national media which very often ignore the local. This has tended to reduce the advocacy role of the library service which in many countries, including Denmark, has an indistinct image. (Greenhalgh, 1995; Skot-Hansen, 1996) Other problems have also been identified, for example the traditional form of organisation, the buildings and the professional hierarchy which will need to undergo change in the future with the advent of new technologies, lifestyle changes including the nature of work, educational change and the move towards life-long learning, and the increasing commercial forces at work in society. Public libraries, like other organisations will need to develop further their "strategic alliances" with other institutions and interest groups so that they can continue to develop as key resources for individuals and communities. In Finland the functions of the library service have been expanded well beyond the book lending one and libraries have been enriched by co-operation with music institutes, theatre and the visual arts. (Rintaluoma, 1996) UNESCO stresses the need for co-operation with "relevant partners" in its Public Library Manifesto (UNESCO, 1995) which is addressed to decision-makers at national and local levels as well as the library community at large. The symbiosis that already exists between libraries and the arts has been shown to lead to one such productive partnership.

Chapter 2

Public Libraries and Arts: existing provision

"Aims and objectives of a modern public library service"

"A modern public library service should provide means of self-development for individuals and groups, make accurate information speedily available, be a centre of cultural life, encourage the positive growth of leisure and the value and pleasure of reading."

(Public Library Service Review Group, 1987)

Library administration in Ireland

The present administration of the public library system operates at three levels:

- **Library Authorities** - which supply library services within the functional areas of corresponding local government authorities. Each one is an independent library system.
- **The Department of the Environment and Local Government** - which has responsibility at central level for all local government services, including public libraries.
- **An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council)** - which is an advisory body established in 1947 to advise both the Minister for the Environment and Local Government and individual library authorities on the provision and development of library services. The Council consists of:
 - a Chairman, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government after consultation with the Minister for Education and Science and
 - twelve other members, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government for a five year term.

The Council meets 6 times per year to establish policies and make decisions in terms of recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, local authorities and other bodies, as appropriate relating to public libraries.

The functions of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna are:

- to provide advice and assistance to local authorities in relation to the improvement of the public library service;
 - to make such recommendations to the Minister in relation to the public library service as it sees fit;
 - to maintain and operate the central library established under Section 2 of the Public Libraries Act, 1947 and
 - to promote and facilitate library co-operation between all types of libraries (public, national, government, business, school and university libraries) in the Republic of Ireland and between the Republic and Britain and Europe.

In relation to its functions the Council may promote, assist, facilitate or participate in the carrying out of research, studies, surveys or the collection of information, data, statistics or other such materials or in the dissemination of such information.

An Chomhairle also has a role in:

- the provision of national experts on culture and broader library issues to the European Union and the Council of Europe and
- the provision of support to the European Union funded Telematics Programmes for libraries, archives and museums.

There are, at present, thirty two public library authorities in the Republic of Ireland. Four are based on municipal authority areas, and the remaining on individual or joint authority areas.

Public Library Administration

There are 322 branch libraries providing services with more than one third open for at least 30 and up to 54 hours per week and 145 are open between 10 and 29 hours per week. (All new grant-aided public library projects recommended by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government are required to be open a minimum of two late nights per week, five days per week, and all day Saturday.) In addition, public library services are available to hospitals, schools, prisons, day care centres, parish halls, and other community service points, and all new public library building projects must address the needs of people with disabilities. In 1997 local authorities provided materials for 662 service points. A mobile library service is provided to neighbourhood housing, rural areas and small population clusters. There are 27 mobile libraries operating in Ireland. The public library service is the largest information and cultural infrastructure in Ireland.

Current Expenditure

In 1998, current expenditure on public libraries amounted to £37.4 million or £10.32 per capita. Over 90% of the funding is financed by taxation i.e. local rates and central government taxes. The remainder is generated by user charges, membership fees, fines etc. Library authorities spent £5.6 million on stocking public libraries with books and other materials.

Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure on public libraries in 1998 amounted to £4.2 million. This is financed by the National Lottery and funds construction and leasing of new buildings, services to primary schools, automation, transport, and the stocking and fitting out of new and refurbished libraries.

Approval is sought from the Department of the Environment and Local Government for all of the above projects except the schools service. The Department of Education and Science pays £2.20 per capita to library authorities for the provision of services to primary schools. The balance of all costs for schools is borne by the library authorities. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) advises on all capital projects prior to approval. This system has been in place since 1961.

Automation

Twenty four public library authorities have either automated or are in the process of automating their services, primarily for housekeeping purposes. Over half the library services have Internet access in at least one branch library each. Computer learning facilities which include a range of multi-media personal computers are also available in a growing number of libraries.

Staffing

Public library authority staffing levels in 1997 were recorded at 1320, with 20% of these being graded at professional level.

Collections

There are currently around 12 million items in stock in the public libraries in Ireland, serving a population of 3.6 million (1996 Census). Of total book stocks, 26% are categorised as children's, while stocks held in primary schools and supplied by the public library authorities amount to a further 20%. Thirty-nine per cent of adult stocks are of fiction.

Membership and usage

In 1997 (most recent figures available), there were 860,274 registered members in the public library system, equivalent to 24% of the population. This represents an increase in membership of 28% over the previous ten years, comprising a 43% increase in adult membership and a 6% increase in children's membership. The latter increase is noteworthy, given that over the same period demographic movements had resulted in a significant (19.3%) fall in the primary school population.

However, the membership figures do not fully reflect the level of usage by adults of the reference, information and other services in public libraries, such as local history and exhibitions, as this usage is not currently recorded in any systematic or comprehensive fashion. The IMS survey which was commissioned

as part of this report puts the level of public library usage in Ireland by adults at 32%, whereas the survey on international adult literacy, Education 2000, produced for the Department of

Education and Science by the Educational Research Centre at St. Patrick's College, states adult usage levels of 38%. Yet another usage level of 60% was quoted in the Combat Poverty/Arts Council survey.

The trend in book issues (averaging 3.6 issues per capita over the 7 year period up to 1997) is at best static. In international terms, book issues per capita are very low in Ireland. Comparative figures for 1993 (Table 2.1) seem to suggest that we are in the middle of the European spectrum of library use, above such countries as Germany and Spain, but well behind Denmark, the Netherlands and Britain.

Table 2.1: International library comparative statistics

Country	Book loans per capita	Materials expenditure per capita
Denmark	14.3	5.8
Netherlands	11.2	2.9
Britain*	9.2	2.4
Republic of Ireland	3.6	1.03
Germany	3.0	0.9
Spain	0.3	.2

Source: Sumsion, John; *International LIS Statistics: A View from IFLA*, Luxembourg, December 1997

The picture which emerges from the Irish issue statistics and the membership and usage data seems to support the observation that the increase in library usage is associated with greater exploitation of the library as an information and community resource and as a study place rather than as a place purely for borrowing books and other materials. It is also interesting to note from the international data an apparent correlation between expenditure on materials and book loans per capita.

There is a marked lack of benchmark information on library activities and performance which would assist Irish public libraries to set performance standards and targets. In Britain, a training package entitled *"Developing and using performance indicators in the management of public libraries"* has been produced for the use of U.K. local authorities (Eckstein, 1993). The lack of such targets and standards in Ireland applies a fortiori to those library activities which are separate from or independent of books and information, although both the 1995 Department of the Environment circular on Library Development Programmes and the guidelines for library policy statements subsequently issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1997 ask local authorities to include explicit objectives in relation to the arts.

The future of the public library service is currently being examined by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, which initiated a public library policy review in 1997. The review is being undertaken by a project team which includes, apart from officials of the Department, representatives from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the General Council of County Councils, the City and County Managers' Association, and the Library Association of Ireland, the professional body for librarians. The terms of reference for the review specifically include consideration of the evolving role of public libraries in the areas of information provision and cultural/heritage services.

The review is being undertaken within the general context of the Government's Strategic Management Initiative and the policy paper "Better Local Government: a Programme for Change". A related development in this area is the establishment within each city and county authority of Strategic Policy Committees to assist in the formulation and development of policy. The probability is that in most areas arts and libraries will report to the same Strategic Policy Committee. Membership of these Committees will include, as well as elected members, representatives from the local community drawn from six sectors:

- Agriculture/farming (except in urban areas)
- Environmental/conservation/culture
- Development/construction

- Business/commercial
- Trade union (not as staff representation)
- Community/voluntary/disadvantaged

The Administration of the Arts in Ireland

The body with responsibility for the arts in Ireland is An Chomhairle Ealaíon/ the Arts Council. The Council was established by The Arts Act 1951, amended in 1973 and has the following functions:-

- To stimulate public interest in the arts.
- To promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts.
- To assist in improving the standards of the arts.
- To organise exhibitions (within or without the state) of works of art and artistic craftsmanship.
- To advise the government, when requested to do so, on artistic matters.
- To co-operate with and assist any other people concerned directly or indirectly in the arts (this may include payments).
- To accept gifts of money, land and other property for purposes concerned with its functions.

The arts, as defined in the Act, are painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama, literature, design industry, and the fine and applied arts generally. Cinema was included in the brief in the 1973 amendment to the Act. In practice, a distinction is made between the contemporary arts and heritage arts with the Arts Council having statutory responsibility for the former. The Council is the Government's principal arts funding and advisory body and it is made up of a Chairman and a maximum of sixteen other members appointed by the Taoiseach for a five year term. The Council meets in plenary session about eleven times a year to set policies and make decisions within the terms of the Arts Acts. (Arts Council Annual Report 1996)

One of the most significant amendments to the 1951 Arts Act for the purposes of this Report was that Section 12 empowered local authorities to assist

"with money or in kind or by the provision of services or facilities (including the services of staff) the Council, or any person organising an exhibition or other event the effect of which when held would, in the opinion of the authority, stimulate public interest in the arts, promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, or assist in improving the standards of the arts."

The powers granted to local authorities under the 1973 amendment have been subject to different interpretations as the Act empowers but does not oblige a local authority to provide for the arts. Provision for the arts is a reserved function and all Arts Act decisions are made by the elected representatives.

Administration of the Arts - the national level

The Arts Council as a statutory body has operated under the "arms-length" principle which ensures that grant decisions are made at a distance from the political process, and until 1992, administrative responsibility was at the Department of the Taoiseach. A Junior Minister with responsibility for the arts was appointed in 1985 and the government published a White Paper on cultural policy in early 1987. Although the Council has primary responsibility for the contemporary arts, a number of arts and heritage bodies and institutions had come under the remit of the Department - for example the National Concert Hall in 1981 and the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 1991. These were established as autonomous bodies directly responsible to the Taoiseach's Department.

The appointment of a Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht in 1992 (renamed in 1997 as Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands) centralised arts and cultural activities in a single ministry for the first time and began a period of rapid cultural planning and expansion in Ireland. The autonomy of the Arts Council was respected and the Council formulated the Arts Plan 1995-1997 which was adopted by Government in 1995. This formed the basis for a programme of action for the three year period which was ultimately extended to four years.

The Arts Council in its second Arts Plan has defined its core values in the following statement of purpose:

"The Arts Council is an autonomous statutory body, appointed by Government and funded by the Oireachtas to promote and assist the arts and to develop public appreciation for the arts. Our role is to enhance the quality of people's experience of the arts, to advocate the unique value of the arts in society, and to recognise both promise and achievement in the making of art. We acknowledge both the bilingual and the international context of the arts in Ireland.

We value excellence, innovation and diversity. We support the expression of these values through policies and programmes for the development of the arts, alone or in partnership with others".

Administration of the arts - local authority level

A partnership exists between the Arts Council and local authorities and this is most clearly expressed in the employment of local authority arts officers. Twenty eight of these positions have now been established. (Arts Council Annual Report 1996), and the Arts Council also provides programming grants to local authorities. The Arts Council's local authority partnership expenditure in 1998 is budgeted to be £913,000 (figures supplied by the Arts Council).

In 1994, local authorities spent a total of £3.9m on arts related areas (Combat Poverty/The Arts Council 1997). However, these figures include expenditure for 18 arts officers and are likely to be higher for 1998 with 28 arts officers employed. The "reserve function" nature of arts expenditure in the local authority structure is also reflected in the wide funding disparities between areas. County arts plans have been developed by a number of local authorities and in 1996 two counties - Donegal and Laois - were given priority funding for the purposes of arts development. The Arts Council has also identified as a priority the need for "greater integration of approaches and co-operation between the various Departments and agencies involved in local authority arts development." (Arts Council Annual Report 1996) It has begun partnership arrangements with Macra na Feirme for the purpose of animating existing cultural networks and with Údarás na Gaeltachta with a view to establishing support systems for the development of the arts in Gaeltacht areas.

In general, local authority arts provision is growing and the possibilities exist for further expansion and increased collaboration in the coming years.

Chapter 3

What the public says: the consultation exercise

The consultation process

In May 1997 the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee advertised in the national newspapers for submissions from interested groups and members of the public in relation to the Committee's work. The text of the advertisement is reproduced in Appendix 4. Fifty-five submissions were received, of which 34 came from organisations and groups. There was a particularly high response from Co. Kildare.

In this chapter, we summarise some of the broad themes which emerged, and highlight areas where important differences of interest or opinion seem to have emerged.

- Libraries in daily life
- The library infrastructure
- Access, participation and disadvantage
- Arts and libraries patterns of co-operation
- The marketing challenge
- Partnerships, programmes and structures

Libraries in daily life

Almost all submissions emphasised the central role of libraries in human development - in the words of the Director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), as "repositories of ideas and experience". The importance of all forms of artistic expression and experience, and particularly the value of libraries as relatively accessible points of contact with the arts, was stressed by most submissions. This point was most strongly put by those who were representing disadvantaged groups or expressing their needs - groups such as people with disabilities, travellers, the elderly, and - a category identified in several submissions - pre-school and primary school children, who were regarded as being particularly disadvantaged in the area of visual education. In the words of the submission from a community activist:

"It is hard to imagine two areas more marginalised within Irish education than the visual arts and the pre-school sector".

The County Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee submission identified as the primary function of the library service:

"the availability of the literature of learning and the Higher Arts. The supply of cheaply available fiction and the sporadic supply of videos and tapes are not appropriate budgetary priorities given their easy availability in commercial outlets."

This is an interesting counterpoint to the more common view that the provision of tapes, videos and other non-book media is an essential function of the modern library, or the view expressed by Comedia in Britain that they support the broad appeal of the library service (Greenhalgh et al, 1995). (But note that a number of submissions have been very critical of the range and number of such items available in public libraries, and some have expressed the view that if a library service cannot provide a comprehensive service in this field, it should withdraw from the field.)

An area where deficiencies were identified in the library service's core role was in relation to the Irish language. A writer in Irish, Biddy Jenkinson, noted that:

"any young student entering a public library in Dublin for the first time would never suspect that the two-thousand-year-old literary tradition of our country had been in Irish alone until recently. 'Irish' writers mean Joyce, Yeats and Synge. It is true that a persevering student will eventually find a copy of Aodh de Blácam's literary history...or come to the Táin via Yeats. Maybe a reference in a history book

will draw the Annals of the Four Masters to their

attention, but where are they likely to find a reference copy of that? Céitinn, Ó Bruadair, Máire Bhuí, Raftery, the Sagas (except, perhaps, Thomas Kinsella's Táin), Agallamh na Seanórach.....name it. Then try to find it!"

This problem attracted a submission from Bord na Gaeilge, which made a structured series of proposals to improve the situation of Irish literature in libraries. These included offers of co-operation in information dissemination, oral proficiency courses for library staff, Irish language readers' circles, permanent exhibitions of photographs of 20th century Irish-language writers, the promotion of translations from the Irish, and an award scheme which Bord na Gaeilge would sponsor.

The library infrastructure

A number of pertinent observations and suggestions emerged from the submissions in areas such as library staff and training, library design, and the space and other resources available for the arts. Creative Activity for Everyone (CAFE) reported the results of a library survey which they had carried out which found that while 72% of branch libraries held a variety of arts activities, only 51 % had dedicated arts spaces. Co. Kilkenny VEC noted that

"the general purpose areas of local libraries are not appropriate and special areas are required."

Both the Irish Wheelchair Association and the National Rehabilitation Board drew attention to the need to make infrastructural provision for the needs of handicapped library users, although neither organisation offered a view as to the extent to which these needs are currently met or not met.

Interestingly, the ILAC centre library in Dublin, which received almost universal praise during all other research phases of this project, came in for criticism in relation to its provision for children from a literature-based organisation which found the children's section to have little display space and to be poorly lit and apparently run down.

The same organisation also stressed the need for separate sections in public libraries for teenage readers, a point which has recurred during the research.

It is clear from many of the submissions that the library service is regarded as suffering from a built infrastructure which is showing its age, and from design deficiencies even in some modern buildings. Clearly many respondents are well aware of the extent to which the public library service has been starved of resources in recent decades, particularly as regards capital allocations. The impression left by these submissions, however, is that the writers believe that fairly modest expenditures of financial resources, backed up by much better planning and design, could, over time, remedy a high proportion of the infrastructure problems. Midland Arts stressed:

"the need to have intervention at the planning and design levels, adequate and enabling spaces, sufficient staff numbers, and adequate finance."

Several submissions focused on the role of library staff in relation to arts activities, and the support which such staff need. The issue was put clearly, if tendentiously, by one individual:

"The artistic and cultural roles of libraries have been identified and accepted, as evidenced by the involvement of library services in promoting art exhibitions and lectures. There is probably a need to formalise the involvement of library services in such activities by the involvement of staff qualified or competent to deal with the promotion of arts in the community. It would seem that the current employment policy in public libraries allows for no more than the provision of exhibition spaces in or near public libraries, without the necessary back up staff to promote the public library's involvement in the arts."

The National Rehabilitation Board made a very detailed submission which set out how the basic needs of people with disabilities should be met in libraries. This is considered later in this chapter: it suffices to note here that several of their recommendations - such as the use of colour, good lighting, clear signage, seating in exhibition areas - would also be attractive to many people not suffering from disabilities, for example the elderly and small children.

Cerebral Palsy Ireland (CPI) also made such detailed recommendations.

Many submissions referred to the application of modern technologies in libraries. ARTHOUSE quoted from

the 1997 Information Society Strategy for Action (Forfás, 1997):

"The global inter-connectivity facilitated by information and communications technologies has implications not only for economics but also for culture, work and learning, which are all now subject to global forces for change.....The Information Society will give birth to a 'Second Renaissance' in Europe in general and in Ireland in particular. A fuller and more enriching exploitation of Ireland's cultural and language heritage will result in a new flowering of creativity, cultural development and community growth....."

ARTHOUSE go on to express the view that the exploitation of these technologies will represent "a leap forward for the arts in Ireland through access and participation", and to suggest:

"The impact of new media technologies upon library systems and resources is going to change the culture of librarianship. This is inevitable. It is time for libraries to begin to adapt ways of working with the community in order to achieve a more gradual shift within the library culture which is flexible and capable of embracing change."

The City Arts Centre in Dublin also argued that:

"New technology should be at the heart of any developments within the library sector and libraries should be seen as sources of information and central resources for accessing new technologies by the community. Particular attention should be paid to children in this regard and skills training in new technology should be part of any such programme."

At a more modest level of technology, one submission, from a writer, noted that "access to photocopiers, fax machines and computers would be very welcome." Another submission from an individual called for "accessibility for public to use Internet facilities".

The arts: access, participation and disadvantage

In the context of this report, "access" can have different meanings. Physical access is a key issue for the handicapped, but the general public may be affected by such issues as *vertical* access (to do with social and educational background) and *horizontal* access (determined by the regional dispersion of facilities). All of these types of access surfaced in our research, and in the submissions received from the public and from arts organisations.

For example, in a pilot study described by the National Adult Literacy Agency, several respondents told them that the library was for "educated" people, and that the complexity of books in libraries meant that users were in danger of "walking into a cathedral with hob-nail boots on."

On the other hand, IMMA sees public libraries as "ideal partners for new Access programmes to do with information and imagination". In IMMA's view:

"Libraries provide a point of access to a range of artistic, cultural and educational material which is utilised by all members of the community. This access crosses all social, economic and generational boundaries....Libraries are key agents who can support the policy of the museum's education and Community strategy and practice in creating access at local level in the context of a familiar setting."

Cerebral Palsy Ireland described case studies of interaction of people with disabilities with the public library service in the cases described, the libraries provided excellent experiences, which highlighted the role that the service can play in relation to access.

However, both CPI and An Foras Gnó identified the need for opening hours and opening days to be brought into line with the needs of users.

In relation to broad social participation in the arts, the Athlone Writers' Group described a set of experiences and perceptions which is widely shared by those voluntary arts groups which made submissions:

"In the absence of an Arts Centre we feel that the public library makes more concessions to community arts than any other local body does. Our local authority no longer advertises or invites groups to seek grants under the Arts Act. The public library in Athlone is the only public place within a thirty-mile radius or so where one will come across a representative selection of the works of modern Irish artists. We feel as a writers' group that such exposure to and cross-fertilisation between the various strands of the arts is most important in the local community."

A writer made a similar point succinctly, and very modestly:

"Whereas I am not a major writer, I make full use of my small talent with minor success. I could not do it without my local library at my elbow."

This comment highlights a factor which emerged very clearly in our discussions with artists (covered in Chapter 5). This is the *multiple values* which libraries potentially have for all artists from whatever discipline. To an artist in Ireland, more especially one living and working away from the main centres of population, a library can fulfil several essential needs:

- it provides a venue for the artist to exhibit or present his or her work;
- it helps to develop the audience for the artist's work;
- it provides sources of inspiration to nourish the artistic imagination and
- it is an information point through which the artist can keep up to date on developments throughout Ireland, Europe and the world in his or her discipline.

The issues of access and participation take on particular point when disadvantaged groups and areas are considered (disadvantage in this context we distinguish from disability). Such groups and areas can include *groups* such as the travelling community and areas such as parts of cities where there are (for example) disproportionate levels of unemployment, poor housing conditions, or low educational attainment. Research (for example, the 1997 Combat Poverty/Arts Council report, "Poverty" Access and Participation in the Arts) has shown that such groups experience problems of access to the arts more than the general community does, and that they participate in the arts less. Many of the submissions we received were very conscious of these problems and of the potential of the public library service to help ameliorate them. City Arts Centre, in its submission, traced the development of pro-active arts programming by libraries in the late seventies, and its contraction, presumably as a result of financial pressures, in the eighties, and made the specific suggestion:

"that libraries have a considered policy and remit with regard to cultural deprivation, particularly with regard to young people. This policy and remit should be informed by contemporary research housed in the Arts Council and Combat Poverty with reference to the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities but should have a very definite local perspective."

Kilkenny VEC also referred to the work of the Combat Poverty Agency, which:

"has consistently drawn attention to cultural deprivation and exclusion as aspects of poverty. Clearly the very first step in access to culture is literacy, yet no national literacy and cultural- access strategy exists."

Participation and society's perceptions are also an issue for such disadvantaged groups, as the submission from one community activist stated:

"Community art and the notion that artists might be readily found among the traveller community, refugees, illiterate people, prisoners, young people, the unemployed, old people, people with disabilities, often elicits its own prejudiced reaction among those who control and retain power and possession in the world of arts."

Arts and libraries: patterns of co-operation

Between both the submissions which concentrated on the traditional, literature-related functions of libraries, and those which ranged further among the other arts, some interesting anecdotes, experiences, perceptions and proposals emerged. Some organisations, such as IMMA and the National Gallery, already feature extensive library-based activities in their outreach programmes.

Many more either have had occasional involvement with the public library service, or would wish to do so. Ireland Literature Exchange, in its submission, identified the reason for this:

"Public libraries, as the most extensive physical cultural network in Ireland, play a significant part in the internal development and encouragement of literary sensibility and appreciation. While other art forms have begun to receive wider recognition and more public exposure over recent years, literary fiction and poetry must surely remain the most easily accessible of art forms in terms of financial outlay and audience engagement. The presence of a fairly extensive network of county, branch and mobile libraries throughout Ireland means that reasonably convenient access to books is possible in most parts of the country."

The submission went on to identify some initiatives which the library service could consider these were in supporting the work of Irish writers, in co-operative ventures with publishers, and in the development of international contacts.

Wexford County Council expanded on the services which libraries provide to artists - mentioned earlier - with the following classification:

"As an information agency the public library provides the following information services, and these can be developed in co-operation with arts agencies:

- research, for artists professional and amateur;
- current awareness of developments elsewhere in their field;
- publicity for the work of local artists, via a databank of their works, and contact details: the library can offer communication opportunities for artists with their publics;
- educational support for teachers and other educators developing their own knowledge base and imparting an enthusiasm to others;
- current awareness/exposure to emerging art forms, e.g., information technology-based;
- general information, e.g. funding, management, promotion, relevant when applied to particular circumstances "

ARTHOUSE, in its submission, went to the root of the Committee's work:

"The role of the Arts Officers in regard to the provision of the arts in libraries would seem to be key. The potential to allot Arts Officers a budget to match the contribution of the libraries in organising and implementing arts and culture projects should be considered. The inclusion of a special 'library projects' strand under Arts Council project funding should also be considered.....fostering relationships at a local level; between Arts Officers and library staff would be a necessary step with a view to removing obstacles and promoting co-operation. Many of the Arts Officers and the libraries enjoy a strong relationship..."

A point further supported by the submission of the Association of Artists in Ireland (AAI):

".....the public library system is the only existing countrywide mechanism for cultural programme delivery. As such the potential role of public libraries in towns that are not county towns is unique. Such a scenario would give the library building a much wider cultural purpose than in towns which have a range of cultural programme providers. Attention to this point would ensure that provision is designed to fill gaps where gaps exist, and to avoid overlap and duplication of existing provision."

Cuala Verbal Arts made a most comprehensive submission consisting of practical (but unprioritised) proposals across the range of library activities, covering necessary facilities, links with the community, especially in areas of deprivation, services for children, residencies, staff training, exhibitions on child-centred topics, competitions, networks, use of the Internet, civic and community events, and the creation and use of dedicated arts spaces.

A local authority member who made a submission expressed satisfaction and pride at the activities of the library service in his county. As he put it:

"The twinning of arts in all their forms with libraries has been a very happy marriage. They complement each other, and (this) is a concept to be encouraged."

The marketing challenge

A theme which has assumed greater significance as the work of the Committee has proceeded has been the perception that libraries are rather inclined to modesty, that this posture is not appropriate to an arts organisation, and that libraries (in co-operation with the arts community, and civic society generally) should be active in publicising their activities, capabilities and resources. Many submissions, either directly or by implication, spoke of the need for marketing and publicity for library-based activities. (This was also a theme in the essays submitted: see the next chapter). In the words of AAI:

"The public library service to date has tended to hide its light under a bushel. It is timely for the service to actively market itself and to enlarge its own user base."

And a private individual, in his submission, stated the case more strongly:

"Libraries, even in rural areas influence the daily lives there should be a very positive public relations policy with its objective the advertisement of the existence of a veritable cornucopia of information on art....in my opinion the essential ingredient that is lacking in the service is public awareness of all the information that librarians and arts officers can provide....let us (proclaim) the expertise, the enthusiasm and the dedication of staff in the larger branches of the service."

In short, there are calls for what has been described, in the U.K. context, as a "sleeping giant" to awaken (Greenhaigh et al., 1995).

Partnerships, programmes and structures

The most valuable fruits of the public consultation exercise were the experiences and lessons about co-operative ventures in the arts which a number of organisations described. Several of these made some reasonably concrete suggestions for the Committee's consideration. While a number were at an implementation, rather than policy, level, some comments should be of real value.

AAI, for example, focused on the local and regional co-ordinating role which the public library can play vis-a-vis arts bodies of all kinds:

"Library as computerised database for cultural information for the county: The information could be networked throughout the county so as to be available on-line in all its library buildings with each town responsible for updating the details in its own area. Such a database would cater for a wide range of cultural information needs of the general public as well as artists, other arts workers, and event organisers. The information should include details of national services and events, local ones and relevant career information. Internet access in libraries could be a source of international information."

CAFE, which works with the Arts Council in developing community arts, maintains a database of 700 individuals and 1300 groups (CAFEdata), and produces a bi-monthly community arts magazine (CAFEnews): CAFE relies extensively on the public library service to support and disseminate their information, and has carried out a number of surveys which highlight both the current relevance to community arts of the public library network, and its untapped potential in some areas:

"CAFE has seen, through our involvement in the Local Urban and Rural Development Programme (ADM) and the Arts Awareness Intervention (Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht/European Social Fund), in tackling problems associated (with) areas of social disadvantage that libraries are an important facility in these areas and the arts at community and local level can provide a useful channel for people to begin (to) participate more fully in society."

CAFE expressed an interest in furthering the Committee's work. IMMA's submission expresses a concept of partnership:

"For any national arts institution, which takes engagement and empowerment of communities

seriously, libraries, their structure and operation would make ideal partners for new Access programmes to do with information and imagination. This partnership should not just be about moving art objects around (i.e., exhibition mechanism) but about distributing new ways of seeing, new ways of 'realising' art and artists....there is a need to formalise such relationships "

Seeing libraries as "key agents who can support the policy of the museum's Education and Community strategy and practice in creating access at local level in the context of a familiar setting", IMMA says that:

"A key aspect of all models of practice developed to date has been in partnering with other organisations and agencies to develop collaborative projects with shared agendas. The library system is one such potential partner...dissemination of good quality arts practice in either formal or informal education and community settings is essential in raising people's awareness and knowledge of the arts. The library system is a key agent in this process"

And again:

"This position of trust which the libraries enjoy provides a comfortable and unthreatening environment in which the community can experience new and unfamiliar forms of artistic media....(and) can be exploited in bringing in established groups and organisations working at local level who are interested in developing access programmes."

