

Irish Youth Work Centre's

# SCENE

Magazine

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ISSUE



New Research - The My World Survey  
Resources  
Practitioner's Articles and Views  
Policy Brief



Irish Youth Work Centre

Issue 75, June 2013

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# Issue 75, June 2013

## Social Inclusion Edition

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### Disclaimer

It is open to all our readers to exchange information or to put forward points of view. Send in news, comments, letters or articles to the editors. Views expressed in this magazine are the contributors own and do not reflect those of the Irish Youth Work Centre or Youth Work Ireland.

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Youth Work Ireland Galway



Youth Work Ireland  
*Be Part of It*



## A word from the CEO

Greeting all and welcome to the second edition of the Irish Youth Work Centre's Scene Magazine, for 2013, on the theme of social inclusion.



Just last weekend I attended a meeting in Brussels of the European Confederation of Youth Clubs (ECYC). Youth Work Ireland has been the Irish member of this European wide network of youth organisations for many years. At the meeting we had the opportunity of having a discussion with Mr. Pascal Lejeune, Head of the Youth Unit at the European Commission. At this meeting there was a general consensus that the current Irish Presidency of the Council of Ministers for Youth is a particular success. Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs chaired the meeting of the Council on May 16th at which agreement was reached on two new EU policy positions including a set of concrete measures aimed at raising the profile of quality youth work at European level and mainstreaming youth policy into broader EU policy initiatives on education, employment and training. The Minister stated "there is growing recognition across Europe of the potential of youth work services to contribute to measures to enhance employability for young people."

Social inclusion of course is not a static concept but rather a dynamic reality which we constantly have to analyse, understand and interrogate. We in the youth sector must continue to innovate and develop new and creative measures to ensure that the young people with whom we work can find ways to exit the often devastating effects of social exclusion on them personally and on their families and communities. Youth workers, paid or unpaid have traditionally in Ireland played a leadership role in this process. In these challenging times it is essential that we continue to do this and to demonstrate to others the positive outcomes and impacts of our interventions.

**Dr. Patrick J. Burke,**  
Chief Executive, Youth Work Ireland

## Introduction to this Edition

By Matthew Seebach

In this edition of Scene Magazine youth work practitioners describe their efforts to bring about social inclusion through their practice; but what is social inclusion?

Social inclusion has many aspects, so articulating it isn't easy. As contributor Susan Menton points out in her article, for practitioners the meaning of social inclusion is often influenced by the context in which we work and the challenges and opportunities faced by the particular young people we work with. We tend to think of only one or two aspects of social inclusion at any given time.

In this edition of Scene magazine you can read youth work practitioners' perspectives on youth work and social inclusion. The articles provide a mosaic; each one provides a different aspect of social inclusion. Viewed together these practitioners seem to be suggesting that social inclusion in youth work is about young people being allowed or enabled to take part in both youth work and society. Importantly, taking part involves young people meaningfully participating in decisions that affect them.

Some of these articles are about how practitioners work to enable specific groups of young people to become involved in youth work and in society. Amongst the several projects with different groups of young people you can read of the work of the CDYS Youth Work Ireland's project for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the Carlow Regional Youth Service's project to support young LGBT people. These stories detail the challenges and successes of this work and provide signposts to those of us who plan similar work.

Other contributors look at how to change our organisations, our programmes and society to become more inclusive of all young people. Youth Work Ireland Galway provides details and learning from their experience of proofing their organisation to enable all young people to become involved. While the YMCA Cork STEP Programme assists young people to become included in the workforce through providing skills and preparation, but also challenges racism and prejudice in society through an intercultural element to this programme.

The barriers to young people's participation in meaningful decision making are described in two articles, firstly Martin Mc Mullan Gerald Hughes from YouthAction Northern Ireland describes attempts to involve young people meaningfully in policy development in the North, while Susan Menton in St Andrews Resource Centre describes work to ensure that every level of her organisation provides opportunities to involve young people.

Taken together, these contributions provide valuable insights into the challenges encountered and the successful strategies that we can all adopt in our work to involve and include all young people and ensure their participation in decisions that affect them in our services and in society.

As Sinead Allen of Youth Work Ireland Galway says, "youth work is ideally placed to promote social inclusion; it opens doors for young people and facilitates young people to challenge themselves and society." At the core of these efforts is the youth work relationship.

Through developing trust with a young person youth workers enable a young people to understand the situation in which they find themselves and find their way into a fuller

involvement in society. For those young people who are experiencing challenges in their lives, a youth worker may be the only person who can do this, as Delia Clarke's story of the youth homelessness story reminds us.

We all know the value of the youth work relationship. Very importantly, the *My World Survey* empirically demonstrates the value of having "one good adult" in the lives of young people. The research review provided in this edition of Scene Magazine helps to prove the value of youth work in that it provides research based evidence of the value of the youth/adult relationship and can quantify this value in terms of the significant impact these relationships have on mental health for young people.

This research is particularly useful for youth workers in demonstrating the impact of our work in young peoples' lives. With the publication of the *My World Survey* we can now point to evidence of what we have always known - that because the relationship is at the core of what we do, all of our work, whether in social inclusion or otherwise, has an immense value to young people and society.

## Invitation to LGBT Youth & Social Inclusion Conference



LGBT Youth & Social Inclusion Conference  
Dublin 2013

As the Irish Presidency comes to a close, BeLonG To is holding a conference to address this theme in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people.

BeLonG To Youth Services is the national organisation for LGBT young people in Ireland. The conference is being organised with the support of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and in collaboration with International Lesbian & Gay Association (ILGA-Europe), the International LGBTQ Youth & Student Organisation (IGLYO), the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The conference

will take place on 16-17 June 2013.

The LGBT Youth & Social Inclusion Conference aims to contribute to the Structured Dialogue Process among European youth organisations by focusing on actions to promote the inclusion of LGBT young people – a significantly large group of young people who were identified in the process to be "in the top of the most vulnerable groups to social exclusion" in Europe.

This associated EU Irish Presidency event will bring together examples of good practice on equality and inclusion work with LGBT youth and create a forum for discussing key challenges and further

solutions. The four main topics that will be addressed, as adapted from the seven thematic areas of the Structured Dialogue Process, are employment, education, participation and rights, and youth work quality and access.

While the June 17th conference is by invitation only; BeLonG To is also holding a related public event on the evening of 16 June. This will include a discussion with international activists on LGBT youth issues and a reception. Please contact BeLonG To for more information: 01 670 6223 or [info@belongto.org](mailto:info@belongto.org), [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)





## My Unique Individuality, LGBT Group.

**MUI: My Unique Individuality is Carlow Regional Youth Service's LGBT teenage youth group running since September 2011 and supported by BeLonG To Ireland and The Community Foundation.**

By Leanne Sweeney

MUI is a safe, friendly environment for anyone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and of secondary school age to meet up, make new friends take part in fun activities and share ideas every second Wednesday from 6-8 pm.

MUI provides a safe, positive and fun environment for LGBT youth, empowering them to develop their own social and personal abilities. There is a strong emphasis on confidence building, community involvement and peer support. The group is open to any young people of secondary school age.

Young people in the group say that it is open and welcoming of their identities, whoever they may be. Participants are enthusiastic that:

“You can be yourself - I don't have to hide who I am anymore, people understand me here”.

Since the establishment of MUI the group has covered a wide range of activities, such as: team building, youth leadership training with BeLonG To, creating a Facebook page, making a rainbow for the St. Patrick's Day parade and learning about issues such as mental health. Future plans for the group include an 'LGBT' friendly sticker for local businesses and schools in Carlow County and to plan, implement and evaluate a south-east regional youth-led LGBT residential to embrace being LGBT in local communities.

### Programme Delivery

MUI follows best practice from BeLonG To and their role in the development of the group is important to acknowledge. These valuable guidelines have fit well within the overarching policy and standards of programme delivery employed within Carlow Regional Youth Service (CRYS). Our standards strongly promote a youth led ethos that can easily be seen in MUI. The participants work in a committee-style format with each participant having an opportunity to chair/steer the group, take minutes and put their leadership skills to use.

