

2013







*“We’ve faced considerable challenges...  
and we are continuing to meet them  
head on”*

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## Introduction

### FIVE NATIONAL OUTCOMES

ACTIVE AND  
HEALTHY

ECONOMIC  
SECURITY

SAFE

ACHIEVING

CONNECTED AND  
RESPECTED

2013 was the first year of our strategic plan. The plan clearly and boldly sets out how we see things and it articulates how we need to move forward. We know that youth work works, and we know that it has a particular role to play in delivering on the 'Five National Outcomes' for Children. So our five-year plan is about two things; keep doing what we know we are really good at and ensuring that we articulate what we do within the wider continuum of services for young people.

In 2013, one of the first things we needed to do was to look at how we planned our work. This was particularly important within our current political and economic climate. With this in mind, the organisation embarked on a process of developing a systematic approach to planning and evaluating its work. This has led to a greater focus on young people's needs, more sustainable youth work responses and a more effective and equal distribution of resources to mainstream and targeted youth work.

Over the past number of years there has been a greater emphasis placed on the need for youth work to be needs driven, evidence based and outcome focused. As most of our funding is received through the Exchequer, we are naturally (and quite rightly) being asked to provide a service that is accountable to the taxpayer. But that has always been the case. As an organisation, we simply support and encourage young people to achieve.

In 2013, we looked at our access points for young people into the organisation and expanded them where possible, we know that in 2014 there is still more work to do. We also looked at the experiences of young people both within the organisation and between organisations and asked what we needed to do to make their journey feel seamless. The Mentoring Programme has been one such development where individuals have accessed group work opportunities through initial individual work.

2013 is the first year of our plan and we believe in maintaining a quality service in a period of considerable change.

  
**Mary Mescal, CEO**





## Highlights of 2013



- 49 new volunteers completed volunteer training and began their role as volunteers with Ossory Youths clubs and projects. Welcome on board!
- The Community Awards, a new addition to the youth service programme, proved to be very successful and rewarding, with five youth clubs completing amazing community based projects. Presentations from the young people showcased projects from restoration of old ploughs into works of art, to creating community gardens and building a community bench.
- The attendance figures on Friday night youth cafe show a steady increase from an average of 20 to an average of 35 young people per night. Some young people took on leadership roles including running the café and providing music over the year.
- Ossory Youth in partnership with Graiguenamanagh community was successful in being awarded €50,000 for the development of a youth cafe for the youth population in the town.
- Ossory Youth was also part of a consortium for a successful application in Rathdowney, Co. Laois for the sum of €50,000.
- The Volunteer Mentoring Programme vetted and trained a panel of 8 adult volunteers to work with 11 young people referred to the programme during the year. Feedback from young people, parents and mentors suggest positive outcomes for approximately 65% of the young people.
- Ossory Youth commenced delivery of a family orientated therapy programme for families where behavioural difficulties such as non-attendance at school, anti-social behaviour, foster care placement breakdown and other family relational difficulties were an issue. The programme is a structured model known as Functional Family Therapy from the US based FFT Associates Inc. In 2013 five families began support through this new service.

- On the Compass GYDP Project 35 young people received support in addressing their offending behaviour and the majority took positive steps (some small, some big) to improve their own circumstances. We are proud of the motivation of some young people to make their lives better despite some difficult circumstance.
- 12 applicants participated in the *'Work to Learn Programme'* in 2013. 8 participants completed the full six months, gaining a positive reference from their employer.
- *'Our Community; Our Conversation'* was launched as Co Kilkenny's first ever Suicide Prevention Strategy for the next 4 years. Ossory Youth played an integral part in the development of the strategy, supporting the Lifeline Kilkenny Suicide Prevention Network and acted as a vital voice in action on youth mental health through this strategy.
- Kilkenny Recovery Support Group continues to grow and 2013 saw the Dog Training Programme begin development.
- 9 young people were the pioneers on the first Ossory Youth pilgrimage to Taize. 5 special days were spent with thousands of young people from throughout the world in a truly unique setting in France. Taize 2014 will be even bigger and better, 8 days and 18 young people.







## Mission Statement

Ossory Youth is a voluntary youth work organisation, which has young people at its heart.

We will provide the opportunities and environments where young people can grow, experience and learn through a shared commitment to and understanding of youth work.

## Strategic Aims

**Aim 1:** To journey with young people in a way that positively contributes to their lives and well-being.

**Aim 2:** To attract and support volunteers and enhance their time, energy and commitment so that there are sustained for the benefit of young people

**Aim 3:** To ensure that the organisation is equipped to meet current and future challenges in the youth work sector.





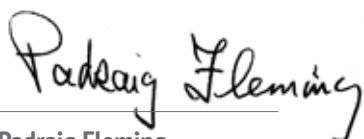
## Overview of 2013

### *‘With adversity we grow stronger’*

We often talk about young people and their ability to stay resilient in challenging times. The concept of resilience in terms of Ossory Youth and indeed staying resilient was no more applicable than in 2013. Across the board, our young people, volunteers, staff and partners have had to beg, borrow and steal to maintain a high quality youth service. 2013 was a year of juggling finances to maintain frontline services, having seen a core budget drop of 8.4%. But that doesn't reflect the true picture of what happened on the ground in 2013 and our ability to stay resilient.

Two new youth clubs were formed in Windgap and Urlingford, thanks to local community voluntary efforts and Urlingford Family Resource Centre. Seven youth clubs completed and passed their 'club health checks' and Hugginstown Youth Club was hugely successful in representing the excellent work of youth clubs to the DCYA. Our volunteer base expanded with 49 new volunteers coming on board and we have evidence to show that young people are benefiting from an ever-expanding integrated youth work approach.

The last number of years has been difficult for youth services in Ireland, and Ossory Youth is no exception. Without the commitment and drive of our young people, our volunteers, our workers, their resilience and desire to go that extra mile, we could not look back on 2013 as being extremely productive and successful for all concerned. But we can. So rather than reflect on what we can't influence, I hope you find that this annual report reflects the resilience of our organisation and the passion, fun and commitment of our people.



