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INSIDE

Overview of Provision for Early School Leavers

The Education (Welfare) Bill Unwrapped

Youth Arts Case Study & Practice Profile

New Resources Section

News Update

Events Noticeboard

Building a Legacy

by Tony Murphy, Chief Executive, NYF

There is much to be thankful for in respect of the Youth Service. Similarly, there is much which challenges us and should not be ignored. Based on announcements last December within the Book of Estimates, the Minister for State Mr Willie O'Dea has to be congratulated for repeating, for the second year, an increase to the Youth Service Budget of £1.5 million. We know that this is not a net gain in so far as increases announced in 1999 by way of new benchmark figures for Youth Information Services and Disadvantaged Projects, along with supplementary grants provided to youth organisations across the sector will need to be annualised in the current year. Nevertheless, it is a positive move albeit we do not have legislation, common salary grades and multi-annual funding.

At another level, there is an aspect to our endeavours which tends to be neglected, that is, the provision of warm, open and purpose built facilities. The foresight of the Uniformed Organisations from the early forties in acquiring *and owning their own buildings is to be complemented. At this point in time, it should be a core demand made* upon appropriate Ministers within Government Departments to initiate co-ordinated policies which facilitate the resourcing and building of centres for young people thus allowing for a multiplicity of services to be available. The advantage of such an approach would be to devolve ownership, and to give both communities and young people a real say in the management and running of centres. It is virtually impossible to provide youth work benefits to young people while meeting with them on the side of the street - even though this can be a necessary service in certain circumstances. It is almost impossible to encourage and to motivate volunteers within a damp and crippling rent environment; it is without question dispiriting to find oneself a tenant in a building which does not allow you "to sneeze". Given the limited level of resources it does not make sense that facilities which are provided for one sector, such as sport for instance, cannot be availed of in a co-ownership way by a range of interested parties that work for the promotion of young people's development.

Though Government sources are tight lipped about the monies identified within the National Development Plan in respect of youth services which could, on the face of it, merely be an accumulation of commitments already known over the seven year period, one could hope otherwise. However, there is scope for the Government to put in place a capital development fund which would underwrite the physical resourcing of a national youth service. This could take the form of capital grants and also, could be established in part as an endowment fund which would release monies on a low or zero interest base given that the endowment fund itself would be accruing benefit within the appropriate financial institution.

In a sense the bid for building/physical resources is the Cinderella of the youth sector's wish-list in spite of what still needs to be put in place for a comprehensive and country wide National Youth Service. And yet, it is appropriate to remind ourselves that we neglect this essential component at our cost. Others have been wiser and those who in the past twenty years have seen the wisdom of developing physical resources through local ownership need to be complemented. This courage and initiative needs to be mirrored and replicated throughout the country so that in a real sense we do build a lasting legacy for those who will actually follow in our footsteps. The campaigning on other fronts will continue apace.

Tackling Early School Leaving	3
So What's the Story with the Scallionaters	5
The Education (Welfare) Bill 1999	10
News	11
Resources	13
Noticeboard.....	15

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Tackling Early School Leaving - How Local Strategies fit into the National Approach

by Brendan Devine, Psychologist, ETC Consultant

Introduction

Brendan Devine is the author of a number of reports on interventions currently in place to address the needs of potential early school leavers and those who have left prior to Leaving Certificate. In this paper, local preventive actions are placed in the context of the national approach to combating early school leaving, with recommendations for improving the effectiveness of current strategies.

The following is offered as a definition of educational disadvantage:

In relation to a student in the formal education system, educational disadvantage may be considered to be a limited ability to derive an equitable benefit from schooling compared to one's peers by age as a result of school demands, approaches, assessments and expectations which do not correspond to the student's knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours into which (s)he has been socialised (as opposed to those to which (s)he is naturally endowed).

In relation to people who have left formal schooling, educational disadvantage may be considered to be the condition of possessing minimal or no formal educational qualifications and/or being inadequately trained or without knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours associated with the demands of available employment, so that one's likelihood of securing stable employment is disproportionately limited as compared to one's peers by age.

National Policy Context

The present national policy in relation to addressing educational disadvantage seems to cover three areas:

- Developing partnerships and co-ordinating government services.
- Targeting and re-structuring resources and provision within the formal school system.
- Addressing the problem of early school-leaving and the needs of early school-leavers.

These policies should be seen within wider policy concerns to increase the competitiveness of the Irish economy, in part by raising national educational standards. It should be noted that there is no policy initiative to clarify the precise meaning of educational disadvantage nor to explain its prevalence. Educational disadvantage is accepted as a problem and policies are aimed at tackling it. Policies have "...placed high priority on effectively tackling the high levels of socio-economic inequalities in educational achievement, particularly correcting for educational failure, which is so highly associated with socio-economic disadvantage". (Coolahan, ed. 1994, 106).

Incidence of Educational Disadvantage

"The level of educational failure in Ireland is not noticeably higher than in other European countries....93% of 16-year olds are still at

school/college, 75% of 17-year olds and 50% of 18-year olds" (Rourke, 1994/7). Surveys by the Department of Labour and the Economic and Social Research Institute throughout the 1980s and 1990s indicated that more

students were remaining in school and that the rate of participation in full-time education had been steadily improving. *"The proportion leaving school at, or prior to, the end of the junior cycle stage has gradually declined, with a corresponding rise in the proportion leaving at the senior cycle. To exemplify, the proportion leaving school at the junior cycle declined from 32% in 1980 to less than 15% in 1995"* (McCoy and Whelan, 1996, 5).

Nonetheless, nearly 15% or 13,000 students, leave school each year immediately after junior cycle. While the percentage of early school-leavers (those who leave with no or minimal qualifications) has decreased significantly over the last 15 years, the problem persists. In addition, the consequences for school-leavers with no educational qualifications have become more severe. The consequences of educational failure have become more serious over time, those without qualifications - drawn mostly from lower working-class backgrounds - being more and more limited to unskilled manual occupations at high risk of unemployment. *"...A priority of policy must be to address the needs of this particularly disadvantaged group"* (Nolan and Callan eds., 1994, 318).