### Challenges and Learning

As programmes in CRYS are generally diverse and accessible to a range of young people, a number of LGBT young people were already engaged in the service before we initiated MUI. When LGBT young people expressed the need for further supports, we began working to develop MUI. In doing so, we learned that confirming the need for an LGBT group to be established is vital, as there is little point in providing something that might not be required just yet. We also learned the value of perseverance; MUI is quite a specialised group and such groups can be slow to take off at the beginning.

However, the biggest challenge that we have faced is promoting the group. There is understandably a lot of concern around confidentiality and safety for new members and conveying this is essential when promoting MUI to LGBT young people who may be interested. The group have discussed at length the importance of confidentiality in recruitment and how to promote the group.

Members have set their own recruitment policy and agreed that if someone new requests to join the group the young person must first meet with a youth worker to ensure the person is age and stage appropriate for MUI. This emphasis on openness and safety has worked well when promoting the group to new members as not all members are 'out' or feel the need for their sexual orientation or gender to be made known among their peers. The group is promoted to other LGBT young people through schools, local media, a Facebook page and through youth projects at CRYS.





## Creating A Space: A Youth Service's Journey to Social Inclusion

by Sinead Allen

*“Civilization is the process in which one gradually increases the number of people included in the term 'we' or 'us' and at the same time decreases those labelled 'you' or 'them' until that category has no one left in it”.*

**Howard Winters (1994) in Howard Dalton Winters: In Memoriam.**

*At the Youth Work Ireland organised ECYC General Assembly 2013 earlier this year, several youth services presented on the contribution of quality youth work to social inclusion. This article provides a summary of Sinéad Allen's presentation which highlighted how Youth Work Ireland Galway approaches inclusiveness. The full presentation and presentation text can be found at [www.youthworkireland.ie/what-we-do/news](http://www.youthworkireland.ie/what-we-do/news)*

At Youth Work Ireland Galway (YWIG) it was decided to employ an evidence-informed approach to addressing social inclusion in youth work. This included reflective practice, the logic model of planning and evaluation, the use of the National Quality Standards Framework and the National Youth Council of Ireland's *Access all Areas Diversity Toolkit*. This article mainly discusses the use of this *Toolkit*.

### Who to Engage in Social Inclusion and Proofing?

The *Toolkit* assists us to realise how diverse young people are and how all-encompassing our efforts in social inclusion must be. The *Toolkit* tells us that

“Young people have 'multiple identities' and shouldn't be seen under one identity alone”. Ireland has long been a diverse country in many ways and includes people with physical and learning disabilities, lone parents, members of the Travelling Community, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) to name but a few. Recently Ireland has experienced increased diversity of ethnicity and religious orientation with the Irish Census 2006 indicating that almost 10% of young people under 24 years were born outside of Ireland.

*Access All Areas* identifies young people at risk of social exclusion as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBT, Irish Travellers, young people with a physical disability, sight loss or deaf, young people with a learning disability or mental health issues, young people involved with the juvenile justice system, young parents, young people with education, employment or training needs, early school leavers, exclusion that comes from young women and men not being treated equally, that is to say challenging gender stereotypes.

### How to Engage in Proofing

According to the *Toolkit* including all young people in youth work requires: “identifying, understanding and removing barriers that exist to participation and belonging”. It focuses on allocating resources to achieve equality of outcome for all. The *Toolkit* identifies the '5 P' model of inclusion; Participation, Policies and Procedures, Public Image, Programme Planning and Delivery, Professional Development and encompassing these criteria is the question of practice.

The 'How To' of proofing that has emerged from YWIG's experience of using the *Toolkit* includes:

- Allowing for mistakes and providing learning opportunities.
- Prioritising inclusion.
- Availability of information and training.
- Strategic and operational planning.
- Evaluation and communication.
- Exercises in experiential learning and empathy.

**Some of our work in these above areas includes:**

- Collaboration with Galway County VEC in a NYCI conducted diversity audit.
- Use of the 'logic model' of planning and evaluation to critically review practice.
- Strategic planning is used to set goals in relation to diversity and other areas.
- Reflective practice is a core training for staff.
- YWIG participates in the Youth Work National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF).
- The use of the *12 Steps to Good Practice for Intercultural Youth Work* - NYCI has been extremely helpful to YWIG in facilitating the process of inclusion proofing.
- YWIG is committed to being an inclusive youth service based on an integrated model of service provision that includes targeted and mainstream groups.

Cultivating empathy - as Harper Lee points out in her novel **To Kill a Mockingbird**:

*"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it".*

## Learning at YWIG

To be effective in promoting social inclusion, it is vital that youth services operate a zero tolerance policy on bullying and exclusion and has clear policies, procedures, training, supervision and support for young people, staff and volunteers. Workers must be fair, consistent, non-judgemental and accountable. Partnerships with dedicated grass roots organisations targeting specific groups such as young people with learning disabilities and minority

ethnic groups is important. YWIG's projects receive referrals from organisations such as the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Brothers of Charity Service, both of whom work closely with young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities.

A major challenge emerging from inclusion proofing our services was a reluctance of staff to uncover information about young people's identity, as it could be seen to be intrusive. Discussions achieved relative consensus amongst staff that the benefit of such information outweighed the risk of intrusion. Furthermore, techniques for gaining information in a non-threatening way such as a universal registration sheet, proved popular with staff and acceptable to young people.

The tendency for young people to gravitate to 'clique's' where commonality exists is a continuous challenge but, we have found with sensitivity and skill this too can be addressed; for example by mixing up groups and with team activities.

Inclusiveness has become integral to strategic planning at YWIG. The starting point has been a vision and aspiration to be open to all young people. The agency had an equality policy and were becoming increasingly aware of the need for an intercultural policy. With the help of the National Youth Council of Ireland a comprehensive 'Equality, Diversity and Intercultural Policy' was developed. The YWIG equality statement recognises and affirms the equal right of all people to participate fully in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their community. Furthermore the organisation is committed, in policy, to promoting interculturalism throughout the organisation, for programme participants, staff, volunteers and members of the Board and management.

**Sinéad Allen is a Community Youth Worker with Youth Work Ireland Galway in the Westside Youth Project. She has worked with young people from diverse backgrounds in numerous settings in the U.S.A. and Ireland including young people in care, young people in the asylum seeking process, refugee communities and the Travelling community.**





# “young people joining in with the world”

by Martin McMullan and Gerard Hughes YouthAction NI

This article emphasises a youth work process which involves young people in participatory youth work, civil society and policy influencing processes within Northern Ireland.

We understand social exclusion from a youth work perspective in which young people have very often been marginalised from not only policy decision making processes, but also decision making within their own communities and educative contexts. Often they are involved in policy consultations only as consultants or consumers. For example, since the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly a plethora of consultations have taken place, of which young people have been core stakeholders. Too often, however, these consultations are repetitive and disconnected to previous consultations in which evidence has already been provided. In reality this is simply re-packaged evidence gathering under the latest umbrella term or policy thematic area. Youth democracy should not be solely passive or reactive but active, proactive and provocative.

In writing this article we are challenging the accusation that young people are apolitical or politically apathetic. Rather, we welcome the use of creative methodologies to aid the participation and meaningful engagement of young people. We

also recognise participation as a basic human right, in which young people are supported to contribute to, connect with and create a healthy democracy. This notion of youth participation surpasses the practice of involvement and taking part, to a more aspirational idea and practice of active citizenship, where young people are conscious and concerned about social, economic, cultural and political issues. Young people are thus active volunteers and 'ambassadors of intent.' This has often been referred to as 'political consciousness' (conscientisation) in which young people are supported to have political literacy and be politically literate citizens.

Since 2009 Youth Action Northern Ireland has enacted youth work approaches which connect young people to civil and political life, involve young people in meaningful dialogue and action, and maintain a relevance and significance to the young people engaged. One example of this is a suite of sixteen 'Let's Talk' dialogue and action events between young people, politicians and policy makers. Here young people join in with the world, more so than necessarily changing it. This 'pricking of conscience' may be the catalyst for further commitments. This article focuses primarily on a youth work framework in which twenty five young people aged 16-25 years, across three areas within Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland, are 'ambassadors of peace' locally, regionally and potentially wider.



