

Life Force Project
Final Evaluation Report



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Life Force Project

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Life Force Project

Final Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

‘...I think drama was a brilliant experience. I overcame my fear of talking in front of people. I met new people and we learned about suicide and how it effects people. I was surprised how many people wanted to see the drama and how involved they got in talking about it. The drama has made me more confident and I would love to do more drama. It was good to talk about issues we would never talk about. Thanks for letting us do the drama.’ Life Force Participant.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Life Force Project. The aim of the project was “*to explore the issues for community groups in addressing suicide, parasuicide (deliberate self-harm) and suicidal behaviour, among their clients and within their wider communities*”. It was envisaged that the participants on the Life Force Project would reflect the community profile and general demographics of the areas involved, however particular focus would be placed on young men in terms of suicide and young women in terms of parasuicide (deliberate self-harm).

Blue Drum, the National Arts Specialist Support Agency under the Department of Social and Family Affairs Family Support Programme, together with a number of community groups made the original application to Pobal for funding. Pobal funded the Life Force Project through the Dormant Accounts Fund, Suicide Prevention Measure AS06.

Blue Drum (lead agency) provided the administrative and personnel support for the project. The community groups (partner agencies) were: Equal Access Community Development Project (CDP) /Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT), Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Services (Catholic Youth Care - CYC); Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige and associated projects); and Ringsend Action Project (this latter group participated at the project application phase and for Life Force Phase I). These partner agencies provided a range of supports and resources throughout the lifecycle of the project. The project began in late 2007 with full participation by January 2008 and finished in May 2009.

2. Context

The project is set in a national and international context of growing concern regarding the levels of suicide and parasuicide. Suicidal behaviour represents a global public health problem and its prevention continues to be a major challenge to health and social services at all levels of Irish society. There are approximately 400 deaths from suicide per year in Ireland (approximately 320 male and 80 female). 80% of deaths from suicide occur in males, and 80% of all suicide attempts occur in females (Irish Doctors & ESB Electric Aid <http://www.suicideprevention.ie>).

More people die by suicide in Ireland each year than in road traffic accidents. Currently, youth suicide rates in Ireland are fifth highest in the European Union (World Health Organisation, 2005). Suicide is now the principal cause of death for people under the age of 40. Deliberate self-harm (parasuicide) is also a significant problem. According to the National Registry of Self Harm 8,600 people presented themselves to hospital in 2007 in 11,100 incidences of deliberate self-harm. In addition many more cases of deliberate self-harm never come to the attention of the health services (Reach Out 2005).

A further factor is the correlation relationship that exists between high incidences of death by suicide and areas that have high levels of social deprivation (National Suicide Research Foundation NSRF 2006). The areas of Dublin in which Life Force operated, namely Ringsend, Swords and Tallaght, have deprivation index scores that are high and in places in the top percentile nationally (Life Force Project Proposal).

Blue Drum is the National Community Arts Specialist Support Agency working in the Community Development Sector. It works particularly with Family Resource Centres (FRCs). Blue Drum was established in 2002 in response to the growing involvement of the community development and anti-poverty sector in utilising arts based methodologies and addressing issues of access to arts and culture provision. Blue Drum has a national remit and is a not-for profit company. The Life Force Project operates within both RAPID and Local Drugs Tasks Force Areas

In an organisational review in 2006 Blue Drum recognised that suicide is a major problem in Irish society. It identified suicide prevention as a key priority area of work. As part of the development of the proposed project, consultation and discussions took place with the groups involved; through this process it emerged that some people who died by suicide were known personally and were clients of the participating groups. It was expressed by some youth workers that issues relating to suicide “*were endemic among young people in the area*” (Life Force Project Proposal).

3. Overview of Life Force Project

‘...The drama was a great opportunity to do something different and it gave us something to do during the week. I thought that the show we did on suicide prevention really opened our eyes to the truth of the matter. I really think there is more to gain from this project and that more people will benefit from it.’ James Cummins, Life Force Participant, Tallaght.

The core focus of the Life Force Project was concerned with enabling participating community groups, in particular young people, to examine suicide, parasuicide and preventative suicide related issues in a creative way. The project was also concerned with developing the knowledge and skill base of the community groups in terms of suicide prevention strategies.

