

# Chapter 6: Youth Theatre Leaders

## Introduction

This chapter explores the profile and participation of youth theatre leaders. Youth theatre leaders have developed a sophisticated vocabulary to describe their roles within the last 10 years, ranging from 'Assistant Facilitator' to 'Artistic Director'. The term 'Youth Theatre Leader' has been chosen to encompass all adults who work on a paid or voluntary basis in a youth theatre and hold responsibility for a range of different artistic, administrative and welfare roles.

The profile and participation of youth theatre leaders is explored under the following headings:

- 6.1 Youth Theatre Leader Profile
- 6.2 Participation in Youth Theatre - Leaders

### 6.1 Youth Theatre Leader Profile

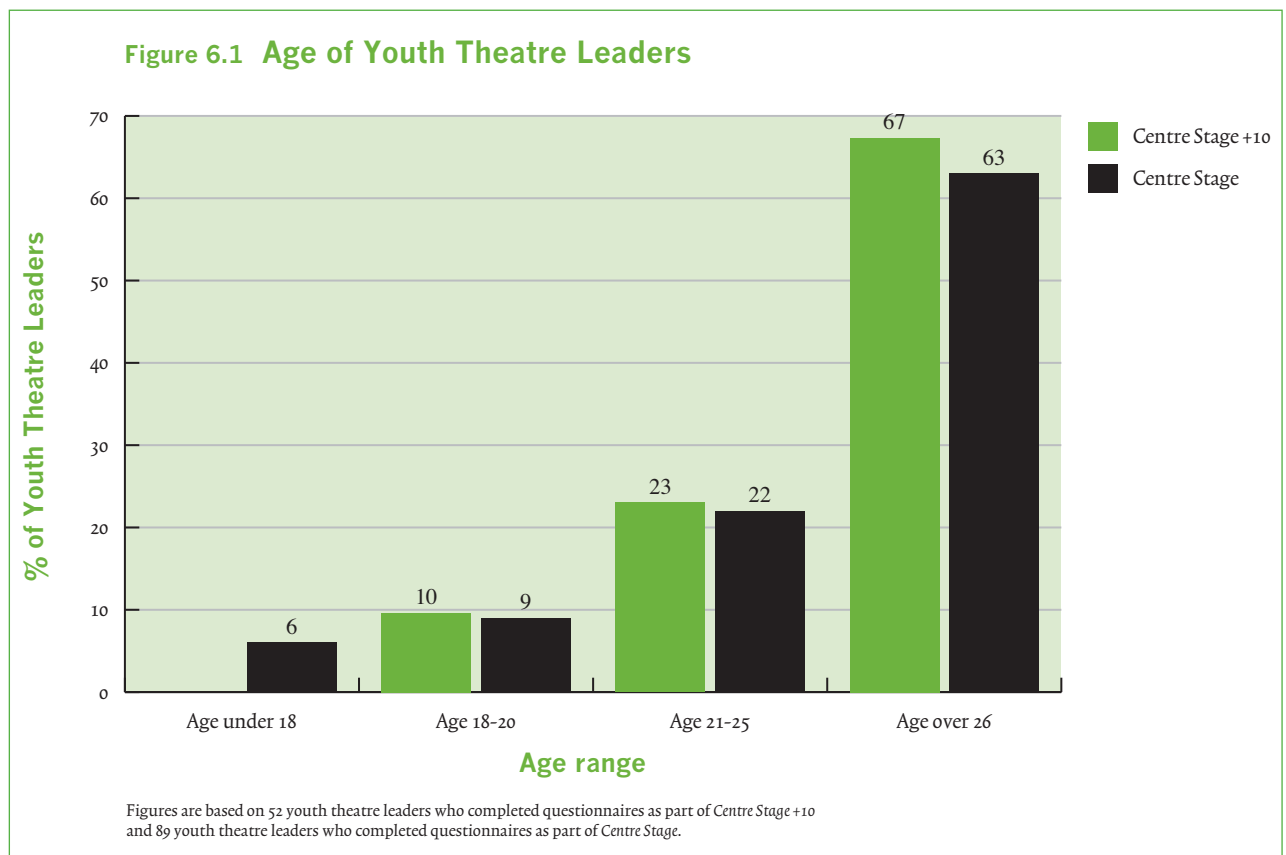
The profile of youth theatre leaders is explored under the following headings:

- 6.1.1 Age and Gender
- 6.1.2 Training and Employment History
- 6.1.3 Why are leaders involved in youth theatre?

#### 6.1.1 Age and Gender

The average age of a youth theatre leader is 35. The oldest youth theatre leader who returned a questionnaire was 67, while the youngest was 18.

The age of youth theatre leaders has changed little over the last 10 years, as can be seen in Figure 6.1. The age ranges are selected for comparative purposes with data from *Centre Stage*. It should be noted that *Centre Stage* recognised leaders under the age of 18 and this is no longer common practice. Some youth theatre members do begin to take on extra leadership responsibilities below the age of 18 and they are termed 'Senior Members' for the purposes of this report.



The questionnaire data shows that the majority of youth theatre leaders are aged over 26. Of the 52 youth theatre leaders who responded to this question:

- 5.77% of leaders were aged between 18 and 20;
- 36.54% of leaders were aged in their 20s ;
- 21.15% of leaders were aged in their 30s;
- 21.15% of leaders were aged in their 40s;
- 15.39% of leaders were aged 50 or over.

Nearly two-thirds of the leaders who returned questionnaires were female. The ratio between male and female leaders is almost identical to that between male and female youth theatre members. 62.50% of leaders who completed questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +10 were female and 37.50% were male. The 21 male leaders who completed questionnaires were clustered in their twenties and early thirties, with 71.43% of male leaders aged under 35. The female leaders who completed questionnaires demonstrated an even spread across all age groups.

There is a six year gap between the average age for women (37 years old) and men (31 years old). This difference is generated by the number of female leaders who begin working with youth theatres (either on a professional or voluntary basis) in their forties and fifties. Of the 17 female leaders who were aged 40 or over, 10 had less than five years of youth theatre experience.

### 6.1.2 Training and Employment History

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Youth theatre leaders come from a variety of backgrounds and the skills they have developed have come from a combination of professional experiences and involvement in voluntary and amateur work.

Leaders have worked professionally in theatre, the arts, youth work and the youth arts sectors. They have also worked professionally in educational settings as teachers in primary, secondary and community schools as well as being drama tutors with local VECs. Leaders who completed questionnaires also worked professionally in a variety of different roles including a laboratory technician, a florist, a banker, an auctioneer, a pharmacist, a painter, a chef and a shop assistant.