**Padraig Fleming**  
Chairperson of Ossory Youth



***“It was a really good once in a lifetime chance and I would do it all over again! I got to meet and experience different nationalities and cultures”***

## What our members have to say



*“I learned a lot while we were preparing for the Masterchef Competition. We learned to cook and we were so proud of ourselves. I couldn't believe that we actually won the competition. I was so embarrassed to walk up and get the trophy and I felt like we were famous because there were so many people taking photos of us. We had such a laugh doing it. I think one of the reasons that we won was because we are friends and that helped us to work together better, we made a really good team. We are going to enter again and can't wait to start practicing for the competition.”*

**Shannon, Age 16**

*“When I first came to the youth club, the Mini Tops was something that I'd heard about, something that everyone was always included in. I was excited to be involved and it was a challenge to learn the dance and perform a solo. We rehearsed loads and I didn't have time to be nervous until I saw the theatre, but what an experience! I'm so glad I did it now, and having my friends with me made it even better!”*

**Chloe, Age 16**



*“On a Friday night I play pool, table-tennis and the playstation. I won the pool tournament in 2013 when I bet Paddy in the final. It felt good to be the best and I liked my picture going up on the wall. I like coming here because my friends are here and I also like meeting new people and making new friends.”*

**Peter, Age 15**

*"The photography project was brilliant....my Grandad loved the calendar!" It was great to learn a new skill, to know how to take a picture properly and it was fun too"*

**Jake, Age 13**



*"It was a really good once in a lifetime chance and I would do it all over again! I got to meet and experience different nationalities and cultures. I've also made friends from all over the world. I am very honoured to have been picked to go and not many people get to go to Artek. Ukraine, was so good and I will never forget it".*

**Sarah, Age 16**

*"I've been part of the group since 2011 and I've got to do loads of stuff such as sailing, kayaking, mountain hiking and loads more. This year we entered a team that got to the final of the Ossory Games soccer. It's good craic and a great way of trying new stuff"*

**Aaron, Age 17**



*"I was involved with Ossory Youth through the Leaving Cert Applied programme. There are 11 people in my class and we enjoyed doing this, as it was fun and something different to normal school work. We did lots of activities and games. Because of the programme I became involved with the Deenside Dolls group as well."*

**Kiera, Age 16**

*"Its fun to go hang out with the girls. We have the tea, sweets and chats every week and there's always something different to do so it's never boring. I'm planning on becoming a youth leader when I finish."*

**Siobhain, Age 16**



*"The reason I went on the Táize pilgrimage was because I wanted to build a close relationship with God. I was afraid to admit to my family and friends that I was losing my faith in Christ. However, after returning from my 5 days in Táize, I realized that my relationship with God had not only grown, but it had also become a personal and loving friendship. To this day, I'm so glad that I went on the Táize pilgrimage and love expressing my experience with others!"*

**Niamh, Age 17**



## Desart Hall

### What's happening at a Glance

#### **St Johns Youth Group**

St. Johns group is comprised of 5th and 6th class boys who meet once a week. Throughout the year the boys have been involved in various projects, one of which was the 5-peak challenge. Some of the peaks were tough, such as Slievenamon which meant a hard slog to get the reward of reaching the top; while others were easier such as Brandon Hill where the boys reached the peak on a fantastic summers day with spectacular scenery and a giant compass!

The final hike brought the group to Enniskerry on a two night residential where they completed a 17km moonlight hike in the Wicklow Mountains. That didn't use up all their energy as they went mountain biking and hill sledging, experienced archery, survival skills, team challenges and lots more before the trip finished. A fantastic year was had with four new members joining in September.

#### **HQ Group**

The HQ group meets in Desart Hall, youth centre every Tuesday from 4.00pm-5:30pm for 11-12 years old. During 2013, the HQ club was busy taking part in the Masterchef Competition, fundraising for the 5km walk, completing a 6 week photography project (funded by the VEC) and producing a HQ Club Forever Calendar as a keepsake. They also completed a 4 week programme focusing on health and hygiene. Members enjoyed their summer outing to Tramore, the highlight being Laserblast and of course fish and chips for the journey home!

#### **Sapphire Group**

The Sapphire group is a progression route for the HQ members who want to continue participating in the youth centre (and for new members!). The group is made up of 1st and 2nd year students and met every Tuesday evening between 6-7.30pm to take part in organised activities.

In 2013, the group were busy in the kitchen preparing for Masterchef. They created some unique pieces during arts and crafts and enjoyed plenty of popcorn at movie nights. They also participated in a 4 week body image and self esteem programme and enjoyed a summer day trip to Tramore which

included swimming in the sea (which was actually warm!) They had fun at the amusements and enjoyed fish and chips and ice cream on the promenade.

### **Lunchtime Drop-in**

The lunchtime proved to be as popular as ever again this year with an average of 20-25 young people attending each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1-2pm. There is a lot going on at lunchtime for both boys and girls. With pool tables, table tennis and laptops with free wifi, theres always a good buzz. In 2013 the girls enjoyed lots of different projects including baking, art, fashion and design and health and beauty.

The gang have gotten involved in other activities in Desart Hall as a result of their involvement in lunchtime; a good example of this was Paddy, Eddie and Jimmy representing Ossory Youth in the National Games table tennis competition in Wexford in July.

### **Friday Night Youth Cafe**

2013 turned out to be a busy year, with the number of young people attending every night averaging 35. There were a few highlights over the year that stood out. Dylan took over running the café singlehandedly and now basically owns the kitchen! He bosses the workers around and somehow finds the time to help Derek work out how to use his mobile phone! Innocent and Godfrey provided music voluntarily over the summer and had the place rocking – you're missed guys so please come back. Mark solved a few arguments in the poolroom by taking off the table slabs and remarking the felt. He also helped fix the pocket, which was driving everyone nuts because the balls kept falling out of the table! Thanks Mark! Mairead and Rachel volunteered with us and the team wouldn't be the same without them. Finally, thanks to the older youth members who signed up to be vetted and to volunteer as helpers – free tea for life!

### **Saturday Youth Café**

Desart Hall Youth Café opened its doors for business in November 2012 and operated weekly from January to June and late September to December in 2013. The café is staffed each week by members of the Youthink youth group, giving young people in Kilkenny city a dedicated youth space with good food, live music and free wifi on Saturday afternoons and was hugely successful. The centrepiece of 2013 was a ten

week acoustic music competition, culminating in a grand final between the amazing talents of Danny Burke, Emily Tracy and Bill Trait with Emily and Bill combining to emerge victorious.