The interest of IMMA in further development of its existing relationships with the public library system (identified by many Chief Librarians in the survey described in Chapter 6) is summed up in their submission"

"Stepped programmes of engagement should be pursued, tuned differently to each context being addressed...specific research could be carried out between museums and libraries {initially on a pilot basis} to explore potential new models...."

One county library service made a number of specific recommendations for improving co-operation and developing strong partnerships. These included:

- "co-operation must be maintained with other bodies and groups involved in the arts/education, e.g. educational bodies – VECs; Education Centres and Local Partner Administrative Groups.
- more consideration must be given to the promotion of the arts in areas of Development and Planning within the local authority;
- co-operation between the local authority and the Arts Council must be reviewed and developed.
- County/City Librarians as a group should have regular contact with the Arts Council."

The submission from the National Gallery of Ireland also referred to its existing extensive outreach involvement with bodies and groups around the country, particularly its experience with public libraries. From the experience of its pilot projects in libraries, the Gallery drew some conclusions:

- "the pilot outreach programmes were planned for a three-year period, in order to allow time to establish the project locally, and also to enable library staff to be in a position to take over management of the project....recent research has highlighted the fact that projects of this nature need to be sustained over a much longer period than three years...
- library resources appear to be inadequate and incapable of supporting this kind of ongoing project....ideally, the Library Council in conjunction with the Arts Council should set up a joint funding structure to support outreach work....

- if a post of *Community Outreach Officer* was created, funded jointly by the Library Council and the Arts Council, this would enable both organisations to draw upon the resources of a variety of (artists)..."

Poetry Ireland described the benefits of the Writers in Schools Scheme, (which it run on behalf of the Arts Council) in which it co-funds, with schools, writer visits to classrooms. A similar project with libraries receives matching funds from the Arts Council: increased funding for this could yield comparable benefits.

Chapter 4

"This sense of ecstasy and freedom": young people and libraries

The competition

As an important part of the public consultation process, and in association with the "Irish Times", the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee organised an essay competition for children and young adults on the theme "What the Public Library means to me". The competition was announced in the "Irish Times" in December 1996, and entries were invited in two age categories - under 18 and under 14. Three hundred and fifty five entries were received from all over the country, with some local concentration in particular areas and schools. The winning entries in each category, by Lorraine Kelly of Ballymoe, Co. Galway in the under 18 category, and Laura Ní Bhrolacháin of Cnoc na Ros, Co. Derry in the under 14 category, were published in the "Irish Times" on 2 July 1997. (A full list of prizewinners is given in Appendix 11.)

The essays submitted are not claimed to be in any way representative, and it is not possible to qualify the perceptions and opinions expressed in them by reference to family background, educational qualifications or occupational grouping of parents, or any other measure. It is very likely, for example, that the children of adults who are non-users of the public library system are under-represented, but we have no way of being categorical about this.

It is also worth remembering that the essay title did not mention the arts, and thus entrants were not guided towards expressing opinions on arts and libraries. However, this may well enhance rather than reduce the value of the essays to the Committee's research, and not only because of the spontaneity of any arts-related ideas which they contained. It will become clear in the course of this report that there will be three pillars to arts/libraries collaboration: a strong library service, a strong arts service, and partnerships between the two. The young people who submitted essays have pointed the way towards building the first of these pillars.

General

Asking children and young adults their opinions of libraries is bound to be a rewarding experience. Books and children go together the experience of learning to read shades, for most children, into a love of the stories, and later into a curiosity about books and what they might hold. Most young people are seized by the wonder of imaginative literature, and the journey from childhood towards adulthood is marked by a progression from one type of literature to another. For most children, each step in this progress is the occasion for a renewed sense of wonder and delight. And, of course, what young people experience from books is the purest development of the artistic imagination: not a bad foundation for a perception of libraries as centres for the arts.

When, therefore, the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee invited children and young people to enter an essay competition on "What the Public Library means to me", it was perhaps predictable that love of reading would overflow the pages of the entries, and that for the great majorities of entrants, this would translate into love of libraries. And so it has proved awareness of what one sixteen-year-old described as "this sense of ecstasy and freedom" provided by libraries pervades their reports. In the words of another sixteen-year-old, the public library is:

"the only place where we can move between different fascinating worlds safely. No other place provides that excitement and mysticism."

And one of the junior entrants, a thirteen-year-old from Northern Ireland, summarised the library's universal appeal:

"To me now the library is a place to escape to when the rest of the world becomes just too much. You can forget everything in a book. The library is a place you are always welcome. You can walk in any time, find a comfortable chair and a good book, and nothing else matters. Even if you go into the library feeling sad or angry you always come out feeling that bit happier."

Constantly recurring adjectives used by entrants in describing their perceptions of their local library are "soothing", "peaceful", "quiet", "mysterious" It is salutary to remember that these qualities are as valued by children and young adults as they are by older people.

What was not so predictable was that so many entrants would be keen and well-informed critics of public libraries, so well able to identify good and bad experiences, so well able to distinguish the ideal from the actual. The essays in fact have made a notable contribution to the work of the Committee, and significantly influenced the recommendations in this report.

The library's core role: a treasury

"Believe me, when you're ten and there's no more Roald Dahl it's pretty devastating".

Particularly with the younger essayists, the enchantment which they find in libraries seems to be supported by book stocks which fulfil their needs. However, an important and disturbing theme emerging from the essays is that the library habit, acquired at a very young age and for years providing enormous pleasure and excitement, frequently withers as children enter the mid-teen years. This is perhaps not surprising, given the way that children are changing at that time, but what is worrying is that for many reaching the end of their schooldays, the alienation from the library, even when clearly regretted at some deep level, has become profound:

"Many people used to be members of (the library) when I was younger, nowadays though I have lost contact with my old friend."

While this phenomenon is not new, it would be expected that the library service would attempt to retain its young members. But there is evidence that these young adults, as we might think of them, are poorly served by their libraries. A recurring theme in the essays is the very poor book stock designed for the teen-age reader. As one disappointed sixteen-year-old put it, his attempt to excuse the library actually reinforcing the point:

"I grew up as a member of my public library and was 'encouraged' to visit the library once or twice a month to find a new and interesting book to read. While this was enjoyable and fruitful for a while, eventually the books became less and less interesting, though I am not discounting changes in my own interests and attitudes."

The same writer made a clarion call for the public library service to break out of what he saw as their poor image with the public:

"Have libraries done anything to counteract this problem? Do they publicise, give talks to schools, try and develop their range of reading material and so increase their catchment area?.....libraries have neglected that all-important asset in modern living, publicity....this position can be resolved, however. Through advertising and publicity, yes."

The scope of library resources

Nearly half of the essays submitted came from Dublin and its contiguous counties. A surprisingly high proportion of these referred to the ILAC centre library, almost always with admiration. Many compared it to their local branch libraries, to the latter's disadvantage.

While no entrant expected that their local branch could compete with the ILAC centre facilities, it was remarkable that the bigger library evoked such strongly positive reactions, even from professed non-library users. The special nature of the ILAC library - its size, the comprehensiveness of its collections, its specialised collections, its audio-visual facilities, the use it makes of technology - seems to open the eyes of young visitors to the sheer potential of libraries to broaden them as human beings in all kinds of directions. In short, the difference between ILAC and the local branch is seen not just as a matter of scale, but also a matter of kind and quality.

There are probably some subtleties to be taken into account here. When describing the almost tangible pleasure they derive from the act of reading, many entrants convey an idea of the library as a cosy, enveloping place, where they can hide away and be lost in their own world - and their local branch fills the need perfectly. But when they think of libraries as treasure-houses of information, as doors to a wider world, the shortcomings of the small suburban or rural branch become all too obvious. One entrant, after describing the joy of libraries, says:

"I have only ever experienced this sense of ecstasy and freedom in large libraries such as the ILAC, and not in my (local) public library."

While one of the prize-winning essayists in the senior category admitted:

"I am now a member of the ILAC Centre library, which is almost a sensuous experience. My eyes applaud the well-lit reading areas and with the library's audio facilities my ears jump for joy on hearing old blue eyes himself murmur 'For once in my life' and other such melodies which are impossible to buy in any retail shop. For old times sake I've been known to visit the children's library and catch up on 'Cat in the Hat' but that's my little secret."

On the other hand, an eleven-year-old entrant took a contrarian stance in expressing a preference for her local library

"because (it) is old and there is lots more space because people tend to use libraries with more modern facilities."

Taken in conjunction with the criticisms frequently expressed of the range of materials and equipment available in branch libraries, some of these essays are putting a question to policy makers - what are the cost/benefit trade-offs between small libraries widely dispersed and fewer but much larger and better equipped libraries? It seems that essayists were fully aware both of the value of the local library and the need for well-stocked central libraries in county towns or other centres.

The library as a study aid

A very high proportion of entrants, particularly those in the senior category, refer to the assistance they derive from the library's facilities in completing school work and projects. They mention the reference sections, the computers, the tapes and CDs which they can access:

"To me the library has many advantages as I am in an exam year and my friends and I find the peace and quiet both soothing and effective in creating a relaxing atmosphere just right for studying, and the numerous volumes of encyclopaedias and the advanced knowledge of the computers all come in handy when preparing projects for school."

Of course, the real value of the library in these circumstances may not be its collections per se, but rather the lifetime lesson it can impart in *how to find information*. One essayist put it like this:

"It was during transition year that I discovered the skills necessary to accumulate relevant information - something which will be very useful for later years."

Interestingly, some showed an awareness of the effect that study-related use of the library was having on their relationship with their "old friend" One example:

"The majority of students nowadays visit their local public library for one reason and one reason only - to obtain the necessary information to complete projects and other school work. Although libraries have proven invaluable for this task unfortunately the link established in the student's mind between libraries and school means that libraries are therefore to be completely avoided for all other purposes. Besides, if you spend your free time in a library you incur the risk of being branded a bit of a nerd, however unfair it may seem."

The same essayist proposed the widespread introduction of cheap Internet access points in libraries as a way of attracting young people into public libraries.

The public library's wider artistic, cultural and civic role

Most essayists adhered fairly strictly to the essay brief, and only a minority attempted to explore wider roles for the public library beyond what they saw as its central roles as a source of imaginative literature, a source of practical information and research data, and a place to study. But many pointed to the particular function of libraries as a repository of local history and lore. This is a particularly interesting function in rapidly-growing urban and suburban areas, where the fabric of the past is being lost under the weight of development, and significant sections of the population lack local roots.

"Libraries also have a role to play in recording, collecting and analysing the history of communities...ancient maps and documents...."

However, most of the entrants observed that the walls of their local public library were frequently used for art exhibitions, and that children's art competitions were library-based. They all saw this as a normal and desirable part of the library's work. As one entrant put it:

"Public libraries have different functions other than just books for reading. Many public libraries hold art exhibitions for the local artists. This function is of great importance to local painters, sculptors and writers. They also hold competitions for the younger children of our society, in art and writing. These competitions give kids the chance to be recognised and rewarded for their efforts.....we see the libraries' involvement in local society, and the good it can do."

One entrant summed up many of the objectives of the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee:

"Another thing the public library should contain is poetry readings and workshops and exhibitions. These should be of local poets and artists in the local community. This would be of benefit to both artists, poets and the local community. The workshops would encourage the local community to develop and sharpen their skills. These poetry readings and exhibitions would bring the community together more."

The same essayist identified an important civic role for libraries:

"The public library would also be a good place to hold debates. These would be debates on public matters. This could be on the different opinions of the local community (on) things to go ahead in the future. This would provide a more democratic society, where all those interested would have a say in what is going on in the community. This could be related to drugs and violence and other crucial matters."

The conception expressed here, of the library as a pro-active agent in civic and social development, is a challenging one. To some extent it highlights the paucity and relative ineffectiveness of existing structures of local democracy in Ireland.

Examples abounded of specific arts activities in libraries, including the following from a ten-year-old studying for a music examination who had lost the use of the family piano:

"Then I heard about the piano and harp rooms (in the local public library). It was just what I was looking for. The piano was in good condition, and it was no problem for me to use it. I practised Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and my standard didn't drop. I think it was a brilliant idea to put in the piano and harp rooms. They were a big help to me."

The good news for that writer is that the Arts Council has a policy of putting pianos into local authorities, and they have already been installed in two authority areas.

And a seven-year-old prize-winner pointed to the occasional puppet show in his local library as one of its attractions. (The same essayist had a keen nose for value, noting that he could borrow seventy-eight books a year for just fifty pence)

Access

For most entrants, the *openness* of public libraries was an attraction the fact that no examination has to be passed or qualification held distinguishes libraries from other institutions where the freedom of children and teen-agers can be circumscribed by rules This was well expressed by one seventeen-year-old:

"The best thing is that this information is open to anybody who wants it. It never wants anything for providing this service except a couple of pounds every year...."

while a prize-winning essay proclaimed that:

"the public library has no boundaries to which its members must conform - neither class, age, wealth, religion nor race".

Yet another:

"It's a mystery to me that more people don't avail of this facility."

On the other hand, for a number of entrants, their local public libraries were inconveniently situated. A twelve-year old entrant, stressing how much she loved the library, complained:

"I get to go to the library only once a week because I live eight miles away from one library and twenty miles away from the other. If I lived in the town I would go to the library every day.....without the library I would be lost. I would have nothing to read.....I have been joined since I was two years old. Each week I get seven books but in a week I could read up to ten books.

To me, the library means happiness."

Writers living in rural areas expected inconvenience: however, some who were in urban areas expected the public library, as a key community resource, to be centrally located and served by public transport.

"The location of the library is important-it must be accessible from all areas."

(Although it must be said that for many entrants convenience was a minor issue compared with the scope and quality of library facilities - for a number living in the Dublin region, the ILAC centre library was an incomparably better experience than their local branch library, despite its distance from their homes and schools.)

The other access issue frequently mentioned in the essays was opening hours. Particularly for the older age groups, concerned with preparation for examinations, it made little sense that by the time they had finished work, the library was closing.

Chapter 5

The Artist's Voice

A methodological concern in undertaking this study was the question of how best to hear the opinions of artists who had experience of and/or opinions about arts activities and events in public libraries. After considering methods such as postal and telephone questionnaires, the route eventually followed was to set up a small number of "focus group" discussions. Three of these were held, in Enniscorthy, Castlebar and Dun Laoghaire. Twenty artists participated (a full list is given in Appendix 5), and a rather wide range of arts disciplines was represented, as is illustrated below:

Arts discipline	Numbers attending
Sculpture	4
Community arts	3
Music	3
Painting	3
Poetry	3
Dance	1
Drama	1
Prose writing	1
Puppet theatre	1

Discussion was structured around eight broad topics:

1. Are public libraries suitable venues for your art form?
2. Have you ever used a public library for an arts event or activity?
3. Would you use a library again?
4. In your opinion, is there scope for the library service to do more to promote access to and participation in the arts?
5. If there is such scope, are there obstacles to its full development?
6. What are the obstacles to fuller access to and participation in your art form by (a) children; (b) young adults; (c) disadvantaged groups?
7. What policies would you like to see put in place to help promote better access to and fuller participation in your art form by (a) children; (b) young adults; (c) disadvantaged groups?
8. Can you see a place for the public library service in helping to develop access to and participation in your art form by (a) children; (b) young adults; (c) disadvantaged groups?

While these broad headings were used to guide and bring focus to the meetings (which lasted between two and three hours in each case), rigid bounds were not imposed on the discussions, which, as is usual on these occasions, took on a life and dynamic of their own. In the following paragraphs we pick out some of the key themes which emerged from the discussions.

Overall experience and perceptions of the public library service

The overwhelming impression gained from virtually all participants, and vigorously supported by them with personal experiences, was of the *suitability* of public libraries in general for the practice of their particular art, and the *value* which they had derived from their library experiences. We had enthusiastic artists who were very well disposed towards the public library service, wished it well, and wanted it to develop its wider arts role. (Regard should be had to the possibility of bias in these findings: it is possible, although we are not

aware of evidence to this effect, that the artists who participated were not representative

It is appropriate to reiterate here a point made earlier that to the artist, a library has at least three roles:

- through its collections of art periodicals and professional publications, as a source of *information and inspiration* relevant to the individual's personal and artistic development;
- through the quality and scope of its stocks of books, periodicals, tapes, CDs, photographs, slides, films etc. as a key agent in developing the *audience* for the art, and
- through making its space and other facilities available to the artist, as an important *venue* for arts events and activities, frequently the only one in a locality.

The extent to which the discussions moved between these functions was fascinating: while the emphasis varied between art forms, and the particular attitudes and interests of individual artists, it would not be an exaggeration to say that most artists had a strongly holistic view of the library as a central agent in the cultural and civic life of the community. In many communities, the local library already provides a neutral space for all kinds of community debate.

This was an interesting and potentially important finding. As the topics which we put forward for discussion (given above) illustrate, there was an expectation that the focus of attention would be the role of the library as a *venue for exhibition or presentation*. However, to some artists, for example to a sculptor, whose works, by virtue of their scale, are totally unsuitable to library exhibition, this was by no means the end of the library's importance to them. This is a useful reinforcement of the library's traditional role as a centre for books, information and education, but it does put the spotlight on the size and quality of specialised collections held in libraries, and opens up, for example, the debate about the respective weights which national library policy should assign to large, fully-resourced city or regional libraries on the one hand, and small local libraries on the other. It also provides further support for the accelerated exploitation and greater awareness of national (and international) computerised collection databases and inter-library lending networks. The existing CD-ROM based inter-library loan system for non-fiction materials organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, which covers the island of Ireland and includes a catalogue of over 1 3 million books, needs to be more widely promoted.

The suitability of the public library for arts activities and events

As stated, nearly all artists found public libraries to be suitable venues for their art, ranging from dance to puppetry. Obviously, there are some forms of exhibition, presentation and participation which demand special-purpose premises or equipment. However, the more relevant qualification to the general statement is that there is enormous variation in the type and size of available spaces. We deduce two categories of issue here. One is the special needs of particular art forms, which we refer to further below. The other is the perceived absolute "rightness" or "wrongness" of individual libraries as arts venues. The fact that many public libraries, particularly the older ones, have no designated or suitable space has been well aired throughout this report. It must also be recorded, however, that many artists attach at least equal importance to the atmosphere of libraries, and what they see as the "friendliness" of the space. Against this criterion, many libraries receive lavish praise, but many more are harshly criticised. (It is interesting that some very similar points, although from a different perspective, were made by essay contestants: children seem to be acutely conscious of the atmosphere and overall environment of libraries)

Specific points were made by artists from different traditions

- a dancer running dance workshops has very particular requirements in terms of floor materials and construction,
- a composer and musician is conscious of the need for musical performance not to distract other library users;
- a poet complained that his readings in one large branch library were interrupted by children in the same area;
- at one discussion group, both visual artists present found the libraries in their county to be unsuitable for exhibition.

There may be value in distinguishing between, on the one hand, artists of national or international standing, whose work is customarily displayed in purpose-built surroundings to the highest professional level, and on the other hand, artists who do not have such a basis for comparison. The first group will naturally be more critical of the facilities of a public library. However, such artists will probably expect large, modern libraries in county towns to provide space of an acceptable standard. Making a related point, one such professional artist said:

"Professional artists won't come in just for the space. So if you want to involve them you need to get them to rotate to the library."

Another visual artist suggested that libraries should be the main venue for community artists, with arts centres being freed up for professional arts. The separation implied by this view did not appear to be widely supported.

A disadvantage of the library system which was identified by all groups is the limitations imposed on its use by inflexible or inconvenient opening hours.

Experiences

Nearly all the artists who participated in the focus groups had direct experience of working with and in libraries. In most cases, the assistance of the library service went beyond the provision and management of space to promotion of the event and general administrative support.

In some cases, the artist had approached the library service to request use of library facilities; in others, the initiative had come from the library side. The local Arts Officer was regularly involved in the organisation of events. More than one participant pointed to the need for someone from an arts background to be involved in mounting events and activities while the library staff's interest and professionalism was valued, some noted their lack of arts qualifications.

Within the limits of what is feasible with each form, all participants who had worked with libraries would do so again, and those who had not had the experience were interested in exploring its possibilities.

Potential

To exploit fully the potential of the public library service to promote arts access and participation, all groups identified a number of essential steps:

Space: while some artists could more or less "make do" with whatever space was available, the overwhelming consensus was that dedicated space, ideally designed with the arts in mind, was essential to any comprehensive approach. Within a county, it was felt that space dedicated to *particular art* forms could be concentrated in particular branches, in other words that specialisation would be geographically spread.

People: co-operation between library staff and Arts Officers seemed natural and desirable to all participants, and the work done by both groups was deeply appreciated. However, there was a near-universal perception that county arts is under-resourced, and a belief that strengthening the arts officer network pays significant dividends in terms of the quality and scope of arts activity. This was linked with the view, mentioned earlier, that the library service needs qualified arts input when facilitating or initiating arts activities.

Collections: most felt that comprehensive stocks of arts-related materials - tapes, CDs, photographs etc - should be maintained by each library authority, on the basis of easy access to these by branches. There is some disagreement on whether it is worthwhile for branches to maintain some minimal level of such materials, with many artists finding the incompleteness of such collections to be more of an irritant than a help.

In responding to prompting about children, young people and disadvantaged groups, most participants were fairly cautious about the role that the public library service could play in increasing the arts awareness of these categories. Most tended to emphasise the responsibility and roles of primary schools, and to see the library's role as secondary and supportive. However, some made the point that young people in particular may find arts venues formal and intimidating, and that for them the more familiar library can de-mystify and break down barriers.

In all the focus groups, emphasis was placed on *bringing arts to schools*, rather than bringing children to the arts.

An area where a very specific need, and possible opportunity for libraries, was identified was in *musical appreciation and education*. Schools of music are few and far between outside the larger cities, and many artists felt that musical performance was an art form which was peculiarly suited to libraries. One composer and performer placed great emphasis on the need for the child to be actually able to experiment with instruments, to get a feel for their potentialities, and saw public libraries - with appropriate equipment, space and training, as well as the involvement of local practitioners - as having an important contribution to make to musical education in Ireland. This proposal may be particularly timely, coming as it does at a time when the Government is examining the whole question of musical education.

Chapters 6

The Perspective of the Professional

Introduction

This chapter reports on the views and experiences of those who are professionally involved or concerned with the research areas: Chief Librarians, Arts Officers, City and County Managers and their senior officials, and representatives of important national arts and community development agencies. We report in particular on two postal surveys directed at Chief Librarians and Arts Officers respectively, and on some of the conclusions of the Working Groups set up during the conference "Access all Areas" held in November 1997. The conference attendance is listed in Appendix 10, while the questionnaires sent to Chief Librarians and Arts Officers are reproduced in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively.

The surveys

For the purposes of the surveys, local authority units were used. These were the twenty-eight counties of the Republic of Ireland (the traditional twenty-six adjusted for the recent division of County Dublin into the Counties of Fingal, South Dublin, and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown) and four of the five County Borough Councils - Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The North and South Ridings of Tipperary operate a Joint Libraries Committee, as do the County and County Borough of Galway. The survey population for the questionnaire to Chief Librarians was, therefore, thirty-two. Twenty-six completed responses were received in time for processing, a very good response rate of 81 %. Three further responses were received subsequently.

Table 6.1: Survey Response Rates

	Chief Librarians	Arts Officers
Total population	32	26
Response processed	26	20
Processed response	81%	77%
Total response	29	21
Total response	91	81

The non-respondents to the survey of Librarians comprised two counties and a county borough.

Not every county has a County Arts Officer, so the survey population was twenty-six. Twenty completed responses were received in time for processing, again a good response rate (77%) and once again a further response has been received since.

The non-respondents to the Arts Officer questionnaire were from five counties and one county borough.

No local authority appeared in both lists of non-respondents.

In commenting on the results, we have generally referred to percentages-either of total respondents, or of sub-groups of respondents. In interpreting these results, the small size of the two populations-26 and 20-should be borne in mind: 25% may mean just five Arts Officers. With cross-tabulations, numbers are even smaller, and account should be taken of the fact that the placing of even one respondent can influence the results.

While the overall response rate was good, it must be said that, as is usual in a case like this, the quality of the responses varied considerably. Nevertheless, it was notable that a high proportion of both categories of respondent took trouble completing the questionnaires, giving obvious thought where opinions or narrative information was sought, and frequently supplying supplementary information on arts and libraries activities and programmes in their local authority areas.

The two questionnaires, supplied respectively to Chief Librarians and Arts Officers, obviously differed considerably in their content. Nevertheless, there was sufficient commonality between them-in their overall orientation and focus-for it to be appropriate, and useful, to deal with the responses from the

two surveys simultaneously in this interim report, and to attempt to knit into our evaluation of the findings from these two surveys material from the other information sources listed.

We have, therefore, identified a number of general headings under which we have obtained information, and we propose to present our interim findings in accordance with these headings. The headings are:

1. **Local structures, policies and programmes** (embracing organisational structures; arts and libraries policies; programmes and budgets; annual plans).
2. **Resources** (relating mainly to staff, funding, and infrastructure).
3. **Activities** (including liaison and partnership both inside and outside local authorities).
4. **The future** (with an emphasis on potential and opportunities, and on impediments to the future development of the project).

Local structures, policies and programmes

The Public Libraries and the Arts Committee represents two national agencies - An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council, as well as the Managers of local authorities-and they in their turn have functions in relation to important institutions at local level - the long-established city and county Library Authorities and the still-developing network of city and county Arts Officers. The existence of these institutions, the fact that both are focused on the wider cultural area, a perception of their relative strengths and weaknesses, and a perception of complementarity between them: all these things combined to dictate that the Committee should determine what relationships had developed between them and to advise the Councils on how these relationships might be best developed in the interests of the arts.

The institutional aspects of the country's local library and arts services thus needed to be explored in our research. Both services are located within the local government structure. The first task, then, is to see how each fits into that structure and what links there are between them.

In terms of overall **reporting relationships** within local authority structures, we found that all Chief Librarians report directly to the County or City Manager, and normally also to a Library Advisory Committee. In the case of Arts Officers, however, a much more varied picture emerged (Table 6.2): there was an approximately equal division of managerial reporting lines between the City/County Manager, the County Secretary, the Chief Librarian or other officials. This is evidence of the extent to which Arts Officers, as late arrivals on the local government scene with ill-defined career structures, tend in general to be less clearly positioned than Librarians, who have long been part of the local government structure (indeed, the concept of a Library Authority is enshrined in law).

Table 6.2: Reporting relationships for Arts Officers

Arts Officer reports:	Number	Percent
To City/County Manager	6	27
To Chief Librarian	6	27
To County Secretary	5	23
To other officer (Finance Officer, Senior A.O. etc.)	5	23
Totals	22	100

Further evidence of variety in organisational structures was provided by the responses to questions about **internal communications**. Only 27% of Chief Librarians and 20% of Arts Officers could identify the Strategic Policy Committee to which they will in the future report, although this may reflect the fact that not all local authorities have yet set up such Committees. 50% of Arts Officers who answered the question characterised communications with the Library Department on arts matters as "informal, no structured arrangement" and a further 9% as "limited infrequent communication".

Turning to the issue of the commitment of library authorities to the arts, it was possible from the questionnaire responses, combined with other findings during the research, to construct an approximate typology of authorities:

- those with a benign attitude towards the arts, proactive policies, and good interface between the libraries and arts services, reinforced in some cases by the weakness of the local arts infrastructure;
- those where the arts infrastructure is strong, the library service is not seen as providing additional strengths, and the interface is in consequence weak;
- those where the local arts infrastructure is weak, but library/arts co-operation is also at a low level.

61 % of library authority respondents have official library **policy statements**, and all save one of these refers specifically to arts activities. (Some authorities were in the process of compiling Library Policy Statements while the research was under way.)

There is evidence (presented later under the heading of Current Activities) that authorities which have prepared library policy statements are more likely to be active in the promotion of the arts. 54% of responding librarians say that their local authority has drawn up an **arts development plan**: the proportion in counties from which an Arts Officer responded to the question was 60%.

Of these authorities which have prepared arts development plans, the library service was involved in the formulation of the plan in 74% of cases (only 50% in counties with Arts Officers who answered this question). Again, we will see evidence later that involvement by the library service in plan formulation is associated with higher levels of artistic activity.

A key interest of the Committee is the targeting of arts activities towards a number of specific groups. The questionnaire to Arts Officers sought information on whether arts development plans contained specific provision for these groups (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Arts Development Plan provision for specific groups (n=20)

Arts plan has activities targeted at:	% of responses
Children	55
Disadvantaged areas	50
Disadvantaged groups	45

20% of Arts Officer respondents said that all arts projects and programmes are subject to an evaluation process. A further 30% stated that some such projects were evaluated. The remaining 50% did not answer the question.

Turning to **budgets**, it is interesting that in only 40% of cases do the local authority's 1997 Estimates include an allocation for arts events and activities for the library service. It is notable that even among those authorities which have policy statements making specific reference to arts activities, only 43% have allocations for arts activities in the library service.

Only 65% of library authorities' acquisitions policies make specific provision for works of imaginative literature, but they all have fiction budgets. However, in the case of library authorities which have policy statements with specific reference to arts activities, the proportion rises to 79%.

Again, 61 % of library authorities had programmes of arts events for the current year. However, for those authorities with policy statements referring specifically to arts activities, the proportion was once again 79%.

In 46% of authorities, the capital budget of the library service includes an amount for art works. However, only 31 % of library services had availed of the Percentage for Art scheme, and the same proportion had commissioned Public Art works.

