



Music Generation Limerick County Summary Framework Plan

LOCAL CONTEXT FOR MUSIC

Demographic, Geographical, Economic and Social context

Map showing the Limerick County MEP area. The grey shaded area is the Limerick Metropolitan area that is currently and will continue to be covered by Limerick City Local Music Education Partnership (LMEP).



Limerick has a population of 195,575 (2016 census figures). Of these, 105,326 live in the Metropolitan Area (the built up area of the City and its suburbs which includes Castletroy to the East, Dooradoyle and Raheen to the South-West and Corbally to the North). Limerick City LMEP caters to this population and is a specifically developed urban programme for this urban environment.

The other half of Limerick's population lives in the much larger, more dispersed rural areas of Limerick County, of whom only 6.4% live in a town with more than 5,000 people. Limerick County LMEP will be responsible for providing music services to these areas (all the map exclusive of shaded grey area). It will be a programme designed and targeted for this predominantly rural environment. There are around 35,000 children and young

people (aged 0-18) spread across this large area, for whom access to services is a challenge.

Limerick Council (now amalgamated between City and County) identifies two 'tier two' towns within this area (those with populations of more than 5,000) - Kilmallock and Newcastle West. A number of towns smaller than 5,000 are designated Tier 3. These are Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale, Castleconnell, Croom, Cappamore, Adare, Askeaton, Patrickswell and Foynes.

Geographic accessibility is a primary concern for the Limerick County LMEP. However, four Regional Creative Hubs in designated locations, each in the North, South, East and West of the county have been selected as Hubs because of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board facilities. Each of the Regional Creative Hubs will enable the Limerick County MEP to provide access to the surrounding area.

All these tier two and three towns have suffered greatly since the economic decline of 2008. The lack of employment for young people caused widespread emigration amongst school and college leavers, producing a 'lost generation' who have yet to return from Australia, Canada and the UK. Once vibrant town centres have become ghost towns of boarded up businesses since this cohort departed. The recovery has been slow in coming to rural Limerick, as the next generation find themselves having to build from the economic ruins of the last decade.

Dr. Eileen Humphreys, author of the Limerick Council Socio-Economic analysis identifies 'Hidden Disadvantage' as a significant factor spread across the county. She states that 'Hidden Disadvantage is defined as areas of poverty and marginalisation that are not as visible as those in urban areas and consequently lacking in intervention. Unemployment rates remain high in the county as are the rates of negative equity.

Limerick County also has a small (0.8%) but significant traveller population, concentrated in geographical pockets (e.g. in and around Rathkeale). The young people in these communities are amongst the most marginalised and will require special targeted interventions from the new County Limerick LMEP.

Current Music Provision in the County

Mapping completed in 2011 revealed that music provision in the county was patchy with many areas un-catered for musically. A more recent 2017 mapping exercise produced a picture in which this patchy provision had further deteriorated to leave large parts of the county in a state that has been described, not unfairly, as a musical desert.

In addition to the lack of access to local musical providers there is also the previously mentioned 'hidden disadvantage' which represents an additional barrier for many in accessing private music provision. Those represented as 'hidden disadvantage' are often those struggling to make ends meet but are disguising their need in order to 'keep up appearances' in the local community.

Existing provision includes individual private teaching practice and a strong range of Comhaltas groups across the county, especially based on the Western and Southern borders. To these are added organisations based in the Metropolitan area, such as Limerick School of Music and Music Generation Limerick City. The fact that these city centre institutions have significant participation from the county emphasises the lack of provision in the county, and highlights the fact that those without the resources to travel are cut off from any access to musical tuition.

Totalling the combined enrolment from the County in these providers, it is estimated that around 0.03% of the 35,000 young people in the County are currently accessing music services. The overall picture is one of a barren landscape in which young people are cut off from the transformative potential of music-making.