The youth café, run by young people for young people is a great place to spend Saturday afternoon and offers an opportunity for young people who voluntarily staff the cafe, to increase their employability skills and gain work experience.



### **Youthink**

Youthink is a youth group of 20 young people that meet every Saturday evening in Desart Hall Youth Centre. The members broadly want to examine issues that are relevant to them and have a positive role to play in the life of Kilkenny city and environs. A key aim of the group is that all planned projects involve Youthink members mobilising and involving a much greater number of young people.

The main projects in 2013 involved establishing the Saturday youth café as a place to go for young people in Kilkenny, a large scale environmental hoarding painting project in partnership with 'Keep Kilkenny Beautiful' in Johns Green, Kilkenny and organising regular youth parties and events in Desart Hall Youth Centre with hundred of young people enjoying themselves. A busy but fun year!



In a very busy year, the single most notable thing was not a specific project, but was the fact that many of the founding members of the group and those who joined in its earliest days, back in 2011, were now leaving. The period September to Christmas was both exciting and sad as a number of old faces left to be replaced by 10 newcomers ready to drive the group forward to 2014 and beyond. Thanks guys!

**Comhairle na nOg**

Ossory Youth, together with our friends, Kilkenny County Council, Foroige, KLP, HSE, DCYA, Kilkenny VEC and Gardaí have ensured Kilkenny Comhairle na nOg had a very busy and active 2013.

The Kilkenny Comhairle na nOg enables young people to bring about change for young people in Kilkenny by gaining an understanding of the Kilkenny County Council structures and how democratic processes work and actively influence these processes. 17 new Comhairle Councillors were elected in October 2013 for a two-year term and this group is facilitated by Ossory Youth on behalf of Kilkenny County Council.

It also works on the development of the Mayors Walk, petetioning for the development of a Kilkenny skatepark, developing our mental health flag project and our anti bullying / cyber bullying campaigns, ensuring that 2013 was hectic, busy and exciting.

**Organisations involved in the supporting and facilitating of Comhairle na nOg:**

Ossory Youth	HSE
Kilkenny VEC	KLP
Kilkenny County Council	Gardaí
DCYA	Foroige

### **Youth Service Programme- What's it all about?**

Ossory Youth, through the youth service programme works with 137 volunteers on a local level. These programmes provide essential youth services to 1395 young people. This work is carried out in direct project work and through our youth clubs.

There were 14 youth clubs in 12 communities affiliated in 2013 working with 335 young people, supported by 88 youth club volunteers.

49 volunteers give their time, expertise and efforts to working with our 10 youth groups and targeted work.

The youth service programme supports youth clubs and groups to provide opportunities for their members in a range of social, economic, educational and recreational opportunities designed to encourage social inclusion and life-long learning.

### **Projects within the youth service programme**


- Community Involvement- Community Awards & Programme Promoters
- Creative Expression- Mini Tops, Bands Competition
- Sports- Ossory Games
- Health & Wellbeing- Masterchef and 5k Fun Run

Involving young people in direct service to the community has proven to be a highly effective means of empowering them to become involved in community life.

Strategically Ossory Youth will continue to support communities and youth clubs to engage in programmes that positively impact on the lives of young people as outlined in our strategic plan. We are consistent in encouraging volunteers to work together and plan for the future. We are committed to ensure it is at the heart of the work we do.







***“We believe that young people are capable of achieving and affecting significant change with the right support”***

## **Youth Service Programme**

### **Programme Promoters**

15 young people, nominated by their youth clubs and groups, took part in the Programme Promoter leadership training over the October midterm. These young people accept their new responsibilities for one year. The training comprised of lots of workshops and plenty of teamwork; after all this hard work the group were spooked with a haunted house tour! Lots of screaming and laughing was heard, a sign of a great day out.

The purpose of the programme promoters is to ensure more awareness and promotion of programmes in youth clubs and groups and it ensures young people are more involved in the planning and delivery of events.

The leadership training the participants receive fosters greater confidence and skills in their role as a programme promoter. This training also provides an opportunity for the participants to critique and make additions to the youth service programme. This is an important role and will mean greater ownership of their youth clubs and groups and a greater sense of involvement in their community.

The programme promoters is a perfect example of how Ossory Youth will continue to support and positively influence the new generation of young people that we work with. We believe that young people are capable of achieving and affecting significant change with the right support.

### **Mini Tops**

Our annual talent competition that never fails to entertain, was filled with fantastic performances again in 2013 in the Watergate Theatre. Nine different clubs took part and sang, danced and acted out amazing routines, ensuring the judges had no easy task on their hands. Our youth clubs are filled with talented young people that, when supported by our volunteers, can truly put on a show!



# 156

**YOUNG PEOPLE PERFORMED  
IN 37 ACTS  
OVER THREE AND A HALF HOURS**

### **Irish Youth Music Awards**

Ossory Youth participated in the Irish Youth Music Awards for the 6th consecutive year. Again the competition was really successful and popular with our first ever solo act Alex Clement Doyle being selected to represent Ossory Youth in the National final in Liberty Hall, Dublin. Alex did a fantastic job and was a very worthy representative.

### **Ossory Games**

The 2013 Ossory Games saw nine different youth groups come together in the Watershed Kilkenny to battle it out for a coveted opportunity to represent in the National Games. 5-a-side soccer was the main event with both male and female teams sweating out their best soccer skills in a bid to take home the gold! Freshford, Kilmacow and Friday Night Youth Cafe all came out on top.

Badminton was played for the first time this year and the girls really showed how it was played. There were some very skilled badminton players there on the day with Johnswell and Mooncoin both claiming first place spots. *"It was great to see a new sport in the Ossory Games and at such a high level"* said Brenda Whitely, leader of Johnswell Youth Club.

Friday Night Youth Café also represented Ossory Youth at National Finals, with three boys taking part in the highly contested table tennis competition. While no one took home the gold, all had a great and tiring day!

### **Masterchef**

The Masterchef competition brings the best chefs from each youth club and group together for a cook-off. They cook in pairs, meaning teamwork, communication and preparation are key. Each club and group holds their own local competition to find their top budding chefs, so the standard at the Masterchef competition is high. 9 teams took part in the second year of this cooking competition in Pobail Scoil Osrai. With ninety minutes to produce two courses, the teams had to work hard. However it was the Compass girls, Shannon and Roisin who came out on top.