An evaluation report of provision for early school-leavers published in 1996 presented the following statistics on the extent of "educational disadvantage" in Ireland:

- Approximately 4,500 young people per annum between 1992 and 1994 achieved five passes only in the Leaving Certificate examination.
- Approximately 5,500 young people per annum between 1992 and 1994 did not achieve five passes in the Leaving Certificate.
- An annual average of 2,700 young people between 1992 and 1994 left school having completed the Junior Certificate and a Vocational Preparation Training (VPT) course only.
- An annual average of 8,000 young people between 1992 and 1994 left school having completed the Junior Certificate only.
- An annual average of 4,000 young people left second-level school between 1992 and 1994 with no qualifications whatsoever.

In addition, an annual average of approximately 900 to 1,000 young people did not progress to second-level school at all. Therefore, over the period 1992-1994, approximately 25,700 young people left school each year, all of whom could be said to be educationally disadvantaged. This represents an annual average of approximately 40% of the school-leaving population (European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit, 1996, v-vi).

The NESF report, 1997, presents new figures from 1993 to 1995 based on McCoy and Whelan, 1996, and Department of Education data. These data are an interesting comparison with the 1992 to 1994 data. The extent of educational disadvantage in Ireland is clear from the following details for the period 1993-1995 (annual averages).

- up to 1,000 did not progress to second-level school at all;
- 3,000 left second-level school with no qualification whatsoever (of which 1,970 were boys and 1,030 were girls);
- 7,600 young people left school having completed the Junior Certificate and a VPT course only (1,400 boys and 1,200 girls)
- around 7,000 did not achieve five passes in the Leaving Certificate examination (around 4,000 boys and 3,000 girls). (NESE, 1997, 39)

Comparing the annual averages of 1992-1994 with those of 1993-1995, the following figures emerge:

- 1,000 less students left school with no educational qualifications;
- 400 less students left school having completed the Junior Certificate only;
- 100 less students left having completed a Junior Certificate and a VPT course;
- 1,500 more students did not achieve five passes in the Leaving Certificate.

This comparison indicates that more students are staying in school up to their Leaving Certificate; however, a similar number of students are not passing the examination. The introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme may address this problem.

Since 1990, the Department of Education has designated certain areas and schools in Ireland as disadvantaged for the purpose of providing additional resources and personnel. Kellaghan et al., 1995, adopted different measures for identifying disadvantaged areas and schools and suggested that the Department's designations did not adequately serve disadvantaged students from town and rural areas. Their work provided the basis for the Breaking the Cycle initiative and gives a good indication of the incidence and the distribution of educational disadvantage in Ireland.

"Our attempts to estimate the incidence and distribution of educational disadvantage lead to a number of conclusions. First, 16% of the population may reasonably be regarded as educationally disadvantaged. Second, the majority (60.7%) of disadvantaged pupils in the country live in rural areas (with populations of less than 10,000), followed by Dublin (25.5%), towns with populations between 10,000 and 40,000 (9.5%), and other urban areas (4.3%). Third, Dublin has the greatest concentration of disadvantage (18.1%), followed by rural areas (16.6%), towns (14.2%) and other urban areas (10.6%). Fourth, Dublin is the area that is best served under the Scheme of Assistance to Schools in Designated Areas of Disadvantage, followed by other urban areas, towns, and rural areas."

(Kellaghan et al., 1995, 47-48)

Pre-school Interventions

Pre-school services in Ireland are provided mainly by private groups and individuals (non-formal) and on a very limited basis through Department of Health and Children and the Department of Education (formal). These services are not standardised or regulated, and provision is on an ad hoc basis. Irish research on pre-school provision and programmes is extremely limited

(see Hayes, 1992, and Kellaghan and Greaney, 1993). Furthermore, in regards to pre-schooling and its relationship to educational disadvantage, there are few sources of information and, as of 1994, *"...no research has been conducted in Ireland regarding the social variation in the use of pre-school services"* (O'Flaherty et al., 1994, 4).

The gaps in the research and the low level of provision are probably attributable to the scant attention which has been paid to pre-schooling in terms of policy and funding. Even though there has been strong evidence to support the value of early interventions on later school and labour market experiences, the Department of Education has only recently introduced the Early Start Programme. The need for early intervention to address educational disadvantage was highlighted by the NESE

"With regard to second-level education there is a continuing requirement to adapt to the needs of potential early school leavers since many students are already suffering from the effects of educational disadvantage and are clearly identifiable as likely to leave early. This means that the focus must also involve pre-school and primary level." (NESF, 1997, 52)

The **Early Start Programme** is intended to address educational disadvantage. *"The overall aim for the Department of Education's pre-school programmes is to compensate for background deprivation"* (Department of Education, 1995, 17). Early Start has a curriculum based on guided discovery through structured activities. A prominent feature of the programme is the involvement of parents; *"...parents belong to an advisory group in each centre, parents participate in the everyday running and organisation of the centre and parents join their children in many of the centre's activities"* (ibid., 18).

Primary School Interventions

The **Home-School-Community Liaison scheme** seems to have developed a successful approach to intervention at both primary and second level. *"The extension, development and 'main-streaming' of the Home-School-Community Liaison project to disadvantaged schools was universally welcomed; although it was also pointed out that it needed more adequate resourcing, and more adequate in-service training, particularly at 'whole-school' level"* (Coolahan et al., 1994, 109).

Boldt, ed., 1996 identified Irish school-based interventions at primary level which were aimed at enhancing students' experience of school and addressing various factors associated with educational disadvantage. It was the first report on present Intervention programmes aimed at addressing specific needs and problems which had been established within individual schools. Boldt found a wide range of initiatives serving diverse needs with limited sources of funding and support. The following Points indicated the prominent characteristics of the interventions studied.