During the project planning phase Blue Drum together with the community organisations explored various creative art forms, that would be appropriate for the project. They examined photography and visual art and concluded that creative drama offered the range of skills that were most suited to their target group, project objectives and community development approach. The approach that the group decided upon was similar to that of the ‘Rita Project’ developed in New York and based on the concept that the creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life enhancing.

The drama approach advocated by Crooked House Theatre Company is rooted in community development principles and is designed to develop life enhancing skills. Skills such as: collaborative creativity; relationship building; teamwork; research; problem solving; communication; focus/concentration; commitment, deferred gratification and independent decision making are the specific skills that the Crooked Theatre Company aims to develop in their form of

collaborative art. These were the skill areas that the project planning group decided were the most appropriate for project participants.

Life Force was carried out in two phases. Phase I was based in the three community settings of Ringsend, Swords and Tallaght. It ran from late 2007 to the summer of 2008. A series of drama workshops were organised in the three communities. Each group of approximately 10 participants explored relevant social issues, such as drink, alcohol, drug abuse, bullying and then, when confident, explored suicide and suicide related behaviours. The groups in Tallaght and Swords consisted of young people, while the group in Ringsend was of mixed ages. These workshops were facilitated by drama facilitators from Crooked Theatre Co. and were supported by professional youth workers in Tallaght and Swords. Support was provided in Ringsend by a key community project worker – the Manager of the local community centre. Each of the three groups created a piece of theatre work related to suicide issues and performed it in a joint celebratory performance at the end of Phase I in Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre.

In Phase II of Life Force, participants from the three community groups joined together as a single group and creatively explored issues relating to suicide in more depth. Drama workshops were held in the Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre once a week with the Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC) groups commuting. A joint piece of theatre relating to suicide issues was created and performed. This piece was performed to audiences in a Dublin city centre theatre, community centres in each of the communities and at a number of other venues upon request.

In Phase II of Life Force, the Steering Group also focused on forming strategic alliances, facilitating collaborative suicide prevention training and identifying best practice in relation to developing suicide-prevention protocols.

An additional short phase III was added in response to demand from Phase II participants. Funding, provided by the Dormant Accounts Fund through Pobal, which was sparse in any case, was

stretched to the limits in order to provide a further 5 drama workshops and a final celebration performance. In this phase, subjects such as bullying and role models were explored.

Life Force was managed by a Steering Group which consisted of representatives from Blue Drum Board, Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC), Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and associated projects, Equal Access (CDP)/Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT) and the Project-Co-ordinator. Representatives of Crooked House Theatre Co. attended meetings.

4. Evaluation Methodology

An independent external evaluator was appointed in March 2008. The evaluation consisted of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. An action research approach was used to track the progress of the project and make necessary adjustment during the project lifecycle. The evaluation involved the following:

- Meet with the project co-ordinator to discuss the project.
- Review and analysis of project application and relevant documentation.
- Review Steering Group meeting minutes and other documentation.
- Observation and discussion with participants, youth workers & drama facilitators in three venues for Phase I
- Observation and discussion with participants, youth workers & drama facilitators in Ringsend for Phase II.
- Analysis of quantitative data.
- Facilitation of evaluation review sessions with the Steering Group.
- Preparation of draft Phase I and Phase II Life Force Evaluation Reports.
- Preparation of final Phase I and Phase II Life Force Evaluation Reports.

5. Project Aims and Objectives

The aim of Life Force was to work with six community groups and to explore creatively the issues for community groups in addressing suicide, parasuicide and suicidal behaviour, among their clients and within their wider communities. Life Force aimed to address the following questions:

- (i) How does suicide, parasuicide and suicidal behaviours impact the work of the groups?
- (ii) How does suicide, parasuicide and suicidal behaviour impact the communities within which the groups work?
- (iii) What can groups do to prevent suicide among people, particularly young males?
- (iv) What can groups do to promote a wider community awareness and response to suicide that would contribute to the cycle of suicide prevention and postvention?

It was envisaged that 26 participants, reflecting the community profile, would participate directly in the project. However a significantly greater number would benefit indirectly in terms of awareness of suicide related issues through the output (drama performance) of the project. In Phase II of Life Force the aims and objectives were further refined as:

- (i) Participants to work towards a theatre production and in the process to use theatre techniques as a way of exploring suicide and raising awareness regarding suicide amongst the participants and the wider community.
- (ii) Steering Group Members to:
 - Work with other agencies in each area to share information on the issue of suicide, and any current suicide prevention work.
 - Stimulate collaborative work on suicide prevention.
 - Use the play and any other creative outputs as a tool to raise awareness, making links between the drama participants and agencies and also with the wider public.
 - Learn from the suicide prevention strategies already in place in Tallaght.
 - Work towards community wide suicide prevention strategies in Ringsend and Swords/Baldoyle.