Masterchef is part of a two-month health awareness campaign within the youth clubs and groups, which encourages and promotes active lifestyles and healthy eating.



### **5k Fun Run**

Ossory Youth teamed up with Gowran Athletic Club for the second year to host a 5k fun run in Kilkenny Castle Park. The sun was shining as hundreds of people gathered at the start line. The park was filled with young people, volunteers, friends and family, coming together to recognise the importance of active lifestyles.

The fun run promotes healthy lifestyles and encourages young people to be active and enjoy physical activity. In conjunction with Masterchef, it forms the second aspect of the health awareness campaign, with young people engaging in lots of different physical activities in preparation.

## **Further work in 2013**

### **Comer Lads and Deenside Dolls**

The lads meet weekly for two hours with 12 participants making up the group. During the year they were active in a number of activities with one of the highlights being their participation in the soccer competition for the Ossory Games. The lads also participated in a quit smoking programme, which was very successful, with two members having quit fully- Well done lads! Other activities throughout the year included arts and crafts and snooker.

The dolls also met once a week with 8 girls forming the group. 2013 was a busy year for the girls with a lot of activity packed into it. The year kicked off with an 8 week beauty workshop in which the girls learned how to do a variety of beauty therapies and techniques. So lots of beautifying and pampering! Other programmes during the year included cooking and baking and a range of art and craft projects.

### **John Paul II Awards**

Ossory Youth supported the running of the John Paul II Awards in 2013. The awards ceremony took place in St. Mary's Cathedral in October 2013 when eighty young people were presented with Bronze, Silver, Gold and Papal Cross Awards. Participants who represented their parishes and schools, (CBS Kilkenny, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Loretto, Presentation and Thomastown) were commended for their outstanding work in their communities and parishes. This event was the conclusion

of a yearlong programme supported by the Diocesan Steering Committee and schools throughout the Diocese of Ossory. Over the past five years the programme is growing in popularity with 185 participants registered for the programme in 2014.

The award is non-competitive, flexible and voluntary and requires an on going commitment.

#### **School-based Work**

During 2013 a variety of programmes were delivered by 5 staff, in a number of secondary schools throughout Kilkenny, including Colaiste Mhuire, Johnstown, Pobail Osrai, Castlecomer Community School, Abbey College Ferrybank, CBS Kilkenny and Kilkenny City Vocational School. All programmes delivered in the schools were needs based and covered topics such as mental health, self esteem, body image, bullying, peer education, team-building, faith based programmes and drug awareness. Over **742** young people benefited from these programmes ranging in age from 12-17 years old.

**OVER 742**

**YOUNG PEOPLE BENEFITED  
FROM PROGRAMMES SUCH AS  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PEER EDUCATION AND TEAM-BUILDING**

#### **Youth Clubs**

Youth clubs are the only sustainable response to local needs of young people. Our youth clubs offer a comfortable and safe space within the local community where young people can meet and socialise in a supervised and supportive manner. In 2013, we worked with 335 young people in fourteen youth clubs, in twelve communities.

Club	Leaders	Members
Borris in Ossory	7	23
Pals	4	16
Freshford	2	9
Hugginstown	5	19
Johnswell Snr	10	27
Kilmacow	8	16
Mooncoin	7	15
Moneenroe	2	7
The Swan	7	32
Slieverue	13	72
Slieverue Outreach	2	15
Goresbridge Jnr	2	13
Robertsill	13	26
The Mill	6	45



## What our Youth Clubs got up to in 2013

### Flower Power

“As part of our community project, we wanted to plant flowers and shrubs in the local nursing home and give a new lease of life to tired looking flower beds. Once we “borrowed” a small piece of land to learn more about gardening and planting, we recruited the help of local gardener, (with the very apt name Senan Gardener) to teach the girls about gardening and nature. He took us on amazing nature walks through a willow-maze, river walk and lots more. We showcased our project at the Community Awards 2013. The group received a glass-engraved award for our efforts and we also received certificates to take home.”

### Alton Towers Fun

“Our summer outing was to Alton Towers near Manchester, England. We left Hugginstown @ 5am on a June morning. The early start had no effect on the enthusiasm and excitement. We travelled to Dublin for our ferry to Holyhead. We had great craic on our crossing with the highlight being an air sea rescue with great drama of a helicopter attempting to land on the ferry. We travelled on to Wiley where we all had a very competitive couple of hours paintballing. Lots of war wounds to show afterwards! Back on the bus and onto Chester for some super shopping. On the move again this time to our hotel, for a well deserved dinner. In to our rooms and lights out, NOT, we had a lot of “Duracell Bunnies”.

Next morning on the bus and away to Alton Towers. We spent the day having the time of our lives. It was fantastic- non-stop thrills and spills all day. Off again on our bus to catch our ferry home. We arrived back in Hugginstown on Sunday very weary but all agreed it was EPIC!”

### Spooky Haunted House

“We decided to do a haunted house at Halloween to raise funds for our youth club. We decided on the room layout and then ideas for each room. We thought up of different props and characters to go into each room and we made what we could during youth club hours. The youth leaders started building the structure of the haunted house using timber and silage wrap. We then decorated and dressed the rooms- a fun job! We decided amongst ourselves who would be in each room and




how we would play their characters, and frighten the life out of everyone! Leaders were on hand all night to help with the running of the haunted house. It was a great night held with over 140 kids coming through the doors with their parents, everyone really enjoyed it and we can't wait to do it all over again next year!"



#### **Rugby at Thomond Park**

"Back in October our club had a meeting where we were planning activities and trips for the coming year. One of the more popular ideas was a trip to a rugby match. It was decided to try and get tickets for a Heineken Cup match and as none of the members had been to Thomond Park we agreed to go see Munster play Edinburgh in January. We decided we needed to fund-raise in order to cover some of the cost of the tickets so we asked the local parish committee if we could have a stall at the parish sale of work at the end of November. Every member contributed to the sale by bringing various items to sell, some knitted, some cooked, some made jam, we even had a couple of hens for sale. With the money raised we were able to cover some of the cost of the trip- Success!!

On Sunday 19th January, 15 of our members headed off for Limerick in high spirits. We arrived in the city in less than 2 hours. We had a bit of a walk to get to the stadium as the match was a sell out and every parking space was taken up early.