Many leaders are very active in voluntary work and amateur theatre work in their local areas. They listed voluntary work on international exchanges, work with the local community groups, adult literacy groups, local youth work organisations, readers groups and the scouts. Some leaders are also active as board members and organisers within their local community for other local youth groups or arts groups. Leaders also mentioned that they had directed and facilitated on a voluntary basis for many different groups, to gain experience and contribute to their local community.

Youth theatre leaders were asked through the leader questionnaire where they felt they had acquired the skills that they regularly use with their youth theatre.

Of the 50 youth theatre leaders who responded to the question:

- 42% of leaders mentioned a qualification in drama or theatre from a local college or university;
- 42% leaders mentioned general theatre experience;
- 30% of leaders mentioned informal training;
- 14% of leaders mentioned a qualification in youth work or youth arts;
- 14% of leaders specifically mentioned the youth theatre where they were a member;
- 12% leaders mentioned their amateur theatre experience;
- 6% of leaders mentioned life skills;
- 4% of leaders mentioned a speech and drama qualification.

Leaders also mentioned training and study in child protection, first aid, counselling, dramatherapy, dance, sound engineering and music technology. Two leaders specifically mentioned the ArtsTrain course run by NAYD. ArtsTrain graduates are working or have recently worked as Youth Drama Officers, Artistic Directors, Drama Facilitators and freelance facilitators / directors at Clondalkin Youth Theatre, Co. Carlow Youth Theatre, Dry Rain Youth Theatre, Dublin Youth Theatre, Galway Youth Theatre, Griese Youth Theatre, Kildare Youth Theatre, Portlaoise Youth Theatre, Rathdowney Youth Theatre, Roscommon Co. Youth Theatre, Roundabout Youth Theatre, Tallaght Youth Theatre and Youthopia Youth Theatre as well as two other youth theatres not included in the research.

There has been a rise in the number of youth theatre leaders who have acquired qualifications in areas directly related to youth theatre such as drama and theatre, youth work and youth arts. Drama and Theatre Studies courses run by Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and local colleges proved very popular with leaders as did the Certificate in Youth Arts offered by NUI Maynooth and delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland. There has been an increase in the variety of drama and theatre related courses offered in Ireland over the last 10 years and leaders are currently far less likely to have a qualification in speech and drama. Of the 89 leaders who completed questionnaires in *Centre Stage*, 13.48% had attained diplomas in speech and drama in comparison with 4% of *Centre Stage +10* leaders.

Leaders value the skills they have built through participation in amateur theatre and other types of theatre experiences, including their membership of a youth theatre when they were younger. They also placed importance on non-formal training that they had received in youth work, youth arts, child protection as well as drama courses organised by the Drama League of Ireland and youth theatre leader courses organised by NAYD.

### 6.1.3 Why are Leaders involved in Youth Theatre?

Youth theatre leaders were asked to rank 10 statements in their questionnaire to ascertain their reasons for being involved in youth theatre. The statements were taken from the original *Centre Stage* leader questionnaire to allow for the comparison of information. Combining the scores, it is clear that leaders are motivated to work in youth theatre by a strong commitment to young people and a keen interest in their artistic, personal and social development.

Table 6.1 Leaders Reasons for Involvement in Youth Theatre

Why are you involved in youth theatre?		% of Overall Vote	Top Ranked Reason: % of Leaders
1	I enjoy working with young people	14.90%	34.62%
2	I find being involved with the theatrical/aesthetic development of young people very satisfying	13.81%	26.92%
3	I find being involved with the personal and social development of young people very satisfying	13.18%	11.54%
4	I believe that involvement in youth theatre empowers young people to participate more fully in society	11.99%	11.54%
5	I like the sense of community in the youth theatre	9.83%	3.85%
6	I find I work more creatively with youth theatres	8.46%	1.92%
7	I get valuable experience that helps me build my chosen career	7.03%	7.69%
8	I enjoy the company of other youth theatre leaders	6.89%	0.00%
9	I make contacts with people who can help me improve my work/career opportunities	4.79%	1.92%
10	It's work, I need the money	2.90%	0.00%

\*Figures are based on the 52 youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of *Centre Stage +10*.

The ranking of these statements is almost identical to the order that youth theatre leaders agreed on 10 years ago as part of *Centre Stage*. Leaders are still becoming involved in youth theatre for exactly the same reasons as before; working with young people and being involved in their artistic and personal development.

The five leaders who ranked 'I get valuable experience that helps me build my chosen career' and 'I make contacts with people who can help me improve my work/career opportunities' were all at the beginning of their careers in youth theatre. They were aged between 19 and 31, with an average age of 23. Four of these leaders are working with youth theatres where they used to be members themselves.

## 6.2 Participation in Youth Theatre - Leaders

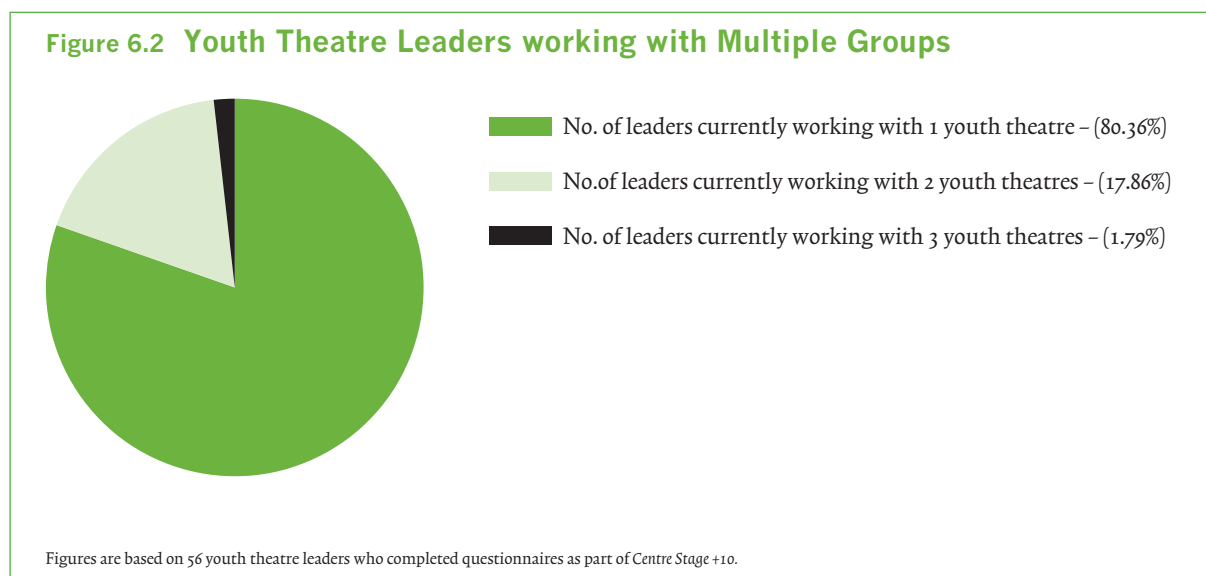
Leaders' participation in youth theatre is explored under the following headings:

### 6.2.1 Leadership Experience

- 6.2.2 Previous Membership of a Youth Theatre
- 6.2.3 Work Patterns
- 6.2.4 Youth Theatre Roles
- 6.2.5 Voluntary Involvement and Commitment
- 6.2.6 Terms of Paid Employment
- 6.2.7 Proximity of Leaders to their Youth Theatres

### 6.2.1 Leadership Experience

The vast majority of youth theatre leaders work with one youth theatre at a time and often one youth theatre throughout their life. They are a very committed group of people who remain dedicated to the young people in their area for long periods of time. There has always been an exchange of freelance facilitators between youth theatres for workshops and projects but some youth theatre leaders are now working on a regular basis with more than one youth theatre. Leader questionnaires indicate that nearly one in five youth theatre leaders are working on a regular basis with more than one youth theatre.



Ten youth theatre leaders were working with more than one youth theatre:

- 9 leaders worked with 2 youth theatres;
- 1 leader worked with 3 youth theatres.

Nine of the 56 youth theatre leaders had worked previously for a different youth theatre. Five of these youth theatre leaders had worked in youth theatres outside the county where they were currently working. It is unclear from the data gathered whether this is due to the migration of leaders within the country or whether it indicates that leaders are building youth theatre careers and moving to youth theatres that offer employment with wider responsibilities. One youth theatre leader had previously worked with three different youth theatres in two different counties.

These youth theatre leaders do not form a majority but they do make up a significant group within the core staff of youth theatres around the country. The employment history of these leaders is indicative of the professionalisation of youth theatre and the youth drama facilitator.

Youth theatre leaders show considerable commitment to their youth theatres and remain working with groups for a very long period of time:

- The maximum time working with a youth theatre was 27 years;
- The minimum time working with a youth theatre was 2 months;
- The average time working with a youth theatre was 4 years, 10 months;
- The total time for all 56 leaders was 295 years, 1 month.

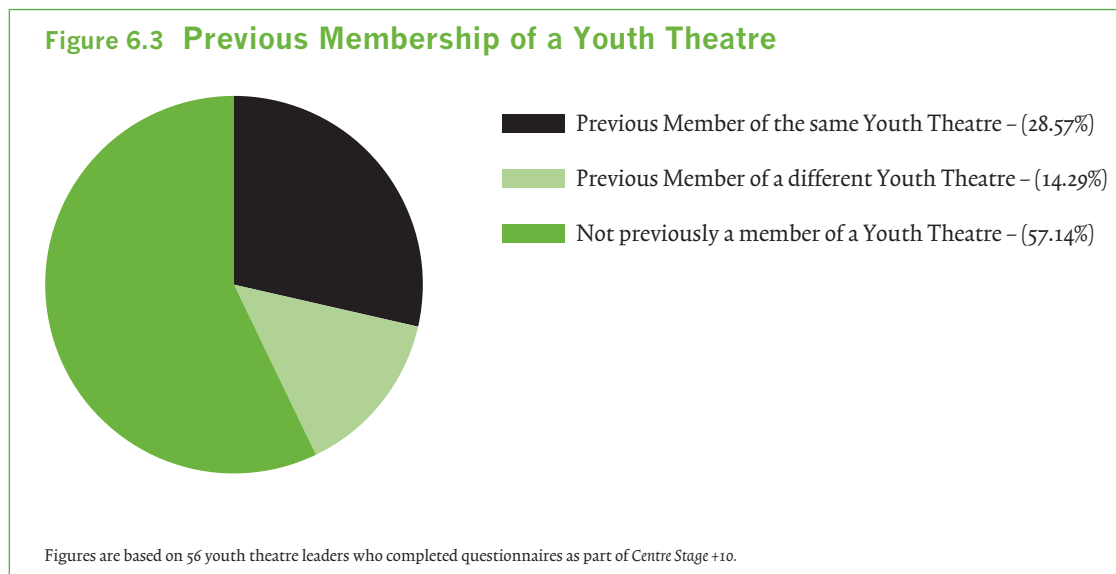
On average youth theatre leaders have spent less time overall with their second or third youth theatres. The

average time working with a second youth theatre was two years 10 months, in comparison with five years, one month for a first or only youth theatre. However, one youth theatre leader had worked for six years with their second youth theatre.

### 6.2.2 Previous Membership of a Youth Theatre

Of the 56 leaders who completed questionnaires as part of *Centre Stage +10*, 42.86% were previously a member of a youth theatre. The first two recorded youth theatres started in Dublin and Carrick-on-Suir<sup>1</sup> in 1977. This time-scale has allowed generations of youth theatre members to grow up, come through the ranks and become youth theatre leaders. The oldest leader who declared previous membership of a youth theatre was 49.

Greater numbers of youth theatres began to develop across Ireland from the nineties onward, allowing better access to youth theatre activity in more urban and rural areas. Looking more closely at this generation of leaders who were members from the 1990s onwards, 73.33% of the 30 youth theatre leaders aged under 35 were previously members of a youth theatre. These statistics illustrate the significance of the cycle of youth theatre members becoming youth theatre leaders. Many youth theatre leaders attribute a quantity of their training to their own personal experience of youth theatre as a young person. 28.57% of those who completed questionnaires are leaders in the same youth theatre where they were previously a member, highlighting their strong commitment not only to their youth theatre but to the young people from the area where they themselves grew up.