The above context of Limerick County demonstrates many children and young people are currently excluded from participation in music programmes in Limerick County due to three primary causes –

1. **Access and Geography:** In order to tackle this issue, we will work with the current existing providers (Croagh, Comhaltas) to add value and not duplicate access opportunities. However, given the lack of current music providers, our main aim will be providing access where there is none. This will be a major challenge, as it will mean reaching young people in a population spread thinly across a large area. It is noted that 65% of the population live in small rural communities, with services spread out and access limited.
2. **Economics:** The nature of 'Hidden Disadvantage' is that it is harder to identify and target those missing out for financial reasons than in cities where levels of hardship and address are more statistically linked. Therefore, exact figures on young people missing opportunities due to lack of funds are harder to ascertain, but the Council's assessment is these numbers are high.
3. **Youth Culture:** Young people in the County have to date only had access to certain genres and pedagogical methodologies. Our assessment and research in both the Limerick City and Clare LMEP areas indicate that music education is successful when it is meaningful to the young people it is seeking to engage. This means developing creative and quality programmes specific to the tastes of the young people and working with them rather than seeking to alter tastes. By approaching and developing programmes in a youth centered model they are inherently more inclusive and sustainable. Our research has shown that programmes that are not youth-led have several pitfalls including: small uptake, low retention rates and an inefficient use of targeted funding. The County Limerick LMEP is aware of these potential mistakes and will plan programmes that are both educationally and financially sustainable.

PROPOSED MUSIC PROGRAMMES

Goals

1. Targeted Access - *Why and where is a County Limerick MG programme needed?*

To use the funding that is available to make the greatest, most inclusive and meaningful difference, it will be targeted where it is most needed. This will mean reaching those excluded by geography and for socio-economic reasons.

2. Young Person Driven - *Who benefits from a County Limerick MG programme?*

Each of the programmes in this LMEP is designed to meet the musical, creative, diverse needs and wants of young people. Each programme will therefore hold a strong line on insuring that there is strong resonance between what the young people want to play/learn and the music programme being designed and funded in their name.

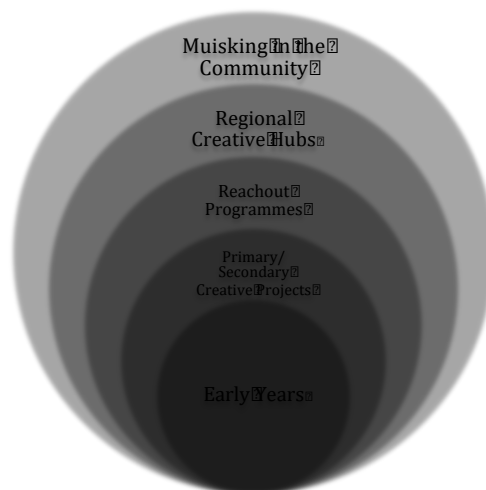
3. Sustainability through Partnership – *How will a County Limerick MG programme work and sustain itself?*

It has been the experience of all Phase 1 LMEPs that the route to sustainability within the funding model is project partners who co-invest in the programme. This knowledge will be at the heart of Limerick County project planning.

Proposed Programme Strands

The County Limerick LMEP has developed several strands that encompass the different values of Music Generation, while tending directly to the specific needs of the young people involved in each programme. The County LMEP has an overarching aim of creating a change in the musical landscape of the county from the micro level (individuals) to the macro level (community/county wide). Each strand being proposed has been modelled after the educationally and financially sustainable programmes undertaken by Clare LMEP.

As mentioned, the County Limerick LMEP has an overarching aim of changing the musical landscape of the county through these music programmes. The diagram below reflects each strand as it interacts in changing this landscape from the beginning/microcosm of early years to the overall community/county macrocosm.