When we got to our seats the teams were on the pitch warming up. There was a great atmosphere in the stadium and the majority of the fans were wearing red for Munster. Although Munster won the match easily it was a very exciting match and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We stopped on the way home for something to eat and needless to say everyone wanted to know WHAT TRIP ARE WE GOING ON NEXT??"

### **Speech and drama**

"Our youth club chose to explore drama and public speaking as a method to improve self-esteem and build confidence. We began a speech and drama course, which ran over seven weeks. We wanted it to be fun and enjoyable and the group loved the mix of ice-breaker games, drama games, articulation exercises, mime, improvisation, puppets, choral verse, characterisation and public speaking.

The girls worked over the seven weeks to prepare their own speech. They worked on the content and practiced the delivery. On the final night, each of the group presented their public speaking topic in front of invited guests including family and friends. This night was a culmination of everything that the young people learned and was a celebration of the development of their skills. Each person was presented with a public speaking certificate to mark their achievements. Everyone definitely learned a lot from it and enjoyed the experience.

## **Targeted youth work**

### **COMPASS Garda Youth Diversion Project**

We were proud to see the majority of the young people referred to the project making positive changes in their lives over the year, no matter how small. Camp Diversion took us down to Rosslare this year with five young people. Garda Aidan Fitzpatrick joined us for the three days and was eager to pass on his camping knowledge (or lack of!) to the lads. Thanks Aidan! Two of the girls participated in and won the Masterchef competition. That was a huge achievement so fair play to you (you know who you are!).

We continued to work in close collaboration with Kieran Scanlon JLO, which increased the effectiveness of the work

along with other agencies. We also brought on board volunteer Niamh to work with a young person and part-time worker Declan to run the football on Fridays, which averaged 12 participants every Friday. The under 18's team that competed in the Ossory Games reached the final but were beaten by a better team on the day. Maybe next year!

The introduction of the full risk assessment tool into the project as part of the IYJS trial site process has improved and focused the work even further. The Project signed up to Phase 2 of the IYJS trial site initiative. This step involved the introduction of a complete risk assessment tool and the use of scales measuring impulsivity, empathy and pro-social behaviour of referrals. We're looking forward to that process continuing in 2014.

#### **Kilkenny Recovery Support Group**

The Kilkenny Recovery Support Group meets one night a week to facilitate the continued recovery of young people in Kilkenny from addiction to alcohol or other drugs. The group has developed its own three-part model, which identifies peer support, education and social activities as being necessary to support individual's recovery. This sees members checking in with each other, sharing and listening to issues they may have in the week that threaten their continued recovery and challenging each other on thoughts and behaviours where appropriate.

The Kilkenny Recover Support Group took a group of young recovering drug addicts from Kilkenny shooting clay pigeons for the day. The group found it amusing as they thought nobody would trust them with a shotgun. This made them feel normal and accepted, which meant a lot to them. It is still a big joke in the group that we handed them all shotguns and a box full of cartridges.

**120**  
INDIVIDUALS  
WERE SUPPORTED  
THROUGH THE  
**DRUGS**  
PROJECTS  
LAST YEAR

#### **Kilkenny Drug Initiative**

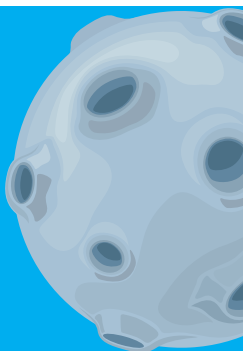
Over 120 individuals were supported through the drugs projects last year. The service works with those who are at risk of developing long term substance misuse, those in recovery, concerned persons and family members of substance misusers. With a range of supports on offer, Kilkenny Drug Initiative supported these individuals through assessment, key working, care planning, group, family and one to one programmes.

OVER **3,600**  
CUPS OF TEA



WERE CONSUMED DURING  
CONVERSATIONS  
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, STAFF AND  
**VOLUNTEERS**

OVER THE LAST  
**10 YEARS**  
OUR STAFF  
HAVE TRAVELLED OVER  
**360,000**  
KILOMETERS  
WHICH IS THE DISTANCE TO  
THE MOON



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS SPENT

**15,573** HOURS

WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

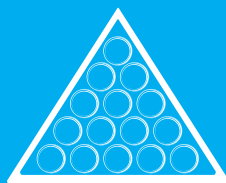
WE USED A WHOPPING

**2,489**



POSTAGE STAMPS  
DURING  
THE YEAR  
**2013**

WE MANAGED  
TO RACK UP  
**2,746**  
GAMES OF POOL



PEOPLE WERE ALSO BUSY ON THEIR

**PHONES**

AS WE SENT NO LESS THAN

**33,624**

TEXT MESSAGES





## Stories of Interest

### Kilkenny-Formigine Youth Democracy Project

For 13 young people, landing in Dublin airport late on Fri 28 June 2013 before returning to Ossory Youth, brought to a conclusion 18 months of challenging but hugely enjoyable work with their partner youth group and now great friends in Formigine Italy. The group from Kilkenny and a larger group of young people from Formigine had finally concluded a European Union funded youth democracy project.

In Kilkenny, the formal mechanism through which young people participate and have a voice in the local democratic structures is through Comhairle Na nOg, Kilkenny's youth forum. The absence of a youth forum of any type in Formigine provided the rationale for the establishment of the youth democracy project, with the young people in Kilkenny acting as mentors and advisors to their Italian counterparts, in the process of establishing a youth forum in Formigine.

After all the hard work, on Wednesday 26th June, in the municipal chambers of the Castello di Formigine built in 1201, to scenes of great celebration, the inaugural meeting of the newly established Formigine youth forum took place attended by the mayor of the city, Mr Franco Richeldi. A firm conclusion of the project was that both groups wanted to further strengthen the links developed between Kilkenny and Formigine as further youth project collaboration would build on the foundations and friendships established- watch this space in 2014!

### Evolution School Programme

Evolution is a comprehensive holistic programme, designed to empower young people to become peer educators and raise awareness in the school community, throughout the school year. Transition/5th year students are trained over 4 days on the topics of mental health, sexual health and drug awareness. They go on to deliver campaigns within their schools to highlight issues relevant to young people.

15 transition years students from Colaiste Mhuire Johnstown, completed their Evolution training in October 2013 and delivered a variety of campaigns in their schools including Friendship Week, a Cyber Bullying Awareness Campaign and will deliver many more in 2014- Well done guys, great work!