6. Achievement of Project Aims and Objectives

In terms of achieving aims and objectives Life Force did work with six community groups in areas of high deprivation indexes. Participants in the project explored creatively issues related to suicide and a number of other related issues. The number of participants was 30 this exceeded the number of 26 originally envisaged. The number of performances and the level of attendance, (approximately 900 people saw the performance), far exceeded project expectations.

The degree of engagement of the young people and other participants surprised and delighted the Steering Group. Not only did they embrace the very difficult subject of suicide and suicide related issues amongst their peers in their communities, but they also took on a level of project ownership and showed levels of commitment and engagement far exceeding the expectations of the Steering Group. Follow on initiatives as outlined further in this report illustrate these levels of ownership, commitment and engagement by the young people.

‘...from drama I have become a stronger person. It has learned me to deal with personal issues and make them strengths. I have learnt to grow in a good positive way. Drama gave me a strong sense of independence.’ Life Force Participant.

‘...doing the drama was a great experience. We got a chance to learn different ways of performing not too many people get this chance. It was also great because we got to meet new people along the way.’ We also learned a lot about suicide which none of us knew. Estelle Lawson, Life Force Participant.

In addition, the commitment shown by the agency representatives, Crooked House Theatre Artistic Director and the Project Co-ordinator again far exceeded expectations. The contributions in terms of dedicated staff time, project costs, participation on the Steering Group and organising performances again far exceeded initial expectations. There was a noticeable increasing level of commitment by Steering Group members and other key stakeholders as the project unfolded, for example the decision by the Management Committee of Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre to host Phase II and the participation of the Community Guards, Youth Workers, and the Manager of Ringsend and Irishtown Community Centre to actively participate in the workshops and become performers.

In terms of developing suicide prevention protocols, this process was perhaps less defined initially. Significant progress has been made in forging agency alliances, finding out what is available and identifying further steps that can be followed up in each of the communities.

7. Strengths and Weaknesses of Project

The strengths and weaknesses of Life Force may be summarised as follows:

Strengths:

- Level of collaboration between lead and partner agencies as illustrated on the Steering Group and throughout the project lifecycle
- Level of participation from other organisations – The Suicide Prevention Officer of the HSE, An Garda Síochána, Rapid Co-ordinator of South Dublin Co. and the therapist associated with Pieta House.
- Access and participation in the arts for young people in targeted communities.
- Use of the arts to engage young people and other participants and as an effective way to explore difficult issues.
- Flexibility of Crooked House Theatre Co. as the project evolved and changed.
- Collaboration between drama facilitators, youth workers and project co-ordinator.
- Ongoing learning was incorporated as the project progressed and evolved.
- Level of participation from the young people, other participants and the support from their families.
- Flexibility of the project to explore broad issues and then move into suicide related issues.
- Relationships enhanced between participants, youth workers, youth agencies and other stakeholders such as the community Gardaí.

Weaknesses:

- As the project evolved roles and responsibilities became clearer.
- Some of the project objectives, in particular related to the development of protocols, were not specific enough and therefore difficult to evaluate.
- Life Force being perceived as a Blue Drum Project.

- Not having the current Steering Group active at an earlier stage.
- Lack of participation of local HSE on the Steering Group and engaging with the project.
- One of the partner agencies not participating in Phase II.
- How learning from the project will be disseminated and mainstreamed.
- Poor communication between all the stakeholders sometimes caused confusion.
- Lack of a mechanism in place to get additional feedback from organisations that brought in particular young people and others to the performances.
- More emphasis could have been placed on developing and supporting the project self-evaluation mechanisms and the evaluation capacity of some of the stakeholders
- Funding – very tight budgets limited the scope of Life Force.

8. Life Force Process

Life Force was managed by a Steering Group that consisted of a lead agency and six partner agencies for Phase I and five partner agencies for Phase II. The Steering Group met on a bi-monthly basis. The project was organised by a part-time Project Co-ordinator who was located in and part of the Blue Drum team. The appointment of the Project Co-ordinator was critical in driving the project forward and acting as a liaison person for all of the stakeholders. As the lead agency, Blue Drum took responsibility for employment contracts and contracts with service providers such as Crooked House Theatre Co, and the external evaluator.