The **Early Years** strand begins this process of change by engaging young children as well as their families at a crucial part of their musical development and education. By engaging from this stage children will be able to fully appreciate and grow through the different strands of the LMEP programmes. Transitioning from the early years leads directly to the **primary and secondary creative projects**, which will develop quality programmes that reflect the diversity and creativity of each school group. Each of these strands are strengthened and sustained through their partnerships with the crèches and schools involved. Further expansion to the change of the musical landscape is by reaching out to those on the periphery of the community in the **Reach Out** Programmes. This strand is aimed at reaching those who are marginalised in their communities such as the travelling community as well as early school leavers. At the core of this strand and the next strand of Regional Creative Hubs are the MG goals of inclusion and access. The **Regional Creative Hubs** are part of the main plan to tackle the geographic access challenge presented by County Limerick. These hubs provide a safe space for endless diverse and creative opportunities for young people. The last strand and largest impact on changing the musical landscape of County Limerick is the **Musicking in the Community** programme which aims to bring all of the strands together through performances, festivals and cross-programme projects.

1) Early Years

The Early Years strand of the County Limerick LMEP will develop partnerships with Limerick Childcare Committee (based in Croom) and other local creches in order to make the programmes sustainable.

The strand entails working with Early Years providers in creches and facilities to develop music programmes for the children in their care. The workshops will take place with young people in the creches/pre-schools that have signed into the programme and are run by the musician and early years' practitioner in partnership. Early years music programmes are at the core of this LMEP as it begins the process of shifting the current paradigm of music education in the County. By bringing music to the youngest members of a community we gradually introduce not only the children, but their families to the importance of musical engagement and education.

2) Primary/Secondary Creative Projects

A core aim of the primary and secondary creative projects is the development of quality musical experiences that allow students to creatively express themselves. These two school based programmes will involve musicians working with young people to explore and create pieces of music. It is a model that has been proven to be a successful, educational, and financially sustainable programme in the Clare LMEP. The Clare LMEP template of school music projects are readily adaptable for the County Limerick context. Each school will contribute 50% of the costs, making the programme sustainable under the matched funding model. The school programme model is the same for both Primary and Secondary schools, allowing for smooth progression for the young people and the development of a strong, diverse musicians team. The Clare LMEP Secondary school projects has proven that working with Transition Year students has been the most successful for that programme. By creating both educationally and financially sustainable projects, it will avoid disappointment as well as fulfill all expectations.

In the Primary/Secondary Creative Projects, the musicians introduce musical concepts and ideas and then facilitate the creation, arrangement, performance and recording of an original piece of music. Each of these projects can be duplicated throughout the year in different schools.

Another aim of these two programmes is to spark the interest and engagement in music through school that will encourage children to make use of the Regional Creative Hubs. The link between the schools programmes and the hubs helps to achieve the MG goals of inclusion and access by linking young people from around the local area together. It is envisaged that each strand will overlap each other from the individuals to the overall community in the following strands. The schools programme will work towards linking with the Regional Creative Hubs and the Musicking in the Community programmes that can be duplicated throughout the year.

3) Reach Out Programmes

These are regional programmes that are aimed at engaging those young people who are marginalised within their community. The two main groups of young people this programme will target are early school leavers and members of the Travelling community. In these programmes, the musicians will introduce concepts through facilitated music appreciation classes where students will engage with music through listening, creating music, making musical instruments and other activities. Depending on the interests of the young people there will also be the opportunity to facilitate the students in the creation, arrangement, performance and recording of an original piece of music.

Currently, the Limerick City LMEP has engaged with programmes dealing with marginalised teens at a range of centres across the county, including Rathkeale, Askeaton and Newcastle West. These programmes have drawn on expertise honed in the Limerick City LMEP that target the areas of 'Hidden Disadvantage' identified by the council report. The programmes that are currently being delivered by the Limerick City LMEP will be taken over under the new Limerick County LMEP.