### **Gym Programme**

A group of 14 young local men showed their strength in completing a ten-week programme pioneered by Fennelly Fitness and Ossory Youth to promote positive lifestyles and exercise among young people in Kilkenny. Throughout the programme the group were put through their paces learning skills in training, weight-lifting, positive mental health, core strength building and much more over the course of the summer. According to one participant, *“Young people today face a range of challenges these days, one of which is the need to maintain positive health and lifestyles.”*

Johnny Ryan from Fennelly Fitness said *“Working in conjunction with Ossory Youth for the first phase of this process was both rewarding and encouraging in terms of further development. Both staff and participants worked really hard in a co-operative manner and that’s what makes it worthwhile!”*

### **Kilkenny Youth work to make the world a better place**

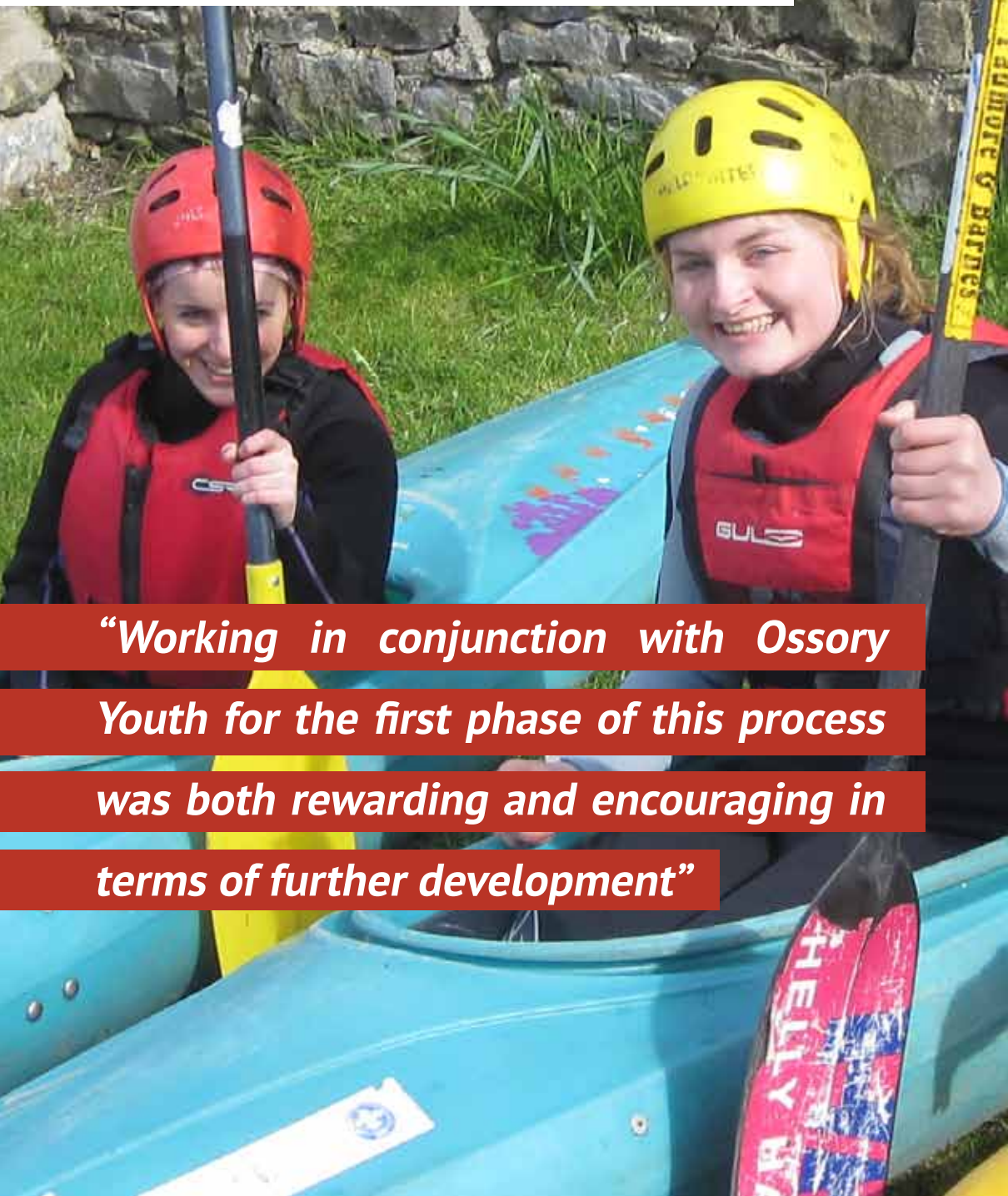
The Crimea-based International Children’s Center “Artek” opened its doors to the participants and guests of the 12th International Children Festival *“Let’s Change the World for the Better”*. Three young people from Kilkenny supported by Ossory Youth represented Ireland for the first-time at this Summit.

Maria, Sarah and Emily, members of the Kilkenny Comhairle na nOg, along with youth worker, Joseph, spent two weeks in Ukraine with 700 talented young people from all over the world, meeting with experts, involved in discussions/actions, taking part in games/theatre and sharing/expressing their cultures.

Key objectives of the festival were to promote principles of tolerance, equality and diversity of thoughts among young people of different nationalities and religions by giving them the opportunity to live in a multicultural environment. The girls performed the Reel, which proved very popular with other delegates. Emily playing a Ukulele, performed at the closing ceremony, which was broadcast live on the web and on 1TV in Ukraine.

We are delighted with the success of this project and the impact it has had on young people. *“It was an incredible experience and an amazing opportunity. I loved learning about other cultures and meeting friends from all over the world. It was great to take part in trying to change the world for the better. It was an unforgettable two weeks”* said Maria.

Overall the young people said that they enjoyed the trip and that it was a great experience, they were given the opportunity to express their opinions about everyday life challenges, and global development. They learnt a lot, made new connections improved their team skills and developed closer relationships with each other.