The partner organisations, namely Equal Access Community Development Project (CDP)/ Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT) Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC), Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and associated projects; and Ringsend Action Project (this latter group participated at the project application phase and for Life Force Phase I), all contributed very significantly to the project in terms of dedicated staff time and ongoing project support.

Phase I of Life Force consisted of 10 two hour drama workshops, including a taster workshop, being held in three community venues namely Ringsend, Swords and Tallaght. There were 30

participants in Phase I – Ringsend 10; Swords 11 and Tallaght 9. At each workshop, there were one/two drama facilitators, two youth workers and a key project worker. The drama facilitators guided the workshops in which issues were discussed, dialogue was created by the participants and a typical scenario dealing with a social or suicide related issue acted out.

Feedback from the young people and other participants indicated that drama was pivotal to them becoming involved. The creative process was new to many of them. Most of the participants had not previously participated in an arts initiative outside of school. Having to identify issues, carry out research, script and act out story lines and perform in front of audiences was hugely challenging and provided a significant learning experience for the participants. The discussion element of the drama workshops was critical to get emotional depth with regard to young peoples feelings regarding suicide and self-harm. The involvement of the youth workers and the key project worker ensured that if issues were not resolved, that there was a support person available outside of the workshops.

A final Celebratory Event at the end of Phase I was held in Ringsend in which all three groups performed. After this performance, as with the subsequent performances, the audience was invited to participate in a facilitated discussion about the suicide related issues that were enacted or emerged as a result of the performance.

Phase II of Life Force consisted of similar drama workshops. The total number of participants for Phase II was 24. Of these 18 were female and 6 were male. Participants included 16 young people (15 – 17 years) from Tallaght and Swords, a mixed age group of four participants from Ringsend, a Community Garda, two youth workers from Tallaght, one youth worker volunteer and a key project worker. Based on the learning from Phase I an introductory workshop was held so that issues related to group formation were dealt with prior to start up. 10 two hour drama workshops were held with participants all travelling to Ringsend. As part of Life Force Phase II the group did seven public performances. The performance were all researched, written and acted by the participants based on their individual and/or community experiences of suicide and suicide related issues.

These performances took place in the city centre, in the local communities and upon request from specific agencies.

During Phase II, the project co-ordinator together with the Steering Group, organised a two-day HSE Suicide Prevention Training Programme (ASSIST). 23 people attended including youth workers, community group representatives, members of the Steering Group, and Gardaí from Swords and Ringsend.

ASIST 'suicide first aid' aims to teach the skills around recognising the signs of suicide and how to assist someone who is feeling suicidal. During Phase II, links were established and relationships forged with other agencies, either providing suicide prevention services or similar organisations dealing with the impacts of suicide and suicide related behaviours in local communities.

In Phase III participants continued to respond to requests for Life Force performances. It was performed in Darndale on April 27th 2009 as part of Celebrate Life Week.

9. Project Inputs

Pobal was the principal funder of the Life Force Project under the Dormant Accounts Fund Suicide Prevention Measure AS06. Blue Drum provided management, administrative support and office facilities for the project co-ordinator. Contributions from the lead and partner agencies included:

- (i) Community contribution
 - Project application, research and submission to Pobal.
 - Participation in the Steering Group and ongoing project support.
 - Contribution of dedicated staff time, skills and knowledge from youth workers and that of a key community worker.
 - Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre hosted Phase II of Life Force.
 - Participation in the ASSIST Training Programme.
 - Expenses in relation to venues, transport, performances, refreshments and a farewell meal for participants.

- Contributions in terms of staff time, provision of transport and venue support by other stakeholders including An Gardaí, Rapid Co-ordinator, South Dublin Co. Co., and HSE Suicide Prevention Officer.
- Two drama facilitators from Crooked House Theatre Co. worked for the price of one in the Swords/Baldoyle CYC Group for the duration of Phase I.

(ii) Pobal Dormant Accounts contribution

The operational grant from Pobal for Life Force was €56,920 this was spent on:

- Preplanning costs.
- Employment of a part-time project co-ordinator and administration.
- Contract with Crooked House Theatre Company.
- Contribution towards hire of venues, cost of transport and printing.
- Contract with the external evaluator.