## Young people as Ambassadors of Peace and Equality (YouthAction NI)

The YouthAction N.I. 'Champions for Change' initiative operates across Newry, Armagh and Louth; South Tyrone and Monaghan; and Belfast. This project is funded by Community Relations Council/POBAL and the Peace III Southern Partnership through the European Union Regional Development Fund. One aspect of the Champions for Change initiative is to support young people as ambassadors of peace and equality, primarily through a peer research process.

The rationale for our project brings together the active involvement of young people as active contributors within civil society, with a particular emphasis on young people as peace ambassadors across and within communities. As peer researchers the young people undergo research training including: ethical considerations, research methods, sampling, data protection, and data presentation. Throughout this process young people have opportunities to test out and practice their skills in this area. A core part of their role involves consultations and data collection with other young people. Once this data is reflected on and framed into meaningful themes with the young people, a purposeful approach is implemented to use the data to lobby local councillors and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The peer researchers have embarked on creating a peace youth manifesto from which continued lobbying and 'asks' will be presented.

The landscape of education provision in Northern Ireland is undergoing significant changes. One of these changes involves recommendations to advance 'shared education' in Northern Ireland. As such, young people and youth organisations have collaborated with others to undertake a series of consultations addressing this current policy focus of 'shared education'. Since November 2012, the peer research approach has engaged over 110 young people to gather their perspectives. Findings to date indicate that young people believe that there should be more opportunities for different communities to interact. At the 'Let's Talk Sharing' event in Armagh (March 2013) young people identified the core priority to improved relations and sharing as: "Young people coming together from different backgrounds to work on a project unrelated to peace education" with 27.5% opting for this. In May 2013 the young people will further utilise an interactive methodology 'Table

of Free Voices' to engage in dialogue with Department of Education representatives. This methodology provides an equal platform where young people have an active stake and share in defining themes and needs and in providing solutions and recommendations for change.

Outcomes for young people include their voices being heard, being more involved, being politically engaged, and having the bite to address exclusion experienced by others. Outcomes for policy shapers include young people's views being part of area based planning and regional planning, and creating alternative modes of public engagement with young people.

The outcomes and anticipated goals of this project demonstrate how youth work (as part of an educational realm) can significantly contribute to peace building, social justice and equality. Peace education and youth participation within youth work can support young people's collective conscience and action which can become contagious to others. The initiative builds both human and social capital across the region with the investment ultimately aiding leadership, participation, ownership and pride. This work is best addressed through young people leading the journey. Effective youth work in which the worker has faith in young people to do the job, trusts them to plan, host and evaluate events, encourages them to make decisions, and ensures they are valued, provide an empowering catalyst for change.

We think it's important that you ask us what we think and what we should do. (comment from young peer researcher). As the youth worker noted, this useful feedback affirms the clarity of intention and understanding for all, and in which power dynamics are minimised.

The continued challenge in youth work is to 'prick the conscience' of young people who have been suppressed in terms of their critical thinking and inquiry. A balanced worldview based on idealism and wishful thinking is reflected with a backdrop of suppression, prejudice and discrimination. Education is only one component in the complex reality of division and separation, reflected in all modes of everyday life, such as housing, work, sport and social activities. Challenges are thus reflected in the wider cultural and institutionalised systems. Communities and decision makers remain unsettled by aspects of change and social

inclusion. Additional moral panics and portrayal of 'loss more than gain' serve to protect the status quo, rather than creating a welcoming place where appreciation of difference is at the fore.

On Thursday 9th May 2013 the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland announced a joined statement about a new good relations strategy, "Together: Building a United Community". This will be complemented by an all-party group to consider parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and the past. There is a degree of caution about the intention and conviction of politicians with such statements, as these can often be unsubstantiated or a diversion from the core issue.

Maintaining the momentum with short term funded projects remains a challenge for the voluntary youth sector, reliant on short-sighted immediate tenders and contracts, focussed on tight delivery areas. Such challenges, though, are eclipsed with hope and optimism as the Ambassadors for Peace and Equality develop a fully evidenced peace manifesto, with a continued plan of positive messaging and action locally and regionally in which young people flourish.

Youth workers must support critical questioning and enquiry rather than developing young people who necessarily conform. Young people need unique spaces to critique the social structures and espouse social change for a fairer and more equal society. Youth work must thus be embedded in a wider struggle for change, ultimately tacking exclusion and promoting inclusion.

**Image on Pg. 6** Back row (left to right) Chris Jenkins (Integrated Education Fund), Gerard Hughes (YouthAction NI), Conor Wallace, Cailum Carragher, David Morris (Front row (left to right) Chloe Johnston, Lauren Johnston, (Lord Mayor of Armagh) Sharon Haughey-Grimley, Darren Davidson, Charmain Jones (Rural Community Network)



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# Professional Education and Training for Youth Work

## An International Forum

NUI Maynooth, 25th-27th June 2013

### Do you ever find yourself wondering.....

- What type of profession is youth work?
- Is it a discipline? What discipline(s) underpin it
- What is its core knowledge base? Its core value base?
- What about ethics?
- What is the relationship between education and training?
- How is fieldwork practice integrated within programmes?
- What is (the role of) theory in youth work education?

If so you are invited to participate in a forum to explore these issues.

### Confirmed contributors so far include:

- Trudi Cooper, Edith Cowan University, Perth
- Robyn Broadbent, Victoria University, Melbourne
- Dana Fusco, City University of New York
- Päivi Honkatukia, University of Tampere, Finland
- Howard Sercombe, Strathclyde University, Glasgow

**How to get involved:**

The Forum will facilitate contributions in a range of ways, including lecture inputs and poster presentations, but the emphasis will be on exchange and interaction.

If you are interested in making a contribution or in attending to participate in discussion then please contact one of the organisers at: youthwork@nuim.ie

Alternatively call one of us at:

Maurice Devlin: +353-1-7083781  
Hilary Tierney: +353-1-7086489



# Call for Contributions

## for

Content for the September edition of Scene Magazine featuring **Outcomes in Youth Work** as its theme.

**Scene Magazine** recently asked its readers about the kind of articles and features that they would find helpful to them in their youth work practice. Based on what Scene readers asked for we are now looking for the following articles for the September 2013 Edition of Scene Magazine.

**FEATURED PROJECTS:** Every edition features the learning from an innovative project or programme that is un-related to the main theme of the magazine for the quarter. These articles are between 600 and 700 words in length and document learning from novel youth work practice and try to provide information and learning that other youth work practitioners can implement in their own practice.

**FEATURES ON OUTCOMES IN YOUTH WORK:** In this edition Scene particularly welcomes contributions from practitioners that document the successful strategies to plan, implement and capture outcomes in youth work that address the main priorities of current funding (child protection, social inclusion, active citizenship etc.) Importantly, we would also ask contributors to describe how they plan, implement and capture outcomes that are un-related to the main priorities of youth work funders. These articles will need to be approximately 700-1100 words.

**YOUNG PEOPLES AND VOLUNTEERS' VIEWS:** In this edition, Scene particularly welcomes contributions on any youth work practice issue that volunteers and young people would like to be heard. These articles are planned to be approximately 400-600 words.

**RESEARCH REVIEWS AND DIGESTS FOR PRACTITIONERS:** Every Scene edition features a contribution from practitioner researchers that summarise evidence of what works in engaging young people. The article should also suggest to practitioners how they can apply this learning to their work with young people. We welcome reviews of existing research, or digests of original research conducted in Ireland. These articles are planned to be approximately 600-1000 words.

If you are interested in featuring your work in Scene Magazine please submit a 200 word summary of your proposed contribution by August 5th. Scene Magazine will attempt to use all writing that is submitted to us. The Scene Magazine editorial team will carefully review all proposed contributions. We will work to select contributions that provide Irish youth work practitioners with a diversity of views, youth work practice experience and ideas. We apologise in advance if we can not accept all proposals.