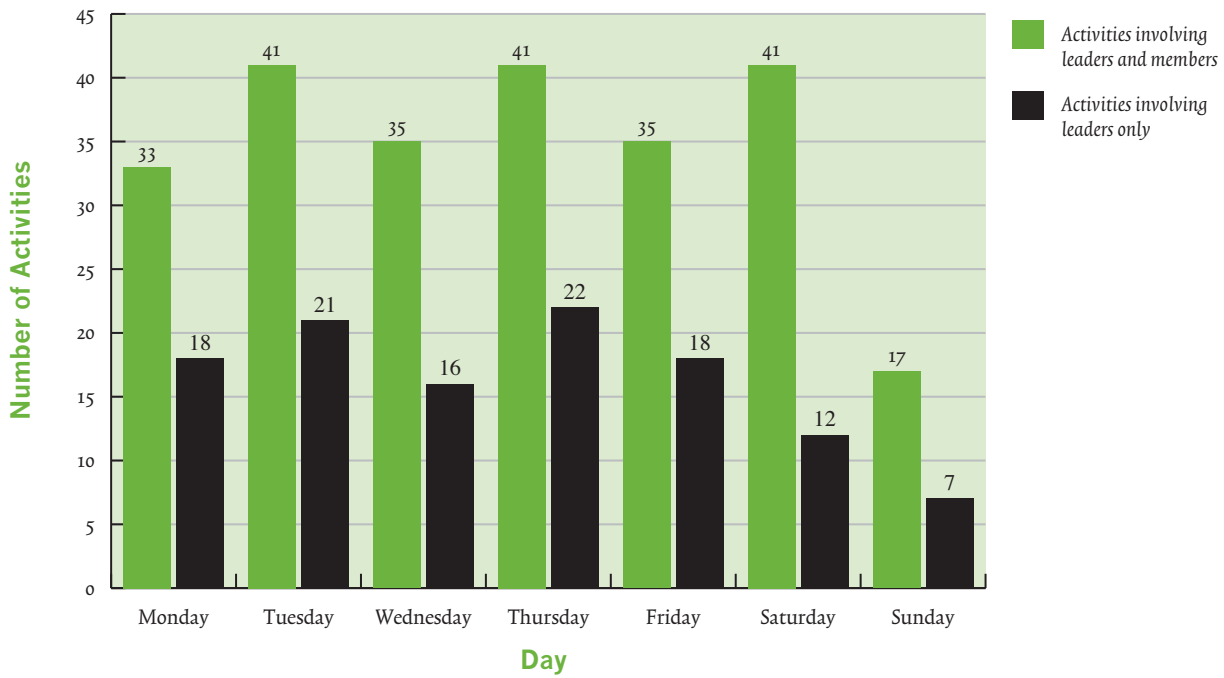
The majority of youth theatre leaders (57.14%) were not previously members of a youth theatre. This indicates that a large proportion of leaders come to youth theatre from different backgrounds in drama, theatre, youth arts, youth work or education.

### 6.2.3 Work Patterns

The job of the youth theatre leader does not run according to a typical nine to five, Monday to Friday schedule. The schedule of the youth theatre leader is built around the times of the week when young people are available to participate and when the youth theatre can access their regular workshop space. This means that youth theatre leaders work a significant amount of anti-social hours including evenings, weekends and holidays. Figure 6.4 shows the weekly work pattern for youth theatre leaders during Census week.

<sup>1</sup> Dublin Youth Theatre and Brewery Lane Youth Theatre.

Figure 6.4 Weekly Work Pattern of Leaders during Census Week



Figures are based on 39 youth theatres that completed an activity log during Census Week as part of Centre Stage +10.

- Youth theatre leaders run weekly workshops, rehearsals and other activities involving young people on every day of the week. Saturday is still the most popular day for artistic activities involving young people.
- Youth theatre leaders also use every day of the week to complete administration, planning and fundraising tasks by themselves. Voluntary leaders and youth theatre leaders who work as professional freelance drama facilitators are most likely to be doing administration at the weekends.

The data gathered from Census Week activity logs for Figure 6.4 shows that youth theatre leaders spend nearly half their time working by themselves or with other adults. Of the 607 hours of youth theatre activity that were logged during Census Week, 308 hours (50.74%) involved only leaders. There is no data to compare this ratio with youth theatres from Centre Stage but youth theatre leaders reflected in their interviews that the level of administration work related to youth theatre has increased over the past 10 years.

- 143 hours were spent by leaders on administration tasks;
- 57 hours were spent on artistic planning;
- 108 hours were spent by leaders on other types of activities;
- 272 and a half hours were spent on artistic activities involving young people;
- 26 and a half hours were spent on other types of activities involving young people.

There is great variation in the number of hours that youth theatre leaders spend on youth theatre activities, reflecting the different responsibilities of each leader. During Census Week, 181 leaders completed 607 hours of activities, creating an average of 3.35 hours per leader. There can be a significant difference between the maximum time and minimum time spent per month by each youth theatre leader due to the increased levels of work leading up to productions, events or trips and this trend underlines the need for a fluid working pattern for youth theatre leaders.

Table 6.2 Average Time spent working on Youth Theatre Activities per month

Average Time spent working on youth theatre activities per month	
Minimum hours per month	2
Maximum hours per month	210
Average hours per month	29

Average minimum hours per month	21.7
Average maximum hours per month	32.6
Sum total of average hours per month	1564.5

\* Figures are based on 54 youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +10 and held 63 different roles.

#### 6.2.4 Youth Theatre Roles

Traditionally, youth theatre leaders have carried out multiple tasks within their youth theatres. They have acquired the skills necessary to balance different types of artistic, welfare and administrative tasks. The traditional dominance of the autonomous model of youth theatre run by voluntary leaders meant that youth theatre leaders were also generally balancing the requirements of the youth theatre with their own professional work.

As part of Centre Stage +10, youth theatre leaders were asked to indicate what type of activities were involved in each role which they carried out for different youth theatres. 56 youth theatre leaders provided information on 66 different youth theatre roles and this data is collated in Figure 6.5.

The questionnaires prove that the majority of youth theatre leaders are still involved in many different areas of responsibility but it also reveals a small group of leaders who specialise within the youth theatre, focusing on one or two tasks such as facilitation, directing, board member duties or technical theatre.