- There appears to be much greater emphasis placed on the process of learning and establishing relationships with pupils than with producing specific educational outputs.
- The focus of most of the initiatives is on building pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

- Almost all the interventions were designed within schools and emerged from within a specific situation and context in order to meet identified needs of pupils, parents and/or the local community.
- All the initiatives would benefit from funding and greater resources; however most did not emerge from nor rely on sources of funding, rather they developed out of a response to needs regardless of or despite inadequate resources.
- The support and/or participation of parents and local communities in the interventions seemed to be key elements to their success.
- A characteristic of each initiative is a respect for all the people associated with the interventions (i.e. school personnel, pupils, parents, community groups/ agencies).
- Where initiatives are centred specifically around learning, they are activity-based, allowing pupils opportunities and choice while engaging them in decision-making.

The **Educational Support Project (ESP)** serves two primary schools in the inner city of Dublin. It grew out of the observations of teachers that a growing number of children were seriously 'at risk' of 'educational failure' due to social and emotional difficulties and that no category of special support was focused on them. The Marist Primary School and Scoil Iosagain in Crumlin developed comprehensive and detailed proposals on the nature of the problem and a strategy for dealing with it. The main aim of the project was to provide a nurturing environment for children so that they experience security and an opportunity to relate in a small group setting. Within this context emphasis is placed on providing opportunities to build self-esteem and confidence. It is intended that, through the identification of and positive intervention with selected students, aged between seven and 12, 'at risk' children will be enabled to integrate and operate more appropriately and fully with their school-going peers and within their communities.

Children are identified for the ESP when they are making little academic progress, when they are persistently and seriously disruptive and involved in gross misbehaviour, when they have been on recurring school suspensions for this behaviour and when there has been considerable effort made to involve their parents and/or where parents are seeking support. The permission and co-operation of the child's family is always sought for referral.

The project teacher facilitates and manages the day-to-day running of the project with support from a trained FAS worker. The project emphasises flexibility in working with children and building caring relationships within the groups. The project teacher identifies the needs of the children and works in direct response to those needs. Linking the work within the group to the work that occurs in the classroom is vital. A positive approach and teaching the language of praise and appreciation is central to the project. Other projects Nationally include; Kileely Community Project, The North Clondalkin Homework Project, Scoil Bhríde and the Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP in Galway) and The Jobstown Youth Action Project.

Intervention programmes aimed at addressing 'educational disadvantage' at primary level seem to be the most extensive and well-developed within the education system. Difficulties are apparent in relation to funding. Many of the interventions described rely on funding which is not guaranteed in terms of its duration or amount, or they are reliant on multiple sources of funding which can create difficulties in the organisation and development of the programme. If, for example, various individuals in a programme are paid from different sources, conflicts may emerge as a result of changes in funding criteria or objectives, thus jeopardising the nature or development of the intervention. There may be, in fact, many interventions which are forced to discontinue due to these circumstances.

Post-Primary School Interventions

At post-primary level, there are fewer interventions aimed at addressing educational disadvantage than in primary level; however, compared to primary, there have been considerable developments in the curriculum at both junior and senior cycle. The Curriculum Development Units in Shannon and Dublin have played an important role in curriculum reform, and these units have also set up and monitored pilot projects aimed at students who have difficulties adapting to school - e.g. The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) developed by the CDU in Crumlin which has over 80 schools involved.

The **Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development** has as one of its main objectives the provision of additional supports to facilitate participation in and benefit from education for those who could be considered educationally disadvantaged. Responsibility for implementing the programme is with Area Development Management. Area-based Partnerships are the main eligible groups for funding.

Many area-based partnerships have been seeking and developing interventions which support second-level students. This work has been set up in direct response to the needs of students and in the light of the high incidence of early school-leaving in certain areas. A wide range of programmes and activities has emerged. Most of these have been devised to complement the work of the schools and to offer direct support to students with their schooling.

The Finglas/Cabra Partnership in Dublin has developed a programme called **CHOICES (Practical Supports for Students)**. The programme aims to 'maximise the achievement potential of young people while at school, reduce early school-leaving and improve educational and training attainment levels'. The complete programme consists of six components described below: Pathways, study skills sessions, supervised study/homework clubs, mentor/tutorial programmes, careers advice/information and summer projects. As the programme is still being developed, not all the components have been implemented fully.

The **Pathways** programme addresses the transition from primary to second-level, prepares and monitors progression to second-level, prepares and monitors progression to second-level and provides support for first year students in the post-primary system. Study skills sessions is a programme for enriching students'

learning styles and study skills and supporting the training of teachers and parents. Supervised study/homework clubs are held in centres near schools within the community and are supervised by teachers, parents, volunteers and third-level students.

Mentor/tutorial programmes provide group tutorials in specific subjects and individual tuition for selected students. The careers advice/information programme holds seminars, and workshops for students and their parents, and subsidises some students to participate in careers events. Summer projects concentrate on activities designed to develop communication, social, computer and enterprise skills; outdoor and creative arts are also provided in the summer project.

CHOICES targets students who are nominated by their schools or by community/youth groups. Overall responsibility for overseeing the development and progress of CHOICES rests with the Education and Training Working Group of the Finglas/Cabra Partnership. An advisory steering committee consists of representatives of the Partnership, parents, schools, community groups, colleges, training bodies, employers and the VEC. The success of the programme is monitored in the following ways: student/parent attitudes, second-level retention rates, third-level participation rates, transfers to further training and career patterns. Regular evaluation takes place through workshops/seminars, questionnaires, interviews and written reports. External evaluations are conducted on specific aspects of the programme. The intervention programmes operating within CHOICES seem to have great potential for addressing educational disadvantage in its target communities. Significant support is offered to students and schools, and there appears to be a high level of partnership and co-operation. As a model it seems to offer many opportunities for Partnerships and communities to assist students and support them in deriving greater benefit from their schooling.

The **Stay in School Project (SIS)** is a new intervention programme based in Crumlin Social Services Centre in Dublin. The overall aim of the project is to address the problem of early school-leaving by providing selected students with opportunities and activities designed to increase their self-esteem and to develop their coping skills. Students from five post-primary schools in Crumlin attend the Social Services Centre once per week in order to experience a different environment in which they can consider constructively their behaviour and participation in formal schooling and engage in small group work focused on their personal development. Each school has a link person responsible for monitoring students, and attention is given to involving parents and youth work agencies in the project. The pilot phase of the project was completed in May, 1997, and the project has been running on a yearly basis since September, 1997.