There is a significant population of the travelling community around the area of Rathkeale. It is an aim to build upon the experience of the Clare LMEP and set up a partnership with Na Píobairí Uilleann to offer a piping programme specifically for traveller young people. The County Limerick LMEP will model its programme and partnership after the Clare LMEP project. The Reach Out strand directly addresses the MG goals of inclusion, diversity, and creativity as a way of bringing these young people back into the community. Through this strand we will aim to further encourage the young people to continue creating music in the Regional Creative Hubs.

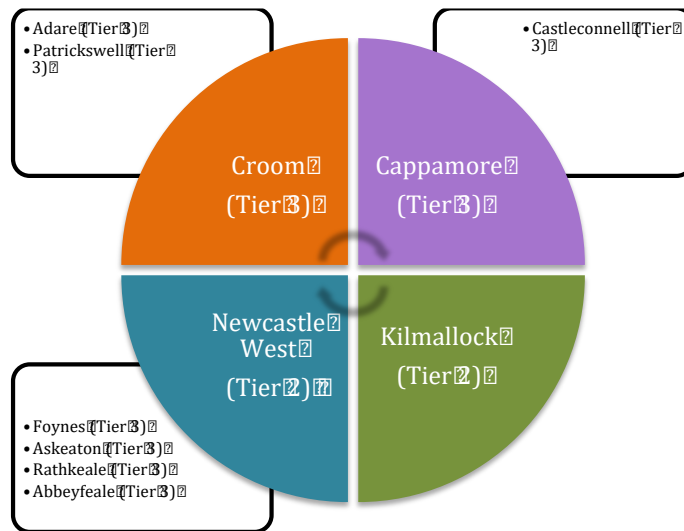
4) Regional Creative Hubs

The hubs model is one shared by almost every Music Generation LMEP across the country. These hubs aim to provide a different outlet for students to experience and engage with music. As the school programmes have compulsory attendance, the hubs are there for children to attend as they wish. Perhaps the most significant part of the creative hubs is that they provide a space for diversity, creativity and engagement outside of school that the young people choose for themselves. It is this culture of musical ownership and identity that the creative hubs enable for all young people. The hubs are there to provide young people with the space, guidance and encouragement that will unleash an almost unlimited path of musical progression.

The main challenge faced by the County Limerick Hubs is lack of centralised population density. Therefore, these Hubs will be carefully placed and timed in order to sustain sufficient vibrancy that will encourage people travel to them. The placement of these Hubs is illustrated in the diagram below.

Limerick County MEP

Regional Creative Hubs



One of the challenges will be providing a sustainable programme across this large rural area. However, one way of addressing this will be the use of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board resources such as buildings. The use of these resources will help produce part of the matched funding requirements for this application. We will meet this by establishing permanent bases at four towns in the North, South, East and West of the county. These will be hosted in the Foróige Youth space in Newcastle West and in Coláiste Íosaef, Kilmallock (both these arrangements are confirmed), Croom and Cappamore. Newcastle West hosted a music school for many decades. Fertile ground has been left from which we can rejuvenate the culture of musicking by using our youth driven model as a driver for sustainability. Each of these hubs helps to fulfill the greater aim of creating a cultural shift in the local regions of an increased engagement in music amongst young people. The secondary school in Kilmallock has reached out to the County Limerick LMEP and have proved to be an enthusiastic project partner, offering to host a permanent hub and school's residency.

In addition to these primary Creative Hubs, we will have a regular, visible presence at the towns located around these hubs including Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale, Castleconnell, Adare, Askeaton, Patrickswell and Foynes. Regular sustainable programmes will be introduced and replicated in the different towns throughout the year. With Limerick City LMEP and County Clare LMEP operating hubs, it is calculated that no young person in County Limerick will be more than 30 minutes-drive from a permanent hub. Through the Hubs and School Creative Projects, the County Limerick LMEP will be able to reach those with no access to transport.

These programmes will follow the proven national hub model of being student interest led as well as a direct input from a team that will potentially include instrumentalists (of multiple genres), songwriters, producers, rappers and singers, working with small groups of young people to develop skills and enable progression into other programmes.