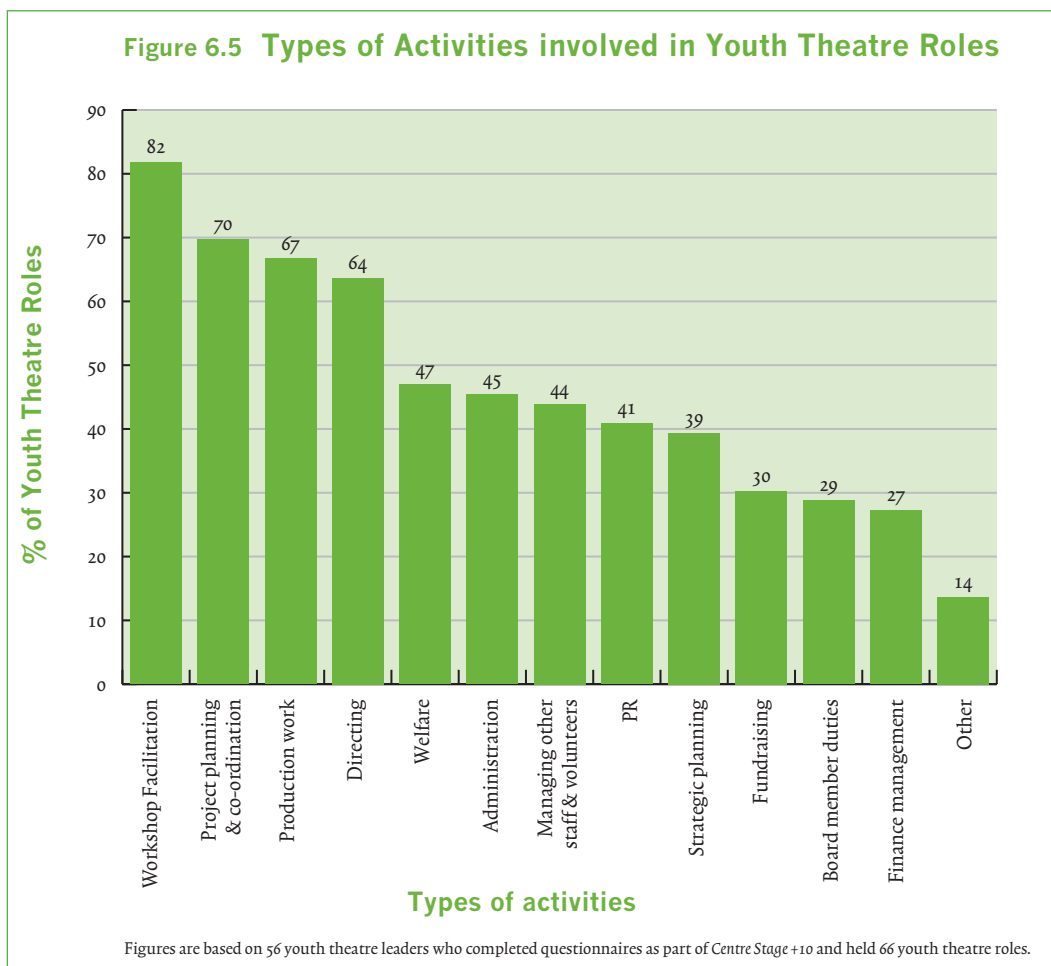


Figure 6.5 demonstrates that a high percentage of youth theatre roles involve multiple types of activities:

- 14 youth theatre roles involved between 10 and 12 types of activity;
- 17 youth theatre roles involved between 6 or 9 types of activity;
- 15 youth theatre roles involved 4 or 5 types of activity;
- 11 youth theatre roles involved 2 or 3 types of activity (generally a combination of 1 or 2 artistic duties with an administrative duty with 3 youth theatre roles being purely administrative);
- 8 youth theatre roles involved only 1 type of activity (7 involved facilitation and 1 involved directing).

The data for youth theatre leader roles which focus on a small number of activities illustrates two distinct types of specialist roles within the world of the youth theatre.

The first of these roles is purely artistic. The role may involve facilitating weekly drama workshops, directing, technical theatre and some project co-ordination and production work. This role is most commonly found within medium sized autonomous youth theatres which employ facilitators or youth theatres with a parent organisation such as a Local Authority and can often include those at ‘Assistant Facilitator’ level or those at the younger end of the leader age-range spectrum.

The second of these roles is purely administrative. The role may involve board member duties, responsibility for fundraising, welfare or finance and assistance with the organisation of a project or a production. This role is most commonly found within autonomous youth theatres but did appear in one or two other models as well.

It is also worth noting that youth theatre leaders who work with multiple youth theatres adopt different types of roles and activity levels within each youth theatre. These youth theatre leaders will often focus solely on facilitating and directing in the second or third youth theatre that employs them, as administration, welfare and other tasks are the responsibility of somebody else.

In *Centre Stage*, three quarters of leaders described themselves as ‘in-house leaders’. Other titles that were recorded included ‘teacher’, ‘trainer’, ‘tutor’, ‘group/general leader’, ‘helper to the drama tutor’, ‘youth worker’ and ‘trainer’. Youth theatre leaders were asked in *Centre Stage +10* questionnaires to list the title they would give their role within the youth theatre. From the compilation of their responses in Table 6.3, it is clear that youth theatre leaders have developed a wider and more sophisticated vocabulary to describe their work in the last 10 years. They have sought to differentiate between positions within the youth theatre, move away from the all-rounder roles that used to exist and attach a higher status to their work by using titles such as ‘Artistic Director’. The development of these titles is an indication of the professionalisation of the world of youth theatre and the world of arts education and youth arts in general.

Table 6.3 Titles of Youth Theatre Leaders

Title	Number of Youth Theatre Roles	% of Youth Theatre Roles
Artistic Director	7	11.11%
Youth Theatre Director / Acting Director	2	3.17%
Leader / Director	2	3.17%
Leader / Facilitator	1	1.59%
Artistic Director / Facilitator / Director	1	1.59%
Youth Drama Officer	1	1.59%
Co-ordinator /Co-ordinator & Facilitator	3	4.76%
Drama Facilitator / Workshop facilitator	20	31.75%
Drama tutor / Teacher	6	9.52%
Facilitator / Director	1	1.59%
General facilitator	1	1.59%
Assistant / Assistant Facilitator	4	6.35%
Supervisor	2	3.17%
Co-facilitator	1	1.59%
Welfare and Workshops Assistant	1	1.59%
Senior Trainee	1	1.59%
Set construction & Design, Lighting, Sound Operator	1	1.59%
Tech Dude	1	1.59%
Chairperson	1	1.59%
Treasurer, general facilitator and car driver	1	1.59%
General all-rounder, fundraising, project development	1	1.59%
Treasurer and Assistant Facilitator	1	1.59%
Secretary	1	1.59%
Committee Chairperson and Welfare Officer	1	1.59%
Workshops facilitator / Administrator	1	1.59%

The largest group of youth theatre leaders recorded titles that purely involved ‘facilitation’. These leaders were all paid staff from youth theatres that primarily existed within larger parent organisations. This category of youth theatre leader is a significant development and indicates a growth in the professionalisation of drama facilitation.

- 44.44% of youth theatre leaders recorded titles in this category. The majority of these leaders were from Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres, with the remaining leaders employed by autonomous youth theatres and youth theatres run by professional and amateur theatre companies, youth arts organisations and arts centres.

The second largest group of youth theatre leaders recorded titles that described a leadership role within the youth theatre (such as ‘Artistic Director’, ‘Youth Theatre Director’, ‘Leader’ or ‘Co-ordinator’) and sometimes mixed this leadership role with other artistic responsibilities.

- 26.98% of youth theatre leaders recorded roles in this category. The youth theatre leaders were spread across all models with autonomous youth theatres and those run by professional and amateur theatre companies registering the most. They were also found in youth theatres run by Local Authority Arts Offices, youth services and youth arts organisations (this leader was Artistic Director of the youth arts organisation rather than the youth theatre).