Another example of an intervention programme designed for students at post-primary level is the **Carlina Project**. This innovative project is based in Clondalkin in Dublin and has three main aims: to promote the safe and legal use of motor vehicles, to provide a programme to discourage joyriding, and to encourage and support young people aged between 11 and 15 to remain in school. Information available on the project suggests that it offers a new and attractive

approach to addressing the needs of students considered to be educationally disadvantaged. The programme seeks to meet its stated aims by providing an exciting programme for young people built around indoor GoKart racing. Participants learn skills in GoKart driving, team work, mechanics, administration, computers and catering. If effective, such a programme could encourage new models of intervention and engage students in learning who are not deriving much benefit from the formal education system.

Recommendations:

In the light of the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

- The 'educational disadvantage' concept needs to be clarified and specified as it is experienced in Ireland, so that numbers can be accurately measured, programmes can be focused on those in need, improvements can be monitored, research findings can be compared and interventions can be evaluated.
- To address a phenomenon as dispersed and widespread as educational disadvantage there need to be considerable changes made in the thinking, approaches and objectives of formal education. Furthermore, interventions aimed at tackling educational disadvantage have to be expanded significantly and funded sufficiently in order to reach people considered 'educationally disadvantaged' and to meet their needs.
- A policy aimed at the encouragement, support and recruitment of educational personnel and auxiliaries
- from disadvantaged communities' to be employed and involved in formal schooling should be advanced and supported in the education system.
- Monitoring and evaluation of approaches aimed at tackling educational disadvantage are required.
- Effective approaches which have been developed to tackle educational disadvantage need to be identified and 'mainstreamed', where possible. Moreover, detailed descriptions and information on effective approaches and interventions should be widely disseminated.

Taken from Partnerships in Education: Learning the Lessons from Local Development, Conference Papers (Area Development Management Ltd, 1999)

So What's the Story with the Scallionaters?

by Michael Byrne and Jim Cathcart

group. A number of the group have gone on to other artistic activities and facilitated workshops based on the confidence gained from involvement in the group.

INTRODUCTION

In a past issue of this publication, we looked briefly at the work of the ACE Project which aims to assist the partner organisations in further developing their arts based approaches in youth work. In future issues we will examine the learning and practical outcomes of the project. These will include models of practice, information and practical resources, policy and guidelines.

One information and networking tool in production is an Arts Directory for the National Youth Federation. This should contain enough appropriate and up to date information to facilitate direct contact and exchange between member services (and beyond). In addition to the core information, I would hope that we can build up a resource of useful case studies and reports on the wide range of projects and initiatives that people are engaged in. This kind of exchange of information has been named repeatedly as a useful support and one that is within our own grasp. Making a contribution will be kept as straightforward as possible. There is a case study template that can be used or amended or alternatively, entries are welcome in whatever forms or styles you find appropriate.

Michael Byrne has taken the first step and has written a case study on a youth arts group using the template questions. If you were at the Making Connections Conference in Portlaoise in February you would have seen the group in action and if you were at the recent NYF Conference in Malahide, you will remember Michael as the impressively wide awake and cheerful presenter of the Big Breakfast session on the Sunday morning.

CASE STUDY:

**The Scallionaters Street Theatre Company
Completed by Michael Byrne, Carlow Youth
Service**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Scallionaters street theatre Company was developed to try and promote creative activity among young people in the Carlow area. Participants range in age from 11-20 and there is an equal gender mix and good mix of social background. The group started as a street theatre and performance group, but have now developed more into a party entertainment group. Most participants have had no experience of creative activities before joining the

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Lead and partner organisations

Initially Carlow Regional Youth Service in association with Eigse, Carlow arts festival committee. Presently the youth service is the only organisation linked with the project.

Profile of Participant youth

- Age Group: 11-20 years of age.
- Gender balance: Has maintained roughly 50% male and 50 % female participation
- Number of participants: There are 39 young people registered with the group, with an average attendance of 16/17
- Previous experience: Five of the participants are also members of a stage school. All other participants have come from a no experience situation.

Key personnel

Initially we developed a small planning group, involving volunteers from the area who were interested in this type of activity. This group disbanded due to commitments of the various members. We employed an 'artist in residence' for a short term period at the start of the project. There are a number of volunteers who have helped at various stages in the project. Two key volunteers continue to be involved when they have the time. I am the one person who has worked continuously with the group since it started.

Nature of youth work

Started initially as a once off project and developed into a special interest club that meets once a week to either; plan, create, train, perform, or evaluate.

Project planning processes

Initially I researched into the various types of arts projects and activities around the country. I was the one that had the original idea to develop an arts based project. I then linked with the local arts festival committee and an artist, selected by them. The three of us worked on devising a suitable art form to suit all involved. The partnership between the three of us came to an end soon afterwards. A planning group of five volunteers and the artist in residence' came together then to devise the aims and objectives of the project and to plan the groups activities.

Specific aims and objectives

- To facilitate and support the development of young people through the use of creative methods and approaches.
- To provide young people with an activity based programme which facilitates them in looking at relevant social issues through various creative media.
- To promote Creative activity in the Carlow area.
- To facilitate the development of participants communication skills through the use of various methods of expression.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Funding:

Eigse arts festival, The Arts Council, The Youth Service, Carlow County Council. (community arts training - Leader and V.E.C.).

Premises:

Had access to local hall for duration of initial project. At present the group use the youth service office for meetings.

Advice:

Two members of the Eigse festival committee. Philip Cullen, Anne Mulrooney - arts workers in Kilkenny. Helen Davies - 'Beat initiative', Belfast. Kay Carbecy - Artist in Residence.

PROJECT DETAILS

Art Forms

Street Theatre, Percussion, Dance, Mask Making, Puppet making, costume making, Drama. Face Painting.

Methods and approaches

The group works from project to project, focusing on a task, planning and training to suit the task. Evaluating and planning for the next project.