Please email your 200 word proposal only to Gina Halpin, [ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie](mailto:ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie) with your full name, the youth service you are associated with, the title of the article that you are proposing and the type of article that you are proposing.



Irish Youth Work Centre

# Involve Youth Project

## The Red Carpet Showcase Night

Kay McCabe Youth Worker

The Red Carpet Showcase Night involved 16 young people aged 10-16 who are involved in our youth service at the Unity Centre in Navan.

The idea for this project came about through the NQSF (National Quality Standards Framework) process. Within our NQSF CIP (Continuous Improvement Plan) we had set out to improve how we communicate that our service is "Young person Centred". To do that, we had a discussion with young people and asked them how they wanted to get their message about our youth group out to the general public, their parents and other youth services in the town of Navan. Their idea was a Red Carpet Showcase Night and each young person invited 1-2 family members, teachers or another adult in their lives. We also helped them send emails to Politicians and other Youth Services.

The young people were involved in everything from the invitation design to the guest list. However, teenagers in general are not great at 'blowing their own trumpets' and some were embarrassed to invite family members. Being a youth service that

specialises in working with young people from the Travelling Community it is important to portray a positive image of young people and all the activities we take part in. But for the most part this is a very easy process, as all the young people have a positive story to tell.

The young people had a sense of achievement and pride in their youth project. It was great to see them explaining our different projects and activities to our guests and in return receiving praise and admiration. It was a very positive evening with standing room only.

At times, as youth workers we ask ourselves questions such as; 'are we making a difference?' or 'what's it all about?' well, an evening like this is a great opportunity to see a sense of pride in the young people's work. It was a fantastic opportunity to sit back and let the young people take the reins and showcase their youth service.

Kay Mc Cabe is a Youth Co-ordinator with Involve Youth Project Navan

[www.involve.ie](http://www.involve.ie)



# ACTivate Group

By Miriam Segondate  
ACTivate Volunteer and Mother of a Programme Participant”

ACTivate is a weekly group that brings together children aged 8 and over with Asperger’s/Autism that encourages children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder to integrate with other children on the spectrum as well as their siblings.

Members can relax and have fun in a multisensory learning environment that encourages social and communication skills as well as positive emotional well-being.

As with all children, group members are part of our community and deserve as much help as possible in developing the skills needed to integrate into the community and encouragement to live as full a life as possible within their capabilities.

Every young person is unique and young people on the Autistic Spectrum present with varying degrees of difficulties in social communication, social interaction and social imagination as well as other challenges in areas like speech and language and sensory processing. In general, the group members are very vulnerable, so we have ensured that volunteers and staff understand the difficulties these young people face as their safety and well-being is a primary concern.

The programme staff is made up mainly of parents of children with Asperger’s/Autism but who also include youth centre workers and volunteers. We are able to provide excellent staff support on the night the group meets to ensure participants are safe while still being able to enjoy themselves in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. We have also provided lots of fun activities to entertain the kids and encourage social and communication skills.

The group has been successful in:

- Helping group members meet other young people who are like themselves.
- Providing an opportunity to play together in a supportive environment - which may be the only time they play with other children in the week.



- Integrating siblings with other young people who have Asperger’s/Autism as well as their siblings.
- Providing a choice to either take part in a group activity or if they need some space they can chill out on the sofa.
- Exposing members to a social setting where communication skills are encouraged and emotional well-being is promoted.

Youth workers are a valuable asset to our community and it’s only by working with groups like ACTivate that the true community spirit comes alive. This group has very vulnerable children who have Asperger’s/Autism, but who have much strength behind this label. By working with these kids, youth workers can bring out these strengths by encouraging them to take part in their local community and receive the respect of people around them. This encourages social and communication skills and will empower them to live as full a life as possible.

**For more information see [www.cdys.ie](http://www.cdys.ie)**



# Resources NQSF Route Map

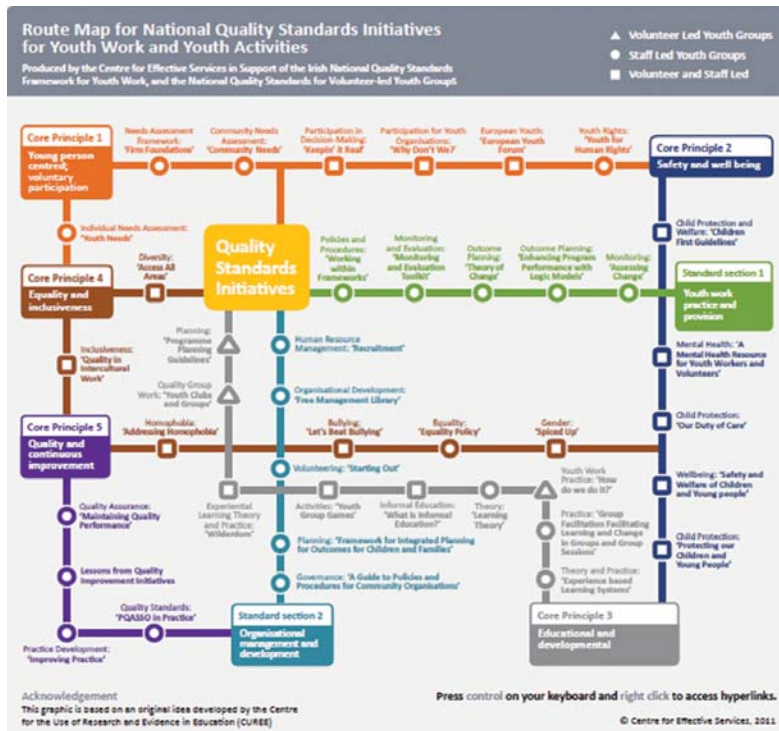
Sam O'Brien Olinger,  
Graduate Intern  
Centre for Effective Services

The Route Map for National Quality Standards Initiatives for Youth Work and Youth Activities (Route Map) is an interactive online resource that has been developed by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) on behalf of the Youth Affairs Unit in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Route Map makes available an array of web-based information which is international in scope.

The resources have been selected based on their quality and capacity to inform and support youth work and youth activities, with all materials assessed on a set of inclusion criteria. The materials come from a wide range of reliable sources, including government departments, national and international youth organisations, academic institutions, independent research and policy agencies.

The Route Map is also accompanied by a more detailed table of resources which contains over 100 quality materials to support staff-led youth groups and over 30 resources to support volunteer-led youth activities.

The Route Map directly relates to the National Quality Standards Framework Core Principles and Standards. For example, if a youth worker is interested in resources that will help them to deal



with issues surrounding racism, xenophobia, homophobia, social inclusion, diversity and/or equality they can go to 'Core Principle 4: Equality and Inclusiveness' on the Route Map. Here they will find a range of practical, accessible and relevant online provisions to help them with these specific issues.

The map is accessible on the CES website at:  
<http://www.effectiveservices.org/our-work/National-Quality-Standards-Framework>

# NEW IYWC MEMBERSHIP OFFER

The Irish Youth Work Centre (IYWC) was established in 1992 to provide for the information and continuous professional development needs of youth work practitioners in Ireland. Irish youth work has changed greatly since then and we have too. After 20 years of serving the Irish youth sector we have undertaken a full review of our provisions to members and updated our facilities and services.

Through surveys and consultations with members and the wider sector we have worked together with practitioners to identify services that help meet the challenges that youth workers now face in their work. Benefits of being an IYWC member include:

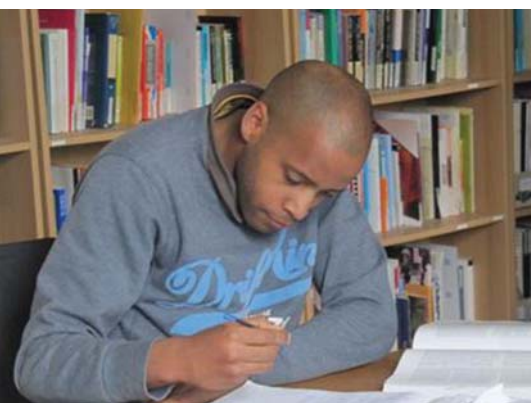
Immediate access to all new IYWC resources which are sent directly to members electronically and in hard copy when they are current. Non-members can eventually access resources when they are archived on our publicly available web-page. IYWC members also get free and preferential access to events, lending library and other services.