10. Project Outputs

Life Force Phase I

Six community groups participated in the project in three different locations:

- Equal Access Tallaght Community Development Project (CDP)/ Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT), Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC); Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and associated projects;) and Ringsend Action Project
- 30 people participated (10 male 20 female) - Ringsend 10, Swords 11, Tallaght 9.
- All participants attended an introductory workshop and nine drama workshops.
- Participants carried out their own research into suicide related issues.
- 90 attended the Celebratory Performance in Ringsend Community Centre.
- Two additional performances of the Phase I Celebratory Event took place in Swords and Tallaght bringing the number who attended Life Force Phase I to 240.

Life Force Phase II

Five community groups participated in the project in one location (Ringsend):

- Equal Access Community Development Project (CDP) / Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT), Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC); Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and associated projects;
- 24 participants (6 male, 18 female) – Ringsend 4, Swords 9, Tallaght 11.
- All participants attended a group development workshop and ten drama workshops.
- Participants carried out their own research into suicide related issues.
- Approximately 600 people attended 9 performances of the Life Force Phase II.
- 23 people participated in the ASIST Suicide Prevention Training Programme.
- Near TV (a community television production company) in Coolock filmed a performance which will be shown on Dublin Community Television.

Life Force in general

- An innovative creative approach was piloted in a community development project.
- New inter-agency and inter-community networks were established.
- A new youth group was established in Tallaght. SAWT will continue to use drama to work with this group and other groups in the area.
- A new Youth Theatre Group with 7 members to date has been set up in Ringsend.
- Linkages with other agencies such as: HSE, CAMHS (Child & Adolescence Mental Health Service Mater Hospital), Pieta House, An Gardaí were enhanced.
- The young people from Tallaght and Baldoyle/Swords are engaging with other Agencies.
- The performances provided an opportunity for the participants to enhance their production skills in areas such as planning, promotion and organising.
- Four of the original Life Force Participants are now in further education in the area of youth work.

Life Force follow-on initiatives

Other initiatives that are planned as a result of Life Force include:

- Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC) are in discussions with Finglas Youth Services (CYC) in terms of developing a shared suicide prevention protocol. This is concerned with developing a clear local response to suicide in Swords/Baldoyle, currently lacking.
- Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) is liaising with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) about training for young people re suicide prevention with peers.
- Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige) and Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC) are in discussions with the HSE for their respective Life Force Groups to train and become a peer education groups to youth groups and school groups in the areas.
- Members of Tallaght Youth Theatre (TYC) will liaise with Life Force participants and encourage continued participation in drama with a view to joining TYC.
- Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre has established a junior Rock Youth Club with 22 members aged from 7 to 10 years, emulating the model of engaging young people through the arts.

11. Project Impacts

Project impacts are essentially about the long-term impacts of a project and therefore difficult to assess at this point. In terms of impacts for the participants, feedback from the participants was very positive about the project. They felt that they had developed the life affirming skills as identified by Crooked House Theatre Company at the outset of the project.

Participants felt that they had developed their skills in areas such as: creative collaboration, research, teamwork, ability to focus and independent decision making. They felt that their level of awareness and depth of knowledge in relation to suicide, and suicide related behaviours had increased significantly. They feel that they are now in a much better position to see when friends and peers are in trouble and much more likely to intervene and provide support.

‘...I think drama was deadly. It was very good for helping us communicate with other people. We met people from different places. I learned a lot about suicide. Life Force Participant.

‘...it gave us something good to do....it was very enjoyable....we got to meet nice new people...it was very exciting and there was also a very good atmosphere’. Life Force Participant.

Members of the Steering Group, in particular Youth Workers, were of the opinion that the level of engagement and ownership of the young people in the project far exceeded their expectations. For example the young people wish to continue participating in the groups, in many instances they wish to continue with drama, some have continued their education in youth work studies and some participants are advocating for the ASIST Training Programme in suicide prevention to be made available for those under 18 years.

As the project lasted almost 18 months with over 27 workshops and 11 performances this length of time and the intensity of the experience enabled participants, members of the Steering Group and other agencies that became involved to become much more knowledgeable and skilled in relation to many of the issues around suicide and pro-active suicide prevention strategies. Drama proved to be a very effective way in which to engage young people and as a tool to get young people to express their emotions.

The element of travelling from Swords and Tallaght to Ringsend worked better than expected. It was time consuming but gave an opportunity for the young people to get to know one another, build relationships with the Youth Workers, get to know young people in other communities and prepare and debrief after each session.