Workplan Diary

In May 1998 young people were recruited and were then involved in the Eigse Arts Festival in June. They also planned an activity for the Tourist Board which unfortunately didn't take place. In September 1998 the group began meeting on Wednesday nights and invited new members to join. The programme through to July 1999 included:

- Training workshops on; mask making, percussion, drama and puppet making.
- Inputs to; Halloween and Christmas pageants, NYF Making Connections Conference, St Patrick's Day parade, Fun days, Parties and the Eigse Arts Festival opening.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

Skills development in the following areas: Communication skills, confidence building, Team building. Has created a social outlet for all members, and has helped them build friendships with people from various social backgrounds 'and adults who they would generally not associate with.

Four members of the group were victims of bullying and did not mix well with their peers. The street theatre group has given these people a safe environment where they have the opportunity to test boundaries and learn the skills of social interaction. They have moved from being socially excluded when they joined the group initially to now being almost fully integrated, becoming more accepted by their peers.

Seven members of the group were referred to the group by other agencies. This proved a challenge at first, in terms of how others in the group would interact with them and vice-versa. There has been one instance where the participant could not interact with the group, all other cases have been successful at some level. The group has given them the opportunity to test the norms and challenge prejudices held by participants towards people from varying backgrounds.

Practical Outcomes

The workplan/diary section outlines the various performances to date. These performances included; street pageants (with percussion, dance and costume) face painting, children's parties and NYF conference. The group have facilitated a number of training workshops with other youth groups in the area. Giving the group the opportunity to share skills and resources with others.

At present we have limited resources, which include sonic costumes, sewing materials, face paints, paints and materials for mask making. At present our limited costume stock has been recycled to the point of exhaustion, and the group need to replenish existing stock. Though some of the projects that we have been involved in, a small budget was generated which has helped to maintain the group up to this point. We have no stable key funder, but are supported in terms of premises and administration by Carlow Youth Service.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Recording and Documentation processes.

Weekly session recordings, Weekly planning recordings, Brief reports written on each performance, photographs of each performance.

Evaluation Process

- Once a month the group evaluate progress to date, and discuss any problems arising at that time. The group also discuss the calendar for the following month and plan future events.
- After each performance the group evaluate performance and discuss any relevant issues.
- Leaders meet to discuss the group and evaluate progress.
- Regular supervision meetings are held with Regional Director to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between the agency and the group, and to ensure that all activities are in line with agency policy.

IMPEDIMENTS

Problems faced include:

No suitable premises - The group use the youth service offices, it can be difficult trying to protect office equipment, it is not suitable for painting or making of large props

No access to storage - At present our only storage space is in the youth service office, and is too small to hold all our equipment. On occasion pieces of work have been dumped because of lack of storage. Many props have to be dumped after use because of lack of storage.

Funding - Difficulty in accessing funding, the arts council and local arts festival committee were responsive in terms of funding. Many community development organisations would not fund the project because this work did not fit their brief though some of these agencies have now supported us using other methods.

Difficulties in getting other agencies to recognise the value of the work - Some agencies were not supportive of the work, and some still are cynical as to the benefits of the group for participants. However, these attitudes are changing.

Difficulties working with one artist - There was a bad experience with one artist at the start of the project, the problems almost destroyed the project.

Difficulties dealing with expectations of some agencies - There have been problems with some agencies expecting product not process.

Responses to the problems included fundraising for the group, asking for payment for some performances and being more careful when selecting people to work on the project. Many of the problems have not yet been resolved.

KEY LEARNING

- The value of arts based youth work, and its positive effects on the young people.
- The need to have employees checked out before employment.
- The need for adequate storage.
- The value of recording and documentation.
- The importance of not becoming funding focused.
- The need for arts training for youth workers in general.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The group have reformed since September. We are at present recruiting new members and looking at training options. We are involved in a number of face painting sessions and workshops with other youth clubs. We have done a number of workshops with the local travellers youth club. Currently we are working on a drugs play for a local community health promotion session. An offshoot of the project is that a separate dance club is being developed at the moment by some of the members.

For further information on the Scallionaters contact:
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ACE Partners:

- The National Youth Federation
- City of Dublin Youth Service Board
- Ferns Diocesan Youth Service
- Priorswood CDP

ACE Mainstreaming Partners:

- The National Youth Arts Programme
- The National Association of Youth Drama

The Education (Welfare) Bill 1999: "Education for All"

by Maurice Devlin

The Education (Welfare) Bill 1999, at the time of print has passed through both Houses of the Oireachtas and is now about to enter the third and final stage, the committee stage, before returning to the Dáil to be passed into law. It is widely expected that the Bill will become operational as early as September 2000.

'The general aim of the Bill is to provide a comprehensive, national system for ensuring that children of compulsory school-going age attend school, or, if they do not attend school that they receive at least a minimum education. The Bill seeks to address the underlying causes of truancy by helping children and their families and by identifying at an early stage children who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems. The Bill imposes statutory duties on schools to have a more proactive approach to the issue of truancy and provides a mechanism for co-ordination between the activities of various publicly funded agencies as regards matters relating to school attendance' (Department of Education 1999a, 1)

The Education (Welfare) Bill 1999 is the first piece of new legislation in over 70 years, which is attempting to ensure that all the children of the state have access to the educational resources which have been developed since the foundation of the state.

The Bill is the culmination of many years of review and development of policy regarding school non-attendance and related educational welfare problems. It was introduced in the context of a number of other important legislative and policy initiatives.

The Education Act 1998 sets out the respective functions and roles of the Minister for Education and the various educational interests and provides for the establishment of executive bodies for the provision of educational support services. It also requires the preparation and regular updating of comprehensive school plans.

The Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 regulates the circumstances and conditions under which children and young people may be employed.

The Youth Work Act 1997 (currently being amended) provides for the comprehensive planning and delivery of youth work programmes and services, on the basis of voluntary/statutory partnership and with a strong focus on disadvantage.

The Education (Welfare) Bill has links with all of these pieces of legislation (and includes amendments to the 1996 and 1998 Acts).