## Our offering of new and updated services to IYWC members include:

- **Youth Studies Ireland:** Youth Studies Ireland is the first professional youth studies journal to be published in Ireland. Youth Studies Ireland is published bi-annually, overseen by an academic Editorial Board and advised by an Advisory Committee which includes representatives from youth work organisations, colleges, state agencies and funders across the island.
- **Youth Work Specific Research Resources and Reports:** These include the upcoming IYWC publication in cooperation with NUI Maynooth *Research on Reflective Practice* and the *My World Survey Report* (an introduction to this report is featured in this magazine).

- **Scene Magazine:** The all new magazine for youth work practitioners. Scene provides practitioners with an opportunity to promote and share their practice and learning with other practitioners in Ireland. Features include policy briefs, research briefs and profiles of practice that youth work practitioners can apply in their own work.
- **Training and Webinars:** A new training programme will launch in September 2013. To date the IYWC has run more than 80 successful seminars and training events. Future trainings will be based on a recent survey that IYWC conducted with members to identify training interests.
- **Symposia for Practitioners:** These symposia provide practitioners with an opportunity to informally meet and engage on critical topics in youth work. The series of youth work practitioner symposia scheduled for 2013 marks a new venture for the IYWC. These events are provided in response to readers of Scene Magazines' requests for further opportunities to both showcase and demonstrate the quality and importance of their work, while also deepening their understanding of what works in supporting the development of young people in Ireland today.
- **Library Facilities and Lending Services:** The IYWC library includes recently published key texts on youth work and youth research as well as historic documentation of youth work in Ireland. The IYWC updates its holdings of publications every quarter using a dedicated budget to ensure that the most recent and relevant publications are available to youth work practitioners and students. These publications are available on loan to IYWC members. Members not able to visit the library can avail of a postal lending service.

To view our full offer of services and receive a membership form go [www.iywc.ie](http://www.iywc.ie) to or contact us at [info@iywc.ie](mailto:info@iywc.ie)



# Addressing Interculturalism in NEETS

Not in Education, Employment or Training Programme Provision  
The YMCA STEP Programme

by Tom Kent & TJ Hourihan



## The STEP Programme

YMCA STEP was launched in 1989 as a pre-vocational training programme for 18-25 year olds who were both educationally disadvantaged and long term unemployed. The programme is aimed at early school leavers who frequently remain on the margins of the labour force often hindered by weak interpersonal skills, poor qualifications, a lack of confidence and consequent poor motivation.

The STEP Programme lead to a full FETAC Level 4 Award and is delivered using youth work methodologies. The programme covers components in Personal Development, ECDL, Teamworking, Customer Service, Career Planning and Work Experience as well as Intercultural Studies.

## Why Interculturalism Training?

Over a decade ago, the YMCA identified a need to address the issue of rising levels of racism among young people involved in the programme. A component was developed called *Share Our World* which looked at the behaviour and qualities of a responsible local and global citizen and enabling young people to take action on the injustices they were exploring in their own lives and communities. In this way the intercultural studies component has been developed in accordance with the

commitment to build equality, make the most of diversity and promote interdependence within the YMCA movement and in our communities (YMCA Quality Standard 4).

The aims of the component are in keeping with the holistic nature of YMCA work and provide a challenge in the form of a quality opportunity for participants to develop spiritually and mentally (YMCA Quality Standard 2). The component also sought to make the most of the linkages which exist between the Irish YMCA and YMCAs in the developing South thus supporting the YMCA family and playing a part in its development, locally, nationally and internationally (YMCA Quality Standard 5).

An important component is to challenge racist and discriminatory attitudes and actions and provide young people with opportunities to interact, collaborate and exchange ideas with people of different cultures, ethnicity or religion. Interculturalism asserts that diversity can enrich society and that by planning for and accommodating cultural diversity, everyone can benefit from a more equal and inclusive society.

Another aim of the component is to promote a deeper understanding of the way the world works through examining concepts such as power, trade, poverty, war and conflict etc., as well as the challenges and benefits of living in a multi-ethnic society. The component seeks to engage young people in critical analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting young people in understanding and in acting to make changes in their own lives and the lives of others at personal, local, national and international levels. Once young people are aware of international issues, global youth work can equip them to take positive action that not only helps their personal development, but can also lead to real change in the world around them.





## Delivery Methodologies

The delivery methodologies for this component are chosen based on the needs and profile of the learner together with the themes and content of the component. The phased development of language, literacy and numeracy skills are facilitated through these chosen methodologies.

Methodologies are inclusive of the range of learning styles of the learners.

The following are the delivery methodologies employed in delivering this programme, as appropriate:

- Directed learning experiences.
- Group discussions and interactions to tease out programme content.
- Practical sessions using appropriate equipment, resources and facilities.
- One-to-one delivery.
- Self-directed learning which may include practice time, preparation, study and reflection time.
- Blended learning.
- Active engagement in campaigning or other awareness activities.

## Youth Work and Experiential Learning Methodologies

Experiential learning is an integral part of the methodologies used on the programme, meaning that learning and development are achieved through personally determined experience and involvement, rather than on received teaching or training. We might also regard experiential learning as growing a person from the inside, whereas conventional teaching and training can be seen as the transfer of capability to a person from the outside. When facilitating the sessions it is important that these are directly connected to the real life experiences of the young people themselves as well as being sensitive to the learning styles of the young people.

## Addressing Racism and Prejudice

To deliver this component it is important that the trainers understand how prejudices can be effectively challenged, how to deal with negative

attitudes from participants and the principles of global youthwork. We have learnt that information, reasoning and debate will not necessarily remove prejudice! Some of the things that contribute to the debating of racist attitudes and views include:

- Where possible ensuring exposure to the person or thing that is provoking a racist attitude allows hearsay or conditioning to be challenged with personal experience.
- Being honest and encouraging honest communication.
- Promoting self-awareness opportunities and thus allowing for the exploration and naming of confused or mixed emotions.

## How to deal with negative attitudes from participants

- Ensure thorough preparation.
- Encourage participants to separate stories from issues.
- Tell positive stories.
- Help participants to identify common ground (links to themselves).
- Refrain from lecturing or telling off when negativity spills over.
- Let the participants have their say.
- Ask them questions (where did you hear that?).
- Challenge without criticising.
- Distinguish fact from opinion (ask how opinions have been formed).

## Other learning from delivering this programme

What we have learned is that while interculturalism and personal development are at the heart of our STEP Programme, there are significant barriers in addressing these issues for groups. For the most part we get to the point of the learners being able to be honest about prejudices and beginning to explore with them the consequences of prejudices. As part of this a substantial amount of time is needed to dispel myths that exist and to create real life experiences for young people to get to know the real people behind the labels.

# Young People and Social Inclusion

*where to begin?*



by Susan Menton, St. Andrews Resource Centre

“I believe in Young People and their ability to achieve whatever they choose, we just need to support them to do this”.

I am proud to have worked for St. Andrew’s Resource Centre in the Pearse Street area of Dublin 2 as the Youth Services Manager for the past 18 years. I have worked as a paid youth worker for more than 22 years and as a volunteer in a youth project in Ballyfermot for many years before that. My own teenage years were immersed in youth activities in Ballyfermot where I grew up, so youth work was always in my blood. I returned to education and qualified from NUI Maynooth and now continue in lifelong learning through completing a Masters in Applied Social Studies in NUI Maynooth. In fact my first youth work qualification was a certificate with NYF in Youth Studies with Louise Hurley back in 1993!

Social Inclusion to me as a practitioner, is creating the foundations for equal participation for everyone. We often use the expression 'social inclusion,' but if that is broken down it can mean different things to different people depending on where they are in their everyday lives. For many of us, we often find ourselves working in areas of disadvantage with pockets of poverty, welfare dependency, youth unemployment and social issues. These communities do not enjoy an equal footing in terms of inclusion and participation in decisions within society.