Looking more closely at the arts service side, we found that all (100%) of responding authorities had arts budgets. Table 6.4 gives some detail.

Table 6.4: Nature of arts budgets (n=20)

Type of budget provision	Percent of respondents
Specific arts budget	85
Line in library budget	5
Line in Recreation and Amenity budget	5
Line in other budget (not specified)	5

Arts Officers were asked if they would favour an additional budget line for arts/community events in the library service: 75% said they would, 15% that they would not, and 10% did not respond to the question.

55% of Arts Officers (including, of course, the 27% who actually report to the Chief Librarian) receive administrative or other support from the library service, while 45% receive no such support. Forms of such support mentioned are listed in Table 6.5: these do not include direct involvement by the library service in the organisation and presentation of arts events and activities.

Table 6.5: Support to Arts Officers from the library service

Type of budget provision	Percent of respondents
Specific arts budget	85
Line in library budget	5
Line in Recreation and Amenity budget	5
Line in other budget (not specified)	5

Summing up the results of the research, the evidence from the way that local authorities approach the organisational positioning, planning and funding of the arts and arts-related library activities seems to suggest that local authorities fall into two general groups-some which have "arts-benevolent" policies and practice, and some which are passive, if not "agnostic".

Resources

"Funding" or "finance" are usually identified as a principal hindrance to arts development, and of course without funds many developments become impossible. However, it was notable that both Librarians and Arts Officers, when asked about their perceptions of the importance of different kinds of resource, were quite specific: physical **space** and trained **staff** are seen as the key ingredients in arts development at local level.

Ten authorities have library buildings which were specifically designed for arts as well as library use. It is notable that nine of these, 90%, were authorities which have formal library policy statements which refer specifically to arts activities.

81 % of library authorities responding have space available for arts activities and events-that is, all except five authorities. The total number of "spaces" available in these authority areas, part time or permanently, is 110, an average of just over five spaces per respondent. However, as Table 6.6 shows, in most cases the space referred to was available only on a part time basis (the figures in the Table do not add up to 110, because some Librarians gave gross information only).

Table 6.6: Space available for arts activities and events (n=32 authorities, 317 libraries)

	Indoor space	Outdoor space
Available on a part-time basis for arts activities/events		
Number of authorities with space available	16 (50%)	4 (12%)
Number of libraries with space available	64 (20%)	8 (3%)
Permanently dedicated to arts activities/events		
Number of authorities with space available	5 (16%)	0
Number of libraries with space available	16 (5%)	0
Permanently dedicated to specific art forms		
Number of authorities with space available	3 (9%)	1 (3%)
Number of libraries with space available	4 (1%)	1 (neg.%)

The Table demonstrates that only a small minority of library authorities have provided space which is specifically dedicated to arts activities, and even fewer have catered for specific art forms. 83% of those authorities which had space permanently dedicated to the arts in general had library policy statements which referred specifically to the arts. It is interesting, however, that three of the four authorities which provided library space for specific art forms had not produced library policy statements at all.

Usage

Considering the library service as a provider of a key resource to the arts-space-there was a considerable amount of consistency in the uses to which library space is put. Table 6.7 shows the frequency with which specific activities were cited as occupying library space in the different authority areas. The table shows that 22 of the 25 library authorities which answered the question (88%) cited **arts, crafts, photographic and other exhibitions** as the most frequent uses of library space. Workshops and the performing arts were the second most frequently cited uses for libraries. It is notable that exhibitions should have been so overwhelmingly the most frequent use to which the arts space of libraries was put, and that the more book-oriented activities did not feature more strongly.

However, 90% of librarians stated that the library service had hosted touring exhibitions or other arts programmes in the last three years. Analysis of the type of exhibition or programme revealed that these included events organised by cultural institutes such as the Goethe Institute, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the British Council as well as EU-funded projects (Socrates, ERDF etc.; the European Libraries Cultural Network) and exhibitions mounted by the OPW and the ESB.

Table 6.7: Use of library space for arts events/activities (frequency of citation)

Activity/event	Most frequent use	Second most frequent use	Third most frequent use	Fourth most frequent use	Fifth most frequent use
Arts, crafts, photographic exhibitions	22	3	0	0	1
Lectures	1	3	4	0	1
Book launches, promotions	0	1	3	1	0
Storytelling, children's book activities	0	4	5	2	0
Workshops, writers groups, readings	2	8	4	0	3
Performing arts, music, drama	0	5	2	4	1
Other artistic endeavours	0	0	3	7	0

Table 6.8 shows the extent to which responding library authorities had dedicated space available for some of the principal artistic activities and events.

Table 6.8: Availability of dedicated space

Activity/event	No. of authorities	As % of respondents	No. of libraries with Spaces	Average no. of libraries with space per authority
Exhibition	20	77	81	4
Workshops	11	42	49	4
Performance	8	31	23	3
Film shows	5	19	10	2
Rehearsal	4	15	5	1

The figures, when considered in conjunction with Tables 6.6 and 6.7, suggest that there may be scope for expanded use of library space for some activities, e.g., the performing arts and film shows.

Librarians were asked to indicate whether certain categories of group had used the facilities of the library service in the past year. Tables 6.9 and 6.10 summarise the responses.

Table 6.9: Use of library facilities by adult arts groups (n=26)

Activity/event	Most frequent use	Second most frequent use	Third most frequent use	Fourth most frequent use	Fifth most frequent use
Arts, crafts, photographic exhibitions	22	3	0	0	1
Lectures	1	3	4	0	1
Book launches, promotions	0	1	3	1	0
Storytelling, children's book activities	0	4	5	2	0
Workshops, writers groups, readings	2	8	4	0	3
Performing arts, music, drama	0	5	2	4	1
Other artistic endeavours	0	0	3	7	0

Table 6.10: Use of library facilities by children's arts groups (n=26)

	% of respondents
Reading circles	31
Writers' groups	27
Drama groups	23
Music groups	8
Photographic clubs	8
Other	8
Film societies	0

The other key resource of the library is its staff. Of the six local authorities in which there was no Arts Officer

and in respect of which responses were received from librarians, four had designated members of the library service with specific responsibility for the arts. In three of these cases, one staff member had been designated. The fourth Chief Librarian stated that the four branch librarians in the local authority area each allocated periods of their time to the organisation and promotion of arts activities in libraries. In none of these cases was there evidence that the designated staff had educational qualifications which were specific to the arts.

Only 18% of the remaining 22 library services had staff (full-time and part-time) who spent at least 50% of their working time on arts issues. However, in many cases library staff had been assigned specific responsibilities in the arts (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Library service staff with specific arts responsibilities (n=25)

Arts-related task	Percentage of respondents
Selecting literature	76
Selecting music recordings	60
Selecting art books	56
Mounting exhibitions	52

The data presented above seems to support the evidence from other elements of the project that many librarians are active in the promotion and presentation of arts activities and events, but that they are doing so without the support of purpose-built structures or training.

Chief Librarians were asked whether they agreed with the proposition that specialist training in provision of the arts to the community should be part of the professional development of librarians. 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition.

Arts Officers, when they were asked a related question, also saw a need for training of librarians in the provision of arts in the local authority. **It is notable that more than 75% of Arts Officers also agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that they themselves should receive such training.**

Other attitudes expressed by librarians seem to confirm their desire that the library service should be centrally involved in the promotion and presentation of the arts. Table 6.12 summarises their responses to a series of propositions.

Table 6.12: Attitudes of Chief Librarians towards arts provision and promotion (numbers)

Proposition	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Public libraries have an obligation to promote the arts	18	5	2	0	0
Public libraries should concentrate on their basic tasks and leave arts promotion to specialists	1	1	3	7	14
Any arts responsibilities which public libraries have should be to all the arts disciplines	3	11	6	4	1
The main arts responsibility of public libraries is in the literature field	7	8	2	7	2

Table 6.12 is extremely interesting, even if some of the data are difficult to interpret. Responses to the first two propositions listed are consistent in suggesting an overwhelming perception among librarians that they have a duty to the arts.

However, the answers to the third and fourth propositions suggest a considerable variety of attitude. Analysis of the 15 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the main arts responsibility of public libraries is in the literature field revealed that 6 of them (40%) also agreed or strongly agreed that the arts responsibility of public libraries should be to all the arts disciplines. Four disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is clear that librarians in general see the arts role of libraries as starting with literature and spreading outwards, but probably there would be very different views as to how far or how fast this should develop.

It is instructive to compare these findings with some of the attitudes expressed by Arts Officers. Table 6.13 summarises responses to a comparable series of propositions.

Table 6.13: Attitudes of Arts Officers towards the place of libraries in the arts (numbers)

Proposition	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
All the arts are integral to the role of public libraries in the local authority	3	4	2	7	1
The dominant responsibility of the public library service lies in the field of literature	2	12	2	2	1
The library service in this local authority seeks to embrace all art forms for the benefit of the community	3	3	2	6	2
Arts initiatives are aimed primarily at delivering the objectives of the library department	0	6	2	7	3

There are some interesting findings in this table. For example:

- more Arts Officers disagree than agree that all the arts are integral to the role of public libraries;
- more than 70% of Arts Officers believe that the dominant role of libraries is in literature;
- only 38% of Arts Officers see the library service in their area as seeking to embrace all art forms.
- but on the other hand, 58% of Arts Officers disagreed that arts initiatives were aimed primarily at the library service's objectives.

These attitudes suggest both a wide variety of experiences in different local authorities, and (possibly) some uncertainty on the part of Arts Officers that the library role in the arts can be a wide-ranging one. It should be borne in mind that definitions of the arts between Arts Officers, who are the professionals in this field, and librarians, whose definitions of the arts may be influenced by the physical limitations imposed by library spaces.

Activities

We start this section with a general review of the work of Arts Officers, as illustrated by the survey, before looking more closely at library-based activities.

Frequent reference has been made in this report to the difficulties occasioned to Arts Officers by their ambiguous organisational positioning. It is, therefore, interesting to look at how they feel they can work within the overall local authority structure. Table 6.14 provides some clues.

Question	Yes %	No%	No response %
"Do you feel that your position as an arts officer within the local authority allows you to work effectively for the arts across departments?"	65%	5%	30%
"Have you, or your predecessors, brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with other departments?"	80%	15%	5%

Table 6.14: The Arts Officer in the Local Authority (n=20)

Some examples of partnership projects with other departments:

- Travellers' project (with Housing Department)
- Council 1996 calendar (with Environment Department)
- Percent for Art Scheme (with planners, engineers, library service etc.)
- Educational package on waste management strategy
- Art works in urban and village renewal schemes
- Environmental awareness art competition
- Road safety drama competition
- Sculpture trail

External relationships and partnerships are equally important to Arts Officers-indeed, are their life-blood (Table 6.15). The difference in the working environments experienced by librarians and arts officers is well illustrated here by the emphasis the latter place on collaboration with other bodies and groups. The focus of the daily lives of Arts Officers must be external.

Table 6.15: The Arts Officer in the community (n=20)

Question	Yes %	No %	No response
"Do you feel that your position as arts officer allows you to work effectively with external organisations?"	85%	0%	15%
"Have you or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with local external organisations or agencies?"	85%	5%	10%
"...regional external organisations or agencies?"	50%	40%	10%
"...national external organisations or agencies?"	65%	25%	10%
"...European or other international external organisations or agencies?"	50%	40%	10%

The partnerships given as examples covered a wide spectrum of arts activity. Local partnerships were predictably with a wide range of arts and heritage organisations. Regional partnerships included the Institutes of Technology, County Enterprise Boards, tourism bodies and other local authorities. In border areas, some cross-border partnerships were found.

The most frequently cited national partnership was with Music Network. Others included The National Theatre Society (the Abbey Theatre), the National Gallery, IMMA, the Sculpture Society, the Irish Countrywomen's' Association, the CYC, FÁS, NAYD, Poetry Ireland, Film Institute of Ireland, Dance Theatre of Ireland, Macra na Feirme, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Opera Theatre Company, the National Chamber Choir, Co-operation North, the British Council, Age and Opportunity, and Government departments.

International partnerships, including various cultural exchanges and twinning arrangements, were with European Union funded programmes (including LEADER), the Gulbenkian Foundation, and various exhibition exchange programmes.

Turning to the library-related work of Arts Officers, the survey revealed that 45% of Arts Officers had developed specific programmes of library-based arts events and activities for 1997, and 55% had not. All save one of those which had developed such programmes indicated what proportion these events and activities were of their total programme. The average percentage (of these eight authorities) was 25%, and the range was from 6% to 90%. In the latter case, county arts was new in the structure, there was no gallery

or theatre in the local authority area, and perforce most activities were library-based. The Arts Officer expects the proportion to fall in 1998. Two other Arts Officers indicated proportions in the 25% to 40% range. Excluding these three, the average was 9%.

These findings may be significant. It is remarkable, especially considering how active Arts Officers appear to be in carrying through joint projects in the local authority, that 55% had not engaged the library service. On the face of it, this seems to suggest a potential major opportunity. Indeed, seven of the nine Arts Officers who reported no specific programmes of library-based arts events and activities had also reported that communications between themselves and the library department were either "Informal, no structured arrangement" or "Limited infrequent communication". Situations such as these are worth exploring, in the sense that arts/libraries collaboration may be one effective response to situations where the local arts infrastructure is weak.

Once again, these results emphasise the need to consider the role of *structure and procedures* in arts-library collaboration.

In 85% of those cases in which there was a specific programme of library-based arts activities and events the programme was drawn up in consultation with library staff. In all cases, there had been such a programme in 1996 also.

Examples of the kind of library-based programme which was developed for 1997 include:

- Summer festivals: workshops, drama, music, writing, dance, crafts, film etc.
- Poetry festivals
- Storytelling
- Touring art exhibitions
- Children's book week
- Visual art exhibitions
- Concerts
- Writers-in-residence Programme
- Children's theatre workshops
- Seminars on information technology
- Clay modelling workshops

Generally, in cases where there was no formal programming of library-based arts activities and events, there was still a level of ad hoc involvement by the library service in facilitating the Arts Officer's work. This took forms such as:

- Advice on programme of literary events commemorating the famine
- Small scale readings and exhibitions (where library buildings not suitable for larger scale events)
- Provision of space for exhibitions
- Performance venues
- Financial support for arts-related exhibitions
- Support for literary festival

Finally, in relation to Arts Officers, we consider the question of the evaluation of events and activities (Table: 6.16).

Table 6.16: Application of an evaluation process to arts events/activities (n=20)

Extent of evaluation	Library-based events/activities	Arts projects in partnership with external organisations/agencies
All projects evaluated	40%	15%
Some projects evaluated	25%	60%
No projects evaluated	20%	5%
Not answered	15%	20%

It is interesting that evaluation of library-based activities should be more frequent than of external partnerships: this may reflect local authority financial control procedures.

Chief Librarians were asked a series of questions about their liaisons and partnerships with arts organisations. Table 6.17 summarises the findings.

Table 6.17: Librarians' liaison with arts organisations (per cent; n=26)

Type of organisation	Formal liaison (Boards, committees etc.)	Informal liaison	Both formal and informal liaison	No liaison
Local arts organisations/groups	12%	69%	12%	8%
Local arts centres	4%	62%	0	35%
National arts organisations	4%	81%	4%	12%
Other organisations	4%	8%	0	88%

The Table illustrates a considerable degree of diversity in such relationships. Frequent examples of national relationships include:

The Arts Council (for loans and schemes, and for the distribution of publicity material)

- National Gallery
- National Concert Hall
- National Library
- IMMA
- The Ark
- The Film Institute of Ireland
- Irish Writers' Centre
- National Adult Literacy Agency
- Age and Opportunity

58% of Chief Librarians reported that the library service enjoyed formal internal liaison with other local authority departments or programmes on arts matters. The examples given of such liaison tended to be rather general in nature - through the County Management Team, through the Joint Arts Committee, etc.

61 % of library services had participated in joint arts-related projects with local, regional, national, European or other international agencies in the preceding three years.

88% of library services had hosted touring exhibitions or other arts programmes in the preceding three years: examples of the kind of event hosted were given earlier in this chapter.

Two Chief Librarians reported that their library services had received grants or other outside funding for arts-related activities in the preceding three years (apart from funding related to specific events or activities of the type mentioned above). One was a small amount (a few thousand pounds), for a sculpture of a distinguished local citizen, while the other authority had received four hundred thousand pounds from the then Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht for a county arts centre, as well as several smaller amounts from local bodies for specific projects.

The future

Librarians were asked for their perception of opportunities for expanded participation in the arts by adults, children, young adults, and disadvantaged groups. Table 6.18 summarises their responses, which hold no surprises.

Table 6.18: "Are there significant opportunities for expanded participation in the arts by....?" (n=26)

Librarians were then asked if they had experienced or foresaw difficulties which might hinder the exploitation of such opportunities: 69% said yes and 15% said no. The difficulties most frequently mentioned were financial constraints, space, a lack of awareness of arts activity, and lack of co-ordination of arts activity.

They identified ways in which the library service could help overcome difficulties the approaches cited included arts training for librarians, facilitation and encouragement, information and publicity, and better co-ordination and co-operation with Arts Officers.

A number of librarians made concrete suggestions for forms of co-operation and partnership these have been taken into account in the final section of this report, where models for the future are considered They included:

- Publicity and public relations
- Sharing of staff and other resources
- Joint venues and co-ordinated activities
- Training
- "Artsquads" to work with libraries
- Development of arts space in local authority offices - e.g., motor tax offices
- Development of comprehensive cultural strategies by local authorities

The benefits of such initiatives were in all cases seen as outweighing the costs.

Arts Officers, in their turn, were asked whether they believed there were factors limiting the development of arts activities within public libraries. The response was 100% in the affirmative (except for two who did not answer). The factors identified by Arts Officers included lack of facilities and finance, trained staff, lack of clear definition of roles, the inadequacies of the library infrastructure, the opening hours of libraries, the lack of purpose-built space, poor communications, and the differing agendas of the two services.

70% of Arts Officers believe there are policy measures or other initiatives which would allow the library service to enhance and develop its role in the arts Measures cited included better access, longer opening hours, trained staff and more purpose-built arts space. The benefits from arts development in libraries most frequently cited by Arts Officers were those benefits stemming from perceived ease of access for individuals, groups, artists and schools.

These findings fitted well with the overall conclusion of 95% of Arts Officers that the library service had a role to play in their programmes for the development of the arts. The areas in which they would most like to see that role developed included information dissemination, promotion, provision of space, contacts with schools, specialist training for librarians, library policy statements which explicitly referred to the arts, and many more.

Finally, we asked Arts Officers if they had specific recommendations on how communications with the Arts Council in relation to arts in libraries could be improved. Several responded, with such suggestions as appointing a libraries officer in the Arts Council, better information flows, more support for Arts Officers, and the maintenance by the Arts Council of a data bank on developments nationwide.

Most Arts Officers took the opportunity to emphasise the different nature of the arts and libraries roles and the need for services to be separate. Some expressed concern about the possibility of duplication of the roles and services, and a concern that existing arts resources might be re-directed towards or shared with libraries.

It was generally felt that there was an urgent need to think through the existing role of the arts officer and see how the potential of the post could be fully realised.

"ACCESS ALL AREAS": THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

When the Public Libraries and the Arts Conference was held in Dublin in November 1997, the main findings of the surveys of Chief Librarians and Arts Officers described in this chapter were presented in outline form

The afternoon session was devoted to workshop discussions of the issues raised as a result of the research. The participants in the conference, who included artists, representatives of the national

cultural institutions and other cultural bodies and agencies concerned with human and social development, librarians, arts officers, local government officials, third level institutions, central government departments, and others, were asked to divide into six discussion groups or syndicates.

Each group was asked to consider a particular area of interest to the Committee, and to answer a number of questions Groups reported back in plenary session. The conclusions of each group were transcribed and discussed with the consultants.

The output of this process was most valuable because of the qualitative flesh which it put on the experiences and views of professionals working in the arts, with children and young people, in public libraries, in public administration, and with disadvantaged groups.

The subjects allocated to the workshop groups were:

1. Promotion of arts through libraries
2. How to establish good practice pointers for success
3. Fostering creativity through libraries
4. Access for all
5. Young people: meeting their creative needs
6. Resources: sourcing funds

In the following pages we summarise the perceptions, views and recommendations of the groups

Promotion of arts through libraries

- The primary role of public libraries in the arts is to be a **venue and platform**. Together with this focus, they should maintain their traditional role of **providing arts and information resources**.
- Notwithstanding the absence of a formal policy between the library service and the Department of Education and Science, the potential for public libraries to operate actively in the area of **arts education, both at community and personal levels**, should be investigated and developed.
- Particularly interesting **models of good practice** are provided by the Dublin 15 Arts Festival (initiated by the public library service), the Athy Writers' Group, the Children's Book Festival, and the Dublin Literary Award.
- Among the conditions for successful library involvement in arts promotion are **clear objectives, well-defined roles, local need and enthusiasm**, and recognition of the library as a catalyst.
- Libraries **have failed to market themselves** in the past

How to establish good practice: pointers for success

- Where relations are good between Arts Officers and Librarians, formal structures may be inhibiting
- Local authorities must adopt a broad (cross-departmental) and **holistic approach to planning for the arts**.
- There is a need for those concerned with libraries/arts planning to be **more outward looking, and to consult with the disadvantaged in society**.
- Arts/libraries policy must be **locally driven and bottom-up**.
- It is a mistake for local authorities to appoint Arts Officers without making adequate provision for **budgets, plans and accommodation**.
- Good co-operation between librarians and arts officers can involve the library service in **creating, driving and generating events**.

Fostering creativity through libraries

- There is a need to develop **multi-layered partnerships** with local authorities, local arts organisations, and regional, national and international bodies.
- Local authorities are fundamentally not creatively orientated, which **places an onus on the interested public to press the agenda.**
- Libraries should be able to **identify and recognise peoples' needs** in a community
- Libraries must **generate publicity and an awareness** of the services they provide.

Access for all

- The complexities of access must be recognised to include issues of **physical disadvantage, demographic disadvantage, psychological deprivation, and literacy.**
- The library should be an **arts space for all.**
- Libraries must engage in **aggressive public relations** to promote the perception of library space as **free civic space.**
- The idea of a **mobile arts outreach service**, involving for example poetry readings or craft workshops, should be investigated in the context of **rural deprivation.**
- Neither library or arts development should be constrained by **constantly adhering to traditional structures.**
- There is a need to ask people at ground level **"what is it that you want?"** and **"what is it that we can offer?"**.
- **Free Internet access points in libraries** would represent positive action towards tackling the whole area of physical and social disadvantage.

Young people: meeting their creative agenda

- Librarians should look afresh at the activities, materials and resources for young adults, and how these may be **differentiated from provision for children or adults.**
- The kind of activities most likely to attract a young audience are **those generated by young people themselves.**
- There should be **increased consultation between the public library system and young people.**
- A **sense of continuity with their particular locality** should be encouraged in young people.
- Librarians should issue a **mission statement** as to their aims and objectives for **young adults.**
- **Local sponsorship** should be sought as a way of supplementing central and local funding of books and other stocks.

Resources: sourcing funds

- Policy needs to address the question of how **equity**, as distinct from equality of provision, can be achieved in access to the arts.
- Money is only an **enabling resource**, and there are others such as personal skills or the existing infrastructure which money can't buy.
- Local services, including arts and libraries, should be looked at in a total way rather than in isolation, and **planning should be cross-sectoral.**

- **Training and development** are fundamental to proper planning and implementation.
- At local level, there should be a **simple plan embracing arts, libraries and cultural activities** but as part of the total, larger local authority picture.
- National and local funds allocations should take account of the **benefits of activities**, particularly cross-sectoral activities with a cultural element.
- Care must be taken to ensure that **changes in the way that local government is financed**, in relation to community charges, do not further widen disparities between communities in terms of broad cultural provision.
- **Business linkages** can have an important role in the resource issue.
- There is a need to **raise the profile of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna**.

Table 7.1: Frequency of using public library

	SEX		MARITAL STATUS				AGE					SOCIAL CLASS						
	Total	Male	Female	Married	Male single	Female married	Female single	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	A/B	C1	A/C1	C2	DE	F
Total	1400	666	734	327	323	366	316	334	267	374	297	398	759	372	461	321	421	397
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Weekly	32	34	16	18	32	28	23	8	27	18	12	30	26	41	12	23	8	
	3%	5%	7%	5%	6%	9%	9%	7%	3%	7%	6%	3%	4%	7%	9%	4%	6%	2%
Fortnightly	396	217	179	17	21	40	23	23	21	38	11	11	12	33	46	24	27	12
	28%	33%	24%	5%	6%	11%	7%	7%	8%	10%	4%	3%	2%	11%	13%	7%	6%	3%
Monthly	196	74	122	23	47	28	30	33	27	32	21	13	12	54	38	33	35	11
	14%	11%	17%	7%	15%	8%	10%	10%	10%	8%	7%	5%	3%	15%	15%	16%	8%	3%
Other	118	41	77	21	21	44	35	26	24	25	22	10	24	22	46	32	20	12
	8%	6%	11%	6%	6%	12%	11%	8%	9%	7%	7%	3%	3%	6%	10%	8%	5%	3%
None	267	193	274	261	222	294	233	186	187	244	188	182	75	174	250	239	370	188
	19%	29%	37%	80%	69%	80%	74%	55%	70%	65%	73%	77%	34%	47%	50%	60%	75%	47%

Chapter 7

The Public as Library Users

As part of this project, it was decided to undertake limited research to explore the relationship between *usage of public libraries and the availability of arts and other activities in public libraries*. Questions were designed and included in the Irish Marketing Surveys (IMS) Omnibus Survey carried out in November 1997. 1400 adults (aged 15+) were interviewed in 70 randomly-selected sampling areas. They were asked:

- how frequently they used their public library;
- what, if anything, would encourage them to use it more often;
- their responses to a series of propositions about libraries.

Tables 7.1 (opposite) to 7.3 summarise the findings. The variations in usage between some of the categories, for example between single females and married men, are quite large. Research into this area is lacking: perhaps a special effort is required to establish the root causes behind this pattern. On the other hand, the differences across social class are predictable, and have been foreshadowed in other research (for example, *Combat Poverty*, 1997). While the overall level of library usage was more or less in line with what previous research had led us to expect, we were particularly concerned to know what factors respondents might find to be influential in encouraging them to make greater use of their public libraries. Therefore the key second question was:

“What, if anything, would encourage you to use a public library more often?”

Responses to this question were not prompted, and the categorisation of replies given in Table 7.2 include several items not foreseen by the interviewers but suggested unprompted by respondents.

Table 7.2: Things which would encourage you to use public library more often

	Total	Male	Female
Total	1400	689	711
Wider range of books	147 (11%)	73 (11%)	74 (10%)
Music	32 (2%)	16 (2%)	16 (2%)
Videos	35 (3%)	15 (2%)	20 (3%)
Information on education	42 (3%)	15 (2%)	27 (4%)
Book/poetry readings	16 (1%)	5 (1%)	11 (2%)
Art exhibitions	11 (1%)	6 (1%)	5 (1%)
Film showings	17 (1%)	7 (1%)	10 (1%)
Dance and drama events	8 (1%)	2 (neg.)	6 (1%)
Nothing	839 (60%)	445 (65%)	394 (55%)

The finding that for 60% of respondents there is nothing that would induce them to use public libraries is significant. Obviously the reasons for this go beyond questions of the arts. But there does not appear to be a latent demand among these respondents for libraries to deepen their arts activities. It is possible (although there is no proof either way) that the public interest in library-based arts activities and events essentially comes from those who are library users already.

Respondents were then shown cards on which a series of propositions about public libraries were printed. They were asked to say whether each proposition reflected their impressions of public libraries as they know them. Table 7.3 shows that despite the large proportion of the population which do not use libraries, libraries inspire a high degree of respect and trust. Few, even of the non-users, were prepared to criticise public libraries or to admit ignorance of them.

One potentially significant finding relates to opening hours, already flagged in this report as a critical issue for libraries. It was in this aspect that libraries received the lowest ratings, and non-users shared the view of a large minority that libraries are not open when needed. A policy of expanding library opening hours, and adding flexibility to the system outside normal hours, may create opportunities for the service to increase its penetration of the population.

Table 7.3: Impressions of public libraries: propositions which apply/do not apply

	Total sample Applies	Non-users Applies	Total sample Does not apply	Non-users Does not apply
Total	1400	957	1400	957
Library staff are generally friendly and helpful	78%	69%	23%	31%
Libraries are a source of reliable information	81%	74%	19%	26%
It is well worth spending time in a public library	71%	60%	29%	40%
Libraries are well-organised	75%	67%	25%	33%
Libraries are open when I need them to be	59%	51%	41%	49%
Libraries provide quick and capable responses to requests	68%	59%	32%	41%
Libraries are poorly located	28%	28%	72%	72%
Libraries often provide wrong information	6%	6%	94%	94%
Library services are of poor quality	10%	10%	90%	90%
Libraries are a place mainly for younger people	25%	28%	75%	72%
Libraries have old-fashioned procedures	22%	22%	78%	78%
Don't know/no reply	16%	1%	23%	1%

Chapter 8

Conclusions: the main themes

Introduction

The objectives of this project are to examine the current provision for the arts in public libraries, review its effectiveness, and make recommendations in relation to its future development. Within this general remit, some specific interests were identified. These related to arts/libraries partnerships in particular areas of life, including the world of the child and young people, areas of deprivation, the information society, and the civic role of public libraries.

In the course of the research, a number of recurring themes were identified, themes which ran across all the areas of interest mentioned above. These "horizontal" themes have done much to inform the evolution of our recommendations, so it is appropriate that in this chapter we set them out in summary form.