The Education (Welfare) Bill provides for:

- an increase in the **school leaving age** to 16 (or three years post-primary education, whichever is the later)

- the establishment of the **National Educational Welfare Board**,
- the employment **educational welfare officers**, to co-ordinate and implement services to young people with attendance difficulties
- it requires that schools take a **strategic approach** to preventing school non-attendance

- it requires schools to **co-operate** with other relevant services such as youth work services.
- It also contains provisions regarding young people under the age of 18 who leave school early: they may only be employed if they are on a National Educational Welfare Board **register**, so that provision may be made for their continued education and training. Employers must **notify** any such employment to the Board.

The Bill is an acknowledgement of the complex nature of absenteeism and early school leaving and the need to develop an integrated response by the variety of agencies which interact with children at risk of early school leaving.

The National Youth Federation's Pathways Project an Employment -Youthstart Initiative and the ADM "Youth at Risk" project jointly organised a consultative seminar in September which was widely attended by a cross sections of services and practitioners who work will be effected directly or indirectly by the new legislation. The seminar was organised on a workshop basis a report on the proceedings the legislative context of the Bill will be printed in January. The general finding of the workshops include;

- a **general welcome** for the broad thrust and intent of the Bill as an attempt to combat educational disadvantage;
- a welcome for its emphasis on the **welfare** of the young person rather than punishment, and its provision for systematic **tracking and monitoring** of students;
- a welcome for the fact that it requires **strategic planning, co-operation** between the various sectors and the building of **home-school links** to help prevent non-attendance;
- a concern by teachers at what appears a huge additional **administrative workload**, added to the **curricular and pedagogical implications** of raising the leaving age, without any guarantee of **sufficient resources** to deliver;
- a concern that the provision for the composition of the National Educational Welfare Board is not in keeping with the principal of **partnership** in education;
- a concern that the framework for the delivery of services is **over-centralised**.

For a copy of the Education Welfare Bill and other relevant information relating to the Bill and early school leaving contact:

www.accessyouth.com/pathways/

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cost is £60.00 and there will be concessions for students and those who are unwaged.

For brochure/application form and further details contact:

Poverty and the Planet, The Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor, Whitehall Road, Dublin 12.

Tel: (01) 4064386 / 4064380.

E-mail: apply@dsckim.iol.ie

New Publications on Strategies to Counter Educational Disadvantage and Early School Leaving

Area Development Management Ltd have recently launched a publication on strategies to respond to educational disadvantage. The full title of the publication is "**Insights No.10: Preventive Education Strategies to Counter Educational Disadvantage: A Compilation of Case Studies on Themes and Issues within the Local Development Programme**".

The document aims to provide a description and analysis of the strategies that have been developed to tackle educational disadvantage within Partnership companies under the Local Development Programme. Based on a series of case studies the document looks at:

- Educational Disadvantage and Preventive Education in Ireland;
- Case studies on Preventive Education;
- Outcomes of Initiatives;
- Issues;
- Policy Recommendations and Conclusions.

The following Partnership Companies undertook the case studies which outlined the experience and learning from the preventive education initiatives: Ballyfermot Partnership; Blanchardstown Area Partnership; Canal Communities Partnership; Cork City Partnership; Cumas Teo; Drogheda Partnership; Dublin Inner City Partnership; Inishowen Partnership; KWCD (Kimmage, Walkinstown, Crumlin, Drimnagh) Partnership; Longford Community Resources; Meitheal Mhaigheo Teo; Co. Monaghan Partnership; Northside Partnership; Partnership Trá Lí; PAUL Partnership; Co. Sligo Leader Partnership; Southside Partnership.

Copies are available from: ***Area Development Management Ltd, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6613611 Fax: (01) 6610411***

The Combat Poverty Agency and Youthstart have also produced a publication entitled "**A Learning Experience**" which outlines eight case studies where partnership approaches between parents, schools, teachers, health boards, the probation service and the community sector have proved to be effective keeping children living in 'disadvantaged' areas in school.

Copies are available from: ***Combat Poverty Agency, Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 6706746 Fax: 01 6706760 Email: info@cpa.ie***

Cherish Launch New Resource Manual & Training Programme for Working With Single Parents

Moving On is a resource manual for working with single parents produced by Cherish.

Training on the use of the manual is offered by Cherish to staff, groups, etc. and Cherish staff are available to run the programme with individual groups of single parents. The manual and course content includes the following topics:

- Personal Development
- Assertiveness
- Stress Management
- Relaxation Techniques
- CV Preparation
- Interview Techniques
- Health
- Nutrition
- Positive Parenting
- Child Development
- The Absent Parent

In addition, information sessions on the work of Cherish, and other relevant issues are available. Cherish also runs **The Moving On** programme with single parents throughout the year in their offices.

This manual is available to buy from Cherish, price £20.00. For copies of the pack and/or more information on the training programme, please contact: ***Cherish, 2 Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6629212 Fax: (01) 6629096 Email: cherish@eircom.net***

CHILDRENS RIGHTS

Pictures & Power

by Peter White

Booklet which describes a youth work project aimed at promoting children's rights and developing individuals' awareness and skills and the impact it had on the young people involved. The Craiglands Mural Project involved a group of 16 and 17 year old care leavers, primarily young men who met over a period of several weeks and devised, sketched and completed a transportable mural which was exhibited locally and nationally.

GENDER WORK

The Gender Agenda: Encouraging Gender Work among Men and Women Working Towards Equality

by Maureen Bassett

Document which aims to define gender work; propose a rationale for engaging in gender work; promote gender work in community development and development education; encourage funders to fund gender work; be of practical assistance to those who wish to undertake gender work; and to promote ongoing debate and discussion on gender work. The document was commissioned by The Gender Network, a network of organisations and individuals from the community development and development education sectors.

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Preparing Materials for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning

by Derek Rowntree

Practical book which guides the user through all the key phases of planning and developing materials for open, distance or flexible learners. Each phase goes through a sequence of development tasks supported by appropriate information, examples and checklists that the author has refined in numerous workshops and consultancies. Topics covered in detail include:

- Profiling your learners
- Agreeing aims and objectives
- Deciding content and sequence
- Developing examples and activities
- Making materials user-friendly.