## The Challenge to Young People’s Social Inclusion

Maurice Devlin’s study of *Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People* conducted for the NYCI found that young people felt they were treated unequally by adults, except when it came to youth workers, so why is this? As practitioners our overarching challenge is to change negative

attitudes towards young people’s abilities and capacity to contribute and engage in real decision-making. If we are to change these negative attitudes we need to promote tangible examples and case studies of how young people’s engagement brings positive impact and we need to act as strong advocates.

## Our Social Inclusion Aims and Strategies

The culture within our project encourages and supports active participation at all levels, not just in formal constructed structures, i.e. in everyday decisions, making the youth service their own, the NQSF implementation team, focus groups for the design and delivery of programmes and junior leaders structures. As well, we are now creating space for young people on our board of management.

The aims of the strategies we use derive from an identified need, i.e. if a need is identified we research, develop and implement a programme or intervention with clear needs aims and objectives and recorded outcomes. The actual strategies we employ are multifaceted and take a youth work approach, as such we begin where the young people are at - metaphorically speaking! This means identifying their abilities and building on these. For this reason, within our project we have various methods and levels of participation.

### Levels of Participation, Methods and Aims

- All young people take part in and decide on the content of their programmes to be implemented from a young age (5+yrs) using creative methods and age appropriate activities.

**AIM:** This embeds a natural understanding that young people can and should make choices and

influence decisions that have an impact on their lives by participating in everyday decision, not just through formal structures.

- In the next level young people take responsibility for implementing part of the programme with youth workers. This can be within a single session or a number of sessions. They identify research, plan, prepare and implement the programme.

**AIM:** This is also a process through which participants can become familiar with decision-making in everyday activities and it creates opportunities for experiential learning to take place.

- Junior leaders programme is a specifically targeted programme with the objective of training young people aged 15-17 years to be junior leaders. This is a two year training programme that is designed and adapted depending on their identified needs. They then organise and run programmes, activities and events for younger age groups. This also plays a significant role in ensuring that programmes can take place.

**AIM:** Creating space and opportunities to learn knowledge, skills and values in a structured way while implementing their learning in a safe environment with youth workers and senior volunteers (18+yrs) This environment also provides for those who wish to delve further into youth work practice as practitioners. Many past participants of the project are still involved as senior volunteers and others have built on this experience to continue on into third level education to study social professions.

- The International Programme gives opportunities to further develop skills and experiences for young people in unfamiliar environments and uncharted territory with different languages and programme criteria. Through this programme, junior leaders have become involved in projects as far afield as the Philippines. All aspects of these projects are executed from concept to completion by young people.

**AIM:** To create a safe environment for experiential learning where young people organise, create and implement programmes for both themselves and young people and learn vital life skills during the process.

## Challenges

The challenges to our work include influencing attitudes to recognise that young people, whilst they have legal age limits imposed on them, are equal members of society. While we endeavour to influence positive societal change in this regard, the change can be slow or non-existent. We can, however, influence and change our own work settings and those of like-minded colleagues. Often in our own work we talk about inclusion and participation, but in practice our structures and processes do not always foster this. We need to challenge our own structures to be actively inclusive in our organisational culture, structures, procedures and programmes. This is an on-going developing process that needs to reflect and analyse how we are doing as we grow. We need to act as living examples of good practice ourselves in order to provide the evidence base for inclusion.

In response to this challenge we:

- Have an aspiration to achieve an organisational culture of being practice aware with ongoing reflection. We do this through asking ourselves questions such as: “are we being as inclusive as possible?”
- Are currently reviewing our active reflective practice on informal learning and progression processes. This is being done with young people, staff and volunteers.
- Engage young people from a very young age in decision making and involvement of implementation as much as possible.
- Implement programmes and developments only after exploring and establishing a need and then establishing a focus group for design and implementation.
- Continuously verbalise and show in our actions that the youth office belongs to everyone, staff, volunteers and young people.
- Have created formal structures with junior leaders, implementation teams, project development groups and have been working to achieve places for young people on St. Andrew’s BOM Youth Service Sub Group.

“Young people are members of communities – now, not at some point in the future.”

**Youth Work through the Youth or Adult? Initiative, 2008**

## Learning

We have learnt that while this process is exciting and challenging, it is not easy. We often engage in soul-searching and questioning of how we do things, but we also recognise all the good practice we have developed unconsciously over time. This process tells us that we naturally have equality and inclusion at the heart of our work, but we do not always get it right!

Experiential learning is crucial for young people to have the opportunity to practice and have the support in reflective learning to ensure

development and progression through stages in their own lives as well as negotiating social structures and breaking down barriers.

We must ensure we as youth work practitioners create those spaces for these opportunities. We must work with young people, but also be advocates and promote young people in their own right to participate and contribute now and not wait until they are adults.

Susan Menton is the Youth Services Manager at St. Andrew’s Resource Centre  
See [www.standrews.ie](http://www.standrews.ie)



# ‘Facilitating Intercultural Dialogue in Open Youth Work in Europe’

## Training for Experienced Youth Workers and Volunteers September 22-29, Kildare

Do you think the working methods which you are using in your youth organisation/club are getting old and not functional? Do you need inspiration and innovative methods? Are you interested in developing your skills as a trainer in international atmosphere? Are you keen to learn more from other youth leaders and trainers from various European countries?

With this Seminar we want to offer the youth leaders and trainers the possibility to develop their skills and knowledge on non-formal education methods around the themes of intercultural learning and human rights education.

### We aim to:

- Provide youth leaders and trainers from across Europe with the skills, knowledge and information relevant to being trainer in an all-inclusive youth work practice.
- Enable participants to provide training to other youth leaders and youth workers in their own communities and organisations.
- Discuss differences and similarities in youth work practices throughout Europe

- Develop and explore training tools and practices from different areas.
- Create a space to share best practices and develop co-operation among participants from ECYC member organisations

### What next?

All candidates must apply using the application available through the ECYC website [www.ecyc.org](http://www.ecyc.org)  
Applications should be sent to ECYC Secretary General Rares Craiut by email at [ecyc@fcj.mp.be](mailto:ecyc@fcj.mp.be)  
Deadline for applications: 8th of July at 12:00 CET.

Application forms to be sent to ECYC Secretary General, Rares Craiut with the subject “ECYC Training for trainers” by email at [ecyc@fcj.mp.be](mailto:ecyc@fcj.mp.be)

Further information:  
Gunnar E. Sigurbjörnsson, Vice President, ECYC  
Email: [gunnars@ecyc.org](mailto:gunnars@ecyc.org)

Stijn Belmans, Vice President, ECYC  
Email: [stijn@ecyc.org](mailto:stijn@ecyc.org)



## A Volunteer's Perspective on National Quality Standards Initiatives for Volunteer-Led Youth Groups (NQSPLYG)

by Noel Watson

I'm a voluntary youth worker with an independent youth club called Southsiders and I also work voluntarily with The Talk About Youth Project, based in St Andrew's Resource Centre in Pearse Street.

I've been involved in voluntary youth work in one shape or form in this area, for my entire adult life, at this stage that adds up to 30 years. During those 30 years I have witnessed huge changes in the quality and delivery of services to the young people involved.

Gone are the days of packing as many kids as possible into a few privately owned cars and heading up to the Dublin Mountains for the day with no real planning, without proper insurance cover, consent forms or consideration of child protection guidelines.

I distinctly remember one incident back in the early 80s, travelling in convoy from a trip to Britas Bay beach with four lads packed into the back seat of an estate car, two more in the boot and one in the front seat, when the windshield of the car shattered. No one was particularly fazed by this, in fact it was a great adventure, a story to tell, to be exaggerated and retold, the driver elevated to the status of superhero. The car pulled over and a hole was knocked in the glass and we continued back to Pearse Street. There were no hysterical parents threatening to sue, no written reports, no insurance claims. Can you imagine what would be involved in an incident like that today? I think you may even be looking at prison time.

When I first became a youth worker these were the sort of issues that were just starting to be addressed and bit by bit methodologies were put in place to address them. Umbrella organisations like CDYSB and CYC were actively engaged in assisting with training and funding for youth groups. Hardly a year went by that I didn't take part in some form of

accredited youth work training. And over time this training has helped me to deliver a professional service to the young people I've worked with. As this training was brought back to clubs and groups it became the norm and the essence of a standard best practice was created.