***“Working in conjunction with Ossory Youth for the first phase of this process was both rewarding and encouraging in terms of further development”***



***“It was a really good once in a lifetime chance and I would do it all over again! I got to meet and experience different nationalities and cultures”***

*“I’ve been given new skills to work with young people on a new and personal level. It is a different way of working with young people and I like the challenge and diversity.”*

**Derek, Teen-Between Volunteer**



*“I’m doing this a long time now and it’s every Friday night, but I love it. I have had some wonderful opportunities for new challenges and adventures. It’s such a positive social outlet for our community; it gives me a great sense of achievement and satisfaction. There has been lots of laughter. As long as the laughter is there, so am I.”*

**Teresa, Youth Club Volunteer**





*"I like working with young people because I enjoy seeing them develop and grow and I want to give back to a sector that I got so much from. I'm studying Youth Work in Carlow so volunteering allows me to put theory into practice so I learn as I go. With my course and volunteering, I've learned about and experienced working in community development but my real passion is with the kind of work I'm doing now. I guess I also have to say how great the team I'm working with is...ha...ha....(not!)"*

**Mairead, Friday Night Volunteer**



*"I made contact with Ossory Youth and arranged a meeting to build up a picture of the community. It was agreed that our housing estate needed a youth club to provide the opportunities and environments where young people can grow, experience and learn, which would be mainly targeted at the 6 to 13 year old age group. Now we have 35 members and more looking to join. Running a club is hard work and time consuming but it is all worthwhile when you see they get so much enjoyment from it."*

**Mick, Youth Club Volunteer**

*"Being a volunteer in our youth club is rewarding, fun, scary, exhilarating and sometimes frustrating. I have felt all these emotions at some stage or other this last year and I always come back for more!"*

**Paula, Youth Club Volunteer**



*"Volunteering with Ossory Youth makes me feel like I'm giving back something I received as a youth myself. Which is to say purpose, direction and positive interaction with peers."*

**Paul, Recovery Support Group Volunteer**

We asked our volunteers why  
volunteer with Ossory Youth?



### Training

In 2013, we trained 49 new volunteers. Ossory Youths training was revived in 2013 and tailored to the specific needs of our volunteers and the young people they were to work with. The training allows a space for peer education, sharing of ideas and resources, while also exploring issues of concern. The training covers topics such as child protection, finance, grants, insurance, and programme planning. It also includes specific training when required to suit their volunteer role.

**742**

YOUNG PEOPLE  
BENEFITED FROM  
AWARENESS  
AND EDUCATION  
WORKSHOPS

Our volunteers are encouraged and supported to engage and identify other relevant training to suit their needs in their role as a volunteer leader. The training calendar in 2013 included the following:

- 7 fulfilled the mentoring training programme.
- 36 completed youth club leader training.
- 5 completed volunteer assistant training.
- Awareness and education workshops in 6 schools benefiting over 742 young people.

### Some Feedback from training delivered in 2013

*"I enjoyed the training, the time flew. I met lovely people and had fun!"*

*"I found it very beneficial and applicable to the work"*

*"It was really useful and interesting. I learned a lot and the group discussions helped to generate good ideas"*

## Stories of Interest

### **Mentoring Programme**

When a young person is struggling to cope with an issue, what can we do to help? That was the question we asked ourselves in 2012 when we were finding that more and more young people were looking for an individual and supportive space to work things out. As an organisation, we considered the counselling route but our experience told us that for some young people, counselling or psychotherapy isn't the answer. Individual mentoring as an approach has been widely used in youth organisations across the globe to give young people a chance to develop a relationship with an adult who is simply just there to listen and offer friendly and supportive advice.

Later that year following a process of research and consultation, the Volunteer Mentoring Programme was established. Since then, our decision to develop the programme has been vilified. In 2013 alone, we had 12 referrals of young people, 8 of which engaged with a Mentor and 7 expressed positive outcomes from their engagement. 7 adult volunteer received training and 4 of the original volunteers remain on the panel to date. Anecdotal evidence tells us much more. We've witnessed young people grow in confidence and self-belief over the past year thanks to having someone to help them realise they always had the ability, it just needed to come to the surface.

Already in 2014, the numbers of volunteers on the panel has increased by 50% and the referrals continue to come in on a regular basis. As we move forward in 2014, it's clear that the Mentoring Programme is responding to a clear and evident need and is why we are committed to growing this part of the service in the coming years.



### Community Awards

Desart Hall was home to the first ever Community Awards in 2013, with youth club members together with their youth leaders from Mooncoin, Freshford, Hugginstown & Johnswell presenting their community projects to a panel of judges and a captive audience. The presentations from all four groups clearly demonstrated that young people have the ability and desire to positively contribute to life and wellbeing of their local communities. All they need is encouragement support and affirmation.

The Community Awards is about seeing the work by young people in our youth clubs and giving them recognition for it through an award. It is about encouraging young people to be more involved in their area and engage in activities and projects that have a positive impact on their neighbours, friends and family.



The requirements are broad, allowing clubs to use creativity and innovation in choosing their projects. The idea is to encourage club members to “*give back*” to their community. With this programme, as long as what you are doing is improving something in your community through your actions, then it qualifies.

It is important that young people receive recognition for their work and we are very proud of what has been achieved by our clubs. We like to encourage our clubs to get involved and engage in active citizenship. We believe it helps to foster a sense of belonging and ownership. It is also their opportunity to give back to their neighbours, friends and communities.

Feedback from last years participants and youth leaders was that not only did the young people benefit from engaging in the project itself but the awards event helped to recognise the work they had done. It instilled the notion of volunteerism and the feel good factor from doing something positive for others. Padraig Fleming Chairman of Ossory Youth emphasised the value of the CommunityAwards; *“Sometimes we underestimate the contribution of youth clubs and project’s like this, yet this experience will stand to each and every young person that has participated. This type of activity together with formal education will ensure strong confident, civically minded young people which bodes well for local communities and Ireland.”*

**The winner of the 2013 CommunityAwards was Hugginstown Youth Club, here is their story:**

Hugginstown Youth Club decided to get involved in a community project. After some discussion we agreed to make a table and bench and present it to the local community. We hoped that this would encourage people to sit and chat with each other.

James Walsh, a local carpenter, put forward the idea of making a table/bench using traditional methods and tools. Everyone thought this was a wonderful opportunity to try something different. We used Michael Moran’s Greenleaf furniture workshop. Here we used tools and techniques used hundreds of years ago. The youth group presented a beautiful oak table and bench to their community. As a result of their efforts the youth club were shortlisted for the Eco Unesco Young Environmentalists Awards in the Mansion House; while they didn’t win an Eco Unesco award, everyone had an amazing experience and thoroughly enjoyed the project.