Some of the themes described are not directly or exclusively concerned with the arts broadly defined. But it is a fundamental finding of this project that successful arts/libraries collaboration is an end the achievement of which will rest on three pillars—a vibrant and confident public library service, a well-resourced arts support structure, and partnerships between the two which are flexible, realistic, and of benefit to both. The first of these pillars was well characterised by one member of the Committee:

"the spiritual essence and inner core of the library the same yesterday, today and tomorrow one of the most precious things in the world...(is) knowledge, the knowledge of the world preserved, cherished, and made available, more and more, for the people, all the people"

Strengthening this pillar - the library service's core role - will also enhance its capacity to make productive arts partnerships, and to facilitate participation in the arts. So several trains of analysis, which related exclusively, or almost so, to the "book" aspects of the work of public libraries, are still highly relevant to the Committee's work.

The recurring themes which we believe are most important to the project have to do with:

- access and participation
- people
- infrastructure
- collections
- the emphasis on literature
- information
- partnerships, and
- public image

Access and Participation

In Chapter 1 we referred to the complexity which attaches to issues of access and participation in the arts and to the identification of the public libraries as "access points" to the arts (Benson, 1989, Arts Council/UCD 1994, Combat Poverty/Arts Council 1997). However, addressing the problem of equality of access to the arts is a cultural matter which has more than "arts" significance. It will involve input from education, social policy and local government as well as the arts, and the public library service can be part of such a strategy.

The research results support the notion of the centrality of the library as a uniquely popular and non-commercial public space which attracts all sectors of society. For some cultural organisations a potential library partnership centred on notions of the "engagement and empowerment of communities" (IMMA) which libraries, as accessible and familiar institutions signify. A young essayist expressed a view of the public library service as one without boundaries of class, age, wealth, religion or race, while some artists stressed that for young people in particular arts venues can be formal and intimidating when compared with the more familiar library space. However, while these strengths were recognised, the "atmosphere" of some library spaces was criticised by a number of artists, and the problem of reconciling the library as open to all and at the same time serving the professional artist was also raised. The democracy which is part of the library service may in some instances limit the access potential for professional artists, and not just on grounds of

physical inadequacy of spaces. The perception of a library exhibition space as essentially provision for amateur artists was regarded by some professional artists as a reason for not considering the use of the same space to show their own work. However, this point was cited less frequently than the issue of the general suitability of spaces which is addressed later in this chapter.

The research identified the following groups as socially disadvantaged in terms of arts/library provision:

travellers, the elderly, pre-school/primary school children, language groups, especially Irish speakers, people with disabilities, adult literacy groups, unemployed, refugees and prisoners.

The inclusion of children in the disadvantaged category was associated in particular with the area of visual education but of concern too is the perception that children and young adults are poorly served by their libraries. Deficiencies in book stocks may be an element of the problem, and this needs to be addressed in the interests of the cultural rights of young people. Related to this, and perhaps of more serious long term significance for policy makers is the fading of the library habit among young people which was identified by some of the essayists. As Martin Drury points out (Tynan, 1996,12) "Children are citizens. The problem is they are mute. They do not have access to power systems. " Their needs can therefore be overlooked or not prioritised, or subsumed within the needs of adults. There is also evidence from British research that children's levels of reading decline from higher to lower socio-economic groups (Hall et al, 1996) and that public and education library services are dogged by inequality of access and failure to place a high priority on children's needs (Department of National Heritage, 1995).

Arts and library provision for young people is a priority of the Committee and an analysis of Local Authority Arts Development Plans indicates that 55% of Arts Officers responding to the questionnaire had activities targeted at children and 45% at disadvantaged groups. When librarians were asked for their perception of opportunities for expanded participation in the arts by disadvantaged groups, including children and young adults, the vast majority (84-88%) were positive, although 69% indicated that they anticipated difficulties which might hinder the realisation of such opportunities. The difficulties most frequently cited were financial constraints, space, a lack of awareness of arts activity and lack of co-ordination of arts activity.

Regional access, or horizontal provision, is another important consideration in the research and CAFE, with its brief to develop community arts, has been active in this area as well as in relation to social disadvantage. CAFE highlights the current relevance and untapped potential to community arts of the public library network and views libraries as important facilities which can provide and disseminate their information. The arts also act as a channel at community level for social participation, and this draws attention to the importance of the civic role of the library space, something an essayist also identified. Where no arts centre exists, it was indicated that the public library makes more concessions to community arts than any other local body. The disadvantage of rural isolation was also identified by some of the essayists who found it frustrating to be able to visit the library less frequently than they might wish. One proposal from the workshops was for a mobile outreach service for areas which do not have libraries or arts spaces. This service might provide poetry readings or craft workshops and it indicates the need to develop in an imaginative way when considering arts and library services.

**"In the absence of an Arts Centre we feel that the public library makes more concessions to community arts than any other local body does. Our local authority no longer advertises or invites groups to seek grants under the Arts Act. The public library in Athlone is the only public place within a thirty-mile radius or so where one will come across a representative selection of the works of modern Irish artists. We feel as a writers' group that such exposure to and cross-fertilisation between the various strands of the arts is most important in the local community."
(Submission by Athlone Writers' Group)**

Problems of access in urban areas were also mentioned and the need for the library to be accessible from all areas and to have appropriate opening hours. A disadvantage of the library system which was identified by all groups is the inflexibility of opening hours. As far as arts provision is concerned, the research indicated that 50% of Arts Officers responding included disadvantaged areas as part of their target in Arts Development Plans.

The need to address the problems of vertical and horizontal access was highlighted by some of the respondents. At a strategic level attention was drawn to cultural deprivation and exclusion as aspects of poverty, and the first step in access to culture was identified as literacy. "Yet no national literacy and cultural-access strategy exists" and a pilot study indicated that several respondents felt that the library was for "educated" people. In Britain, where literacy levels are higher than in Ireland, adult colleges have found that they have had to arrange brief but absolutely essential introductory courses on using small libraries for new students (Hughes, 1993). A recent report, the International Adult Literacy Survey (Irish results published by the Department of Education and Science, 1997) has identified that 25% of Irish adults are in the lowest literacy category and this statistic, for a country which prides itself on its educational provision, must present urgent questions for policy makers if the future health of Irish society is to be assured. It also highlights another access issue raised in the research - 1 e that the free availability of cultural services cannot be equated with equal access, and that many people feel themselves to be incapable for social reasons of using such services. The environment and 'language' of many cultural practices and services, even when available free of charge, can alienate and inhibit full participation in cultural life and this needs to be addressed if social inclusion is a goal.

Action research projects in Limerick City Library and Offaly County Library, funded by the Department and Science and supervised by a steering committee representing the Department, the Library Association of Ireland, the National Adult Literacy Agency, the two library authorities, the two local vocational educational committees and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, aim to establish a structured programme formalising the library's role in adult literacy provision. The projects plan to strengthen and further develop partnerships with existing literacy schemes.

An access issue raised by artists in the research was the importance they attached to the library service having professional arts input when facilitating or initiating arts activities. Trained staff and specialist support from professional arts officers was seen to be an essential ingredient in the success of arts provision in the library. The role of technology was identified in a number of submissions and it was the view of ARTHOUSE that exploiting these technologies will dramatically improve access to and participation in the arts. The importance for children of exposure to, and training in new technologies was also identified.

At the physical level, better buildings and longer opening hours were seen to be important to access, and the research also focused on the access needs of people with disabilities. Although many case studies provide evidence of excellent experiences, highlighting the positive role that the library service can play in relation to access, once again, the need for opening hours and days to be brought into line with the needs of users was expressed.

Access for people with disabilities involves such things as the use of colour, good lighting, clear signage, seating in exhibition areas, and the point was made that these would also be attractive to many people not suffering from disabilities, for example the elderly and small children. The importance of intervention in the planning and design of spaces was also stressed so that the best use of scarce resources can be guaranteed (It should be noted that the Arts Council provides in its capital and revenue budgets for addressing the access needs of people with disabilities). Accessibility for people with disabilities is enshrined in the recommendations of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna to the Department of the Environment and Local Government and also in the Department's own building regulations.

A case study by Cerebral Palsy Ireland in Tallaght, Finglas, Ballyfermot and ILAC libraries examined models of good practice and proposed recommendations on the broader artistic, cultural and civic roles envisaged for public libraries. "Those libraries which can be presented as models of good practice have some basic foundations. These include:

- **easy physical access to public libraries;**
- **easy physical access within public libraries;**
- **accessible facilities;**
- **pleasant and supportive staff.**

By building on these foundations the public library system will be able to provide a service that is inclusive to all members of Irish society. This work can begin by consulting with and listening to those people who have been segregated, excluded and marginalised by Irish society for too many years."

The role that libraries can play in combating social disadvantage is well summed up by Danielle Taesch from the municipal library (described as the "Bibliothèque-médiathèque") of Mulhouse in France:

"Ultimately, the library is a visible social instrument of the municipality's social development and cohesion policy. It is a place for sociability, for adolescent conviviality... a place for socialisation, for learning the codes and rules of politeness..." (Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France, no.1, 1997)

The "médiathèque" concept in France is an interesting one, because it is partly founded on the notion that in rural areas and smaller towns it is uneconomical to provide separate infrastructures for the whole range of cultural activities-theatre, concert hall, cinema and so forth - and that developing multi-purpose facilities on a library base is often the best way to provide cultural opportunities which would otherwise be unavailable to the population.

People

As in every field of human endeavour, the commitment and abilities of the people involved are vital to the success of initiatives in the cultural field. In the present instance, for example, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, irrespective of differences in the structures and powers of local government, at least some of the variations in arts/libraries achievement which can be observed both internationally and among the Irish local authorities may be put down to differences in individual interests, inclinations, motivations and training, on the part of librarians, arts administrators and local government officials. Indeed, more than twenty years ago the "enthusiasm" of Irish librarians for arts initiatives was identified as a crucial ingredient in the development of the arts (Richards, 1976:77).

In this context, then, a very encouraging finding is the considerable degree of commitment to the arts of most Irish public librarians, and to arts/libraries collaboration on the part of librarians, arts officers and many senior local government officials. **Throughout the different strands of the research, we found time after time that children, community arts groups, professional artists, organisations representing people with disabilities, and individuals who made submissions, had had most positive and life-enhancing experiences with libraries, and the warmest feelings towards the librarians they encountered.** When collaboration with arts officers and with arts institutions, including the national institutions, had been active rather than simply facilitative, the cultural product was most valuable and valued. It is remarkable that even non-users of library services shared in the general perception of libraries as worthwhile institutions, a perception also observed in Britain, where the public library is an institution of "high public esteem" (McGuigan, 1996; 72).

Some of the research findings underlined the importance of broadening and deepening the commitment of the people working in the public library system to arts development.

In the first place, the research shows that many librarians hold to a very traditional, literature-centred view of library functions. It is important to appreciate that such a view is not necessarily hostile to the other arts as suggested by the rough typology of library authorities outlined in Chapter 6, in administrative areas where the arts are strong and well-resourced, and unconstrained by a shortage of venues, it may well be appropriate for libraries to define their special role narrowly. However, we would suggest that even in such cases (rare in Ireland), there are opportunities for co-operation which would benefit both sides.

Secondly, library staff who wish to play an active role in the initiation and implementation of arts events and activities are very conscious of their need for specialist training, and believe that such training should be part of the librarian's professional formation. Professional artists who have worked with libraries hold the same view. What is not so clear is the type of training which is being sought. Clearly neither artists nor librarians themselves expect a librarian also to be (for example) a fully-fledged gallery administrator. However, librarians might well be expected to be conversant with the philosophy and policies underlying community arts, and also to be able to understand the artistic objectives and practical needs of a sculptor, a dancer or a pianist.

Thirdly, for many Arts Officers the lack of clarity and security inherent in their employment situation is a source of concern. It is outside the scope of this report to analyse the issues involved. However, we did find evidence of a feeling on the part of some Arts Officers that in comparison with the long-established and highly structured public library service, they suffered from some institutional

uncertainty. While we found no suggestion whatsoever that these issues were having a negative effect on the establishment of arts/libraries collaborative efforts, it might be unduly sanguine to assume that this would never happen, or that the development of the partnership would not be stronger if some of the employment issues were dealt with.

The final issue under this heading is a related one. We have already highlighted the cultural differences between libraries and arts development, and the specific attributes of the two services. We have characterised the librarian's role as a custodian of cultural assets, as a promoter of literature, and as a source of information, and the arts officer's as that of a cultural entrepreneur, building networks, seizing opportunities. The symbiotic potential of bringing these two cultures into an even more positive working relationship is enormous. Both professions have strengths and capabilities which are absolutely fundamental to the enrichment of the cultural life of the community. It follows that any policy which was predicated on ignoring these vital differences, which set out to submerge them in a broadly-based but bland cultural bureaucracy, would defeat the objectives of the Committee.

Infrastructure

This theme encompasses not just the physical space available for library-based arts activities, but also aspects of its management.

Again and again it appeared during this project that if the space problem could be solved, the outlook for arts in libraries would be immeasurably improved. Chief Librarians, Arts Officers, community arts groups, artists themselves, national cultural institutions, and members of the public identified this as the single most pressing need. This is a concern internationally as well in France, according to Sylvie Fayet, writing in "Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France", (no. 5, 1996)

"More and more communities today consider their library to be an actual cultural instrument and an element of municipal policy"

and design or reconstruct their libraries accordingly.

There are, of course, several dimensions to the space issue. Different art forms need different kinds of space. It may be difficult to reconcile conflicting aims of openness and intimate spaces (Fayet, 1996). Some participants (e.g., wheelchair users) have special needs. Within a local authority area, not every library needs comparable amounts and types of space. And space may be irrelevant if the skills to use it properly are not there.

Nevertheless it is a fact that the people in the best position to prioritise obstacles to the development of arts in their local library services singled out the current limited availability of suitable space in libraries as the most important obstacle, and several institutions referred to the desirability of inserting strong arts criteria into the specification of new or re-developed library space. (This, indeed, was a recommendation of a report more than twenty years ago [Richards, 1976], but our survey revealed that 60 per cent of library authorities do not have purpose-built arts space.)

Secondly, it is clear that the relatively restricted opening hours and days of many libraries seriously constrain their value as venues for arts activities and events (and, it must be said, in their core function). Only 38% of branch libraries are open for 30 hours or more per week. This compares with 47% open for 30 hours or more in Northern Ireland, 52% in Scotland, and 54% in England and Wales (Public Library Statistics, 1995, Cultural Trends, 1993). A theme of the research was the need for opening times to be brought into line with the needs of users, whether these be teenagers studying for examinations or artists hoping to exhibit their work. However, current policy is that all new grant-aided public library projects recommended by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government are required to be open a minimum of two late nights per week, five days per week, and all day Saturday. Furthermore, opening the November 1997 Conference "Access all Areas", the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Mr. Noel Dempsey T D stated that library opening hours needed to be further reviewed.

Collections

An important theme emerging from the research was some dissatisfaction with the collections held by public libraries. This was most acutely expressed by young adults and by artists.

Statistics on collections are quite limited. However, it is notable that although issues of children's books constitute 35% of all book issues, children's books make up only 26% of book stocks (Intriguingly, the situation is reversed in Britain, where children's books make up 26% of book stocks, as in Ireland, but account for only 22% of issues.)

However, the inclusion of the stocks held in primary schools brings the children's proportion up to half of total library authority stocks. Issues of children's stock in branch libraries in 1995 were higher (4.5 per capita p.a.) than issues of adult materials (3.1 per capita p.a.). Most children use the libraries in their primary schools, but such issues are not fully recorded by the schools.

While separate statistics are unavailable, there is a widespread perception that the teen-age, or "young adult", reader is poorly served by the library service. While some readers seem to progress rather rapidly from children's fiction to adult fiction, perhaps via the classics and school texts, there is a large segment which wants literature falling into neither category. Meeting this need should be a key objective of the library service, because it is only by so doing that public libraries can hope to retain the interest of children - their greatest fans - as they progress through puberty and into adolescence. It is important that every opportunity be used to ensure that the public library is not seen by this age group as just an extension of school.

The issue of the cultural rights of young people has already been raised in this report. It is important that any initiative designed to improve the collections available to them should take account of the cultural rights, identities and aspirations of young people themselves their views should be sought and they should be directly represented in efforts to improve collections and facilities intended to enhance their enjoyment of libraries.

Irish language organisations have pointed to under-representation of literature in Irish in the book collections of public libraries. Another group of issues surrounds the non-book collections of public libraries, particularly CDs and music tapes. There appears to be little consistency in the policy of library authorities towards such items, with some maintaining extensive collections and others according them only token representation. In today's world, material of this sort has a role to play (apart from its intrinsic value) in drawing new users into libraries.

Artists have been particularly critical of the art-related collections of their local libraries. Artists depend on journals and periodicals to keep up to date with developments nationally and internationally in their medium such materials tend to be expensive, if bought, so many artists would benefit considerably from easier access through the library system. This does not imply that every branch should stock a full range, but that inter-library networks should be more effective and the system better known to the public. Currently, the Irish artists whose views were sought during this project do not find the existing arrangements (described in Chapter 2) adequate.

These comments are fully consistent with the finding in the research that for many people the best library is the biggest one, with the largest and most varied collections. This view underlay, for example, the praise accorded by many essayists and artists, in particular musicians, to Dublin Corporation's Central Library (commonly known as the ILAC library). It is supported by research in England and Wales which found that library users generally prefer main libraries to branch, village or mobile libraries (Department of National Heritage, 1995).

Probably not many Irish public libraries would be as fortunate in their collections as the municipal library in Lübeck in northern Germany, which organised a series of concerts featuring works stocked in the library, each performance being accompanied by an exhibition of valuable scores (Schnoor, 1995: 2). But such an initiative is suggestive of the kind of thinking which can lead to arts events based on library collections.

The emphasis on literature

A clear theme running through all the phases of the research is that the primacy of literature and book-related activities within the service portfolio of libraries is not to be seriously challenged. In the view of one submission, in spite of the technological and other developments of recent years, literature remains the most easily accessible of art forms. Many of the Chief Librarians most enthusiastic about embracing the arts in their widest definition emphasised that the core role of libraries was in the sphere of the written word, and that this must be the artistic rock to which explorations in the wider arts should be anchored. Arts Officers generally hold the same view, which also underlies the developmental activities of many overseas libraries. As Dominique Baillon-Lalande, of the public library of Nanterre, a large working-class satellite of Paris, has put it:

"Books are, and will remain, the best way of discovering the world, other people, and oneself. They constitute such a pleasure and enrichment that our role is to share them with the greatest number of people possible" (*Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France, 1997:1, translation*)

This from a municipal library which defines multiple cultural and social roles for itself, and which sees itself as a front-line activist in striving for social and racial equity, and against the "dumbing down" of popular culture. All the arts are ways of "discovering the world" - as the Arts Council has said (The Arts Council and Education, 1979-89):

"...the arts are forms of intelligence, ways of knowing the human condition and repositories of human experience symbolised in word, sound, movement and image"

There are also, of course, those for whom problems of literacy constitute a barrier to books. This segment of the community presents a dual challenge how to improve their access to non-literary forms of art, and how to overcome their disadvantage.

Although the primacy of literature is clear, the commitment of librarians to other arts is not to be doubted. In our survey, 23 out of 25 Chief Librarians (92%) either agreed or strongly agreed that "public libraries have an obligation to promote the arts", which compares well with a figure of 59% of responding British public libraries which felt that the visual arts were part of their remit (Brands, 1993)

Information

The public library is seen by most as a natural source of information of a civic and social, as well as cultural, nature. This perception should help to reinforce the library's position in the arts. The holistic view of the library, as a treasury and an exchange for the whole community, puts value on each element of its collections and on each segment of its information base. Interestingly, artists themselves are among those most anxious to see the library's role as the centre of a generalised information network developed, perhaps because they have more experience of isolation.

An interesting example of the kind of development which would be possible in this area can be found in the United States, where the National Endowment for the Arts and the Benton Foundation have initiated a project "Open Studio: The Arts Online" to provide community access to the arts on Internet sites in all 50 states as well as helping to put artists and arts organisations on-line. Libraries will play an important role in this initiative as mentors to arts organisations and artists. The project will assess the changing needs of artists and organisations, and serve as a public clearing house for arts project information (Benton Foundation, 1996).

A consistent theme was the development of the library service's capacity to provide a computerised and networked information base for all cultural news and activities in the local authority area, with links to national databases. In principle, such a facility for the arts would be no different from services supporting other matters of community interest, and could be part of a general network. A British study (McGuigan, 1997) points to the enormous opportunity which an "information society" presents for the public library "...knowledge is closely associated with power, not only to do with lending books, audio, visual and audio-visual goods, but with accessing data banks and computer networks" (p 73). The study sees a major threat in the "privatisation of information" and the further commodification and marketisation of the properties of the public sphere.

A related area is the broader application of information technology to daily life, and the role of public libraries in assisting such applications. The Information Society Commission, in its December 1997 report to the Taoiseach, highlighted the "major role" which libraries have to play in the encouragement of lifelong learning, and stated:

"More resources are required to enable them to maximise their potential as information centres.....The Commission will promote awareness of the role that public libraries can play in a learning Information Society. Librarians can assist people in the use of the technology in their centres and help ensure that those who use their facilities can achieve maximum benefit. The role that local communities can play in developing the resources already available to them will also be examined in this context."

A good example of partnerships in this area is "Libraries-on-line", a joint initiative between Microsoft and the public libraries in Ballyfermot, Castlebar and Limerick which has provided access to the Internet, the World Wide Web and educational and business software through the public library system.

Partnerships

Mention has already been made of the cultural and practical differences between local authority arts provision and a library service. It is a fact that the nature of an arts officer's job is such as to compel co-operation, collaboration and partnership with other organisations, including those which have access to substantial resources. However, such co-operation, collaboration and partnership is also part of the life of the librarian, and the research revealed a wide range of efforts involving diverse collaborators. In France, the library service emphasises its responsibility to weave a network of partnerships with many other community organisations (Baillon-Lalande, 1997).

In most cases in Ireland, such relationships with arts organisations have not been formalised. Only in three local authority areas did the research reveal that Irish library authorities were formally involved (through committee memberships, etc.) with arts organisations, whether these were local arts centres, local arts organisations and groups, or national arts organisations. However, in these three cases the level and effectiveness of local arts activity appears to be above average.

A related theme which emerged from the research is the scope which exists for fruitful co-operation within the local authority structure itself. Many arts officers have found that the formation of strong relationships with line departments such as roads, engineering, housing and community and environment has created great synergistic opportunities for arts initiatives. For those local authorities where such relationships have not been developed, an immediate opportunity exists. The library service has a place in intra-authority partnerships also. In this regard, the Strategic Policy Committees which are being established within local authorities can provide a clear focus and direction to the initiatives relating to arts/libraries activities in the wider community through including such initiatives in their remit.

Apart from continuing or service-focused partnerships, there may also be opportunities for ad hoc partnerships, to achieve particular tasks.

In the United States, the American Library Association reports that for librarians who co-ordinate cultural programmes

"In spite of the enormous demands these programmes make on staff time and library resources, they are immensely satisfying and challenging professional experiences. And just as important, they help libraries establish an enduring profile in their communities as centres for cultural activities that can make a difference in patrons' lives. ALA's travelling exhibition programmes in particular have provided opportunities for libraries to develop firm co-operative relationships with community groups and to gain equal footing with other civic institutions-especially in the eyes of local government." ("American Libraries", March 1997)

Public image

The library service is widely perceived to be slow to publicise itself. This reluctance to beat the drum undoubtedly has its roots in the traditions and culture of the service. To the extent that it is associated with a perception of the library as a quiet place, a refuge from daily life, it is a tradition to be valued. However, in today's world the library may need to speak up to make its story heard.

This is not solely an Irish phenomenon. In Britain, the "high public esteem" in which the library service is held, referred to earlier (McGuigan, 1996:72), goes hand in hand with "low political visibility and concern". Research in Australia (Mercer, C., Smith M., 1996) found that libraries, as the most used and best distributed of all cultural institutions, are well positioned to act as strategic navigators of the "knowledge economy". However, the research indicated the need for libraries to capitalise on their position with more aggressive and confident tactics with regard to the new culture and communications industries.

All the "client groups" of the library service consulted during this project delivered a similar message libraries need to be active in telling communities what they are doing, and what value they can add to virtually every civic concern. The need for this is made all the greater by the essentially local nature of the service no individual library, or even county library service, has the profile of one of the national cultural institutions, and in consequence is perhaps less overtly valued. But the public library service is unique, in that it delivers to every corner of the country cultural goods comparable in value to those of the national institutions, and this is a story worth telling.

The strength with which this theme came across in the research was remarkable. The public library service has many champions who want the service they so much admire and depend upon to be much more active in developing its role, in finding new community needs it can meet, and in communicating with the public. Given the attractive and newsworthy nature of many contemporary arts activities and events, the closer partnership which this project envisages can create excellent opportunities for the library service to publicise itself. Raising the profile of the public library service will enhance its ability to expand and fulfil its broad civic role. And in return, using an existing infrastructure to promote the arts will enhance the position of the arts in the community and proclaim them more widely.

The views expressed on this subject - by members of the public, including children, by artists, and by arts organisations - seem to have been predicated on an acceptance of the local nature of libraries, and it can be inferred that the national nature of the public library service as a whole was not particularly considered by respondents (although it did feature in the discussions and suggestions at the Conference, "Access all Areas", held in November 1997). But clearly the case can be made that a public information campaign on behalf of libraries should include a significant national element.

Chapter 9

Recommendations: Models for Partnership and Development

The outcome of the research to date indicates that there are a number of models for development which might be considered. However it is worth bearing in mind that the central feature of the initiative is based on partnership and the issue of institutional partnership can be relatively complex. In this instance, the separate historical development of library and arts services in the Irish local authority structure must be borne in mind. This contrasts with many other national experiences, where cultural services such as arts, libraries and museums often have a common institutional base at local authority level, with arts and libraries frequently being grouped together in a distinct department (perhaps with other cultural responsibilities such as museums). In Britain, the County Durham experience, where the library service pursues an active commitment to arts development work in its 41 service points, and where libraries are developing a strategic role within arts provision for the County, provides a model of best practice in this regard¹. In Britain, the synergy which can emerge from arts and library partnerships was identified as far back as 1985 when a conference on libraries and the arts drew an attendance from 28 library authorities and 4 Regional Arts Associations (Heeks, 1989). In a seminar the following year (Spiers, H., ed. 1990:10), the key factors in the development of the arts/library partnership were identified as vision, commitment and an understanding of development strategies, with action recommended at national, local and individual level.

The development of the partnership between arts and library services in Ireland must take into account their different levels of establishment within the local authority structure, the different organisational cultures involved - the lack of a shared organisational history, the degree of professionalisation, the willingness of the partners to share information and resources, and very importantly, the clarity with which the partners identify and agree their aims, objectives and goals. Furthermore, as the research indicates at the operational level, the differences in reporting structure and the organisational uncertainty experienced by some arts officers can be an impediment to further development. Any initiative at the national level, such as the appointment of an arts officer based in An Chomhairle Leabharlanna should take into account that such a position might have the effect of undermining the position of the county arts officer through encouraging librarians to bypass the local arts professional and deal directly with the national officer. Such an appointment, therefore, should be considered in the context of a specific period and with a precise and clearly defined role in relation to the co-ordination of specific projects. Consideration should also be given to allowing this appointment to emerge from the successful completion of the first phase of the partnership, rather than being put in position from the outset.

So while the Committee can, and should, create the necessary climate - the right conditions, including the policy framework, support structure and funding for the project - implementation might well be a matter of building on existing best practice and in this way ensuring organic growth. All elements of the research findings including the consultations with the public and with artists, and the consensus of the participants at the Conference, emphasised the necessity for organic growth, and for development to be from the bottom up, driven by local needs and capacities.

Two conclusions follow:

- The Committee, therefore, in considering what recommendations are most likely to promote the aims of the project, must be conscious of the need to marry policy making at national level with *patterns of activity* at local level. In an adaptation of a current maxim of management theory, the arts and library services must "**think national, act local**".
- Furthermore, the Committee will need to be conscious of the need to avoid one-sided partnerships. The phrase "**strategic partnership**" is used to describe collaborations which (a) benefit both, or all partners, and (b) advance the achievement of each partner's **long-term goals** (as distinct from the efficiency or effectiveness of their operations).

One model for the development of a strategic partnership in the cultural area (Dreeszen, 1992) envisages movement from simple transactions (for example, in the current case, the provision by an arts officer of an existing cultural programme to an appropriate library authority), through joint ventures and the development of information - sharing networks to co-ordinated tasks, these occurring first on an ad hoc basis but leading later to ongoing collaboration. The final stage in such a model is institutional collaboration, where the partnership becomes permanent, with its own resources and programmes.

¹ see for example, Durham County Council, Arts, Libraries and Museums Department, Corporate Objectives, County Durham Cultural Partnership Strategy Document and Policy Statement, *Eye Sites: Community Initiatives in County Durham Libraries*, 1996 and a variety of other programmes of events, exhibitions and activities.

It is worth repeating that the evolutionary models outlined above need not move along the line of increasing complexity from simple transactions to institutional collaborations and it is not necessary that partnerships evolve through each of the stages of the model (Dreeszen 1992, 19). At the simplest operational level it may be that occasional joint ventures will be what some arts officers and librarians wish to develop, while in other instances such ventures may deepen and evolve into co-ordinated tasks. The use of the model is largely for purposes of clarification and to indicate the variety of levels of initiative.