Ensemble Space:

It is at the regional hubs that all the MG core values are brought to life through the development of ensembles. As proven by the Music Generation publication, 'Possible Selves in Music' (Flynn and Johnston, 2016), experiences and observations have shown that trying to fit young people into a pre-existing plan that doesn't reflect their needs, wants or desires is not a sustainable model. Within the ensemble space young

people will be given access to a diverse range of highly qualified tutors that will provide guidance along each ensemble's creative process. Each ensemble also becomes a space for inclusion and partnership between the young people and their own community. The ultimate goal for these ensembles is to show off their creativity in different events hosted as part of the Musicking in the Community strand.

5) Musicking in the Community

The Musicking in the Community will engage entire local communities through the schools programmes, festivals, community centres and events with a brief to inspire and engage. Musicking in the Community has two primary functions:

- a) One is to create the desire to play and engage with music that an inspirational performance can elicit in a listener.
- b) The other is to publicise the County Limerick LMEP programme, a means of spreading the word as the efficient means of reaching others not yet involved in the LMEP programmes.

Limerick County currently hosts over 70 festivals annually. These festivals provide ample opportunities for community wide engagement and partnership that also allow young people to come together to show off their musical creations in a variety of venues. These festivals allow a different level of engagement with children, young people, and their families to experience music and the County Limerick LMEP through live performance experiences.

Strands 1 – 5:

The five strands of the County Limerick LMEP aim to interlock and weave a new cultural, musical tapestry within the county. The County Limerick LMEP provides a very unique opportunity to link the three different LMEPs (Limerick City, County Limerick and Clare) and create a musical dialogue; three voices across the Shannon region. By engaging and learning from each other's best practices, it is possible to develop creative, inclusive and diverse musical programmes that are educationally and financially sustainable through partnerships. It is our belief that these five strands best achieve the goals listed at the start of this section as well as align with the core values of Music Generation.

BACKGROUND TO MUSIC GENERATION NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Music Generation is Ireland's National Music Education Programme that transforms the lives of children and young people through access to high-quality, subsidised performance music education.¹ Initiated by Music Network, Music Generation is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Local Music Education Partnerships (LMEPs).

Music Generation was set up in 2010 by Music Network to establish infrastructure for performance music education. Its genesis stems from the combined philanthropic support of U2 and The Ireland Funds to seed-fund phased implementation of Music Network's Feasibility Study Report: [A National System of Local Music Education Services](#)

During Phase 1 the programme was established in 11 LMEP Areas.² Phase 2 commenced expansion into 9 further LMEP Areas.³ In December 2017, Government announced its commitment to support the roll-out of Music Generation nationwide by 2022.⁴

Music Generation currently creates some 67,000 opportunities for children and young people to engage in music tuition annually, generating more than 400 employment opportunities across a range of artistic/managerial, musician and administration/support roles. For further information visit: www.musicgeneration.ie

Policy, Research and Guidelines Documents:

- Music Generation National Development Office Strategic Plan 2016-2021
- Possible Selves in Music, Summary Report 2016

¹ Music Generation focuses on the provision of performance music education – that is, the breadth of vocal and instrumental learning in all genres and styles of music. This includes all pedagogical approaches and practices appropriate to particular musical cultures and traditions, and is delivered by professional musician educators. Recognised by the Department of Education as non-mainstream music education, performance music education complements and enriches – but does not replace – the mainstream music curriculum provision of the formal education system.

² Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Laois, Louth, Limerick City, Mayo, Offaly/Westmeath, Sligo, South Dublin and Wicklow

³ Cavan/Monaghan, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Galway City, Galway County, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Roscommon, Waterford and Wexford

⁴ Kerry, Kildare, Meath, Longford, Tipperary, Dublin City, Fingal, Limerick County and Cork County.