

Company Background:

ReCreate is a thriving social enterprise making art materials and educational supplies affordable and accessible to every sector of the community for all kinds of creative purposes. This is achieved by salvaging clean, reusable materials from business and distributing them to members for free in unlimited quantities. The project is based on a concept known as Creative Reuse which encourages the public to reuse materials that would normally be sent to landfill or for recycling, for all manner of creative and inventive purposes.



Fig 1: Exploring the possibilities at the Warehouse of Wonders

The business model is that members pay a nominal annual fee and in turn have unlimited access to materials stored in ReCreate's *Warehouse Of Wonders (WOW)* and its facilities, which include a workshop and member's area.

ReCreate's vision is to establish a national social enterprise fostering creativity, valuing social inclusion and protecting the environment.

ReCreate's mission is to be an inclusive and successful social enterprise inspiring curiosity, creativity and care for the environment.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing accessible and affordable art materials and educational supplies to all sectors of the community across Ireland
- Championing awareness around reuse and diverting materials from landfill
- Encouraging social inclusion through extensive work-placement programmes for those with additional needs and those distant from the labour market.

ReCreate first opened its doors to the public in November 2013 in Ballymount, Dublin 12 and today prides itself in being the national distribution centre for the collection of materials salvaged from businesses to be used as art supplies. The space, known as the "Warehouse of Wonders":

- Has had over 20,000 visitors in 2016 alone. (12,000 in 2017 to date)
- Showcases what can be done with the materials through display, interactive areas of how to best incorporate the materials into a setting.
- ReCreate has an extensive workshop programme, which is growing year on year, further spreading the benefits of Creative Reuse.
- Storage of materials from approx 250 Business suppliers to allow easy access by the public to take away for creative reuse.
- Is a welcome space for the whole community particularly those with special needs, ensuring a safe and friendly environment at all times, catering for large groups which is proving increasingly popular.

ReCreate has had just over 2,000 member groups signed up since November 2013 but enquiries to avail of the materials come in by the hour. This increasing demand signifying the huge potential for a project such as ReCreate in Ireland, putting reuse on the public mind in a way not previously achieved by other initiatives. Members are mainly comprised from the early childhood, education, special needs, community, arts and related organisational sectors as well as families and individuals too.

The success of this project in the first 3 years has seen ReCreate outgrow the current space, long before anticipated. This success has led to ReCreate entering a Feasibility study into what the next step for ReCreate should be. Not only do ReCreate require larger storage and warehouse space, but a larger, more fit for purpose workshop space is also necessary as ReCreate's education and workshop programme continues to grow exponentially, further increasing the amount of materials diverted from landfill. Since the introduction of more staff, ReCreate's output has increased significantly, particularly around our Education Programmes, Workshop bookings and participation at various events around Ireland.

Reuse Education & Awareness initiatives by ReCreate

Through working on our 2016 Heads Up Project and the first half of our 2017 All Heads together Project, it has become evident that ReCreate's materials are a critical enabler of the work of community and youth groups, arts facilitators, teachers, special needs assistants and those working with young children. Creative reuse of the materials allows individuals to articulate in an alternative way, their inner emotions and feelings. This is particularly powerful and effective in disadvantaged and special needs communities where:

- Individuals may struggle with the skills involved in the formal and traditional communication channels of writing and talking.
- Individuals to articulate in an alternative way, their inner emotions and feelings

Based on these findings, ReCreate are now addressing the lack of creative opportunities and arts programmes which are available to those working with very young children, children with additional needs, vulnerable adults with mental health issues and those with Dementia. Experimentation and exploration of creative processes encourages participants to express themselves individually, allowing them to become more articulate and confident. By placing a professional ReCreate artist within a group setting, participants are provided with an opportunity to engage in hands on, experiential workshops, with emphasis on inquiry based learning. ReCreates intention is to compliment current educational programmes, enhancing overall learning and well-being all while learning about the holistic benefits of reusing materials.

All Heads Together 2017:

ReCreate's staff are of the firm belief that this project can advance the Creative Reuse concept and actually influence national policy, bringing creative reuse into the education and health curriculums. It will further advance ReCreate's mission to encourage Creative Reuse on a national scale as there are still many schools and community groups using new materials, depleting raw materials, and there are still many companies putting into landfill or recycling materials that can have another life.

Following on from the huge success of Heads Up in 2016, it was the above belief that led to the fruition of All Heads Together in 2017. Throughout this year, we have delivered a number of accredited Continued Professional Development courses, highlighting how reuse materials can be successfully incorporated into the primary and pre school curriculums, across all subjects. In September 2017, ReCreate will collaborate with selected artists carers and teachers within educational settings. The aim is to share skills and knowledge that will lead to long term improvements in practice focusing on the concept of creative reuse and how creative exploration can be integrated into the pre-school and primary school curriculum.