As applied to arts/libraries co-operation, at each stage of partnership-building, there is scope both to share the risk inherent in cultural ventures, and to broaden and deepen their potential. In some situations, pilot collaborative projects between arts officers and libraries could be used to control the risks inherent in the implementation process.

The Committee may decide to develop a series of initiatives based on the kind of evolutionary model outlined above and including a focus on areas of deprivation and on services for children and young people. These might evolve in the following way:-

Stage One - simple transaction: Arts Officers in the relevant areas 'sell' an arts event, for example a Music Network tour, to those libraries which have an appropriate performance space (Music Network was the national arts organisation most frequently cited as a partner by arts officers in the questionnaires).

Stage Two - joint venture: examples could be:

1. development of a joint children's project with a focus on story-telling/drama/mime/poetry. This might be in association with Verbal Arts in Derry, or another organisation, such as the Ark, and could be based on residencies in a number of targeted libraries. (The Linen Hall Library in Belfast ran a very successful project - "Yarnspinning" based on community storytelling and this was developed further in a number of public libraries in Northern Ireland)
2. an alternative joint venture could be modelled on an initiative from the Durham project - 'Visual arts year 1996' which focused on creating new artworks for libraries in the county. This involved artists, library staff, library users, community groups and schools, and included workshops with local people through whom the designs (in this case for wall hangings and window designs) emerged. A project such as this could be considered in association with a national cultural institution which has already done outreach work in the community and education fields.
3. another example might be a project with a focus on disability with the NRB, who made a submission, and Very Special Arts. This could provide holiday arts programmes in a number of targeted libraries for children from local special schools and mainstream schools.
4. a further example could be a project to develop literary critical skills, through the mediation of writers and other artists.

An excellent example of joint venture practice is provided by the "Ag dul Siar, Ag dul Siar" sculpture trail through the libraries of Mayo, developed as a major partnership project by Mayo County Council and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, with the support of the Arts Council. The trail features art works from the Museum's collection. It embodies Mayo County Council's policy of promoting access to high quality art within the county, and also meets the aims of IMMA's national programme established in 1997 with a specific commitment to a partnership approach in decentralisation. By involving the public libraries the Museum found that "a whole new and extremely democratic way of exhibiting contemporary art was established." (Carissa Farrell, IMMA, quoted in the "Irish Times", 20 April 1998).

The "joint venture" concept could also embrace projects under the "Percent for Art" scheme, or other projects where several partners are needed either to secure the appropriate level of commitment by the bodies involved, or to access diverse sources of finance. A British example, where the problem of funding a major arts activity was tackled, is the massive Antony Gormley sculpture, the "Angel of the North", at Gateshead. While this was commissioned by Gateshead Libraries and Arts Service, it was funded by the Arts Council's Lottery Fund, the European

Community, European Regional Development Fund, Northern Arts, and three private sector sponsors-Ove Arup & Partners, the Express Group, and Silverscreen plc. Possible models in Ireland include cases where private developers have provided (free of charge) library or cultural space in new retail or commercial developments.

Stage Three - information network. This could involve access to national and international arts information etc for arts officers and librarians in a number of counties, using information technology. The project could include arts organisations already working in the information technology and data collection areas.

Such an initiative would fit well with the concept which emerged from the research of the library as providing a central information service for the arts, as part of its general civic and community role.

Stage Four - co-ordinated tasks/collaborations. Here partners do more than share information but resolve to act together. Some recommended initiatives under this heading are:

1. a joint conference or training programme for arts officers and librarians,
2. an annual festival of arts/library events, and
3. the design and delivery of a co-ordinated public information programme aimed at enhancing the public image of the library service and informing the public about its wider cultural role.

Stage Five - institutional collaboration. At this level, without establishing any additional institutional structures, partners have the capacity to develop on-going strategic programmes in which lasting forms of collaboration are put in place, resourced and monitored.

Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that action is required by a number of policy-making bodies, individually and in partnership, if progress is to be made in developing arts and libraries services. These are as follows:

Recommended actions by the Arts Council

- Review writers-in-libraries policy with a view to enlarging budgetary provision
- Improve the availability of musical instruments in libraries and consider the appointment of musicians-in-the library programme. It is particularly appropriate to consider the appointment of a musician-in-residence at Dublin Corporation I LAC Library
- Provide for a number of cross-disciplinary residencies in appropriate libraries

Recommended actions by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

- Encourage the formation, in the area of each branch library, of a Library User Committee, which should include, as well as library staff, a number of active library members (of whom at least one should be a young adult) and representatives of local organisations and individuals active in civic affairs, the arts, education, social exclusion and other areas, in order to help maintain the relevance of the library's services to the community, and to enlist support (including resources) for its activities. Ideally, the local Arts Officer should participate in the work of such Committees as appropriate and necessary. Such an initiative would assist in involving library users who are not generally encouraged to contribute to or participate in the development of services
- Encourage library authorities to develop in conjunction with young people mission statements outlining their aims and objectives for young people and to distinguish in their policies between children and young adults
- Review with representative organisations for people with disabilities how library policy in relation to disability access can be co-ordinated with the Arts Council's policy in this area
- Provide a quarterly newsletter for users, detailing arts activities

Recommended actions by the Department of Environment and Local Government

- Review of library staffing and service delivery, including opening hours, to ensure flexibility
- Correction of built infrastructure deficiencies, including capital investment backlog
- Consideration of opportunities for arts/libraries provision in mixed public/commercial building developments such as shopping centres and urban renewal projects

Recommended Joint Actions

- the appointment of an arts officer based in An Chomhairle Leabharlanna with responsibility for the co-ordination of the projects and reporting to the Committee
- the development by the Arts Council, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the local authorities of a national arts and libraries strategy to optimise the utilisation of scarce national resources. This would include an arts input to Library Development Plans and the provision of designated arts spaces in new library buildings and the development of guidelines for such spaces. A strategic approach is appropriate at this time with the emergence in local authorities of Strategic Policy Committees, which will provide a forum for the closer co-ordination of arts not just with the library service, but also with other elements of local administration
- an initiative by the same two bodies focusing on training/human resource issues for arts/library services for all levels of arts and libraries provision in local authorities. At a practical level, training for librarians in the hanging of exhibitions should be developed
- a national plan for access to arts and library services for disadvantaged groups and areas. This would involve the two Councils, Department of the Environment and Local Government, Combat Poverty and CAFE and would build on existing research. As indicated earlier, it is particularly important to address the issue of equality versus equity in access to arts and libraries, and to this end we recommend that a pilot survey be initiated to test how the problem can be addressed
- a specific library-based national project aimed at children and the visual arts, identified frequently during the research as a neglected area, to be developed by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council
- a capital investment study involving the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna which would evaluate existing exhibition/general arts spaces in the libraries where they are available (identified in 16 libraries by the research) with a view to upgrading these and developing guidelines for their use
- the preparation of guidelines (to be agreed with the Department of the Environment and Local Government) to be applied to the design of new library buildings or to the reconstruction of existing buildings which would allow for appropriate arts space to be planned into all new capital spending

APPENDIX 1

BRIEF FOR CONSULTANTS

A Proposal for a study to review the role of public libraries in the provision of the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

Introduction

The Arts Plan, published by The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon in 1994, put forward a proposal that a partnership be developed between The Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) with the purpose of increasing access to and participation in the arts through the public library system.

The Public Libraries and the Arts Committee has been established to advise both Councils on how the partnership should be developed.

This document sets out briefly a proposal for an initial study to be undertaken to inform the Committee of the current situation with regard to existing structures for the provision of the arts in public libraries.

In pursuing this initiative, the Arts Council and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna hope to increase awareness of public libraries as centres for culture, where access to all forms of culture and the arts is available to all sections of the community, regardless of age, ability or social status. The partnership would also aim to promote the facilities of the public libraries as local gateways to information, providing for lifelong learning and the cultural development of individuals and social groups.

Research will be commissioned into current public library/Arts Council practices in relation to arts and culture. The purpose of this research is to inform the Committee on how the further development of the arts might be facilitated through the public library infrastructure. It is also envisaged that the research would determine opportunities for the development of stronger links between the two Councils and public library authorities.

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon established in 1951 is the statutory body for the promotion and development of the arts in Ireland. At present, it disburses an annual grant of IRE20 8 million.

Following the publication of *The Arts Plan*, the Council is committed to the advancement of this Plan - Strategic partnerships such as that proposed between An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Arts Council form a cornerstone of this document.

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) is the statutory body which was established in 1947 to advise both the Minister for the Environment and Local Government and individual library authorities on the provision and development of public library services.

Public Libraries there are, at present, thirty two public library authorities in the Republic of Ireland. Five are based on municipal authority areas The remaining are based on either individual county or county borough or joint authority area.

There are 317 branch libraries providing services with one third open for at least 30 and up to 54 hours per week and 154 are open for a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 29 hours per week. In addition, public library services are available to hospitals, schools, prisons, day care centres, parish halls, and other community service points In 1994 local authorities provided materials for 180 service points.

A mobile library service is provided to neighbourhood housing, rural areas and small population clusters. There are 29 mobile libraries operating in Ireland.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this study is

- 1. to inform the Committee of existing structures and tools for the provision of the arts in public libraries and to review the effectiveness of their operation and programmes and**
- 2. to identify areas which require attention by public library authorities and to make recommendations in relation to the future development of the provision of the arts in public libraries.**

Research will be undertaken in the following priority areas:

1. positive value of public libraries in daily life including particular concerns in the areas of deprivation,
2. the enhancement of the world of the child and young people through public libraries and the arts and
3. an examination of models of good practice and the proposal of recommendations on the broader artistic, cultural and civic role envisaged for public libraries.

Methodology

A consultant will be appointed to undertake the study and to report to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee. The study will be monitored by the Sub-Committee.

The study will advise on the following issues:

1. how to simplify access to the arts through public libraries,
2. public libraries as a force for social integration,
3. the enabling value of public libraries in the information society,
4. current opinions of artists and creators on the provision and access to the arts through public libraries,
5. the primacy of children and young people in the public library service, including methods used to target children's and young people's services, and the promotion of reading and writing to children and young people,
6. current opinions of children and young people on the provision and access to the arts through public libraries,
7. examination of the broader cultural and civic role for libraries and
8. examination of current successful structures/systems and practice and proposal of future directions.

Timescale

It is expected that the study will be of six months duration and will commence in July 1997.

A final report will be submitted to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee by the consultant at the end of this period. Interim and progress reports will also be presented to the Committee by the consultant.

Detailed Requirements of Study

National Surveys

A series of national surveys will be sent to

- chief librarians of each library authority,
- arts officers of each local authority and
- artists (a random selection of individuals from membership lists or/and their representative national associations.

To elicit:

- opportunities for co-operation and
- priority actions necessary to support co-operation.

Outline

The outline will assess

- coverage of the arts by public libraries,
- relationship between public libraries/arts organisations and the local community,
- relationship between the Arts officers and the public library service and
- promotion of reading and writing to adults and young people.

Other topics will be identified by the consultant with the prior approval of the Committee during his/her research.

The outline would take account of any previous reports of relevance inside and outside of Ireland.

Recommendations

The final report will include recommendations on

1. A review of structures following examination of the above topics and
2. The roles An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the Arts Council and local authorities should play to facilitate these developments.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE TO CHIEF COUNTY AND CITY LIBRARIANS

The Public Library and the Arts Committee has been established to advise An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) and the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) on how further development of the arts might be facilitated through the public library infrastructure. This questionnaire is an essential part of the research.

To ensure the success of the project, please complete the questionnaire and return it by **Friday, September 19th 1997**. Your response will be confidential to the consultants and the Steering Committee and will primarily be used for aggregation purposes.

Note: For the purpose of this research, the arts are considered to include:

Visual arts	Crafts	Photography
Film	Video	Multi-media
Dance	Mime	Literature
Drama	Music	

These categories include locally generated activities under the headings of Community arts, Arts education and Amateur/Voluntary arts.

1. THE LIBRARY AUTHORITY IN THE COUNCIL STRUCTURE

1.1 Name of library authority

1.2 Name of City or County Librarian

1.3 Is there an Arts Officer in your local authority? Yes No

1.4 If yes, to whom does he/she report?(tick one)

County/City Manager County/City Librarian Other (specify)

1.5 Name of Local Authority committee (if any) to which library service reports

1.6 How often does this Committee meet?

1.7 Name of Council Committee responsible for arts matters (if any)

1.8 How often does this Committee meet?

1.9 In the future, to which Strategic Policy Committee of your local authority will the library service report?

Arts and the Magic of the Word
A Report by the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee

2.5 Has the library service hosted any touring exhibitions or other arts programmes in the last three years?

Yes (If yes, please specify or attach details)

No (If no, go to Q.2.6)

2.6 Apart from outside funding related to specific events/activities of the type which you have listed, has the library authority received any grants or other outside funding for arts related activities in the last three years?

Yes (If yes, please specify, including amounts)

No (If no, go to Q.3.1)

3. POLICIES AND BUDGET

3.1 Does the local authority have a plan for the development of the arts?

Yes No In preparation

3.2 If yes, was the library service involved in its formulation?

Yes No

3.3 Is there an allocation in the 1997 estimate for arts events/activities for the library service?

Yes No

3.4 Does the library authority have an official library policy statement?

Yes No (If no, go to Q.3.5)

If yes, does it refer specifically to arts activities?

Yes No (If no, go to Q.3.5)

If yes, please supply a copy of the statement when returning this questionnaire.

In either case, what is your own view on the context of arts provision within the overall public library service of your authority?

3.5 Does the authority's acquisitions policy make a specific provision for work of imaginative literature?

Yes No

3.6 Does the library authority have a specific budget for arts activities and programmes which is distinct from that of the Local Authority Arts Officer (if any)?

Yes No (If no, go to Q.3.7)

If yes, specify the amount of the library authority's arts budget for 1996 (and for 1994 and 1995 if possible) and indicate the main types of expenditure incurred (to the nearest £1000)

3.7 Does the capital budget of the library service (buildings and other capital headings) include an amount for arts works?

Yes No

3.8 Has the library service availed of the Percentage for Art Scheme?

Yes (If yes, please give details) No (If no, go to Q3.9)

3.9 Has the library commissioned any Public Art works?

Yes (If yes, please give details) No

4. RESOURCES

4.1 How many of the libraries in your authority area have accommodation which is available for arts activities/events ?

Basis	Number of Libraries	Number Outdoor Outdoor area	Size Sq.ft of each	Number Indoor Indoor area	Size Sq.ft of each
(A) Available on a part-time basis					
(B) Dedicated to arts activities on a permanent basis					
(C) Permanently dedicated to a specific art form					

4.2 For which arts purpose is library space most frequently used?
(List in order of frequency of use)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4.3 Were any of your libraries specifically designed for arts as well as library use?

Yes (if yes, how many?) No (if no, go to Q.4.4)

4.4 In how many of your libraries is accommodation available for use by arts groups?

4.5 In how many of your libraries is dedicated space available for:

	No. of Libraries
Rehearsal	
Performance	
Exhibition	
Workshops	
Film Shows	

6. ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

The Library Service as promoter or initiator of arts-related activities

6.1 Do you have a programme of arts events/activities for the current year?

Yes No

6.2 If yes, is this spread over all the branch libraries in your area?

Yes No

If no, please comment

6.3 If you answered "yes" to Question 6.2, which of the following categories of event or activity are included in your programme:

Type of Group	Adult		Children's	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Book Clubs				
Poetry/book readings				
Drama				
Dance				
Musical performances				
Exhibitions-craft				
Exhibitions-photography				
Exhibitions-painting and sculpture				
Workshops				
Other (describe below)				

6.4 Please comment on the volume of community arts, arts education and amateur/voluntary activity or involvement represented by the activities and events shown on the previous table.

The Library Service as facilitator of arts related activities

6.4 Which of the following types of group have used the facilities of the library service in the last year?

Type of Group	Adult		Children's	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Writers' groups				
Reading circles				
Drama groups				
Music groups				
Film societies				
Photographic clubs				
Other (please specify below)				

7. ATTITUDES

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the propositions listed below. Please use the following rating system:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 5 |
| Agree | 4 |
| Neither agree or disagree | 3 |
| Disagree | 2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 |

- | | Rating |
|---|--------------------------|
| 7.1 The library service has a responsibility to collate and disseminate information on arts activities and events | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.2 Public libraries have an obligation to promote the arts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.3 Public libraries should concentrate on their basic tasks and leave arts promotions to specialists | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.4 Any arts responsibilities which public libraries have should be to all the arts disciplines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.5 The main arts responsibility of public libraries is in the literature field | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.6 Public libraries should particularly promote work of a high standard by contemporary professional artists | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.7 Public libraries should be centres of community arts, fostering local creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.8 Specialist training for librarians in provision of the arts to the community should be part of their professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8 THE FUTURE

8.1 In your opinion, are there significant opportunities in your local authority area for expanded participation in the arts by **adults**?

Yes (if yes, describe below) No

8.2 In your opinion, are there significant opportunities in your local authority area for expanded participation in the arts by **children**?

Yes (if yes, describe below) No

8.3 In your opinion, are there significant opportunities in your local authority area for expanded participation in the arts by **young adults**?

Yes (if yes, describe below) No

8.4 In your opinion, are there significant opportunities in your local authority area for expanded participation in the arts by **disadvantaged groups**?

Yes (if yes, describe below) No

8.5 If your answer was "no" to any of the Questions numbered 8.1 to 8.4, please elaborate below

8.6 Have you experienced or do you foresee difficulties which may hinder the exploitation of such opportunities for any of the groups referred to in Questions 8.1 to 8.4 ?

Yes No

8.7 If yes, please elaborate below

8.8 What role can the library service play in exploiting the opportunities or overcoming the difficulties you have identified?

8.9 In your opinion, is there room for further development of partnerships between libraries, arts organisations and other local authority departments which would help to increase access to and participation in the arts ?

Yes No

8.10 If yes, please give some examples of the kinds of partnership which you think should be developed :

8.11 If you answered "yes" to Question 8.9, please identify the costs and benefits to the library service which you feel would be associated with the development of such partnerships:

9 COMMENTS

PLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO ADD ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE ARTS IN IRELAND. FEEL FREE TO APPEND DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL.

Many thanks for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire. The completed questionnaire should be returned not later than Friday 19 September, 1997 to:

Anne Kelly / Peter Kelly
c/o An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
53-54 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2.

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE TO LOCAL AUTHORITY ARTS OFFICERS

THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

The Public Library and the Arts Committee has been established to advise An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) and the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) on how further development of the arts might be facilitated through the public library infrastructure. This questionnaire is an essential part of the research.

To ensure the success of the project, please complete the questionnaire and return it by **Friday, September 19th 1997**. Your response will be confidential to the consultants and the Steering Committee and will primarily be used for aggregation purposes.

Note: For the purpose of this research, the arts are considered to include:

Visual arts	Crafts	Photography
Film	Video	Multi-media
Dance	Mime	Literature
Drama	Music	

These categories include locally generated activities under the headings of Community arts, Arts education and Amateur/Voluntary arts.

COUNTY OR COUNTY BOROUGH

1. THE ARTS OFFICER IN THE COUNCIL STRUCTURE

1.1 How often does the Committee responsible for arts matters meet?

1.2 In the future, to which Strategic Policy Committee of your local authority will the Arts Officer report?

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

1.1 Please identify the way in which formal communication takes place between yourself and the Library Department on arts matters (tick all applicable channels below)

- Line Management
- Regular formal meetings with branch librarians
- Regular formal consultation with Senior Librarian
- Shared advisory groups/committees
- Shared Working groups
- Informal, no structured arrangement
- Limited infrequent communication

1.2 Please describe briefly how this relationship works in practice

2. ARTS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN YOUR AREA

2.1 Do you have a specific programme of library-based arts events and activities in 1997?

Yes No

If "yes", what proportion are these events and activities of your total programme?

2.2 If you answered "yes" to Question 2.1, was the programme drawn up in consultation with library staff?

Yes No

2.3 Was there such a programme in 1996?

Yes No

2.4 If you answered "yes" to either question 2.1 or 2.3, please describe the current or most recent programme, giving representative examples of the coverage of different arts forms.

2.5 If there has been no formal programming of library-based arts events or activities, has there been any ad hoc involvement by the library service in facilitating your work?

Yes No

2.6 If you answered "yes" to Question 2.5, please explain and give some examples:

2.7 Are such events and activities subject to an evaluation process? (please tick where applicable)

All projects

Some projects

None

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Relationships with other local authority departments

3.1 Do you feel that your position as an arts officer within the local authority allows you to work effectively for the arts across departments?

Yes No

3.2 Have you, or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with other departments?

Yes No

If yes, please list up to three examples of projects?

Relationships with external organisations

3.3 Do you feel that your position as an arts officer within the local authority allows you to work effectively with external organisations?

Yes No

3.4 Have you or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with local external organisations or agencies?

Yes No

If "yes", please give examples below.

3.5 Have you or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with **regional** external organisations or agencies?

Yes No

If "yes", please give examples below.

3.6 Have you or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with **national** external organisations or agencies?

Yes No

If "yes", please give examples below.

3.7 Have you or your predecessors brought to fruition arts projects in partnership with **European or other international** external organisations or agencies?

Yes No

If "yes", please give examples below.

3.8 If you answered "yes" to any of Questions 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 or 3.7, were the partnerships subject to an evaluation process? (please tick where applicable)

- All projects
- Some projects
- None

4. ARTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

4.1 Has a plan for arts development been drawn up for your local authority area?

Yes No

4.2 If yes, was the library department involved in its formulation?

Yes No

4.3 If there is an arts development plan in your local authority, does it contain specific provision for activities targeted at:

Children Yes No

Disadvantaged groups Yes No

Disadvantaged areas Yes No

4.4 Are the arts projects/programmes developed as part of the plan subject to an evaluation process? (please tick where applicable)

All projects Some projects None

Provision for the arts

4.5 Is there an arts budget in your local authority?

Yes No

4.6 If "yes", is this (please tick where applicable)

a specific arts budget a line in the library budget in another budget (specify)

4.7 What is the amount of your arts budget for 1997?

4.8 Would you favour an additional budget line for arts/community events in the library service?

Yes No

4.9 Do you receive administrative or other support from the library service?

Yes No

If "yes", please describe.

5. ATTITUDES

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the propositions listed below as they apply to your local authority. Please use the following rating system:

Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neither agree or disagree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

- | | Rating |
|---|--------------------------|
| 5.1 All the arts are integral to the role of public libraries in the local authority. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.2 The dominant responsibility of the public library service lies in the field of literature. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3 The library service in this local authority seeks to embrace all art forms for the benefit of the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.4 Support for arts activity exists wholly independently of the library service. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.5 Arts support within the library service is aimed at supporting high quality professional work. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.6 Arts support within the library service is primarily aimed at arts Initiatives by the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.7 Arts support within the library service is well balanced between Professional provision and community access. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.8 Arts initiatives are aimed primarily at delivering the objectives of the library department. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.9 Specialist training for Arts Officers in the provision of the arts in the local authority should be considered. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.10 Specialist training for Librarians in the provision of the arts in the local authority should be considered. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. THE FUTURE

6.1 Are there factors which you believe are limiting the development of arts activities within public libraries?

Yes No

If "yes", please elaborate below.

6.2 Are there policy measures or other initiatives which you believe would allow the library service to enhance and develop its role in the arts in your local authority?

Yes No

If "yes", please elaborate below.

6.3 What do you consider to be the main benefits/disadvantages of increasing support for the arts within the public libraries?

6.4 Do you feel that the library service has a role to play in your programme for the development of the arts?

Yes No

If "yes", in what areas would you like to see the role developed?

6.5 Do you have specific recommendations on how communications with the Arts Council in relation to arts in libraries could be improved? Please comment below.

COMMENTS

PLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO ADD ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE ARTS IN IRELAND. FEEL FREE TO APPEND DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL.

Many thanks for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire. If you feel that any questions are inappropriate, please do not answer them, but answer the rest. If we have missed an area you consider to be significant, please let us know. The completed questionnaire should be returned not later than Friday 19 September, 1997 to:

Arne Kelly / Peter Kelly
c/o An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
53-54 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2.

APPENDIX 4

PUBLIC LIBRARIES & THE ARTS TEXT OF ADVERTISEMENT INVITING SUBMISSIONS

As part of a developing partnership between An Chomhairle Leabharlanna / Library Council and the Arts Council /An Chomhairle Ealaíon, it is proposed to commission a major study on the arts in public libraries. The areas of interest for the study are as follows:

1. The positive value of public libraries in daily life including particular concerns in areas of deprivation,
2. The enhancement of the world of the child through public libraries and the arts and
3. An examination of models of good practice and the proposal of recommendations on the broader artistic, cultural and civic roles envisaged for public libraries

To inform this research, the joint PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE now wishes to issue a call for SUBMISSIONS from interested individuals and organisations. Proposals and analysis in the areas of particular interest to this study are welcome, as are submissions relating to all elements of the work of the libraries in the area of the arts.

Further information on the project is available at

**<http://www.iol.ie/~libcounc> or from
The Director, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna,
53 & 54 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2.
Telephone (01) 676 1167 or 676 1963
Fax (01) 676 6721 e-mail libcounc@iol.ie**

Submissions should be made in writing or on tape to An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, or to your local library on or prior to **Friday 23rd May, 1997.**

Cuirfear fáilte roimh moltaí as Gaeilge

LIST OF ORGANISATION AND INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE SUBMISSIONS

Age & Opportunity
St. Joesph's Building
Marino Institute of Education
Griffith Avenue
Dublin 9.

Arthouse - Multimedia Centre for the Arts
Curved Street
Temple Bar
Dublin 2.

Association of Artists in Ireland
Arthouse
Curved Street
Temple Bar
Dublin 2.

ASTI - Association of Secondary School Teachers, Ireland
ASTI House
Winetavern Street
Dublin.

Athlone Writers' Group
c/o "Inisfree"
13 Beech Park
Athlone
Co. Westmeath.

Athy Writers' Group
c/o Vera McHugh
Tullamoy
Stradbally
Co. Laois.

Bord na Gaeilge
7 Memon Square
Dublin 2.

Lena Boylan
Celbridge
Co. Kildare.

CAFE - Creative Action for Everyone
23 Moss Street
Dublin 2.

Cerebral Palsy Ireland (CPI)
Sandymount Avenue
Dublin 4.

City Arts Centre
23/25 Moss Street
Dublin 2.

Mae Clancy-Leonard
Woodlands
Naas
Co. Kildare.

Elizabeth Connelly
Newington House
Christianstown
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

Con Costello
Tullig
Dublin Road
Naas
Co. Kildare.

Ms. Anne Coughlan
County Librarian
Offaly County Council
O'Connor Square
Tullamore
Co. Offaly.

County Kilkenny Vocational Education
Committee
Arts & Adult Education Office
Ormond Road
Kilkenny.

Cuala Verbal Arts
29 Lismore Park
Waterford.

Noel Dalton

Adult Education Organiser
VEC County Offices
Limerick Road
Naas
Co. Kildare.

Senator John Dardis
Belmont House
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne
c/o National Library of Ireland
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

Douglas Reading Circle
The Library
Douglas Shopping Centre
Douglas
Co. Cork.

Ann Egan
St. Patrick's Post Primary School
Newbridge
Naas
Co. Kildare.

Desmond Egan
Great Connell
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

An Forás Gnó
4 Céide Í
Baile Átha Cliath 2.

Ireland Literature Exchange (ILE)
19 Parnell Square
Dublin 1.

The Irish Wheelchair Association
Árás Chúchulain
Blackheath Drive
Clontarf
Dublin 3.

Irish Museum of Modern Art
Royal Hospital
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

Biddy Jenkinson
35 Ascal Cabán tSíle
Baile Átha Cliath 18.

KELT - Kildare LEADER Company
The Woods
Clane
Co. Kildare.

Kerry County Library
Moyderwell
Tralee
Co. Kerry.

William R Kiernan
c/o Kildare County Libraries.

Kildare Performing Arts Group (KPAG)
Unit 2A
Cutlery Road
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

Kilkenny County Council
County Hall
John Street
Kilkenny.

Annette McCormack
"Marlay"
Station Road
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

Maeve McGrath
8 Hatch Place
Dublin 2.

Con McNamara
25 The Village
Newbridge
Co. Kildare.

Paddy Melia
c/o Kildare County Libraries.

Midland Arts
Bridge House
Bellevue Road
Mullingar
Co. Westmeath. Terry Moore
c/o Kildare Public Libraries.

Michael Mullan
Castlebar
Co. Mayo

The National Adult Literacy Agency
76 Lower Gardiner Street
Dublin 1.

The National Council for the Blind of Ireland
PV Doyle House
Whitworth Road
Drumcondra
Dublin 9.

The National Gallery of Ireland
Merrion Square West
Dublin 2.

National Rehabilitation Board
25 Clyde Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4.

G Newman
Waterford.

Lissa K Oliver
The Bungalow
Youngstown
Athy
Co. Kildare.

Siobhán O'Rafferty
Royal Irish Academy
19 Dawson Street
Dublin 2.

Poetry Ireland
Bermingham Tower
Upper Yard
Dublin Castle
Dublin 2.

Councillor Paddy Power
Caragh
Co. Kildare.

Royal Dublin Society
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4.

Sheila Simmons
Irish Association of Older People
Room G02
University College
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2.

Frank Taaffe
Ardreigh House
Athy
Co. Kildare.

C. Talbot
c/o Kildare County Libraries.

Austin Vaughan
County Librarian
Mayo County Library
Mountain View
Castlebar
Co. Mayo.