*“We learned so much about our environment and developed new skills. Not just that but we learned about how our ancestors did things. We are so proud of what we made, loads of people are asking us to make one for them!”* said Jody Dwyer, Hugginstown Youth Club.

Thanks to Kilkenny Leader Partnership for sponsoring the event and in particular Alison Allen who has supported our youth clubs and projects in many ways, providing encouragement, assistance and enthusiasm.





*“sometimes we underestimate the contribution of youth clubs and project’s like this, yet this experience will stand to each and every young person that has participated”*

### Lifeline Suicide Prevention Forum

Over the last six years, Lifeline, under the aegis of Ossory Youth has become a galvanising force for evidence-based action on suicide prevention. 2013 saw its biggest achievement realised by the creation of the County Kilkenny Suicide Prevention Plan 2014-2018 *"Our Community; Our Conversation"*. Developed over a two year period, taking in numerous public consultations, focus groups, interviews and research funded by KLP, ESB and the Lions Club, guided by the HSE Suicide Resource Office and Kilkenny Social Inclusion Measure, the plan represents a comprehensive, transparent and whole-community led approach to tackling suicide in current Irish society.

The plan emphasises the devastation suicide has on our community, our young people and brings simple, achievable and practical ways that the resources and people of County Kilkenny can share in the responsibility of tackling this issue, which causes so much pain and from which no one is unaffected.



Since its launch in September the plan has received huge backing and support from being mentioned on the Late Late Show to plaudits from the Minister for Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch. More importantly the plan has already resulted in real concrete action on areas brought forward by the public including great support for young travellers, LGBT and those suffering from rural isolation. Training on issues contributing to suicide prevention has been rolled out and great public awareness initiatives have been supported and delivered. Ossory Youth is very proud of the roll it has played in this work alongside the dedicated and selfless efforts of the Lifeline Suicide Prevention Forum members.



### Taize

On the 21st August nine young people departed Kilkenny on a five day youth pilgrimage to Taizé. None of the young people, or leaders Joseph and Treasa, hadw been to Taize before so they ventured to France not knowing what to expect of this famous youth pilgrimage setting.

They came home saying that the Taize *‘experience’* was indescribable as no words adequately captured the essence of the place. The conclusion was that it had been a never to be forgotten experience and they have now joined the ranks of over 100,000 young people from around the world who make a pilgrimage to Taizé each year.

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical monastic order in Burgundy, France and the pilgrimage was organised by Ossory Youth under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory and was open to young people within the diocese from Transition year, 5th year and Leaving Cert.





## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2013

### ASSETS EMPLOYMENT

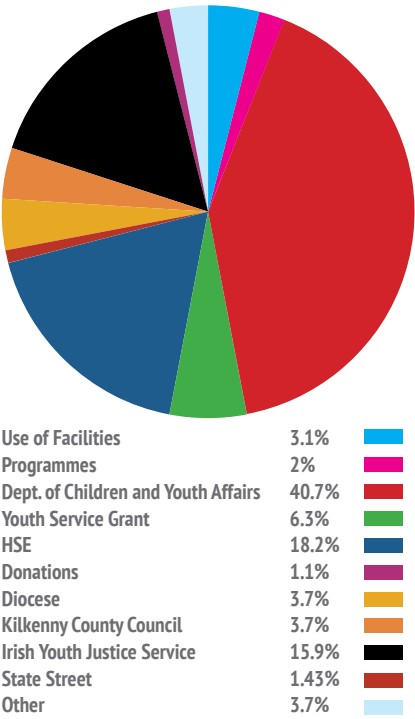
	31ST DEC 2013	31ST DEC 2012
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	€299,837	€299,518
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	€24,171	€31,536
Cash at Bank	€137,089	€ 172,278
	€161,260	€203,814
<b>CREDITORS</b> (Amounts Falling Due Within One Year)	(€57,961)	(€48,582)
<b>NET CUREENT ASSETS</b>	€103,299	€155,232
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CUREENT LIABILITIES</b>	€403,136	€454,750
<b>CREDITORS</b> (Amounts Falling Due After One Year)	(€97,180)	(€111,230)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	€305,956	€343,520
<b>RESERVES</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED SUPLUS</b>	€305,956	€343,520
	€305,956	€343,520

On Behalf of the Board

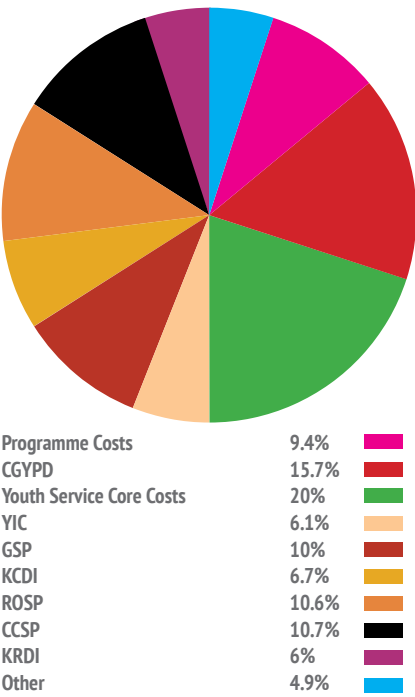
**Padraig Flemming**  
**Liz Dermody**

Date 9th April 2014

Income



Expenditure





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### **Joseph Mguni**

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### **Rebecca Carbery**

### **Derek Butler**

### **Catherine Kavanagh**

### **Declan Wall**

## **OSSORY YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS**

### **DIRECTORS**

**Padraig Fleming** (Chairperson)

**Liz Dermody** (Vice Chairperson)

**Ian Coulter** (Treasurer)

**Louise McKenna**

**Eamonn Daly**

**Seamus Morrissey**

**Brenda Whitely**

**Treasa Forristal**

**Ellen Lynch**

**Fr. William Purcell**

### **FUNDERS 2013**

**Department Of Children & Youth Affairs**

**Irish Youth Justice Service** (Inclusive Of ESF Funding)

**HSE**

**Diocese of Ossory**

**Statestreet**

**ESB**

**South East Regional Drugs Task Force**

**Kilkenny Borough Council**

**Kilkenny County Council**

**KLP**

**Kilkenny VEC**