The youth theatre leaders who recorded titles that involved being an assistant, a trainee or a supervisor were generally working within parent organisations such as Local Authority Arts Offices, arts centres or youth arts organisations.

- 14.29% of youth theatre leaders recorded roles in this category. The majority of these leaders worked for Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres but they were also found in an autonomous youth theatre and ones run by an arts centre and a youth arts organisation.

The youth theatre leaders who recorded titles that involved a mix of artistic, board, welfare and technical duties were primarily from autonomous youth theatres.

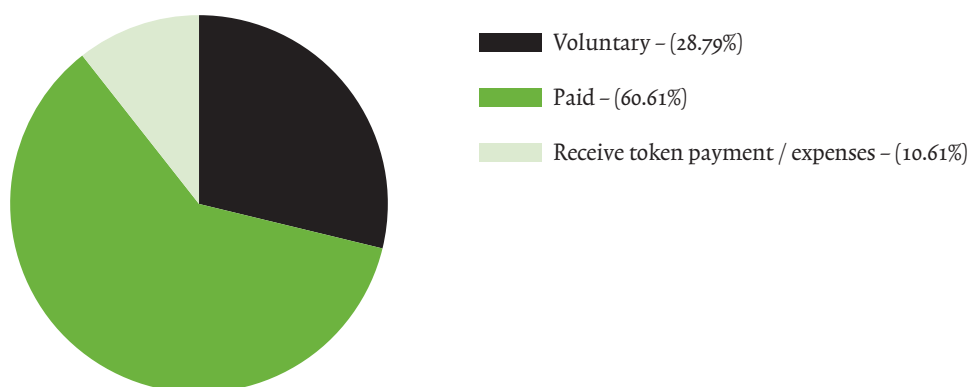
- 14.29% of youth theatre leaders recorded roles in this category. The majority of these theatre leaders were from autonomous youth theatres.

#### 6.2.5 Voluntary Involvement and Commitment

The past 10 years has seen a large increase in the number of paid positions within youth theatre. The professionalisation of the role of the facilitator, the increase in youth theatres set up by parent organisations such as Local Authority Arts Offices as well as courses like ArtsTrain<sup>2</sup> have all contributed to this increase. This increase in youth theatres run by parent organisations has in turn led to a decrease in levels of volunteerism within youth theatre. Organisations can find it difficult to balance paid leaders and volunteers within one setting and some youth theatres make a commitment to recruit paid staff.

However, the professionalisation of the sector has not eliminated the voluntary contribution of youth theatre leaders. There are elements of volunteer activity within 24 of the 45 youth theatres included in this survey and it is still particularly strong within the autonomous youth theatres. There has been a general sense that levels of volunteering had dropped within Celtic Tiger Ireland but Volunteering Ireland reports that numbers are healthier than ever in their 2006 survey, ‘Hidden Landscape’, which recorded an increase of 4.1%<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 6.6 Paid and Voluntary Activity of Youth Theatre Leaders**



Figures are based on 56 youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +10 and held 66 youth theatre roles.

<sup>2</sup> Established by NAYD in 1999, ArtsTrain is the only dedicated youth drama facilitation training programme in Ireland. The course aims to provide training in drama facilitation practice and methodologies, youth work and youth arts as well as developing an understanding of good youth theatre practice

<sup>3</sup> Donaghue, Freda, Prizeman, Geraldine, O'Regan, Andrew & Noël Virginie, 2006, 'The Hidden Landscape - First Forays into Mapping Nonprofit Organisations in Ireland', Centre for Nonprofit Management, School of Business, Trinity College Dublin

## • VOLUNTARY LEADERS

Of the 56 leaders who completed questionnaires, 19 worked on a completely voluntary basis for their youth theatre, receiving no payment for any work at all.

- 84.21% of these leaders who worked on a voluntary basis were committed to their youth theatre for the foreseeable future;
- Voluntary leaders were represented in the questionnaires from 10 different youth theatres: Backstage Youth Theatre, Cabinteely Youth Theatre, Celbridge Youth Drama, Griese Youth Theatre, Independent Youth Theatre, Kildare Youth Theatre, Lightbulb Youth Theatre, Portumna Youth Theatre, Roundabout Youth Theatre and Waterford Youth Arts;
- Voluntary leaders were represented from six autonomous youth theatres, one Professional Theatre Company Youth Theatre, one Amateur Theatre Company Youth Theatre, one Youth Arts Organisation Youth Theatre and one Youth Services Youth Theatre;
- No voluntary leaders were recorded from any Arts Office youth theatre, although interviews with youth theatre leaders indicate that youth theatres such as Carrigallen Youth Theatre in Leitrim are assisted by a small group of volunteers;
- These voluntary leaders carried out multiple tasks within their youth theatres and on average they were dealing with seven different types of artistic, administration and welfare tasks. The questionnaire data shows that voluntary leaders carry out a wider variety of tasks than leaders who were paid or leaders who received token payment;
- The age range for voluntary leaders was 18 to 67 and the average age was 38.

### CASE STUDY: Waterford Youth Arts – combining paid staff and volunteers

Waterford Youth Arts runs its activities through a combination of paid staff and volunteers. A paid drama facilitator runs each drama workshop with the assistance of a volunteer. The volunteers support the facilitators and also satisfy WYA's child safety policy, which requires two adults in every workshop. WYA requires volunteers to commit to a full term with a particular group and in turn, provides volunteers with training in child safety and first-aid. Previous volunteers have included parents, teachers, youth workers, students and other arts workers. WYA advertises locally and through its website for new volunteers.

“We have some great volunteers who have committed themselves for many years to help with individual workshops – these people are the backbone of our work and ensure that at all times workshops are safe and good fun for all involved.” – Waterford Youth Arts Leader

## • LEADERS RECEIVING TOKEN PAYMENTS

Seven youth theatre leaders were receiving payment for their work with their youth theatre but felt it was below the standard rate, was irregular, was a token payment or was simply a reimbursement of expenses. In some cases youth theatres arrange special rates for trainee youth theatre leaders or assistants that is below what they would pay a more experienced leader. In some cases youth theatre leaders felt they were being paid a token rate that did not reflect the variety of responsibilities within their role or the hours they worked.

- Four of these leaders were from Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres, two were from autonomous youth theatres and one was from a Professional Theatre Company youth theatre;
- The age range of these leaders was 19 to 45, with leaders clustering between 19 - 26 and 39 - 45;
- These leaders were dealing with an average of 4.6 different types of activity as part of their youth theatre roles.