Wexford County Council
County Library
Abbey Street
Wexford.

APPENDIX 5

Artists who participated in Group Discussions

CASTLEBAR

Curran, Mary

Durkan, Leah

Heemskerk, Marianne

Pilboro, Anthony

Reidy, Ger

Reidy, Tony

Smith, Mick

Woods, Vincent

ENNISCORTHY

Breen, Declan

Breen, Joanne

Clarkin, Sean

Dempsey, Noeleen

Gaynor, Helen

Grant, Deirdre

Warren, Michael

DÚN LAOGHAIRE

Cussen, Clodna

Gillen, Gerald

Lambert, Miriam

Ryle, Victoria

Teljeur, Gerda

APPENDIX 6

Position paper presented to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee by John Coil, Mayo County Arts Officer.

THE LIBRARY AND THE ARTS. THE ARTS AND THE LIBRARY.
THE ARTS IN THE LIBRARY, THE LIBRARY IN THE ARTS.
WHERE ART THOU, O GREAT ONE YE LOCAL AUTHORITY?

This position paper is one of those that seemed like a good idea at the time of its first mention. If it had been written then, I would probably deliver a very upbeat account of potential good practices and aspirational hopes. However, as the title may suggest, it is one which I now find difficult to write. This difficulty is created by a realisation that the partnership strategy between the Arts Council and the Library Council and the work of this committee have taken on an area of development which has turned out to be much broader than that which I had initially perceived, and indeed, I must state that I feel that it is a partnership area which is too broad and one which needs greater definition and focus. Meaningful, productive, successful partnerships between organisations of any kind are indeed difficult, complex and of an evolving nature and need to be nurtured over time with a strong basis of mutual respect, unity of purpose, specific common goals and the willingness to compromise somewhat in order to achieve those goals. I have no doubt that the arts council and the library council do have areas of common concern at national level. However, ideologically, I do feel that the areas of discussion generated and dealt with by this committee are primarily of a local nature and although I find the work of the committee to be educational, and worthwhile on many levels due to the calibre, wisdom and knowledge of those who attend these meetings, I do feel that the real issues with which we concern ourselves are issues which must be dealt with more effectively at a local internal level with the local authority structures. Local partnerships and local development need local understanding, local common goals and local mutual respect and in this context, I find a partnership proposed between two national agencies, in an effort to promote a development situation within one locally based agency, namely, the Local Authority, to be a bit of a contradiction and somewhat at variance with my own localised bottom up, planning and development beliefs.

It is also sadly, a reflection of the current top down planning which persists in this country. However, I still find it extremely worthwhile to be here, in order that I may at least attempt to address the issues and try to change this top-heavy approach to planning. Therefore, within the context of the work which this committee is trying to achieve, there is an area of concern which I feel, needs to be addressed. That is, the realisation that, regardless of recommendations or proposals which may emanate from this committee or indeed from the two councils, that local development, local partnerships and internal partnerships within organisations and agencies are primarily personality led, with the success of projects of a joint partnership nature being due mainly to the fact that all the partners have entered into cooperation with agreed common goals.

Therefore, it is obvious that my position in relation to arts and libraries, libraries and arts etc. is that development must be based on an internal partnership within the local authority which considers the local need and the local provision. The problem of arts definition is one which must be addressed by this committee sooner rather than later. We must acknowledge the different perspectives and try to define the arts activity which already happens in libraries and also look at proposals on how we should develop arts in libraries. It seems to me that our definition of arts activity can vary quite a bit and that there is a gulf to be spanned if this partnership is to succeed. There are different types of arts activity which can happen in libraries and I will return to this point later in more detail. At this stage, it may be enough, to introduce the idea that some arts activities can be product led while others can be process led.

Based on the premise that the success of our deliberations at a national level will ultimately depend on effective partnerships at a local level, I feel that we could provide a better climate for the internal partnerships within local authorities by rewarding and encouraging those local authorities which have shown initiative, innovation and excellence of practice in promoting arts access and arts participation through the library service and through effective partnerships between their arts service, library services and other services. The message that should be put forward is that excellence, partnership and integrated strategic planning will be rewarded.

A situation which replicates the fuzzy, inside out, lets promote this in areas which have done nothing so far and which do not have the expertise or inclination to do so must not be repeated. There are examples of potential good practice of the arts in the libraries and there are examples of potential good practice of the libraries in the arts, but most importantly, there are examples of good potential

integration between libraries, arts and other local authority services I use the word potential in all of these areas of action because I feel that they could all be developed further by making resources available and this is what this committee could promote by proposing to both councils that they should introduce the incentive of funding from national sources for the pilot development of these partnerships at a local level. A broad funding led approach with the promise of funding for all areas would only create a situation where individuals and services without the common goals or the strategic approach to development in this area would become involved for all the wrong reasons and could do more harm to arts development, library development, and local development in general.

The development of examples of good practice as models for action should then be followed by initiatives to improve practice in other areas. The next step would be to address the need for training. This need exists at many levels. The need for an understanding of the roles of Arts Officers and County Librarians could easily be addressed through our existing education system. For example, the arts admin. studies and the library studies at universities could enter into partnership to promote better understanding of arts practice, arts admin. and librarianship for future graduates. This should also be applicable to other areas of service within the local authority e.g. architects, engineers, planners etc. This alone would not solve the arts training problems for the existing library service As we all know, libraries are not predominantly staffed by qualified librarians, so we must address the problem of providing arts training and indeed, in many instances arts appreciation courses for the untrained library staff. The current situation in relation to those working in branch libraries is also personality led and arts success is therefore patchy.

There is also a need for greater understanding of the different ethos, of the different aims, and of the different target communities that the library service and the arts service in a local authority may have. We must understand that only where common goals exist should we enter into partnerships and projects We should not enter into projects without relevant expertise.

The arts role and the library role in the community converge at certain points and diverge at many others. They are two distinct services with some areas of common purpose Both services aim to improve the quality of life in the community, sometimes together, but often in different ways and using different approaches. The arts service provided within the core function of the library, (arts, books, CDs, tapes videos, play readings etc.) which Tom McCarthy has emphasised must be acknowledged more by the arts sector and be seen as an integral part of the arts jigsaw. Similarly the process based, participation based arts activity which can be provided through the arts service and library service working together must also be emphasised while understanding the limitations imposed on the level at which and to which any library service can develop these arts functions.

Contrary to popular opinion in certain quarters, I do not feel that the library service as it currently exists, can serve the function of an arts centre and should not try to do so for the following reasons:

1. The ethos of the library and the ethos of the arts sector in Ireland differ greatly in relation to quality of art, especially in relation to the visual arts The library is popular as a place of exhibition for local artists of varying quality.

The imposition of an artistic policy in libraries would be problematical and contrary to their image as a place of the public and for the public. This provides a problem for the arts administrator whose emphasis is on quality. In this instance the best that can be achieved to accommodate both aims is to provide a balance of good quality art in the annual programme while still accommodating the local amateur. It is not the ideal situation from an arts stance.

2. Library staff are not trained to run arts centres and should not be expected to do so If a policy of building arts centres with libraries was established, it would require that they be staffed separately with the relevant expertise in both areas.
3. Library buildings in Ireland have not been designed with a range of arts provision in mind. The limitations of space and the poor quality of exhibition spaces even in new libraries rule out many art forms which need good spaces in order to be properly appreciated - such as quality art exhibitions, sculpture shows, dance, performances, music, opera, theatre and workshops needing space to work in. Although a step in the right direction in the provision of much needed arts centres throughout the country, I do not feel that the arts centre in the basement approach is ideal in respect to access. I would much rather see library buildings designed with arts access in mind. This may take a radical rethink in relation to existing library policy and in relation to which government department funds the capital.

The example of Wrexham Library is interesting where access to both the library and the arts centre is through the same foyer with both facilities at ground level and with equal visibility and a feeling of services being integrated with equal respect.

However, there is an important role that the library can play as a partner in local arts development and it is a role that it can perform well when it is approached from the right perspective. It is a role that should be approached in partnership with the arts service but also with the other services of the local authority. It is a partnership role which must begin by a respect for the arts role within its primary functions, access to books, reading, CDs, CD-ROM, Internet, information etc. - all with arts function or content. It is a role which can develop a libraries programme of quality arts provision which may or may not be building based. It is a role which can engage with current good practice and which can produce its own good practice in arts development. It is a role which can provide participation in the arts as well as access to the arts. It is a role, which for reasons already stated will initially have to be limited to certain art forms which can be developed professionally and to a high quality within the limitations imposed by the building/expertise/resources. It is a role which should develop from the strengths of the library system. It is a role which this committee can explore and debate, which the two councils can issue advice on, and with which potential models of good practice can be identified and developed to their potential, but which will succeed only when enlightened personalities with developed understanding and capacity for effective partnership come together to provide positive actions.

The most important lesson that I have ever learned in relation to the workings of the local authority system and to the development of effective partnerships within it is captured in an often used quote from my former librarian, mentor and colleague, Pat McMahon, when he said "John, - every problem is an opportunity", therefore, let us use the opportunities.

APPENDIX 7

Position paper presented to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee by Robert Dunbar, Children's Books Ireland.

BLAZING WINDOWS

I have decided to call my paper 'Blazing Windows', a title which I owe to Seamus Deane's novel of last year, **Reading in the Dark**. This is a novel which proves yet again the truth of Declan Kiberd's observation in his recent article in *The Irish Times* that 'Many a great writer has had a story to tell of an early decisive encounter with a library'. No one who has read this book will easily forget the library encounter between Deane's boy narrator, growing up in the Derry of the 1940s and 1950s and the wonderful character known as Crazy Joe no one will have any scruples about the use of the word 'decisive' to describe it. From that first encounter come the regular meetings with Joe which gradually spread beyond the library and into the local park Joe's aim, records the boy, was 'to give me a little of the education I so sorely lacked but at least had the decency to want', rarely, one imagines, have the art books in the local public library proved to be quite as remarkable a launching pad. Little wonder that on one of his later walks with Joe the boy notes how, as darkness falls, the library windows were 'blazing'.

Today's children and teenagers may, for a large variety of reasons, be more difficult to coax into our public libraries they recognise their 'blazing' potential less quickly than Deane's young hero. Adults, such as those listening to this paper, who take the significance of books and libraries for granted, now find that they have to work harder to convey that significance and there are few signs that the effort is going to become less demanding. But maintaining our faith, and giving public utterance to it and the aspirations it embodies, would seem to be a primary prerequisite, particularly at a time when the young are being wooed by an army of forces many of which diametrically militate against what we might term a book-centred or library centred culture. It seems foolhardy to predict any easy or speedy victories over such forces and perhaps the first step in our attempt should be to recognise that no one group or agency or service, however well intentioned and equipped, is likely to succeed. Persuading the young to visit and to use the public library would seem to be a venture where the encouragement of home and school must be a prelude and accompaniment to the attraction offered by the library itself.

In the specifically Irish context the school is an area of special concern, given that our school library facilities, whether at primary or secondary level, remain (where they exist at all) at a rudimentary level, in terms of funding, resources and management. It is, sadly, less the case in Ireland than in some other places that internal school and external public library services complement one another, here, very frequently, the latter has to compensate for the former, even in catering for the strictly school - or curriculum-related needs, never mind those which are more generally informational and recreational. In any proposed review of public services provision for the young in Ireland it is therefore vital to give serious re-consideration also to the existing arrangements for school library provision and to set in train a process which will encourage, indeed demand, their closer liaison and co-operation.

If the young are to be brought into our public libraries it seems a fairly obvious comment that these must be places where the young want to go. Selling our wares, in the metaphorical sense, becomes a significant part of our function. Clearly, not every one of our existing 317 branch libraries is going overnight to transform itself into the place for the young of any particular town or townland to be seen equally clearly, buildings as yet on the drawing board need, more than most of their predecessors, to take cognisance of young needs and interests. It may be that any such future developments would include the provision of a youth service which, much more than is the present case, would be a differentiated element of the public library organisation while many of today's children's sections or children's areas or children's rooms have an identity and an accommodation of their own, the same could not be said, in most places, of arrangements for the teenage reader, particularly if that teenage reader should be of the unemployed, non-academic, non-student, non-middle class variety.

Readers such as this may well find more attractive a library environment which combines a socialising function and a role as a central information agency with its more traditional facilities.

Even in the most limited spaces of our present arrangements, however, it can be suggested that a certain *attitude* to the young library user (and particularly to the teenage one) might be worth cultivating. Put briefly, that attitude shows itself in a willingness to take the young seriously, both at

the stage through which they are passing and as the potential adult library users of the future. We have, I hope, moved well beyond a stage where children and teenagers are seen as some sort of lesser beings than the rest of us, beings who are fobbed off with services, resources and modes of treatment which no adult would, or should, tolerate. All adults who attempt to bring children and books together have to be very special people, a remark which applies extremely strongly to those who work in our public libraries. They need - and I hope I am being neither silly nor sentimental - to be 'forever young'

In doing some background reading for this paper, I came across a 1972 essay by a librarian called Ann Osborn on library services to teenagers. In the course of it she writes 'A teenager deserves a library that recognises reality. He needs an information source and study area that does not impose arbitrary, crippling rules on him. His library should recognise that dignity and silence are not prior requisites to learning.' Add the occasional feminine pronoun, extend the comment's specific emphasis from 'teenager' to the more general 'child' and we have, I think, a useful reminder as to the desirable priorities in a genuinely youth-centred library service. We might, to return to Seamus Deane's boy narrator, have something to learn from the librarian in the house of 'blazing' windows. Listen to this: 'The librarian, a formidable Protestant lady, clucked her tongue at me but let me through the wooden turnstile beside the desk after inspecting my hands by turning them over like a pair of dried fish on the blotting paper at the counter. She was large, her blouse tight on her breasts, her throat slightly goitrous In her armour of chiffon and serge, with her blondish hair rigidly waved, she seemed to pulse softly and secretly. Even on this occasion when I was still streaked with sweat from the football, she pursed her lips in determined disapproval and then smiled as she led me through. Her friendliness was stronger than her sense of respectability.' You can ponder that last sentence for yourselves. 'Her friendliness was stronger than her sense of respectability.'

As implied earlier, the two principal needs which will bring the young to a library can be summarised in the words 'informational' and 'recreational'. Where the former is concerned, the modern public library will obviously recognise the appeal to the young of today's technology and will create circumstances where - in all senses of the verb - they can play with it. The day of the card catalogue has gone and has been replaced by electronic systems where screen search is the entry to ever-proliferating realms of knowledge and information. Competence in the confident handling of such systems is something which the library should positively encourage, not merely on the young users' casual visits but also on specially arranged sessions where groups of them can be welcomed and instructed. More ambitiously still, a range of public library-based 'search' activities - with, perhaps, a competitive dimension - can be promoted, if only as a diversion from the school 'project' which generally brings in the young - however reluctantly. This new emphasis on the technological extends beyond mere searching into our accepting that - certainly for what is usually called 'information' material - there is a growing body of content which (for example on CD-ROM and the Internet) is no longer to be found exclusively in linear texts in traditional book format. In a world of accelerating political and social change, a book with a title such as **Africa Today** is likely to have a very short shelf life indeed. Here is where the screen or disk, with its capacity to update and be updated, is clearly a vital instrument in the hands of the young. But what has been referred to here as the 'traditional book' format for information material will continue for some time to have its place in many of our libraries the need to ensure that its young users can cope with its conventions remains. It must be added, finally, that for all our own and our young friends' enthusiasm all sources of information - literary or technological - have to be subjected to *critical* reading and assessment.

Perhaps the primary onus on inculcating such an attitude resides with the school - it would fit in well in Media Studies programmes - but no harm will be done by the public service which tries to share the responsibility.

It is when we move from the informational to the recreational needs of the young that we find, perhaps, the greatest scope for imagination, initiative and development in our public library service. The word 'recreational' can be taken to include those areas of reading which might relate, say, to hobbies and spare time pursuits. In this interpretation, much of what has been said earlier under the 'informational' heading remains relevant but there are extra opportunities here for the library to co-operate with community sporting and cultural services, they can dovetail to mutual advantage. This could involve an 'outreach' role for the library, where its services come to the young as distinct from more usually waiting for the young to come to them. The practice of taking library services outside the library, hardly as yet known in Ireland, could have particular relevance for the teenage population, many of whom will have an innate distaste for entering any building which seems even vaguely institutional, they might be persuaded to look at its wares if they are displayed on their own territory.

'Recreational' embraces also, of course, that reading which manifests itself in an interest in fiction, which, given the age group we are thinking about in this paper, will mainly mean what is usually referred to as children's (or young adult) literature. The Arts Council Arts Plan 1995 -1997 specifically defines one of its intentions as being 'to awaken and increase children's interest in literature', an objective with which it is hard to imagine a public library system in disagreement. But - sadly, we might feel - there will be a very large number of the intended audience for this 'awakening' and 'increasing' for whom the very word 'literature' will act as a deterrent rather than an attraction if it and 'fiction' are made to become totally synonymous I am reminded of Sibyl Burr's very funny children's novel **Life with Lisa** (1958), where the twelve-year-old heroine records at one point in her diary: 'I was just thinking would I buy a comic to read after my bath when I saw Miss Edwards' brown hat going over the ashfelt (sic) towards the gate. This reminded me that in English she had said not to read Comics in our spare time but to Improve Our Minds with Literature. This is books in libraries that are still like new because people do not take them out often Literature is heavy books with small print and no pictures. So I thought I had better go down to the library and get some Literature out, as I am anxious to Improve my Mind.'

We can easily enjoy the mischief and irony of such an observation but it does not bring much solace to those of us adults who believe - to put it simply - that some books are better than others, that reading the better ones provides more worthwhile experiences than reading the others and that it is part of our adult responsibility to pass on these beliefs to the young. They will almost certainly encounter the second-and-third rate somewhere along the road in any case, so why bother spending valuable resources in specially providing it for them out then with the *Point Horror*, the *Goose Bumps*, the *Sweet Valley Highs* and all those teenage magazines. These are noble ambitions but they have, as we stock our library shelves, to be balanced against the possibility that such reading may often be the precursor of better things to come. After all, for Seamus Deane's boy narrator, it was a volume called **Shan Van Vocht** which was his entry into the realms of fiction, read in bed as he imagined 'the various ways the plot might unravel, the novel opening into endless possibilities in the dark.' Moreover, if we democratically extend to adult library users the right to have access to all kinds of 'literature' it seems unfair to be prescriptive about what is made available to their children. It may be that the real focus of concern in our libraries should be less with 'literature' than with creating an atmosphere which simply celebrates the joys and pleasures of reading. You may recall Dr. Johnson's well known views on the subject: 'I would let a child first read any book which happens to engage his attention - because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards ' To which one could, of course, add 'Yes - if there are better books around for him to get': It is up to our public library service to see that there are and that potential young users know of their existence.

Where staffing, resources and space permit, the young person's library can become a centre for an almost infinite range of book-related activities book clubs, discussion groups, author visits and readings, storytelling sessions, quizzes, the production of library magazines, book fairs... In other words, the activities which in Ireland currently tend to become squeezed into the two weeks of the annual Children's Book Festival should be much more a regular feature of our libraries. In all of these endeavours, a special place should be accorded to Irish writing - both past and present - for the young, since this constitutes a significant element in defining our cultural identity and certainly has a great deal to say about our perceptions of children and childhood and of the ways in which these change and develop. Local connections with particular writers and themes should be exploited as, more nationally, should anniversary celebrations 1998, for example, will bring the birth centenaries of C.S. Lewis and of Patricia Lynch, as well as the bicentenary of 1798 - all three of which events should promote a great deal of children's book - and library centred activity.

The sorts of things being discussed here can only occur as a result of adult enthusiasm and initiation but, where possible, the young library user needs to be actively involved in them, as distinct from merely being the passive spectator. This consideration dictates that the views of our young library users as to what they expect of our public library service should be constantly sought, that they should be respected and that they should be remembered when new provisions are being planned. Even something as basic as a suggestion box for new titles and materials and a place on book - selection panels might provide a couple of useful starting points for a truly shared endeavour. Twenty years ago the Task Force of the Young Adults' Services Department of the American Library Association had at the top of its list of priorities 'the entitlement of the young adult to non -judgemental attitudes, respect and participation in the decision-making process of libraries': it is a priority which we might usefully bear in mind in the Irish context.

I started with a reference to windows and I am going to end with doors. In 1991 the English children's writer Susan Price published this collection of short stories, called, as you can see, **Forbidden Doors**. I want to read you her epigraph for her collection:

'In my house are many chambers, and you may lift all the latches, you may turn all the locks, you may look into all the cupboards and all the rooms - except this room Into this room you shall not go, you must not go, I forbid you, to open this door.

Be bold, but not so bold - your blood will freeze icy cold.

Will you open it, even so?

If you open that door, you will release monsters If you step through that door, you will be lost.

But there might be treasure.

Still, the door is forbidden... And here are stories of what happened to those who dared to open it.'

And Ms. Price then embarks on telling her seven stories of those who dared When we come to the final paragraph of the final story, 'Mrs Fox', we read this: 'And it's good to remember that when someone forbids you to open a certain door, you should ask what it is they don't want you to know.' If I were wearing my political cap this afternoon I might very well add, 'Especially in Ireland.' As a metaphor of what reading is really about I know of nothing which is more appropriate than Price's formulation. In looking forward to a new millennium where today's young, as adults, refuse to submit to any obstacles to their adding to their knowledge of their world we must accept the vital role of the public library service in fostering and developing that enlightenment. Let us see that we provide the support - in all senses of the word - that such an undertaking will demand.

APPENDIX 8

Position paper presented to the Public Libraries and the Arts Committee by Tom McCarthy, Poet.

A POET IN THE LIBRARY

'Oh go on then. You can take out some adult books.'

The words are Mrs. Bolger's, the indulgent and wonderful Branch Librarian of the Carnegie Library in Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. It is a winter's afternoon in the late Sixties. The noise of the pneumatic hoisters in Sargent's Garage, and the voice of young Michael Sargent shouting to Dick Fraher or Andy O' Keeffe, comes through the Library windows and even the walls. But the noise doesn't disturb either Mrs. Bolger or me. The fire is lighting in the Lending Section and I have in my hand the first full poetry collection. I will ever read: Richard Murphy's beautiful *Sailing to Ireland*, a hardback from Faber and Faber. Mrs. Bolger has just broken a regulation: I can borrow an adult book on a child's ticket. 'Here, you may as well try this one too. It just came in from Lismore'. She hands me a second book, a joint Selected Poems from Thomas Gunn and Ted Hughes.

In the small Branch Library in Cappoquin Mrs. Bolger and I engaged in a loose kind of poetry workshop. She saw the pattern of my borrowing. In a time before the complete professionalisation of the service, she was that most perfect being in the book trade or the arts; a gifted amateur in the service of the public. I think of poetry always as a private matter, a question of material appropriated emotionally and then thought about. Libraries, on the other hand, are public spaces, places of leisure, education, information and welcome. There is no earthly reason, none whatsoever, why a user should ever feel unwelcome in the open, democratic, non-judgemental space that is a Library Lending Section. I'll never forget how welcome I felt in that public space in Cappoquin.

For years, therefore, I was a user, a borrower, before I came to work in a Library. Cork City Libraries where I now work is a vitally different place from that Branch in Cappoquin. Cork is a great thriving city; its Public Library has over twenty thousand registered members, and probably treble that number of Reference users. Graduate professionals run every Department, Archives, Lending, Reference, Music and all outlying branches. There are days when it can be insanely busy, with books and CDs piled high, photocopiers whirring, reference staff running everywhere to satisfy professional, business and leisure users. Exhibitions will be hung, classes in Literacy or Literature given in the Davis Room, parcels of books returned from other Libraries on Inter-Library Loan, reserved books checked and shelved. But always, the physical need to carry books. People with no experience of the book trade never realise just how physical the whole activity is. A busy Library can be both physically and mentally exhausting.

But however busy a Library becomes, the principles behind the activity remain the same; to provide a space open to all citizens where they can learn, become informed, browse and feel brilliant and entertained with the accumulated work of their own writers and artists. It could be said that the Tax Office is where the state takes something from its citizens whereas the Public Library is where the state places something back into the community. It is the people present, librarians and users, who constitute the only valid definition of a Public Library.

It's important to remember that the impulse to make a Public Library service arose from a sense of duty to society and a firm belief in its consistent improvement. We have a lot to learn from the Victorians. They had fewer delusions than ourselves and they had a wonderful belief in the general power of education. They didn't worry too much about the word 'inclusiveness', but they worked consistently through committees and Public Appeals to bring something extra into social life. It is salutary to look at the First Annual Report of the Cork Free Public Library Service, published in April of 1894: 'Your Committee, therefore, after several meetings, arrived at the conclusion that it was useless to consider the question of a Library until the financial difficulty for providing for its maintenance was overcome'. Their attention, however, was called by Mr. W.J. Lane, M.P., to the provisions of an Act passed a few years ago, called 'The technical instruction Act, 1889,' which empowers municipalities to levy a rate of 1d in the £ for the purposes, termed in the Act 'technical instruction' and 'manual instruction'.

A committee of notables - The Mayor, High Sheriff, Mr. Cosbie, Mr. Hill, Mr. McMullen, Mr. Beamish, Mr. F.W. Allman, Mr. Green, Mr. Jolley, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Baker - submitted a report. The report was adopted by the general committee on June 23rd 1892; Alderman Madden, Roche, Sheehan and Councillor Barry were selected as Management Committee members by the

Corporation and a Librarian was elected on September 15th, only to resign twelve days later. The first Public Librarian to take up reins in Cork was Mr. Wilkinson who came from Leeds Free Public Library. Two Assistants to the Librarian were appointed in March of 1893 and a Catalogue of Books was printed on May 30th, only three months after the first delivery of books.

In the first year of the library, Darwin's *Origin of the Species* was borrowed twelve times, twice by a dressmaker, once by a stonecutter; Carlyle's *French Revolution* was borrowed on average twice a month, twice by a saddler, three times by a carpenter and three times by a railway engineman; Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was borrowed seven times, twice by chemist's assistants, once by a tailor and once by a warehouseman. But the popular authors were still the novelists: Dickens', Lever's and Scott's works were borrowed on average over four hundred times. Even in 1894 the Library Committee's worries sounded familiar ... 'the Committee's greatest difficulty is their inability to provide books in sufficient numbers to meet the demands of borrowers.'

It all sounds familiar to those who've had libraries at heart for years. What is interesting is that Local Government officials and luminaries in Local Corporations were already at work in Library Provision more than twenty years before the Carnegie Free Library became a familiar landmark in Irish life. Library provision, thank God, has always been seen as a natural consequence of the extended franchise: it is a symbol of proper local government, and public officials who don't provide it are treated harshly by the local electorate.

Working in this most creative branch of Local Government, I've become aware that a poet is no different from any other Librarian or Library Assistant. I have worked for nearly twenty years in the Public Library service, spending hours on end with colleagues who are as gifted and complex as any novelist or poet. Nowadays, on any staff of, say, ten librarians, you would be likely to find two or three people actively interested in writing, two trained in counselling, two interested in aromatherapy, three or four interested in classical music, two able to play a musical instrument, one or two related to someone already in the book-trade, four or five fluent in a Continental language but pretending to know nothing. Most librarians in Ireland are brought up in conventional bourgeois Catholic families where the hiding of talent, especially by females, has been developed to a fine art. Modesty in ambition is encouraged at home, and accentuated by the death-in-life Grading system of the Irish Public Service. In my own case, for instance, I have moved up one grade in twenty years.

The stability of this culture means that it would take a nervous breakdown for any Irish librarian to expose the full range of their innate brilliance and education. Lukewarm tea, as Daniel Corkery pointed out in *Threshold of Quiet*, is what it is all about. Cocky or pushy people are generally shunned. The demands of the reading public accentuate the stable modesty of librarians. The borrower, as anyone who has dealt with this vital creature must know, demands consistent service, rapid turn around in the queue and no nasty surprises. It would be difficult to give library users a regular service if all librarians started acting like inspired geniuses, disappearing all at once to finish the vital poem or make notes for the novel. Ironically, librarians and the reading public understand each other perfectly. Borrowers prefer to find genius in books; a genius behind the lending desk would only interfere with the borrower's relationship with the books on offer.

But a public library should always be considered a proper preoccupation of any land at peace. In the ancient world, Ptolemy I took advantage of the long peace between Macedonia, Syria and Egypt to set up museums and libraries. It was Demetrius of Phalerum, expelled from Athens, who reminded Ptolemy of the advantages that accrue to a country that builds libraries and attracts men and women of culture. When the chronicler Strabo visited Alexandria in 24B.C. he found buildings with covered walks, arcades furnished with recesses and seats, dining-halls for scholars in that 'Temple of the Muses'. Of the two great libraries of Alexandria, in Brucheion and Rhakotis, the Byzantine scholar Tzetzes estimated they contained over five hundred thousand volumes. The classification of these volumes, parchment and papyrus-rolls, was a literary task. The Head Librarians of Alexandria included Apollonius the poet, Aristophanes the Homeric scholar and Eratosthenes the polymath. The care of great collections, like the work of history, is something that requires spiritual depth as well as administrative skill. Even in our own time, writers like Archibald MacLeish, Frank O' Connor and Philip Larkin have carried on that tradition of learning coupled with public duty. It is my hope for the future that Public Libraries will attract the literary and artistic administrator as well as the computer nerd and the technocrat. Nowadays, it helps to have a Doctorate in Information Science, but librarianship without the personally developed feel for books, their past and their spiritual cost, is a truly sterile task.