Based on the author's 30 years' experience, this stimulating and broad-based book will help readers develop the best materials in the form most suited to the needs of their learners.

500 Tips for Open and Flexible Learning

by Phil Race

All types of organisation have recognised the growing demand for open and flexible learning programmes. With the increased emphasis on new ways of learning, and the rapid move towards open

and flexible courses, this practical guide will help those involved overcome the challenges they face.

The guide provides user friendly advice and support for those currently involved with open learning, and those considering it for the first time. The topics covered include:

- deciding on the appropriate open learning materials to use
- writing open learning materials
- communications and information technology
- supporting open learners
- assessing open learning.

The book provides immediate and accessible help to the increasing number of people now under pressure to design, support and deliver open learning programmes. This book should prove useful to tutors, trainers, managers of learning resource centres and curriculum developers who are already involved in, or considering the use of open learning.

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

Enhancing Our Future: A Profile of Parenting Programmes in Ireland

by Barnardo's

Report which details research into parenting programmes in Ireland, undertaken by the National Children's Resource Centre, Barnardo's. The project was jointly funded by the Health Promotion Unit and the Child Care Policy Unit of the Department of Health and Children. The research was guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the funding agencies and from Barnardo's.

An advisory panel was established consisting of representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies who are directly involved in the provision of parenting programmes nationally. This research follows on from a study written and compiled by Jennifer Rylands, entitled "**A Study of Parenting Programmes in Ireland, Exploration of Needs and Current Provision**" which was published in 1995.

The aims of this research project were to: update the database on the current provision of parenting programmes established by the 1995 study; identify the aims and objectives of each programme in order that facilitators can more readily choose programmes suitable for participants; identify the common elements in programmes that are felt to be working well by those groups who are using them.

The report profiles 31 parenting programmes, the information for which was provided by the programme developers. This research found that: there are extensive changes to the 1995 database; there are several new parenting programmes being piloted; very few parenting programmes have been externally evaluated; very few are specifically oriented towards disadvantaged communities and the level of training of programme facilitators varied widely.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA TRAINING

Telling it as it is... Public Relations & Media Handbook for Disability Networks
by Jacqui Browne, Sharon Browne & Helen Fitzgerald

Handbook produced as a supplement to the EU Horizon training programme of the ICPD "*Training and Development of County Networks*". This training programme is part of the Employment Horizon Initiative of the European Social Fund, which primarily intends to explore new and more effective ways of tackling unemployment and marginalisation from the labour market among people with disabilities. An important means of bringing people with disabilities in from the margins is strengthening their own organisations and networks. With this objective, the ICPD Horizon programme consists of three training modules: Communicating with Others, Working with Others and Disability Awareness, Employment and Equality Issues.

The handbook was developed as an additional resource for the "*Communicating with Others*" module. It was compiled for the use of the thirty Networks of the ICPD and outlines how to devise and employ PR and media strategies. Although designed for use with disability networks the material in the handbook is generic in nature and should be easily adapted for use by voluntary or community groups.

SINGLE PARENTS

Moving On: A Resource Manual For Working With Single Parents
by Cherish

Manual which concentrates on group learning and the emphasis is on group work rather than formal teaching methods. The 'Moving On' course enables single parents to make informed decisions about their future. The course does not just concentrate on gaining skills, but offers the participants an opportunity to look at where they are coming from, what their past experiences are, what their needs and values are, what skills they have, how these can be enhanced and what they want in the future for themselves and their children. The programme accepts that it is as valid to decide to continue as a full time parent working in the home, as to enter the job market.

This manual is based on a pilot conducted with a group of single mothers, but can easily be adapted for use with mixed groups, groups of single fathers and groups of teenage parents. This manual is divided into 7 sections, each with a number of sessions.

- Section 1 is the Introductory Section.
- Section 2 focuses on personal development
- Section 3 concentrates on dealing with stress.
- Section 4 looks at the job market and interview techniques.
- Section 5 deals with health issues.

- Section 6 gives guidelines on positive parenting.
- Section 7 aims to wrap up the course and has a sample evaluation.

TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION & LEARNING

Using Technology in Teaching and Learning
by Pat Maier, Liz Barnett, Adam Warren & David Brunner

Comprehensive guide which looks at the issues involved in integrating learning technologies within teaching and learning. The book contains activities, case studies and notes and topics covered include:

- educational perspectives
- developing new teaching strategies for larger student groups
- using computers to deliver teaching and learning resources
- using computers to communicate with and between students.

USING THE INTERNET IN EDUCATION

Teaching and Learning Materials and the Internet
by Ian Forsyth

The Internet is a means of accessing information. It is an obvious and valuable *tool* to use as a teaching resource. But there are many factors to take into account for Internet delivery - not just how to use the technology most effectively, but also how to assess the results, monitor student progress, and ensure that your materials are used to promote real learning.

This second edition examines the educational and administrative considerations of offering courses, course materials or course delivery via the Internet. It advises on how to handle and use the Internet appropriately, and discusses the ways in which it will change the roles and relationships of teachers and learners.

A new chapter about using the Internet with a bias towards the learners' perspective has been included, together with a section linking Internet with Intra net considerations. Other topics covered in detail include: getting started designing and using forms cost concerns, economic benefits and budget.

This practical, step-by-step approach and an extensive glossary of terms make this book essential reading for course developers, educational and training institutions, and all those interested in educational technology.

All of these titles and others on related topics are available on loan (**NOT SALE**) from the Irish YouthWork Centre, an official sales agent in the Republic of Ireland for Nightshift Publications, Russel House Publishing, Directory of Social Change, Combat Poverty Agency and NYCI among others.

Effective Time Management

Venue: Dublin Northside (specific venue to be agreed)

Date: Thursday 13 and Friday 14 April, 2000

Two-day workshop primarily aimed at those with no formal training. And also suited to those coming from small organisations. The two dates will be very practical and jargon free with no role-playing, video-taping or tests involved. All participants will receive a comprehensive booklet and completion certificate for the two days.