## • PAID STAFF

The majority of leaders who completed a questionnaire as part of *Centre Stage +10* were paid for working with their youth theatre. There is no data from *Centre Stage* to allow a comparison with employment conditions within youth theatre 10 years ago but in 1997/1998 a little less than a quarter of youth theatre leaders described themselves as employees.

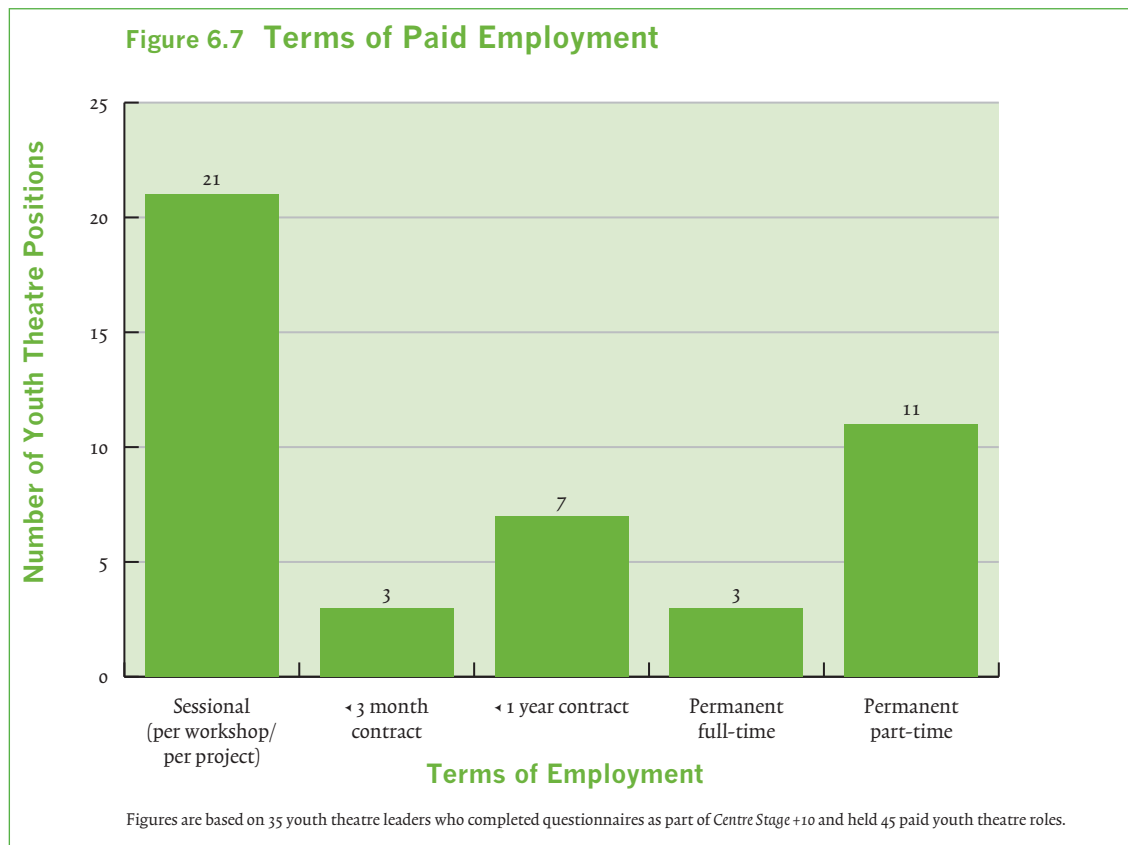
- Paid leaders were recorded from 21 different youth theatres: Activate Youth Theatre, Cavan Youth Drama, Co. Carlow Youth Theatre, LYTC Carrick-on-Shannon, LYTC Carrigallen, Co. Limerick Youth Theatre - Abbeyfeale, Roscommon County Youth Theatre, Co. Sligo Youth Theatre, Griese Youth Theatre, Kildare Youth Theatre, Lightbulb Youth Theatre, Manorhamilton Youth Theatre (MYTH), Mayo Youth Theatre - Castlebar and Ballina, Na Crosáin Youth Theatre, Physically Phishy Youth Theatre, Portlaoise Youth Theatre, Portumna Youth Theatre, Roundabout Youth Theatre, Waterford Youth Arts and West Cork Arts Centre

Youth Theatre;

- Paid leaders were recorded from 10 Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres, four autonomous youth theatres, four Professional Theatre Company youth theatres, one Youth Services youth theatre, one youth theatre run by a Youth Arts Organisation and one run by an Arts Centre;
- These leaders were dealing with an average of 5.75 different types of activity as part of their youth theatre roles. Youth theatre leaders with paid full-time positions carried out the widest variety of tasks amongst this group;
- The age range of paid leaders was 19 to 58 with an average age of 34.

### 6.2.6 Terms of Paid Employment

Paid employment has increased within youth theatre since *Centre Stage*. However, the recency of this trend has meant that the development of contracts, job descriptions and standard rates of pay is still an ongoing process for employers within youth theatre.



- Two youth theatre leaders described themselves as permanent full-time staff. One of these leaders is the Outreach Officer for Graffiti Theatre Company and runs two youth theatres; Activate Youth Theatre and Physically Phishy Youth Theatre. The other leader is the Artistic Director of Waterford Youth Arts;
- The leaders who described themselves as permanent part-time staff worked for eight different youth theatres. Half worked for Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres while others worked for autonomous youth theatres and those run by parent organisations including a professional theatre company, an arts centre and a local youth service;
- Eight of the 10 leaders who reported they were on a 3-month or 1 year contract worked for Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres. The remaining leaders worked for a youth theatre run by a professional theatre company and one run by a youth arts organisation;
- Nineteen leaders were contracted on a sessional basis for 13 different youth theatres, with 63.16% of these leaders working for 6 different Local Authority Arts Office youth theatres. The remaining youth theatre positions were with autonomous youth theatres and those run by professional theatre companies and youth arts organisations. Leaders who were working with multiple youth theatres were likely to be contracted on a sessional basis for at least one of their roles.

It would be misleading to think leaders who are employed on a sessional basis are not committed to their youth theatres on a long-term basis. These 19 leaders had a sum total of 64 years and two months working with their youth theatres. The longest was eight years and the shortest was two months but the average was three and a half years. It would appear that these leaders are working according to casual employment arrangements and are not under contract.

• **RATES OF PAY**

There is no simple guide to the rates of pay that youth theatre leaders receive and it is further complicated by the lack of job descriptions and contracts explaining what leaders are being paid for.

Youth theatre leaders in permanent part-time or full-time posts are the most likely to have contracts, job descriptions and yearly salaries but these may not solely relate to youth theatre activities and may include other responsibilities within their parent organisation. The vast majority of youth theatre leaders are paid according to weekly, workshop or hourly rates. These rates may apply only to the facilitation of a workshop but often weekly or workshop rates may also include administration and planning. Some youth theatres have devised a selection of different hourly and project rates to suit workshops, administration, youth theatre trips and intensive rehearsals.