My own love of books comes from my father. My abiding image of him will always be of a slightly stooped, prematurely greying man at ease by the window with a book in hand, *Carter's Advanced Accounts* perhaps, or a Zane Grey Western. Men who read Westerns are a dying breed. I regret their passing, their steady, long-suffering silence, their spiritual westward soul-searches where a man could befriend a colt and converse with tumbleweed. In literature, there is now no place where the moderately educated man can go to repair his soul. It is Tom Wolfe, Terry Pratchett or nothing. There are now no books that are the literary equivalent of a large bottle of stout. Men have lost out in the area of popular fiction because they never took care to buy enough books.

I first went to work in a library when I was an undergraduate at U.C.C. in the mid-Seventies. I had a weekend job as 'Honorary Branch Librarian' in a disused church in Villierstown, Co. Waterford. Each Saturday I stamped about forty books. The lending section was housed in the choir gallery, from where I could hear the crack and plop of snooker games being played in the sacristy. There was something very Larkin-like about that nightmare. Mrs. Hayes, the then Waterford County Librarian, supported the project with a kind of bemused enthusiasm because it was part of an early community development scheme. My most famous borrower (as we say in the trade) was Tony Summers, the biographer of JFK and Marilyn Monroe.

I've worked in the Public Library Service since 1978, the year my first collection was published. Public Librarianship is a leisure service as well as an educational one. When one leaves a University, one steps from the world of requisition slips to the world of request forms. The difference is crucial: the first has an air of compulsion, the latter contains an anticipation of pleasure. A public librarian doesn't just listen to the conversations that books have with each other, *qua* Borges: he or she has to listen to the conversation of the borrowers.

My own attitude to the reading public is easy-going. The library is an ideal place for a poet to work. A lot of fuss is made about 'accuracy' on the job, but 'attitude' is a far more important gift - I've yet to meet a poet who isn't interested in other people. Poets are insatiably curious and love gossip. But so are the people who read books. In twenty years in the library I've yet to come across a public relations crisis that was caused by inaccurate work. Serious problems, when they occur, are always caused by poor people management, a surly response and a digging in of heels. For this reason alone the introduction of computers and computer systems into libraries has been a great boon. Computers remove some of the drudgery from searches, it should give us time to be more personal rather than less-connected with the reading public. Computers will never do any damage to the traditional library as long as they are used as tools. Many people who market computer systems and software think that the concept of information retrieval is something new. In fact, reading is one of the oldest, and still the most proven, method of retrieving information.

Computers are merely an additional form of reading. The only danger to libraries that is posed by the growth of electronic media is that too much emphasis may be placed upon technology in teaching and recruiting public librarians, to the detriment of teaching in book conservation, collection building and general humanities. Librarianship like public service is an art, a skill within the humanities, and not a science. I admit to having prejudice in favour of books. There is no software yet invented that is as good as an enthusiastic, well-read librarian. Books are likely to remain at the core of the Library Service- the condition of the book stock and its exciting presentation and exploitation - is akin to aerobic fitness in general health. From the satisfied reader a whole atmosphere of healthy relationships radiates. As Melvyn Barnes, President of the British Library Association, noted in his address to the 31st Annual Conference in Tralee in 1995:

"There will not be any exciting predictions about the death of the book because millions of people continue to value the Public Library as the key source of printed material. I use the term 'key source' because the Public Library is the only place providing the widest possible choice, without the limitations imposed by the ability to pay "

The astonishing thing about the library service is that it tracks public taste in an up-to-the-minute fashion. Its lending figures when analysed offer the clearest possible picture of public taste. At the moment there are plans and committees afoot to help bring the 'Arts' into the public library space. The general readership of the public libraries is not an artistic one, much as I regret to say this. When we discuss bringing the arts inside our spaces we should be aware that for the arts, especially the arts professionals, this will be a new kind of encounter. The newness of it is really the exciting part. The membership of public libraries is much broader, in class terms as well as merely educational terms, than the general membership of arts centres. Many of the borrowers of Danielle Steel, Jilly Cooper, John Grisham, Maeve Binchy or Louis L'Amour would be afraid to enter into the arts centre next door to our branch library. The library is a very familiar space, they feel that they own it and that

borrowing books doesn't belong to any one particular life-style. The arts centre (where I happen to be one of the directors) seems to belong to the trendy young, those who are self-contained and seem to own the future. The hard fact is this - even after you've squandered your future you can still belong completely to your local library. For many borrowers the library is one of the instruments of coping with life, on a weekly or daily basis. As a writer I'd like to bring more than mere coping into the daily life of the lending section: more people who are passionate about books, about information, people who are proactive and open-hearted.

My dream would be that there would be no difference between an arts centre and a library. I imagine something like a pedestrian tunnel between the arts centre and library, and on-line access to the library from the arts centre, as well as a book centre, a sort of word factory, within the arts building for children. There should be more human traffic in galleries and more art in libraries. I am conscious of the richness already in books, but reading a book about art is not the same thing as coming face to face with a painting. An exhibition has more to do with the artist than the reader. Only when faced with a piece of sculpture or an installation does a reader encounter something radically new.

Nearly twenty years in the library has taught me that poetry is a high priority within a narrow profile of the reading public. One book of poems may be lent in a week when we stamp out two thousand books of romantic fiction. Poetry is not a popular art, but it has a steady and deep-rooted constituency. I am never angered by the imbalance between the autocracy of numbers and the oligarchy of aesthetic values. Why should I be angry? Each year brings a new poet or two, or a new collection, into the lending section. Poetry may not be as popular as the safer crises of a Mills and Boon, but poetry is constantly renewing itself, even on the shelves of the public library.

One of the privileges of being placed before the public each day is that one can see over time changes in trends and the growth of fashion. At the moment, for example, people have rediscovered Stevie Smith and Pam Ayres. Poets like Paul Durcan, Heaney and Eavan Boland have retained their popularity over two decades. Others, T.S. Eliot and Frost who were so popular in the Sixties, are now almost completely forgotten by the borrowers in our branch libraries.

Fashion is one of the abiding, tantalising mysteries. Maeve Binchy, Catherine Cookson and Danielle Steel have a ring of permanence about their names. They can look forward to the inexhaustible fidelity of their readers. I know readers who have followed Catherine Cookson from her first book. They marked her early *Mary Ann* pages with ration-books while cutting a slice of bread on the fold-down kitchen dresser, now a *zapper* for the cable-T.V. rests on the page while they micro-wave a coffee. A librarian, like a village doctor, shares that enormous intimacy with the public; the knowledge of how life changes for broad groups of the population. One can also see the sociology of one's country worked out in the changing patterns of reading.

The real enemies of poetry are those who think that poems should be as popular as soccer or TV quiz games and as relevant as a political Party. Why should it be? We are all terrified of being branded 'elitist' by the new commissars of popularity. It has come to the stage now where I have heard people being praised for *not* having read books. We have to arm ourselves against any morality that forces poets to 'put on an act' of ignorance in order to shine. A poet should stick to the first intuitions, the personal music and the blessed genius of books that protect the integrity of an intellectual life. Working in a library has taught me that creative work is essentially conservative. I don't mean this in the political sense, poets have been among the fiercest radicals, politically and socially. But I use the word 'conservative' in its dental, nay, orthodontic, sense: a damning up of life forces, an accumulation of virtues, a hard-packing of memory and rhythm. Most poets are popular on the basis of some fundamental misrepresentation; some sensational piece of gossip or personal tragedy or the survival of political crisis like the Ulster conflict. A poet should not be panicked by literary public relations. Journalism is most attractive when it is internationalist and progressive, but poetry is most attractive when it is *good* poetry. Poetry is never provincial, only criticism can be provincial. A librarian walking among the bookstacks on a quiet morning sees everything of value conserved in front of him the great forgotten novels, Scott's *Chinese Love Pavilion*, Greene's *England Made Me*, Sheehan's *Glenanaar*, or the great forgotten poems, Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* or Cronin's *R.M.S. Titanic* or Matthew Arnold's perfect *Dover Beach*. The good librarian takes stock, withdraws, conserves and promotes for the sake of the abundant life within these books.

Ultimately it is a matter of values. Very few librarians are narrow-minded; in fact, the story of the Public Library in Ireland North and South is one of many minor battles against the narrow-minded. The core value is that there should be access to knowledge for all citizens regardless of academic background. The Trade Union movement and Vocational Education committees have always been great allies of the Public Library because both organisations have had an historic commitment to

Adult and Continuing Education. Learning is a life-long activity, and the Public Library will always remain as an essential *vehicle* upon that road. Whether we love poetry or knowledge in general, Trades Unions will always remain a vitally and intimate friend of the Library Service. In a 'cut-back situation' (not just a 'situation', but now an ingrained attitude of Local Government administration for over a decade) the poor are the first to lose out. The middle-class will always have proportionally more access to academic and professional Libraries. Nothing should be allowed to come between the poor and a poem. I was not a child of the middle-class when Mrs. Bolger handed me two expensive collections of poetry. She was no socialist, but she had a strong native belief in empowerment.

A librarian's will should be able to withstand the hyperbole of advertising, to fight for shelf space for works of the spirit. A good librarian, like a good poet, should have a mind that stretches over that twilight zone of previous generations. One can never tell when a great book will be restored to its proper context. Television can be a great help. A novel like *Brideshead Revisited* languished in the bland grey wrappers of Chapman and Hall for years until it was released into the public domain through television images. Television will effect the popularity of classics in the future, I've no doubt, so that there will always be an even *popular* reason for libraries to stock the classics. Generally, though, books create their own public. Who could have foreseen the popularity of Noel Browne's *Against the Tide* or Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*? Or Joseph Lee's brilliant history of Ireland between 1912 and 1985? There are certain books that attach themselves to the public heart because of the horror of the contents or the seriousness of the message. I think *Angela's Ashes* is set to become one of the vital Irish documents of the Twentieth Century. So many Irish people will have read it that a view of society, not just Limerick society, will have been planted in everyone's mind. At one time in our Library there was a waiting list of one hundred and thirty borrowers for McCourt's book. The power of the book is that it offends respectable Irish memory, it challenges silence. In a country that idealises the past with so much soft-focus art and poetry, it offers a fine broad canvass of dry toilets. What's so curious about it is this - most users of the Public Library service are middle-class, they enjoy the book because it releases them from a burden of lies about the Forties and Fifties in Ireland.

As a theme for poetry the library has had very little influence on my own work. The only poem I've written using the library as a metaphor is 'Cataloguing Twelve Fenian Novels'. I got the idea of that poem in the store-room of the Mayfield branch in Cork. We were 'wearing out' old and mutilated stock when I came upon a memo attached to a bundle of Canon Sheehan novels: should they be thrown away or recatalogued? They had come to the end of their useful lives as fiction. The memo was seething with possibilities.

As I spend most of my waking hours in the library it's only natural that I get ideas for poems while I work I have to work out a strategy to save these ideas. Contrary to popular belief, modern libraries are bustling places, with a lot of activity and noise. I always carry a few used book cards (5cm. by 2.5cm.) in my top pocket. When I returned to the City Library in 1995 after a year in America I was horrified that total computerisation had occurred in my absence. The computer meant the death of the card catalogue and the absence of stacks of useful abandoned cards. It's not possible to make notes on the plastic sleeve of a *zapper*. The genesis of the poem is two or three lines, not necessarily the *first* lines of a poem. But these lines contain the tone and pace of the poem, as well as some crucial irony or insight. At the end of a working-week I used to empty out my pocket and cellotape the fragments into a notebook. I like the idea of fragments. We live in a world beyond belief, the only thing we truly share with each other is that lack of belief. Truth, therefore, is a fragmentary thing. Nothing produces a lyric better than a few fragments, moments of cognition and feeling rescued from the brain-dead quotidian world of work. Writing devours time. Domestic duties; the grind of a 9 to 5 job and parenthood means that one lives with two fierce editors; work and children. I would not have it any other way. Through those things love weaves its way through our waking hours. Time is hardly ever squandered in my writing because there is little time to squander.

Bad days in a Public Library can be terrible: constant queues, screaming children, distraught pensioners risking broken bones to beat each other to the latest Maeve Binchy, and perhaps, the boss in foul humour. Suddenly one can see why Camus abhorred the idea of a regular job, why Yeats loathed the management of men. On such days I envy the poets who went to live on Inisbofin in the Sixties, especially the lucky one who lived with Deborah Tall, or the poets who flee to the sanctuary of the potato fields of America. Maybe I should give in my notice, take the 474 to JFK and join Greg Delanty and Eamon Grennan as they wander up and down the Hudson professing poetry and distilling the distant elements of home. When a country interferes with intelligent thinking one should say farewell.

Then again, there are exciting days ahead, recitals in the foyer, exhibitions in the Mills and Boon section. In the Public Libraries the best days are only just beginning. Twenty years from now, when every Secondary School will have a Library and a professional School Librarian who will be a key figure in each child's education, when every V.E.C. College of Commerce and VTOS Course will have its fully equipped and brilliantly stocked Lending Section, when there are Public Library Lending Sections in Waterstones, Easons and Virgin Megastores, when there are public reading-rooms and Reference Libraries (instead of vile arcade-game rooms) in each Irish Airport and Railway Station, I will be able to say 'I was once a poet in a Library. We endured the great storm of cut-backs in the 1980s, but nobody died.' And the young Librarian will nod in approval, because it will be universally understood by then how barbaric, regressive and unthinkable were the cutbacks in the Public Library Service.

APPENDIX 9

Paper presented at "Access all areas" conference by Patrick Conway Director of Arts, Libraries and Museums Durham County Council

FOR EVERYONE - NOT THE FEW

Professor John Pick of London University famously remarked the Arts Council of England, had it been established in the 18th century, would have had departments concerned with landscape gardening and embroidery, but that drama or the novel would not have been recognised as legitimate artforms.

All institutions, and indeed worker groupings, professional or otherwise are, to a large extent, a product of a particular period in history, the dominant values of that time, the contemporary fashion, and not least the interest shown by powerful people with both wealth and standing.

We probably need institutions. Today's seminar would not have happened but for the developing partnership between the Arts Council and Library Council, organisations charged with advising your Government about cultural issues and presenting strategies for development. Bureaucracies too have a purpose. They can organise and deliver, facilitate arrangements for partnership and operation, provide a structure within which legal responsibility and financial obligations can be discharged. Local Authorities, and I gather from reading material about the Public Library and Arts Committee - they are central to the overall vision of this strategic alliance between arts and libraries - give legitimacy to public investment in cultural matters, accountable as they are through the democratic process, which with all its limitations is something to be valued. Furthermore they provide the mechanisms by which choices can be made and funding priorities agreed.

John Pick went on to suggest that while institutions, bureaucracies, funding structures, political processes may come or go, undergo modification and change, the human need for creative expression remains. American psychologist Maslow may have referred to this as self actualisation, but after shelter and nourishment there is no doubt the thirst for knowledge and creativity remains essential to personal well being and that of the community, spatial or otherwise from which the individual derives his or her identity. Indeed Maslow argued that without satisfaction of this basic need the human form was less likely to cope with life's 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'. An argument I am sure we would all employ in today's complex world, where cultural issues are often marginalised and seen as being relatively insignificant, when compared to issues of great moment, as identified by movers and shakers.

Institutions or bureaucracies are not uppermost in the minds of the jazzers who meet monthly at Bishop Auckland Town Hall Arts and Library complex. Similarly the 25 or so brass bands who contested Brass in Concert a week last Sunday at Spennymoor were not particularly mindful of arts funding structures. Nor are the various writing groups, initiated by the Arts, Libraries and Museums Department, the rock bands who use rehearsal and recording facilities at Northern Recording, the community tapestry groups and proggy mat makers, even nationally acclaimed visual artists Kate Whiteford and Andy Goldsworthy, our artists in residence covering Writing, Paper Making, Rock Music, Fire Sculptures etc.

What they are interested in is having the opportunity to participate, to develop creativity to engage in debate, to stimulate, to excite. Indeed as Lorraine Kelly of Ballymoe in the recent Library Council/Irish Times essay competition suggested "to experience diverse emotions, views, situations and challenge the way you think and look at things".

Today we are discussing the strategic alliance between libraries and arts. I have been asked to concentrate on this relationship and the benefits for the public at large. In that context, are libraries and arts that separate? I think not. Both areas are simply institutionalised and bureaucratic manifestations of the same objective. Glib perhaps, but our strapline in County Durham is access to knowledge, ideas and creativity. Furthermore, the three P's - Product, Process and Participation - link arts and libraries. The Product can be the book, the CD, the video but equally the performance, the exhibition. The Process leading to that Product will involve writing, composing, performing, designing, scripting, directing, while Participation may involve residencies and workshops. A few years ago Michael D. Higgins suggested very persuasively that one of the aims of a comprehensive arts policy might be to combat the growing compartmentalisation of modern economic systems and to restore expressive freedom to the individual, so that every man and woman can again be an artist. Higgins in a preamble to a speech argued persuasively using work from anthropologist Margaret

Mead in Bali, that there was a time when the arts were not a specialist separate activity, but the possession of every man and woman who partook of a culture. Its stories, poems, carvings, paintings etc. The Balinese could not understand the western notion of arts as some form of 'heightened' representation of life. They explained "we have no art - we just do everything as well as we can". A few weeks ago watching masked drama from Korea, as part of a sisterhood agreement between Kyonggi Do and the north of England, I was again reminded of the Balinese. The visiting company were to a large extent staggered that the word art should be used to describe their performance.

As indeed do the rock musicians who move from Northern Recording to gigging in pubs and clubs throughout north west Durham, or the tapestry workers whose pieces began in half a dozen libraries for Year of Older People and ended up in Strasbourg at an EU symposium on solidarity between generations via Durham Art Gallery. Or indeed the Rapper Dance Teams of 19th century Northumberland and Durham who kept alive for future generations the sword dances that prompted observers to suggest the dancers were "fit to jump over the moon". Or even my forebear Richie Barrett, the 'Poet of Erris' and active United Irishman. The former have perhaps benefited from institutions, the latter two examples certainly did not.

If one accepts this fundamental human need to experience emotion and develop ones creativity as Margaret Mead rediscovered in Bali, what are the implications for Librarians and Arts Administrators. Well we have to recognise their work has become institutionalised and sadly perhaps over professionalised. Professionalism has its strengths, but can lead to intolerance. If we want proof of this one need look no further than Law or Accountancy and the various jealousies and narrow thinking stemming from the so called specialisms within these activities. Work experience, social and professional conditioning can lead to protectionist and limited thinking. We may agree with W.H. Auden when he said "If I knew my prejudices I wouldn't have them".

Initially I was asked to talk about the Durham experience but suggested a change in the title, that for me conveys the advantages for the population at large of Arts and Libraries working as one. Inevitably I will draw on experience gained in Grimsby, Humberside and Gateshead where I spent twelve very satisfying and rewarding years as well as County Durham. However I hope not to become too anecdotal!

What is Art, what are Libraries? Great minds have sought to define. The former whilst having accumulated a series of assumed definitions over the years, mainly related to artforms, which as John Pick has observed are transitory and but one manifestation of 'culture', a state of taste and intellectual development at a particular time. This rigid definition could exclude experiences not yet accepted or understood. Our Cultural Strategy document for County Durham has as a starting point United States Public Law 209 that has six lines listing various artforms. However, in keeping with John Pick's view and ensuring inclusivity we added the rider that the arts could include any further creative or communicative device as yet beyond the understanding of the human brain or indeed beyond our cultural conditioning.

Libraries simplistically are easily defined, though concentrating on the physical appearance is like suggesting the Mona Lisa is a mixture of pigments within a shallow open topped box, or a book is merely a conglomerate of paper, printing inks, glue and boards. We talk glibly about access to knowledge, ideas, information and imagination. I am taken by Aisling Cronin of County Kildare who in her essay suggested "it's no coincidence that the word library sounds like the word liberty meaning freedom because that's what the library gives me. It has no boundaries to which its members must conform - neither class, age wealth, religion or race."

A pretty good core value - and one that should appeal to library and arts workers alike. Particularly in respect of cultural diversity and the fact our arts and indeed library funding structures are dominated by western cultural values from an ABC 1 background, that is occasionally dismissive of other cultural traditions. One is reminded of Sir Kenneth Clark's famous 1960's TV series about the arts, that had the relatively unassuming title "Civilisation". In that programme Clark, the Art Historian and Critic rather than a later British Cabinet Minister, described civilisation almost entirely as if it and the development of western art and culture were one and the same thing. It is inconceivable such a programme today would take such a stance. Particularly if Aisling Cronin had anything to do with it.

Let's take a look at the Public Libraries and Arts Committee s three research areas:

- a) concerns in areas of deprivation
- b) enhancement of the world of the child
- c) examination of good practice in the broader artistic, cultural and civic roles.

Advantages of utilising the library network have been well documented. Last month the British Government in relation to its policies for Lifelong Learning, the National Information Grid and preparing the nation for the Information Society, recognised visiting libraries was the fifth most popular British past-time after going to the pub, driving for pleasure, eating out, and surprisingly cruising fast food outlets. A piece of research undertaken by Comedia, an independent research consultancy, in 1993 confirmed the centrality of libraries to education and lifelong learning, social policy development, information and advice, cultural enhancement and economic development Available in all sizeable communities, with evening and weekend opening, the high levels of usage - independent research indicated 82% of Durham's population visited libraries at least once during 1994 and 58% were doing so on a regular 3/4 weekly cycle, some more. This outstrips any other voluntary activity. Compare the numbers to museum, theatre, art centre attendances. Even football matches.

Last weekend 36,500 watched John Barnes score two goals as Newcastle beat Southampton. A week before over 33,000 witnessed Sunderland, my team, draw with Forest, a game that marked the return from injury of the Mighty Quinn. Had Niall been leading the line in Belgium we may have had more to cheer about. Almost 80,000 watching the People's Game yet in the same fortnight approximately 120,000 library visits were made in County Durham - the People's Network to knowledge, ideas and opportunity.

Strategic alliances as history tells us, are only successful if the various parties gain something from the venture. Enlightened self interest one might say. Bearing in mind those objectives set by both Arts Council and Library Council, what can Arts Administrators, artists and the Arts gain from libraries.

The high market penetration of libraries has been mentioned. All sectors of the community, as our young friend from Kildare perceptively observed all classes, backgrounds and interests. Independent research indicates that library patrons are also more likely to be interested in the arts either as participants or audience. Mori polls in Great Britain also confirm the feel good factor library users experience. Currently over 80% of the samples are impressed with the service, approve of public investment in the libraries and would actually pay higher taxes for improvements. Above all they welcome the neutral, non threatening atmosphere. In a dangerous world the local library provides a safe environment within which one can learn, be entertained, lose oneself.

All these facets add to the community presence, the centrality of the service to local people, a civic location, public space in a commercial world. Local staff paid from the public purse to provide mediated information and advice provision on all subjects. A service that you do not have to use because of statute and law of the land or because of abject need. Is it therefore any wonder that local librarians are highly regarded as community leaders. My colleagues in the towns and villages that make up County Durham are in demand as School Governors, Parish Councillors, Community Centre trustees, management committee members of advice agencies, single issue groups, neighbourhood watch, housing associations, as well as voluntary arts organisations, festival committees and the like. Credibility in the community comes easy to local library staff. They are regarded as professional in the best sense of the word. They have integrity.

Libraries may cater for the population at large but in terms of delivery specialist provision will target particular client groups - Under 5's, Children, Schools, the Housebound, Unemployed groups, women, the gay community, prisons. Not only established working relationships with users but links to the community infrastructure, including special interest groups. More often than not the Service will have specialist officers charged with developing provision. More of that later.

Because Library Services have been mainstream local authority services for generations, personnel have a sound management pedigree, covering strategy, operational matters, budgets, and not to be under estimated political nous. Furthermore the Service, integral as it is to local government provision provides access to other relevant departments for developing arts activity - Education, Social Services obviously, but also Planning, Technical Services and Highways. The latter organisations are clearly essential for implementing visible public and environmental art programmes.

In terms of the alliance what about reciprocal benefits? Arts workers too can bring strengths to the table. Librarians have been running events and activities for years, but my experience suggests an arts background can bring lateral thinking, new ideas and most obviously exciting creativity to exhibitions, kids storytime, storytelling, reminiscence work, small scale recitals, creative writing. At a local level arts workers are more likely to capitalise on opportunities presented by community development, including the unorthodox. The advantage of being a mainstream established local

authority service, as libraries are, can also become a straitjacket. It has been said librarians are over concerned with procedures and techniques, can be unimaginative, play safe, and to some extent are limited in independent critical thought. One reason advanced for this is 'over professionalism'. Sadly in many environments there is a preoccupation with status and the differences between professional and non professional staff. The punters are not bothered about such arcane arguments. Arts workers can 'loosen the corset' through their personal skills, outlook, attitude and on occasions a principled disdain for local authority bureaucracy.

Very obviously arts workers bring a wide range of practical events management skills, provide new contacts, deliver new working relationships including funding sources and provide a conduit for what some still see as a staid public service, with the exciting, emotional, slightly risqué, bohemian lifestyle of the arts, where reason and common sense are not always plausible. Above all, art workers can provide library services with a renewed sense of purpose in the face of concern about declining basic usage, while at a personal level they can be a positive influence in terms of self esteem and self belief.

Different folks, different strokes perhaps, but the synergy can produce incredible excitement. Street cred complemented by enduring community allegiance to the public service ethos. I would now like to look practically at four areas critical to this synergy: Policy and Strategy; the Community. Dimension; Housing the Arts; and Structure, Staffing and all that.

We are talking, as I understand it, about local government and how it can facilitate the alliance between arts workers and librarians. An understanding of the corporate culture and the political dimension are therefore essential for the alliance to succeed. Now clearly all organisations are different in respect of the decision making process. What is fundamental to the success of this alliance is that cultural services are a major local authority objective and are represented at the table where key decisions are being made, both by elected representatives and senior officers. My experience on the other side of the channel suggests that where this is not the case, a vibrant cultural services scene will not form part of the local authority brief. I would like to think it was no coincidence that in both Gateshead and County Durham the person responsible for cultural provision has chief officer status, a seat at the Chief Officers Management Team or Board of Management and is expected to take on corporate responsibilities in addition to his or her service brief. Within our decision making process there is a major standing committee for the cultural arena of the same status as Education, Social Services and Environment that provides political direction in respect of policy and service priorities. Therefore the service is central to developing in County Durham the eight corporate aims of the County Council. Namely:

1. Community life - to support and improve the quality of community life and respect the identity of communities.
2. Economic well being - to help create a more robust, diverse, prosperous and self- sustaining economy.
3. Leadership and representation - to represent and promote the interest of people in communities, regionally, nationally and internationally.
4. Opportunities for all - to enable access for all to a wide range of opportunities for work, commerce, education, leisure and creativity.
5. Physical environment and cultural heritage - to care for, safeguard and improve the natural and built environment and the County's cultural life.
6. Safety and protection - to ensure that people are kept safe and healthy and their property protected.
7. Tackling disadvantage - to give special consideration to the needs and aspirations of people with particular disadvantages.
8. Use of resources - to seek to optimise human, physical and financial resources, securing their use in the most economic, effective and efficient manner, having regard to the needs of future generations in accordance with the principles of sustainability. It does not require a Solomon to appreciate that arts, libraries and museums services are key to satisfying those aims.

The particular policy statement for the Arts, Libraries and Museums Committee goes on to develop those principles. In so doing the County Council has provided 5 objectives for the Arts, Libraries and Museums Service

1. Providing and promoting a vigorous and challenging programme to the people of County Durham, visitors to the area and inward investment. The emphasis is on vigorous and challenging. The last thing Durham County Council wants is a passive reactive and predictable provision.
2. Ensuring quality service provision in terms of agreed standards consistent with identified needs sustainable from resources available to the Department - the emphasis on identified needs and related to resources. In a time of economic stringency we must not make glib references about quality service provision without being honest as to what is sustainable.
3. Emphasising the value of knowledge, ideas, creativity and our cultural inheritance to broadening opportunity, conserving and maintaining collections, and supporting individual and community development. Fairly self-explanatory, but for me that reference to individual and community development is absolutely critical.
4. Working with people in communities to utilise staff skills, collections and resources in an interdisciplinary manner that has as its focus the user. I will elaborate on this objective later.
5. Liaising and consulting with other public and private organisations at local, regional and national levels to enhance service provision. Alliances, alliances, alliances. No individual or indeed organisation is an island!

That is strategy at the macro level. A further point. It is important to have a sense of scale. A local authority may be responsible for major facilities, a repertory theatre, receiving regional venue, concert hall, major art gallery or museum that will quite clearly require cost centred financial arrangements and responsibility centred management including appropriate specialist staff. In my career I have had within the departmental brief, regional film theatres, major public art programmes, receiving theatres, and currently an art museum, holding one of the major collections outside London and recently awarded designated status by the Museums and Galleries Commission. Relationships to libraries in these cases will generally cover information, ticket sales, poster sites, and critically, access to sampling frames for marketing. There will also be co-ordinated working in respect of schools work, more of that later, and possibly general outreach work. For example curatorial staff at The Bowes Museum have recently been visiting local libraries in the former East Durham coalfield, forty miles distant to give talks to local groups in the libraries. East Durham with all due respect, has traditionally viewed the Bowes as distant, elitist and irrelevant to contemporary culture. Local librarians as community champions provided audience. The result, coachloads visiting the Museum for guided tours, sticky buns and afternoon tea.