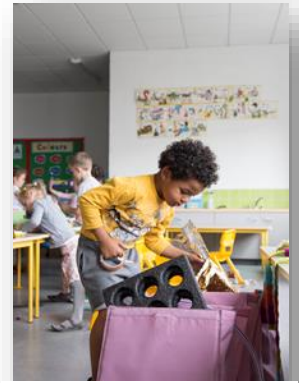


Fig 2: Exploring the Endless Possibilities during a school workshop

Creating Urban Heroes 2017

ReCreate's *Creating Urban Heroes* programme aims to develop a series of creative partnerships between various youth groups, from disadvantaged areas in Dublin. These relationships will focus on giving young people an alternative method of communication other than those taught within formal education settings, such as reading & writing. *Creating Urban Heroes* will allow young people to express themselves by incorporating the visual arts into their communities. The purpose of this project is to address issues that affect the groups and their local surroundings and consider how they as young people can be empowered to tackle their concerns in creative ways.



Fig 3: Community Installation using materials around them by the artist Bordalo. Take a closer look.

The aim is to channel the young people's interests and capabilities while at the same time raise awareness about their own surroundings and environment. By working closely with an artist, the young people would have the opportunity to respond creatively and constructively to the issues at hand.

Festivals & Events:

Aside from working with local schools, ReCreate's extensive workshop programme also extends to facilitating large spaces at festivals & events around Ireland. The artists have developed an innovative, interactive, open play model which has proved immensely popular with event organisers. These involve:

- The ReCreate team designing numerous different indoor and outdoor open play and creative spaces, uniquely conceived to suit each individual environment.
- Direction is minimal or non-existent as the participants are encouraged to explore the diverse and plentiful materials on offer to create sculptures, artwork or play themes.
- At every event staff use the materials at their disposal to brighten and energise the space, always designing a refreshing and innovative space which attracts huge attention.

ReCreate have been asked to decorate and facilitate spaces at over 20 festivals and large events in 2017 alone including St. Patricks festival, Kildare National Play Day, Dublin National Play Day, Rose Festival, Seafest, Space Invaders-Children's Art Festival, St Patrick's Festival, Electric Picnic, Culture Night, Bluefire Street Festival, Canalaphonic and Barboro Children's Festival. It is estimated that ReCreate will have directly introduced Creative Reuse and its benefits to well over 25,000 individuals by the end of 2017 through its appearance and workshop at these events. ReCreate staff estimate

that they will divert over 250 tonnes from landfill in 2017, this figure could be extended if the ReCreate Team could measure the effect they have on people that attend ReCreate workshops throughout any given year. By promoting the benefits of reusing materials, it is hoped that this is carried forward to when at home or back in the classroom. Staff are confident a considerable additional tonnage of materials will be diverted from landfill by families and member groups through their own efforts and by seeing how everyday materials can be reused in many different ways.



Fig 4: ReCreate At The Rose Festival 2017



Fig 5: ReCreate @ Croke Park Sustainability Day 2017

Team Building & Corporate Training:

ReCreate offer an extensive Team Building and Corporate Training model for a range of different groups. As well as facilitating a number of Continuous Professional Development courses for teachers throughout the Summer months, ReCreate also deliver workshops based on whatever theme the group may request. With schools, ReCreate artists have facilitated workshops helping teachers to upskill in certain areas, highlighting how these materials can be used across a number of subjects on a day to day basis and also team building exercises to help boost morale between the groups.

The Corporate Training model links innate creativity with innovation. The overall theme of ReCreate's Corporate Training model is that of "Communicate, Collaborate & Innovate". The events are interactive, challenging and fun, looking to get the delegates to think outside the box. ReCreate's Corporate Training is an energising event that allows the participants to leave at the end of the day with a thought provoking experience. The purpose of the workshops is to challenge the staff to participate in hands on activities, moving into 3 dimensional thinking, problem solving and unlocking that innate creativity that everyone is born with, but can get lost in some individuals as the years go on. These tailored workshops also demonstrate to the participants how their unwanted materials can be creatively reused as opposed to being sent to landfill or overseas for recycling, further raising awareness.

Conclusion:

ReCreate works with over 2,000 member groups across Ireland as well as the thousands more that visit ReCreate spaces through events, festivals and other workshops to promote the concept of Creative Reuse. Schools and community groups save substantially on their annual budgets; children and adults alike get access to materials not previously accessible; businesses are given a viable and feasible third option for disposal and of course the environment is hugely advantaged by less materials going to landfill. ReCreate's vision is to become a national model for best practice in social enterprise where creativity is fostered, people are valued and the environment cared for. Evidence based research has proved that engagement with ReCreate's reuse materials encourages positive mental health and wellbeing. ReCreate has had a great impact on the community in a short space of time, staff are driven and focused on continuing to grow this project and a Pakman Award would be an incredible accolade and a great tool to help the organization to continue to grow.