Many youth theatres reported trying to adhere to VEC hourly rates but even hourly rates can vary widely depending on the experience or training position of the youth theatre leader and on the ability of the youth theatre to pay.

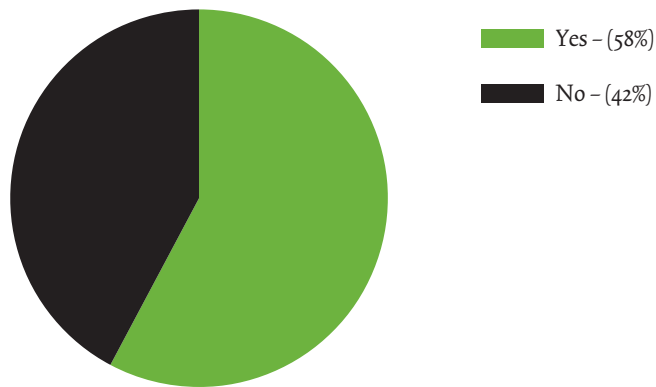
Youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of *Centre Stage +10* were asked what their conditions and rates of pay were. Their responses are collated in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Rates of Pay for Youth Theatre Leaders

Rates of Pay for Youth Theatre Leaders	
Minimum per hour	€10.00
Maximum per hour	€55.00
Average per hour	€37.00
Minimum per workshop	€25.00
Maximum per workshop	€175.00
Average workshop	€67.00
Minimum per week	€40.00
Maximum per week	€171.00
Average per week	€105.00
Minimum per month	€120.00
Maximum per month	€2,500.00
Average per month	€1,540.00
Minimum per year	€1,200.00
Maximum per year	€40,000.00
Average per year	€15,600.00

There is an element of volunteerism hidden within the employment of the paid youth theatre leader. During *Centre Stage +10* interviews, many youth theatre leaders stated that they were not paid for all the work they did for the youth theatre. They did not feel that the hours they spent on administration and artistic planning were always recognised. Figure 6.8 supports this with 42% of leaders stating that they were not paid for every hour they worked. It is unclear from the data gathered whether employers are underestimating the amount of work that is necessary to plan and run the youth theatre activities, whether there are misunderstandings related to contracts and job descriptions or whether employees are working beyond the boundaries of their role.

**Figure 6.8 If you are a paid leader, do you get paid for every hour that you spend on youth theatre activities?**



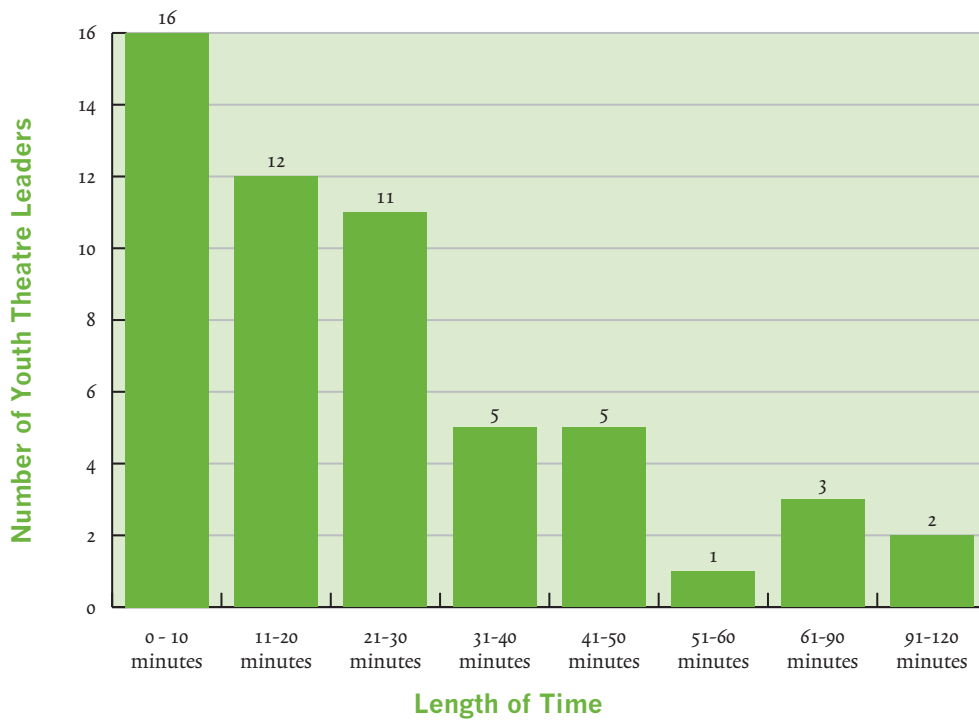
Figures are based on 35 youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +10 and held 45 paid youth theatre roles.

### 6.2.7 Proximity of Leaders to their Youth Theatres

Youth theatre leaders are travelling further than ever to run youth theatre activities. This could be viewed as part of a national trend towards commuting. However, youth theatre leader questionnaires show a reverse of the national trend as leaders from cities are travelling to work in smaller urban and rural areas. Paid employment is the largest factor attracting youth theatre leaders to travel large distances to areas that do not have skilled, local leaders.

Voluntary leaders are most likely to work with a youth theatre that is based close to home, reinforcing the idea that they are committed to the young people in their local area. Leaders who receive token payments for their work are also more likely to work close to home. Some paid youth theatre leaders work close to home and are travelling distances similar to those of the young people attending their youth theatre. This is most likely with paid leaders in urban areas. However, there is a small group of youth theatre leaders who travel large distances to find paid employment in youth theatre. Responses to the *Centre Stage +10* leader questionnaires show that leaders are travelling up to 2 hours each way to paid youth theatre employment. They are generally travelling to youth theatres based in more rural counties that do not have a strong tradition of youth drama or possibly professional theatre.

**Figure 6.9 Length of travel time to youth theatre activities: leaders**



Figures are based on 55 youth theatre leaders who completed questionnaires as part of Centre Stage +10.

- Youth theatre leaders who travelled 10 minutes or less were composed of 43.75% voluntary leaders, 31.25% paid leaders and 25% were leaders who received token payment;
- Youth theatre leaders who travelled between 11 and 30 minutes were composed of 65.22% paid leaders, 26.09% voluntary leaders and 8.70% were leaders who received a token payment;
- Youth theatre leaders who travelled between 31 and 50 minutes were composed of 80% paid leaders and 20% voluntary leaders;
- Those who travelled for more than 50 minutes were all paid leaders.