I will be honest, in the face of public expenditure cuts it has been critical to refocus the Bowes Museum and its magnificent art collections. It will, I am sure, be readily appreciated that at a time when schools are being forced to merge, fire stations are being closed and old peoples homes being rationalised, public expenditure on what may be termed elitist art funded 100 years ago by the sweat of the Durham miner and being seen as pandering to the middle and upper classes is in danger of being blown away. However, a clear sense of political direction, as detailed in those corporate aims, backed up by key strategic objectives for the Arts, Libraries and Museums Committee, ensured the work of the Bowes Museum has been re-evaluated with the focus far more on the user and the non visitor. Hence that outreach work in East Durham and the fostering of a new sense of ownership among Durham folk for what are widely regarded as the best collections of fine and applied art outside London.

For local arts development strategies, alliances between arts workers and librarians come into their own. 'For the many not the few' can mean something tangible. That community dimension, which librarians bring, allied to imaginative and creative programming is a pretty potent cocktail. Traditional Book Awareness schemes, Creative Writing Groups, Music Appreciation, Open and Flexible Lifelong Learning and Computer Literacy can be transformed into participative ventures and events. Thus book awareness schemes and holiday activities for children can spawn drama, kitemaking and circus skills workshops. Creative Writing groups are readily adaptable for readings and often a fusion with music or even mime. Music appreciation easily transforms itself to work with our classical music outreach worker and links to Northern Sinfonia which resulted in the Cobweb Orchestra, forty players of various skills meeting in Annfield Plain Library and then performing with choral groups. Folkies,

rockers, indie, and other contemporary musical tastes readily move on from using recorded music collections to gig workshops and sessions at Northern Recording, our music co-operative. The ubiquitous library display for the local artist can give rise to sketching and art appreciation culminating in shows individual or group at purpose built gallery spaces in our larger facilities. Open and Flexible Learning, linked but not always to computer literacy programmes, have a logical development in digital art and multi-media workshops utilising portable video and music recording equipment - a departmental central resource. The traditional children's storytime quickly develops into storytelling and the oral tradition. Our Durham Learning Resources service to schools providing books, CD Roms, artefacts, prints, stuffed badgers, industrial archaeology, naturally extends into art in school initiatives, involving last year some 60 artists. Librarians provide the links, and the basic core service. Arts Workers bring added value and a new experience Librarians working with the Housebound and Elderly, initially developed React, a Reminiscence and Recall project county wide. It was then but a short step to tea dances, craft initiatives, and entertainment for that client group. Similarly within four prisons in the County, the traditional library services to these establishments provided the opportunity for poets, writers and visual artists to take up residencies. The latter resulted in an exhibition in Durham Cathedral. Tom Hadaway, a northern writer and playwright, during his residency, enthused several inmates to recount their experiences. A particularly poignant reminder of Tom's residency came at the Durham Litfest in 1996 when Judith Ward, wrongly convicted for the M62 bombing and incarcerated in Durham Prison, returned to County Durham as a visiting author. And all because the first steps were taken by a librarian.

Community Arts is a term not so fashionable now as a few years ago. A product of the sixties, it had as the eighties dawned become almost institutionalised, and indeed debased in the eyes of many commentators. A new professional the 'community artist' had emerged using public subsidy to make decisions about the art product being provided in local neighbourhoods suffering social, economic and environmental disadvantages. Such a situation was and is anathema to the early protagonists who considered the approach was an attempt to give back to the people ownership of creative expression. Instead of the cultural agenda being set by a minority of practitioners and institutions, those sixties community arts workers wished all people to do things - as the Balinese would suggest - as well as they can.

Community Arts can, I believe, be re-invigorated by working in conjunction with community libraries. Both community arts and community librarianship can be seen to stem from the same objective. If libraries are to be effective in community provision they must be community based in terms of service provision. Traditional provision, be it Libraries or Arts is not. It is geared to the 'believer' and is demand led. Services offered result from a combination of professional judgements, on the part of Librarians and Arts Workers, and the vociferous demands of articulate users. The service is materials based, in the case of libraries - books, records, videos - and product based as regards the arts - plays, exhibitions, concerts. Improvements in the service will be characterised by increasing the number of outlets, materials being loaned, productions being performed, artefacts displayed, exhibitions hung - or bums placed on seats. The emphasis is on numbers. Once a successful formula has been discovered the consumer is given more. The nature of such provision is 'more of same'. The same provision is repeated in more locations. As such it can be organised and directed from the centre, it is universal, once the mould has been created, replicas can be reproduced without undue reference to local conditions. Standards can be set fairly easily - in terms of expenditure per thousand, floor space for a particular population, and return on investment.

By comparison community based provision has as its focus need rather than demand. A further feature is that it concentrates on people rather than materials or productions. Putting the two together clarifies the objective of linking people with the information or creative opportunity they need to fully develop as individuals, in the context of the community from which they derive their identity. The people can be traditional users or non users. Their needs can be diverse - help with creative writing, access to a potter's wheel or the current rate of unemployment benefit, state of the art knowledge relating to digital technology or where a rock band can practice. The need might be solved by a material resource, though equally it might be satisfied through an activity.

Community provision is based on needs rather than the demands of an articulate minority. Developments in the Service are a consequence of broadening the range of needs being satisfied. Instead of 'more of same' the slogan is 'more and different'. Such provision requires decentralisation because the needs of communities are different. To remain community resources the services offered have to be dynamic. For needs change and so must the nature and type of provision.

Therefore in terms of strategy for community development local government, it seems to me, should be forging joint initiatives between librarians and arts workers, particularly in relation to social need, through community based provision that has at its route inclusivity - for everyone not the few.

A word about buildings. Were it possible to deliver services without them I would be delighted. In a time of reducing budgets more resources could be invested in product, programme and stock instead of heat, light, repairs and security. However, they are necessary, provide a sense of place and identity and naturally can be a focus for civic pride. I do appreciate there are problems about flexibility and reconciling what may be seen as competing needs by users, by performers, by librarians, by arts workers, by craftspeople etc.

But instead of concentrating on the difficulties, embrace the advantages. Some of the most exciting work has come from the most unlikely venues. I recall some wonderful folk evenings in a small library near Grimsby docks. Completely unsuited to Raku firing, local libraries in Gateshead were nonetheless venues for the work of Christine Constant that gave rise to a community pottery. Librarians and Arts Workers in County Durham are ever resourceful about conventional library spaces, including the use of issue counters as impromptu staging. Our spaces are used for a wider variety of arts events, wet areas cater not only for children's activities but craft sessions ranging from papermaking to jewellery work.

Where there is a will there is a way. I was fortunate, back in Grimsby in the early 1970's to commence a career at the town's main library that contained within its walls two purpose built/designed gallery spaces, coffee bar and multi-purpose room. Capital investment and that related building revenue budgets were optimised, the exhibition spaces received visitors they would not normally have seen, and those spaces quickly became used for lunchtime performances geared at office and shopworkers in the central area.

A decade later in Gateshead, I was fortunate to be centrally involved in a major extension to the Central Library that included traditional Reference and Local Study facilities, but also a flexible space with retractable rake and small gallery space. A small coffee bar was developed into full catering and licensed facilities. My time in Durham has seen the opening of Bishop Auckland Town Hall, a venue serving a town with 25,000 inhabitants that comprises Library, Tourist Information, Consumer Protection, flexible performance space seating 300 on electrically controlled rake on a floor suitable for the most exacting dance professional, gallery space, meeting rooms and of course bar, catering and function catering for up to 300. A similar development has recently been progressed in Peterlee with the College of Further Education and a major initiative in Durham City is now being planned with Lottery cash.

There are 39 libraries in County Durham, an area of small towns and large villages. A refurbishment programme bringing them up to modern day standards financed from Objective 2 and the Rechar Programme for former coal-mining areas is based on the notion of local libraries as community resource centres. Consistent with the Authority's policies, refurbishment must cater for local community activity and provide meeting rooms including kitchen facilities, exhibition/display space and multi-purpose areas for 80-100. Flexibility is the guiding principle - all island book stacks on casters!

Of course there are problems. Patrons of Sedgfield did not take kindly to 'Going for Green', an Agenda 21 initiative involving local folkies running kids workshops, prior to a village procession. Some Trimdon regulars took exception to video workshops as part of multimedia preparations for a website, but they were outvoted ten to one. Cornforth users thought the use of the library grounds for sculpture days rather weird and some of the pieces in bad taste. But a wonderful critical debate on the merits of Damien Hurst resulted particularly as one of his pieces was being shown in The Bowes Museum at the same time.

Part of the research brief for the Public Library and Arts Committee is the notion of civic pride and the cultural arena contributing to a sense of civic identity. As I discussed earlier, the library building has always been symbolic, embodying civic values, ideas of citizenship and the principal of the individual's right to knowledge and information. This notion, propounded by 19th century philosopher Samuel Smiles was embodied in the thinking behind Victorian libraries. They were part of a civic infrastructure that reflected local authority confidence, a belief in self improvement, and sought to further the emerging notion of an educated democracy. A few years ago I came across a statement attributed to the Swedish architect of the 1920s, Erik Asplund, who stated in designing the central library in Stockholm, his belief was that its construction had to demonstrate a journey from a state of darkness to one of light.

Appreciating the different needs of users, leads on to staffing structures and the overall management of service delivery. At one level this can be through multidisciplinary working, with discrete professional disciplines coming together to achieve shared objectives. The emphasis is on sharing and this multidisciplinary approach stems from perhaps administrative and managerial convenience, stemming from a generally held notion the discrete disciplines - libraries, performing arts, visual arts, published and broadcast arts, one could add museum workers, archivists - have something in common.

It seems to me and what I have read of your research project and its three objectives, that Ireland is moving on to the interdisciplinary approach where the emphasis is not the professional discipline and associated skills, but the user and non user, the community of interest either spatial, or sharing particular demographic or social interests. This means new approaches to service delivery, particularly at a local and community level where the technical and professional disciplines are focused on shared objectives of furthering access to knowledge, ideas and opportunities.

The growing convergence between information and communications technology is, I believe, blurring the boundaries between production and consumption. Institutionalised arts provision in the 20th century reinforced the separation with the punter consuming and having limited opportunity to influence the produce received. Multi media, accessible recording facilities and desk top publishing now mean millions can produce and receive. Technical advancements must result in professional disciplines reappraising their role and purpose.

As discussed earlier when talking about policy, interdisciplinary working can be most effectively delivered at a local level. Thus Bishop Auckland Town Hall with its library, professional programme, sub regional exhibition space, participatory activities, is delivered by an interdisciplinary team. They form part of a Local Delivery structure operating throughout the County with strategic support being provided by a team of specialists - Marketing and Promotion, Stock and systems, Durham Studies, Information and Advice, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Youth Services - operating county wide. All local delivery outlets have similar access in terms of events planning and technical advice from those specialist officers.

The general public at the point of delivery are not particularly interested about fine, professional differences. A recent piece of work in County Durham focusing on the 50th anniversary of coal nationalisation involved arts workers, social history specialists, librarians, and community workers delivering a programme of exhibitions, events, performance and personal involvement. The objective was not to stage events exhibitions or publish books, but rather to increase the individual and collective understanding of a major influence on the lives of individuals and communities in recent times. It was as much about contemporary social comment as collecting. Personal identity and a sense of place were as critical as interpretation. There were spin-offs. Our collections of photographs, objects and memorabilia increased significantly because local communities in over 40 locations were actively engaged in the creation of the events. Particularly poignant for many communities, coal mining in County Durham touches everyone's lives, even those of us who have had no personal connection. It has shaped the collective emotions of the County's inhabitants and will, I suspect, continue to do so well into the 21st century. Some may have suggested the 50 years project was simply cashing in on sepia tinted nostalgia. I reject that claim. It celebrated comradeship, the nobility of working people and the emergence of new generations who respected and understood their roots. The Arts have always had a central part to play in mining communities. The pit men had a weekly sum deducted from their pay packet to support the colliery brass band, the colliery welfare, and in the early years of the century, the working men's club which contained a library, and organised public lectures. During the 1980s the Miners' Strike saw the emergence of exciting work covering many artforms. The Arts were a means of expressing the fears and hopes of communities being devastated economically. It was perhaps no coincidence that this period saw the emergence in County Durham of a strong women's movement and women support groups in pit villages provided a backbone for survival. Hardly surprising too that the 1980s spawned a number of arts organisations and local libraries provided space, resources, support and encouragement. Small presses from the department published short stories and poetry, fostered performance art and in a small way contributed to a sense of pride in the community.

Similarly in 1996, the County Durham public were more interested in the exhibitions, commissions, and participatory programmes for Visual Arts Year, than whether the work was championed by curators, arts workers, librarians or community workers. A Stained Glass Commission, unveiled by Tony Blair, was the result of debate and discussion with representatives of political groups and mining organisations, a Turner and Cotman show owed its success as much to the design influenced by environmentalists as to the works themselves. A vinyl art initiative in over 40 local centres was

the result of an interface with local people and organisations facilitated by librarians and community workers. A major exhibition featuring artists from the Madrid School was uplifted by commissioned music. In many respects it could be argued these initiatives, and I am sure hundreds like them throughout the country, demonstrate straightforward partnership and collaboration and are therefore not particularly innovative. However, I would suggest that in a small way collaborations, if you like, are slowly but surely leading to a re-evaluation of professional purpose and a questioning of so-called professional differences. This is happening particularly among younger generations of workers from many disciplines. I think we would all agree added value emerges from partnership. Perhaps now is the time to begin to critically examine ways at taking partnership and co-ordination a stage further.

But perhaps a more cogent reason for considering seriously an interdisciplinary approach is this notion of participation and inclusivity of the population at large in decisions that effect their lives. Are we creating cultural opportunities 'for the public' or 'on their behalf'. This could be a perfectly legitimate approach and indeed stems from the traditional, professional role for arts administrators and librarians advocated by institutions. However, a 'New working order' position could involve us managing and developing provision 'in association with our public'.

As I have said 'for' and 'on behalf of' are perfectly legitimate positions to adopt. They stem from a regard and respect for professional judgement based on knowledge and experience as to what is appropriate. And in our case that clearly means a respect for the objects and works of art we collect, how they are displayed and interpreted. It is also consistent with the vexed notion of quality and standards.

'In association with' implies dialogue and debate with a wider audience, accepting there may be other issues that communities, spatial or thematic may wish to explore. Contemporary visual art may be regarded as the hackneyed example but equally the approach could be true of social history, of music, drama, dance. And in terms of the Public Library and Arts Committee and its research areas, revolutionising standpoints in relation to music and other contemporary art forms will be critical for establishing relationships with younger people and perhaps groups hitherto neglected by arts professionals.

Ageing Dylan freaks like myself may suggest this smacks far too much of Ivan Illich and his disabling professions.

But is there not a grain of truth in his view that professionals can be a barrier to individuals taking charge of their own lives and allowing others to take decisions on their behalf. The critique would suggest this leads to alienation from institutions and structures that effect our lives. Apathy results. And while Illich was centrally concerned in his studies about Education, Legal and Health issues, is not our cultural heritage equally as important an issue for participative democratic models?

Ironically many cultural service professionals are beginning to actively engage the user/public in the type of service provided. It is called marketing. But the crunch will come if the results of the market research and publicly stated preferences as regards product within the museum, the library, or arts centre, do not coincide with the professional view on what should be provided.

So the interdisciplinary approach in respect of a new working order could require a fundamental reappraisal of professional objectives and the examination of working practices. It should result in the service's first and foremost obligation being to people. Our responsibilities to the arts would therefore be subordinate to working with communities and individuals.

There are implications for professional education, for training, for a fundamental reappraisal of the knowledge skills and attitude listed in a person specification. Above all for the motivation and sense of purpose shown by entrants to Arts and Libraries work.

It grieved me to read recently in a submission for Lottery funding on behalf of some Authority in southern England that librarians lacked subject knowledge in respect of the contemporary novel. As cultural sector workers, the books we stock, the nature of our exhibitions programme, the style of drama in our performing spaces, the opportunities for creative expression generated are public testimonies of our valued system and a statement of what we consider to be important.

Structures must facilitate lateral thinking, encourage the Maverick, provide support to fieldworkers who, like Star Trek, 'go boldly where none have gone before'. Management if it is worth anything has to foster an environment where new ideas are welcomed, where experimentation is encouraged and above all where there is the freedom to fail.

So it can be argued that in terms of service delivery, the structures within which we operate and the national policy framework, there is a discernible development from traditional partnership and co-ordination i.e. multidisciplinary to newer more cohesive ways of working i.e. interdisciplinary. It should come as no great surprise. After all both the Arts and indeed Libraries are themselves a broad church embracing many subject specialisms and skills. The interdisciplinary approach is in many respects a natural consequence but with one significant difference. The starting point lies with our public and the emergence of effective communication systems based on a greater understanding of the world around us, through improved access to knowledge, ideas and opportunity.

And the approach can invigorate our facilities, open up opportunities to develop new audiences, and consequently broaden the visitor base. It is suggested this perspective can lead to greater personal and professional satisfaction, and open up career development opportunities. Already many academic institutions are offering courses of study at both under-graduate and post-graduate levels that embrace this inter-disciplinary outlook. There is also evidence that traditional, single subject courses are exploring modular options from other areas of study. A next natural development would surely be a move towards harmonisation of professional as opposed to academic qualifications. Such a move would truly enable the cultural sector to capitalise on the opportunities that now present themselves by ensuring workers, presently to some extent constrained by their single discipline background, have the chance to progress and influence strategic thinking.

We live in an evolutionary society. Several political commentators have recently commented about the need to live with reality and to come to terms with evolutionary change. It seems to me that the traditional distinctions between professional groupings are fast disappearing and the alliances arising from the partnership inherent in the work of the Public Libraries and Arts Committee is an excellent way to progress that thinking.

John Pick emphasised that institutions are of their time. Back in my own authority, together with my colleagues the Director of Education and Director of Social Services, I have been critically examining how community development is fostered or indeed not fostered in the authority. At the beginning of the month, the three of us jointly chaired an evening seminar, for managers and field workers from the three departments. Case studies exemplifying good practice were presented, opportunities were brainstormed whereby the resources of the authority as utilised within those departments could be better employed. The seminar broke up into discussion groups, part of whose remit was to look at advantages of closer working between the departments and to highlight barriers that prevented this happening. At the onset it was recognised that the general public, individually or in communities, were not really bothered as to which part of the authority provided support for community initiatives or brokered development opportunities. Interestingly, many examples of good practice that excited other workers, came from Arts, Libraries and Museums - festivals, reminiscence work, heritage based initiatives, local history, resource centres, community information, open/lifelong learning. But there was one critical barrier, unanimously agreed to be the biggest obstacle to joint working. It was, of course, professional rivalries and a deficit of understanding about the contribution other professionals could offer. Partly it had to do with structures but more fundamentally it was an issue of attitude, approach and fixed thinking based on professional conditioning.

Most commentators suggest attitude and approach in a changing world are critical. Indeed it has been suggested that in some respects attitude and approach can be equally as important as resources, management structures, and all the other paraphernalia that get in the way of our working lives. Two months ago I was asked to give a paper introducing a theme "The New Working Order" at the British Museums' Association Conference. Then I asked delegates which of the following descriptions they would use to describe their approach to interdisciplinary working - "The New Working Order":-

- the enthusiast
- the acceptor
- the concerned
- the unconvinced
- the alienated

Those headings were used 12 months ago in a British Government report "IT for All" which sought to summarise attitudes towards information technology by the British Public. An extensive research programme concluded that the nation, for the purposes of ongoing debate, could be divided into those categories.

In the same way that that Government report examined the evidence available and came to certain conclusions, how would we figure in respect of the notion being advanced by the Public Library and Arts Committee.

Would we be the enthusiasts? People who are comfortable with reality are adaptable, confident at embracing change, see the opportunities for improved service delivery, and are anxious to learn more about this 'New working order' as it moves towards an inter-disciplinary approach.

Perhaps we might describe ourselves as the acceptors. We profess to see the benefits of partnership and the multi-disciplinary approach, and indeed could see ourselves moving along the continuum to interdisciplinary working. We are confident on the whole about coping personally with the changes that may affect our working lives. But perhaps we are ambivalent about the advantages. As acceptors we might suggest 'there is too much change for changes sake these days'.

We could be concerned. We have mixed feelings. We are keen to learn more, but perhaps are personally worried about our own abilities to cope. We may be working in isolated environments and therefore feel we have little contact with others and lack the opportunity to develop the discussion.

It is possible we are unconvinced. If pushed, we can provide cogent and persuasive arguments against change. We can repudiate the notion that our services will benefit from moving along that continuum from the status quo based on our practical working experience and knowledge. We will cite the importance of our professionalism. But we are a little worried about being left behind.

And of course we could be alienated. We could be completely uninterested in any change and furthermore consider the 'New working order' a bad thing. We would not wish to pursue the opportunities of even partnership were they presented because this could lead to a dilution of all we hold dear. We will, of course, work with other people, but it has to be on our terms. We might suggest "we are professionals, we know all there is to know about libraries or the arts and it is not our problem if other sectors can't fully comprehend the unique nature of our work".

As we explore the theme "New working order", it is essential we metaphorically put on the shelf our own preconceptions resulting from professional loyalties and professional conditioning. Let us approach the theme in an open minded manner, secure in the knowledge that those preconceptions can be taken down from the shelf should it prove necessary.

Perhaps we may decide to leave them there, and embrace the notion 'For everyone - not the few'.

APPENDIX 10

PUBLIC LIBRARIES & THE ARTS CONFERENCE

Attendance List

1.	Ballagh	Robert	Artist
2.	Behan	Cllr. Bernie	Kerry County Council
3.	Bennett	Anne	Limerick County Library
4.	Berkery	Eva	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
5.	Bevan	Alun	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
6.	Bourke	Marie	National Gallery
7.	Bradley	Niall	Kildare County Council
8.	Bregazzi	Dermot	Fingal County Council
9.	Browne	Cllr. John T.	Wexford VEC
10.	Cahill	Cllr. Michael	Kerry County Council
11.	Carthy	Cllr. Leo	Wexford VEC
12.	Costello	Nick	Opera Theatre Company
13.	Coughlan	Anne	Offaly County Council
14.	Coughlan	Valerie	Church of Ireland College of Education
15.	Coyne	Josephine	Kildare County Council
16.	Crean	Angela	The British Council
17.	Crowley	Noel	Clare County Libraries
18.	Cruickshank	Margrit	Writer
19.	Cullen	John	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
20.	Cunningham	Austin	National Gallery of Ireland
21.	Davitt	Deirdre	Bord na Gaeilge
22.	Delahunty	Gillian	Cerebral Palsy Ireland
23.	Duffy	Catherine	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Public Libraries
24.	Dunbar	Robert	Children's Books Ireland
25.	Egan	Anne	Kildare County Council
26.	Ellis-King	Deirdre	Dublin Corporation
27.	Enright	Deirdre	Wicklow County Council
28.	Farrell	Mary	Westmeath County Council
29.	Farrell	Clarissa	Irish Museum of Modern Art
30.	Farrell	Helena	National Adult Literacy Agency
31.	Farrell	Anne	Cuala Verbal Arts
32.	Fennessy	Richard	Waterford Corporation
33.	Fitzgerald	Mary	Cork City Library
34.	Fitzpatrick	Oria	The Arts Council
35.	Flanagan	Marian	The Arts Council
36.	Foley	Cllr. Tommie	Kerry County Council
37.	Foley	Michael	National Rehabilitation Board
38.	Fox	Francis	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Public Libraries
39.	Gaughan	Marilyn	Mayo County Council
40.	Galvin	Brian	Combat Poverty
41.	Gilligan	Jack	Dublin Corporation
42.	Gleeson	Breda	Kildare County Council

43.	Griffin	Donald	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Public Libraries
44.	Hanrahan	Fionnuala	Wexford County Council
45.	Harold	James	Galway County Council
46.	Hayes	Margaret	Dublin Corporation
47.	Hetherington	Rosemary	Dublin Corporation
48.	Hickey	Tony	Writer
49.	Hogan	Claire	Dublin Corporation
50.	Howell	Shay	R.T.E.
51.	Ingoldsby	Maeve	Writer
52.	Jenkinson	Biddy	Writer
53.	Kelleher	Mary	Royal Dublin Society
54.	Kelly	Anne	Consultant
55.	Kelly	Lorraine	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/ The Irish Times Essay Competition Winner
56.	Kelly	Peter	Consultant
57.	Kennedy	Fergus	Longford County Council
58.	Kiberd	Declan	Public Libraries & the Arts Committee (Chair)
59.	Kilcline	Helen	Roscommon County Council
60.	King	Thomas	Carlow County Council
61.	Leahy	Ann	Age & Opportunity
62.	Leavy	Emer	Roscommon County Council
63.	Lenihan	Mary	Kildare County Council
64.	Lloyd	Joan Anne	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Public Libraries
65.	MacAodha	Sinead	The Arts Council
66.	MacChonghail	Somhairle	Monaghan County Council
67.	MacDonagh	Ian	Cork County Council
68.	MacGearailt	Cllr. Brendan	Kerry County Council
69.	MacGiobuin	Mel	CAFE
70.	MacMahon	Pat	Galway County Council
71.	McCarthy	Tom	Writer
72.	McDermott	Norma	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
73.	McHugh	Vera	Athy Writers' Group
74.	McKernan	Joan	Limerick County Council
75.	Maher	Gerry	Wicklow County Council
76.	Maher	Martin	Tipperary County Council
77.	Mawe	Tim	Department of the Environment and Local Government
78.	Meaney	Helen	The Irish Times
79.	Mee	Sharon	Offaly County Council
80.	Moore	Terry	Kildare County Council
81.	Morris	Catherine	Literary Critic
82.	Mullen	Michael F.	Castlebar Arts Centre
83.	Ni Chonail	Muireann	Laois County Council
84.	Nf Dhomhnaill	Nuala	Poet/Writer
85.	Nf Dhuibhne	Eili's	The National Library
86.	Nolan	Cathriona	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

87.	Nolan	Kieran	Poetry Ireland
88.	Ó Briain	Gearóid	Westmeath County Council
89.	O'Brien	Ivan	O'Brien Press
90.	O'Byrne	Rory	Fingal County Council
91.	O'Callaghan	Stephanie	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
92.	Ó Cathasaigh	Diarmaid	Bord na Gaeilge
93.	O'Donohue	Steve	Dublin Weekend Radio
94.	ODrisceoil	Pnonsias	Co Kilkenny VEC
95.	Ó Fionnáin	Traolach	Donegal County Council
96.	Ó Giollagáin	Conchúr	Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge
97.	O'Grady	Desmond	Writer
98.	O'Keefe	Claire	Jeunesses Musicales
99.	O'Rafferty	Siobhán	Royal Irish Academy
100.	O'Reilly	Regina	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
101.	Ó Ruairc	Micheál	Writer
102.	O'Sullivan	Carmel	Dublin City University
103.	O'Sullivan	Kevin	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council
104.	Phelan	Eamon	Laois County Council
105.	Power	Cllr Paddy	Kildare County Council
106.	Price	Barbara	Athy Writers' Group
107.	Priestley	Séan	South Dublin County Council
108.	Quinn	Kevin	South Eastern ELB
109.	Reynolds	Mary	Longford County Council
110.	Riordan	Michael	Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown VEC
111.	Ronayne	Liam	Donegal County Council
112.	Shubotham	Carole	Cerebral Palsy Ireland
113.	Sliney	Marjory	Fingal County Council
114.	Tierney	Sheila	Louth County Council
115.	Titley	Alan	Writer
116.	Treacy	John	International Education Services
117.	Troy	Thomas	An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
118.	Turley	Liz	Dublin Corporation
119.	Uhlár	Antoinette	Arthouse
120.	Vaughan	Austin	Mayo County Council
121.	Verso	Derek	Waterford Corporation
122.	Walsh	Helen	Limerick County Council
123.	Walton	Rosemary	Dublin Corporation

**"Access all areas" b
Conference programme**

Morning session:

Registration and Coffee

Official opening of conference by Mr Noel Dempsey, TD , Minister for the Environment and Local Government

Chairman's address

Declan Kiberd, Professor of Anglo Irish Literature and Drama, University College, Dublin

For the many, not the few

Keynote speech by Mr Patrick Conway, Director of Arts, Libraries and Museums, Durham County Council (See appendix 9)

The Irish way presentation of interim results of research to date

Anne and Peter Kelly, Research Consultants

Review

Dr Alan Tittley, Lecturer in Insh.St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

Afternoon session:

Spreading the word

Ms Nuala N1 Dhomhail, Poet and Writer

Afternoon workshops - Promotion of arts through libraries

How to establish good practise pointers for success

Fostering creativity through libraries

Access for all

Young people Meeting their creative agenda

Resourcing Sourcing funds

Agenda for the future Feedback from workshops

Professor Declan Kiberd

Chairman's Conclusion

APPENDIX 11

PRIZE WINNERS • 1997 COMPETITION

UNDER 18 CATEGORY

1ST PRIZE: Lorraine Kelly,
Turia,
Ballymoe,
Co. Galway.

Highly Commended: Jack Carty,
18 Taney Crescent,
Goatstown,
Dublin 14.

Rosina Joyce,
11 Glencard Crescent,
Salthill,
Galway.

Aishling Cronin,
229 Castleview,
Leixlip,
Co. Kildare.

UNDER 14 CATEGORY

1ST PRIZE: Laura Ni Bhrolachain
6 Pairc an Teampail Mh6r,
Cnoc na Ros,
Doire BT48 OEQ.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Barry Moynihan,
St. Joseph's Boys School,
Adare,
Co Limerick.

Elizabeth McCarthy,
Berrings,
Co. Cork.

355 entries were received

APPENDIX 12

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Benton Foundation

<http://www.benton.org>

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna / The Library Council

<http://www.iol.ie/~libcounc>

The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon

<http://www.artscouncil.ie>