Cost: £100.00. (early booking advised). Training can be organised for private groups at no extra cost for a minimum of ten delegates (anywhere in Ireland) Free. Limited to 40 participants.

Further Details: The Glendale Institute, 17 Fairways Park, Griffith Road, Dublin 11.

Tel: (01) 8340334 **Fax:** (01) 8340334

E-mail: gleninst@indigo.ie

Being an Effective Management Committee Volunteer

Venue: Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

Date: five consecutive Thursdays, 3, 10, 17, 24 February and 2 March, 2000 from 19.30 - 22.00. each evening.

Five-night course aimed at anyone who sits on a voluntary management committee, particularly of a small to medium-sized organisation. It will cover both the individual and collective responsibilities involved in being an effective volunteer on a committee or board. The course will be taught from a community development perspective, with much input from participants and will be facilitated by Patrick Burke, Community Development Consultant. Issues covered will include, but are not limited to:

- Effective group work and communication skills
- Roles of voluntary committee members, including chair, secretary and treasurer
- Accountability.

Cost: £25.00 including refreshments. Limited to 10 participants.

Further Details: Volunteer Resource Centre, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 872 2622 **Fax:** (01) 8735737

E-mail: vrc@tinet.ie

How to Assess Suicidal Risk and Respond Appropriately

Venue: All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Date: 10 & 11 February, 2000

One day seminar which will be run on successive days examining at how best to respond to suicidal risk. There will be a maximum of 50 participants each day and the days will be facilitated by Dr. Peter Maguire & Mrs. Carolyn Pitceathly CQSW from the Christie Hospital in Manchester.

Further Details: All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Tel: (01) 837 3745

Youth Arts Forum: Conversations Along the Way Seminar Series

Venue: Ardboyne Hotel, Navan, Co. Meath **Date:** Friday 11 - Saturday 12 February, 2000

Final seminar in this series of three by the National Youth Arts Programme which will look at the following:

- A Review of the Conversations Seminar Series held in 1999
- Planning for the future direction of the Youth Arts Forum
- Training: mapping existing provision, characterising the different types of training and planning for a future strategy in relation to work of the forum in this area
- Practical skills workshop

The National Youth arts Programme is a partnership approach to promoting and developing youth arts. The partners are the National Youth Council of Ireland; the Arts Council; and the Youth Affairs Section, Department of Education & Science

Further Details: Rosie Boyle, c/o National Youth Arts Programme, National Youth Council of Ireland, 3 Montague Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 4784122 **Fax:** (01) 4783974

E-mail: arts@nyci.ie

Marketing Volunteering: the millennium image

Venue: Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

Date: Tuesday 7 March, 2000

One-day course suitable for anyone interested in the future of voluntary work and volunteers and wishing to market volunteering as a powerful force in the year 2000 and beyond. The course challenge outdated stereotypes of volunteering and propose how to get across effective messages about volunteering. The day will be facilitated by Debbie Thompson, Training Accreditation Officer, Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency (NIVDA)

Cost: £25.00 including refreshments. Limited to 20 participants.

Further Details: Volunteer Resource Centre, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 872 2622 **Fax:** (01) 8735737

E-mail: vrc@tinet.ie

About the Irish YouthWork Centre



The Irish YouthWork Centre is an initiative of the National Youth Federation (NYF). It acts as a one-stop research and documentation centre which has been developed to respond to the varied information, research and training support needs of youth & community workers, researchers and students, and anyone who works with young people. Its' services include:

Enquiry Services on:

- ◆ Trainers, consultants and specialists on youth & community work and related topics
- ◆ Venues suitable for hosting youth events and conferences
- ◆ Courses in Youth & Community Work and related fields
- ◆ Where to find youth & community work resources and training materials from other agencies
- ◆ Through its project database the Centre can connect people with other youth & community work projects doing exciting and innovative work within their field of interest

Sharing Good Practice

The Irish YouthWork Centre is constantly engaged in researching and documenting innovative approaches to work with young people in areas of special interest. This information is available to youth workers through hard copy resources, database information and ongoing independent research being both undertaken and commissioned by the Centre and published by the *Irish Youth Work Press*. These publications include quantitative and qualitative research, training manuals, issue-based guidelines for youth workers and policy documents.

Good Practice and Policy Development Seminars

The Centre regularly organises theme based, seminars and workshops. All the seminars are supported with; up to date analysis of the issue and what's happening on the ground in the form of information and/or research packs; the issues that youth workers are likely to meet; success stories, innovative projects, good practice; and sources of further information.

Library

- ◆ Lending service for youth & community work related books, videos and training materials.
- ◆ Photocopy and reference services for reports, statistics and hard-to-find articles on youth work.
- ◆ Newspaper cuttings, Dáil Debates, Government Bills/ Acts and youth related Statistical Updates.
- ◆ Profiles on over 200 organisations in the youth, community, social & voluntary sectors.
- ◆ Retention of over 80 youth work and youth work related periodicals/journals.
- ◆ On-line database facilities of all information stocked in the library.
- ◆ On-site study facility.

Publications and Resources

Low cost resources and training materials for sale (*the IWYC acts as an official sales agent for a number of agencies including the National Youth Council of Ireland, Combat Poverty Agency, Russell House Publishing, Nightshift Publications and the Directory of Social Change*). The Centre also offers an extensive range of research, guidelines, policy documents and programme packs for sale published by Irish Youth Work Press, the publishing arm of the NYF.

A complete **Publications For Sale Brochure** is available (see address below)

Free quarterly magazine (**Irish YouthWork Scene**) to members of the Centre.

For further information on the services of the IRISH YOUTHWORk CENTRE, why not write, call in, telephone, or email us:

Fran Bissett/Michelle Drumm, Irish YouthWork Centre, National Youth Federation, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: +353 1 8729933 **Fax:** +353 1 8724183

E-Mail addresses: fbissett@nyf.ie mdrumm@nyf.ie **Web site:** www.iol.ie/~nyf