Youth services have evolved, as has the volunteer youth worker. I was lucky that funding was available to support me in delivering a quality service, enabling volunteers and volunteer led groups to apply best practices to the work they do, ensuring a uniform standard of delivery of service no matter what area of youth activities the young people are involved in. It is unfortunate that this funding has been curtailed so stringently in recent times and is no longer available to those young people who are now volunteering.

Voluntary youth work is not just about organising a safe and secure space for young people to freely express themselves and have fun in, it is not just about ensuring that we have the right materials for the activity we are undertaking, or the correct ratio of youth worker to young people. It is also about assisting in the development of these young people. It is about enabling them to realise their full potential as active citizens within our society, of encouraging them to give back to the communities that have nurtured them.

As youth work and youth workers have evolved so too is it only natural that a uniform method of recording the work we do should evolve too. The National Quality Standards Framework will be an additional tool in the volunteers repertoire to ensure best practice continues in youth services across the country.

**Noel Watson is a volunteer with  
St. Andrew's Resource Centre**

[www.standrews.ie](http://www.standrews.ie)

# Tithe na nÓg

‘supporting young people to secure and establish sustainable accommodation’

by Delia Clarke



Tithe na nÓg is a Galway Diocesan Youth Service (GDYS) project that provides support and guidance to young people (18-25 years) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Galway City or County. The need for the project was identified through the work of the No.4 drop in centre – a long established service of GDYS that works with young people who are facing challenging times in their lives. Over a number of years the No.4 service identified that youth homelessness had become a significant issue requiring enhanced provision and resources.

The HSE provided initial funding to explore the need and potential benefits of a specialist youth homeless prevention service. In January 2009 a project leader was appointed and the service developed organically from that time. Initially based upstairs from the No.4 project, young people were referred informally to meet with the project leader and to explore individual needs and supports required. A pattern of need became evident over a few months, allowing formal processes and procedures to be developed and ‘Tithe na nÓg’ was established in June 2009. Since then the project has worked with 271 young people. In 2012 we reported a 71% positive outcome rate, meaning that 71% of young people we worked with moved from being homeless or at risk of homelessness into a stable housing situation.

## Approach to Project Delivery

Tithe na nÓg is based at a central location in the city and operates on both drop in and appointments basis. Young people can access services by self referral (phone, drop in or email) or by referral. An out of hours service is provided

up to 8pm Monday to Thursday inclusive. The project focuses on resolving the housing and related financing issues with the young person. However, the project aims to work holistically and encourages the young person to address any other issues they may also be experiencing, including mental health issues, debt, family conflicts and/or addiction issues. In doing this, Tithe na nÓg supports young people to link with specialist service providers and provides the link between agencies.

## Tithe na nÓgs’ Objectives are to:

- Facilitate young people to secure timely and suitable accommodation and avoid the need to utilise emergency accommodation.
- Support young people to move from emergency accommodation as quickly as possible into sustainable accommodation.
- Build the capacity of young people to manage independent living and stabilise their accommodation by offering training, education and support.
- Support young people to integrate into their new community and to access the support they need from local youth service providers.

The project has faced a number of challenges; identifying the appropriate age range to work with was a key issue for the project in the early stages. The No.4 Project in 2009 worked with young people from the age of 15 years to 25 years. Our project accepted all referrals from the No.4 project in the first 6 months. Regular evaluation and monitoring of the new service highlighted an issue for the project in its work with young people under the age of 18 years.

Child protection legislation for under 18 year olds was a concern and the challenge of working with young people who had left home under the age of 18 years presented a level of complexity for the service beyond the expertise of the project. The project sought the involvement and guidance of the social work department for all such cases. In reality this wasn't always readily available particularly when young 15, 16 and 17 year olds contacted the service in crises late in the working afternoon or called our out of hours service in the evening. After 6 months the project and the organisation board of management agreed to limit access to the service to 18 to 25 year olds only.

Partnership development was a key area for the project from the outset. A key challenge was defining and presenting the project as a unique service that was not overlapping with other services provision. In the first few months young people worked between services and on occasions this was not effective. Boundaries and roles were agreed with particular services such as The HSE After Care Team and with Emergency Accommodation. These agreements remain in place and ensure the young people receive the attention and support required and services are clear about their roles without fear of overlapping with Tithe na nÓg. Attending the Youth Homeless Forum meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss any issues that arise when working with young people we have in common. The Youth Homelessness Forum works in partnership with other homeless service providers and youth services providers across the City and County to:

- Ensure young people meeting the project remit are brought to the attention of the project.
- Provide a holistic service to young people.
- Share good practice and to address common issues including developing innovative approaches to meeting the needs of young people across agencies.

Key principles of the project are to:

- Provide a tailor made service for each young person.
- Develop a strong relationship between youth worker and the young person that is based on trust and transparency on both sides.
- Empower the young person to lead the process

and to learn the skills necessary to address the issues they are experiencing. Young people we have worked with over the years dip back into the project for information or advice when a housing issue reoccurs. An impact of Tithe na nÓg is evident from their ability to utilise this information and to address the issues with limited intervention from project staff.

- Work with integrity and guide young people to benefit from the services and financial supports available while encouraging the young person to broaden their horizons and work towards a sustainable lifestyle that is appropriate to their potential in the longer term.

In practice this requires services to be delivered through intensive one to one work, which forms the basis to our approach and is proven to be effective in supporting the young person to progress in a short period of time. Each young person is allocated a key worker from the Tithe na nÓg team. The key worker is often the first person to meet with the young person enabling the professional relationship to develop from the outset. The key worker meets with the young person regularly (about three times a week) to facilitate them to overcome the crises period and develop the trust. These appointments can involve accompanying the young person to social welfare appointments and viewing houses. Appointments can also be used to review the agreed action plan and deepen the understanding of the underlying issues experienced by the young person.

Young people working with the project have expressed appreciation for the clarity project workers have enabled them to bring to their situation. Homelessness or the risk of homelessness can overpower young people and alter their perception of all aspects of their lives. Working with the young person to identify and list the issues they are experiencing and prioritising the areas to be addressed can relieve the pressure for the young person and thereby improve their overall mental well-being. Knowing their keyworker will be on hand to take each step through the process with them is also said to be a strength of the project.

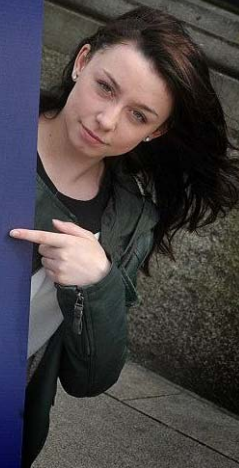
**Delia Clarke has a background in community development. She will have been the Tithe na nÓg Project Manager four years next month.**



# Policy Brief

by Michael McLoughlin  
Head of Advocacy & Communication  
Youth Work Ireland

# YOUTH WORK CUTS



The following are excerpts from a quarterly Policy Brief produced to better inform thinking and knowledge on policy issues relevant to the areas of youth and children. These will be short updates on current developments in national policy which may be useful.

## Young People Taking the Brunt of Recession

In a recent report the ESRI has highlighted the impact of the recession on young people and has concluded that the impact of recent economic change has been greatest on this group. The National and Economic Social Council has made similar findings particularly focussed on the issues of employment. It pointed out "Youth unemployment varies by county, with the highest rates in Limerick city (50%), Donegal (49%) and Wexford (47%). It was lowest in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown 27%, followed by Fingal, Cork county, Galway city and Dublin city"

### ESRI Report

[www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/RN20130104.pdf](http://www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/RN20130104.pdf)

### The NESC Report

[www.nesc.ie/en/news-events/press-releases/latest/the-social-dimensions-of-the-crisis-the-evidence-and-its-implications/](http://www.nesc.ie/en/news-events/press-releases/latest/the-social-dimensions-of-the-crisis-the-evidence-and-its-implications/)

## Youth Emigration a Huge Issue

The NYCI recently launched a report on Youth Emigration. "Time to Go?" is a qualitative study of the experience of emigration amongst young Irish people. It particularly focusses on those in the UK and Canada. The report points out "Over the past 2 years over a quarter of our population has been affected by the emigration of a close family member, and half of our 18 – 24 years olds have said they would consider emigrating themselves"

### Time to Go Report

[www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI\\_Youth\\_Emigration\\_Report.pdf](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI_Youth_Emigration_Report.pdf)

## Youth Related Questions

A number of youth related issues such as Youth Cafes, Garda Vetting and funding for Youth Diversion Projects have been raised in the Dail by a variety of deputies recently. Similarly cuts to youth work funding continue to be raised in Dail.