In total approximately 800 people attended Life Force performances. The performances took place in local community centres, a city centre theatre venue and at a number of venues upon request. Participants researched, wrote and role played all of the characters in the drama. Many of the dramas were based on their real life experiences.

The group performed at the Dublin Diocesan Seminar in St. John of God's Community Centre on 'World Day of the Sick' where approximately 60 people attended. A couple of young people from the Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC) group, who are engaged in a separate suicide prevention project, did a presentation to approximately 50 health professionals in the Mater Hospital Child & Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The presentation covered their thoughts on services

currently available for young people and what they think is needed, as well as the learning from the Life Force project. The whole group performed Life Force as part of Celebrate Life Week and were filmed by NearTV a north Dublin based community television production company. These additional performances were an unexpected outcome from the project. They and the demand for tickets for all of the performances illustrated support for the project and a need in the community for initiatives and information in relation to suicide prevention that will in particular engage a young audience.

In terms of disseminating information the Life Force Performances were a very effective way of reaching audiences. Audiences included family members, local communities, youth clubs, representatives from organisations such as An Garda Síochána, School Teachers and Principals, Pobal, the Arts Co/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Rapid Co-ordinators and Community Development Projects. Demand for tickets far exceeded expectations. Some of the youth clubs block booked seats and brought large groups. Whilst this ensured that the project reached and had an impact with a wide audience it needs further analysis in terms of younger audience preparation and reaction to the performances and subsequent discussion.

At the end of each performance there was a facilitated discussion with audience members in relation to the performance and suicide related issues. These discussions proved to be very fruitful, helpful for sharing information and enabling audience participation.

The networking, inter-agency collaboration and information sharing elements of the project took root in Phase II. Further collaborative initiatives in relation to suicide prevention initiatives are planned by all of the participating agencies. The establishment of the Youth Group in Tallaght, the Youth Theatre Group in Ringsend and the Youth Rock Club Group together with the other planned initiatives will hopefully lead to lasting and sustainable outcomes of Life Force

12. Key Learning Points

The key learning points from Life Force are:

- The importance of pre-project planning so that aims and objectives, roles, project roll-out, monitoring and evaluation are all clear and systematic throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Drama as a creative methodology for community development was very effective in terms of getting young people involved and enabling them to discuss difficult emotional issues.
- Engaging young people in relation to broad social issues such as: alcohol and substance abuse, bullying, difficult personal relationships at first, and then when trust was established and the creative approach understood, focussing in on suicide related issues, worked well.
- The importance of the role of Project Co-ordinator in organising events but more importantly co-ordinating the lead, partner and stakeholder agencies and establishing new community / agency networks.
- The necessity of having the Youth Workers and the key Community Worker involved in the process from the practical perspective of organising venues, attendance and transport but more importantly knowing the issues that arose during the workshops and being available for follow-up with the young people and other participants.
- The necessity of having skilled Drama Facilitators who had the authority to challenge difficult behaviour and the creative skills to earn the respect of the young people.
- The demand for information and models of best practice in relation to suicide prevention strategies was evident. This was illustrated in the high demand for audience seats and the number of youth groups attending the performances.
- The need to acknowledge the critical contribution of partner organisations at all stages of the project and in all documentation.
- Travel to the drama workshops was very useful in terms of preparation, debriefing and enabling friendships to develop amongst the younger participants.
- The use of an Action Research approach to identify and incorporate learning in the project lifecycle resulted in improvements being made as the project developed.
- Greater support for project self-evaluation would have made the evaluation more systematic and more rigorous and less reliance on an external evaluator.

13. Recommendations

1. Members of the Steering Group should continue to network to ensure that the follow-on initiatives identified as a result of Life Force are delivered, the additional learning is shared and that the project is formally closed.
 2. The lead and the partner agencies should review their learning from the project and incorporate ways to build on their experience and incorporate the lessons learned into their on-going work.
 3. The Steering Group should examine ways in which the learning from Life Force is disseminated to a wider audience, for example developing a template for a suicide prevention programme using drama.
 4. The Steering Group should examine ways in which a template for a suicide prevention programme using drama could be mainstreamed by other community, youth, education, arts and health organisations.
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Appendices List

Appendix A : Members of the Life Force Steering Group

Appendix B : Thank you to the following who contributed to the Life Force Project:

Appendix C: Life Force Participants

Appendix D :Crooked House Theatre Drama Facilitators

Appendix E : Publicity from Life Force Performance

Appendix F: Life Force Phase I & Phase II and III Performances, Venues & Attendances

Appendix G: Life Force Performances: Audiences (representation of groups)

Appendix A

Members of the Life Force Steering Group

Bisi Adigun	Board of Management Blue Drum (until February 2009)
Lorraine Barry	Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre Manager and Life Force Participant
Rose Kinahan	Equal Access Community Development Project Tallaght/Suicide Action West Tallaght
Geraldine Robertson	Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC)
Jenny Leonard	Tallaght Youth Service (until January 2009)
Fiona McDonnell	Tallaght Youth Service (from January 2009)
Iris Lyle	Life Force Project Co-ordinator
Valerie Scully	Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige)
Siobhan Larkin	Co-ordinator Blue Drum

Attendee:

Peter Hussey	Artistic Director Crooked House Theatre Company & Life Force Drama Facilitator
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Occasional attendees:

Crooked House Theatre Company Members / Drama Facilitators
Áine Campbell, Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service, (CYC)

Appendix B

Thank you to the following who contributed to the Life Force Project:

Blue Drum – The Specialist Arts Organisation

Community Gardaí

Crooked House Theatre Company

Equal Access Tallaght (CDP)

ESB Electric Aid

Parents of the Participants

Pieta House Lucan

RAPID West Tallaght

Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre

Ringsend Action Project

Ringsend & District Response to Drugs

Ringsend Community Training Centre

South Dublin County Council

Suicide Action West Tallaght (SAWT)

Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC)

Tallaght Youth Service (Foróige)

Appendix C
Life Force Participants

Life Force Participants & Performers Phase I

Swords / Baldoyle 13 participants

Amanda McGivergan
Arianne Alkmin
Camila Alkmin
Geraldine Robertson
Laura Thornton
Leon Keogh
Lynn Robertson
Niashia Coleman
Rebecca Downey
Sarah Warren
Shauna O'Farrell
Stephen Walsh
Thomas Mc Donagh

Tallaght Participants 11 participants

Paul Sherlock
Sarah Gorman
Elene Leao
Sarah Patchell
James Cummins
Sinead Byrne
Estelle Lawson
Bestella Zoka
Maria McArdale
Dean Hudson
Jenny Leonard

Ringsend Participants 11 participants

Amy Faulkner
Claire Casey
Derek Dempsey
Emma Merrigan
Gary Cuniam
Jacinta Conroy
Jason Faulkner
Lorraine Barry
Robbie Maguire
Sharon Gregg
Teresa Rooney

TOTAL: 35 participants started Life Force Phase I and 30 completed it.

13. Lorraine Barry
14. Niamh Barry
15. Niamh Delaney
16. Nieashia Coleman
17. Paul Sherlock
18. Rebecca Downey
19. Sarah Gorman
20. Sarah Patchell
21. Shauna O'Farrell
22. Sinead Byrne
23. Siobhan Guerinne
24. Stephen Walsh
25. Thomas McDonagh
26. Vivienne Boylan

Total 26

Life Force Participants & Performers Phase II

1. Amanda McGivergan
2. Anna King
3. Antoinette Jenkins
4. Camila Alkmin
5. David Pigott
6. Elena Leao
7. Estelle Lawson
8. Ger Robertson
9. James Cummins
10. Jenny Leonard
11. Joanne Cleary
12. Lisa Owens
13. Lorraine Barry
14. Niall Power
15. Nieashia Coleman
16. Paul Sherlock
17. Rebecca Downey
18. Sarah Gorman
19. Sarah Patchell
20. Sinead Byrne
21. Siobhan Guerrine
22. Stephen Walsh
23. Thomas Mc Donagh
24. Walter Morrissey

Total All 24 Participants completed Life Force Phase II

Life Force Participants & Performers Phase III

Participants and performers at final celebration event on May 7th 2009

1. Amanda McGivergan
2. Anne Cheevers
3. Ariane Alkim
4. Camilla Alkmin
5. Danielle Doolan
6. Elena Leao
7. Estelle Lawson
8. James Cummins
9. Jason McCarthy
10. Joanna Cleary
11. Kim Hankey
12. Laura Crambie

Appendix D
Crooked House Theatre
Drama Facilitators

Bonnie McCormick	Life Force Phase I
Brenda Donohue	Life Force Phase I, II & III
Karina Power	Life Force Phase III
Keith Burke	Life Force Phase I, II & III
Mary Duffin	Life Force Phase I
Niall Power	Life Force Phase II
Peter Hussey	Life Force Phase II & III

Appendix E : Publicity from Life Force Performance

Life Force

A devised theatre piece that explores issues of wellbeing and suicide prevention.

Directed by

Peter Hussey and
Keith Burke of Crooked House Theatre.

Performed by

Young people from Swords/Baldoyle
and Tallaght as well as
Ringsend residents.

Discussion

Each performance of Life Force is followed by a discussion with the audience facilitated by Peter Hussey, Artistic Director of Crooked House Theatre.

Date: THURSDAY DECEMBER 4TH

Venue: THE NEW THEATRE TEMPLE BAR 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2

Time: 8 pm

Tickets: FREE but limited seats, booking essential, ring (01) 670 3361



Appendix F

Life Force Phase I & Phase II and III Performances

Venues & Attendances (600 – 700 approximately)

Life Force Phase I

Celebratory Performances:

Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre	May 29 th 2008	Audience 90
Millfield Theatre, Rush	June 2008	Audience 120
Brookfield Enterprise Centre Tallaght	July 4 th 2008	Audience 20

Life Force Phase II

Life Force devised Theatre Piece:

New Theatre, Temple Bar (Full House)	December 4 th 2008	Audience 60
Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre	January 22 nd 2009	Audience 70
Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre	February 5 th 2008	Audience 60
St. Finian's River Valley Community Centre, Swords	January 29 th 2009	Audience 110
Civic Theatre Tallaght	February 12 th 2009	Audience 140

Diocesan Seminar, St. John of God's, Community Centre, 'World Day of the Sick'	February 7 th 2009	Audience 60
Celebrate Life Week Sphere 17 Centre Darndale	April 27 th 2009	Audience 30

Presentation:

Mater Hospital (CAMHS)	March 2009	Audience 50
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Life Force Phase III

Final Celebratory Performance:

Ringsend and Irishtown Community Centre	May 7 th 2009	Audience 30
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Total Audience

840

Appendix G

Life Force Performances Audiences (representation of groups)

This list does not include the many individuals who attended

New Theatre Temple Bar

Family and friends of participants

Steering Group

Blue Drum Board

Artane Drugs Awareness Project plus group of young people

Cherry Orchard Youth Service plus group of young people

Swords/Baldoyle Youth Service (CYC) staff

Mater Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

The Arts Council / An Comhairle Ealaíon

Independent Evaluator Patricia Hunt

Tallaght Civic Theatre

Brookview Community Youth Project.

Clondalkin Youth Service.

West Tallaght Resource Centre

Jay Project Tallaght.

Mayor of South Dublin Co. Co. - Cllr. Marie Corr.

Rathmines/Pembroke Community Partnership.

St Aidan's Community School - Peer Mentor Group.

Teenline Ireland

Tallaght RAPID Co-ordinator.

Tallaght Youth Forum.

Tallaght Youth Services (Foróige) and 20 youth groups

Teachers from St Aidan's Community School.

Teachers from St Marks Community School

Vista Community Development Project.

Local Gardaí

Gateway Mental Health Project, Rathmines

Youth Work students from N.U.I Maynooth.

St. Finian's Community Centre, Liffey Valley, Swords

Youth Reach

Youth Service

Bayside Youth Club

Chaplain Mater Hospital

Cross Care National Suicide Awareness Project

Fingal County Council

Fingal Community College

Hamilton Park Care Facility

HSE

St Margaret Traveller Community Association

Swords Gardaí

Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre

City Housing Initiative

Community Garda, Garda Derek Dempsey

Deutis Doolin, Sinn Fein

Fianna Fail Councillor Sarah Ryan and Chris Andrews

Green Party – Claire Wheeler

Local election candidate DamianFarrell

Maria Pariody, Labour candidate

Martin Taylor, Dublin CC

Newsfour

O'Rahilly House Residents Association

Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre

Ringsend Action Project

Ringsend Girl Guides

Ringsend/Irishtown Youth Project

Sphere 17 Youth Project

St Andrews Resource Centre

Swan Youth Service

Dublin City Council

Independent Evaluator Patricia Hunt



ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

**This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant
Accounts Fund**