### Youth Work Cuts (Roisin Shorthall)

[www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2013-04-16a.95](http://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2013-04-16a.95)

### Youth Diversion Funding – (Brian Stanley)

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2013042300076#N43>

### Garda Vetting (Eric Byrne)

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2013042300077#N14>

## Child and Family Support Agency and Children's Services Committees

The Children's Rights Alliance held a conference on the new Child and Family Support Agency which was addressed by Gordon Jeyes and others. The event effectively laid out the need for a robust and integrated agency in this area but specifics are still hard to determine and legislation is awaited in the area. Children's Services Committees continue to be an important instrument in the work of the DCYA.

### Questions on CFSA (Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin)

[www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2013-04-16a.16](http://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2013-04-16a.16)

### Children's Services Committees (Roisin Shorthall)

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/dail2013041600095?opendocument#WRTT03550>

## Childrens and Young People's Policy Framework

Work on the Children's Policy Framework and the constituent Youth Policy Framework are nearing completion. There has been only limited scope for input through public consultation and the work of the National Children's Advisory Council. However at the same time it appears decisions are being made that may impact on the future of youth work. An NYCI delegation recently met with the Minister and it has been agreed that there will be more regular meeting and interaction with the voluntary sector.

Download the full Policy Brief  
from [www.youthworkireland.ie](http://www.youthworkireland.ie)





# The Youth Mental Health Scene in Ireland

by Dr. Barbara Dooley & Dr. Amanda Fitzgerald

MY  
WORLD  
SURVEY

NATIONAL  
STUDY OF  
YOUTH  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

What can the My World Survey tell us?

Given the significance of the important findings in the My World Survey (MWS) in terms of youth work practice, it may be of use to youth workers to read a more in-depth version of this report specifically prepared for youth workers by Dr. Barbara Dooley and Dr. Amanda Fitzgerald (UCD and Headstrong).

Read this report at  
[www.youthworkireland.ie](http://www.youthworkireland.ie)

The My World Survey (MWS) is the first national study of youth mental health in Ireland, looking at both risk and protective factors in young people aged 12-25 years. The MWS has established a national youth mental health database in Ireland. This database is intended to inform policy, allow us to measure the impact of innovative services such as Headstrong's Jigsaw initiative and provide a baseline for youth mental health.

Two versions of the MWS were devised, one for adolescents attending Second Level schools in Ireland (MWS-SL) and a second survey devised for young adults who are in Post-Second Level education (MWS-PSL). For the MWS-SL, 72 post-primary schools were randomly selected and 6,085 students completed the survey, with an average age of 14.92 years. Over half (51%) of the sample were female. In the MWS-PSL, 8,221 young people completed the survey with a mean age of 23.5 years, and 65% female.

This summary identifies mental health risk and protective factors that have relevance for youth work practice. This includes data in relation to distress levels, alcohol, the effect of bullying on young people, suicidal behaviour, the importance of talking and the role of a 'One Good Adult' in a young person's life. These are important considerations that can inform youth work practitioners when working with young people today.

## Key learning points relevant to youth work practice

When working with young people it is important to recognise that the number one health issue for them is mental health.

### Key risks are:

- Levels of distress increase through the teen years and peak in early adulthood.
- There are significant links between risky alcohol behaviour and mental health problems such as depression, stress and anxiety.
- Bullying negatively impacts on the mental health of young people and reduces protective factors associated with mental well-being.
- Financial stress in young people is linked to elevated distress, self-harm and suicide.
- Risk taking behaviour is linked to self-harm and suicide attempt.

### Key protective factors:

- Low risk alcohol behaviour is related to better mental health outcomes.
- Talking about problems is associated with better mental health outcomes.
- One Good Adult in a young person's life is a significant protective factor in a young person's wellbeing. This last point is particularly relevant to youth workers and it is worth noting that research with young people in Ireland has confirmed that having at least one caring adult in a young person's life can act as a buffer against distress and lead to positive psychological functioning.

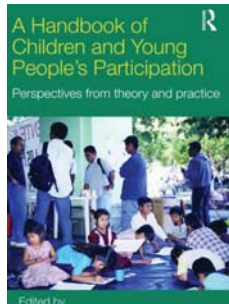
MWS provides an evidence base to support key youth work practices. For a youth work practitioner, engaging with young people and being that supportive adult and encouraging young people to talk, in particular males, is key to unlocking some of the distress that young people in Ireland today are experiencing. Promoting mental health awareness is key to healthy living in this age group and reducing stigma.

# New IYWC Library Resources

Just some of the resources held in the library at IYWC which relate to social inclusion and youth work

## A handbook of Children and Young People's Participation - Perspectives from theory and practice

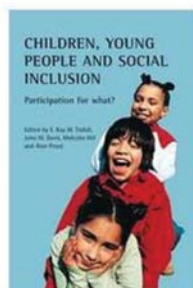
By Barry Percy-Smith and Nigel Thomas (Ed), 2010



This text brings together key thinkers and practitioners from diverse contexts across the globe to provide an authoritative overview of contemporary theory and practice around children's participation. Promoting the participation of children and young people – in decision-making and policy development, and as active contributors to everyday family and community life – has become a central part of policy and programme initiatives in both majority and minority worlds. This book presents the most useful recent work in children's participation as a resource for academics, students and practitioners in childhood studies, children's rights and welfare, child and family social work, youth and community work, governance, aid and development programmes.

## Children, Young People and Social Inclusion: Participation for What?

By John M. Davis (Ed)

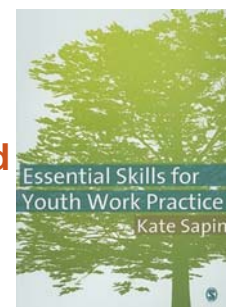


Social inclusion and participation have become policy mantras in the UK and Europe. As these concepts are being translated into policies and practice, it is a critical time to examine - and challenge - their interpretation, implementation and impacts. This book asks how far and in what way social inclusion policies are meeting the needs and rights of children and young people. Leading authors write from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, including social policy, education,

geography and sociology. The book critically examines the concepts of participation and social inclusion and their links with children and childhoods; considers the geography of social inclusion and exclusion; explores young people's own conceptualisations of social inclusion and exclusion; and examines how these concepts have been expressed in policy at various levels.

## Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice Empowering Youth and Community Work

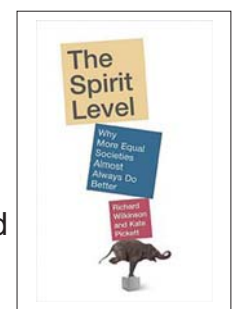
By Kate Sapin, 2008



This text appears on the reading lists of several youth and community modules taught in Ireland. A useful text, it analyses the key skills in youth work, ranging from the initial steps through to supervision, which can be applied across a variety of settings and roles. Throughout the book, practical examples grounded in participatory and anti-oppressive practice address the core values and the purpose of youth work. Suggestions for further reading, definitions, and theories are also provided.

## The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better

By Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, 2009

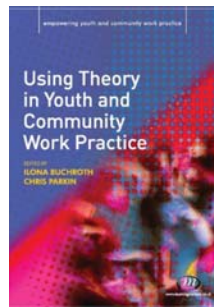


Everyone knows that the poor in rich societies are more likely to have shorter, less healthy, lives, to do less well at school and to end up on the wrong side of the law. But The Spirit Level goes further than this, to demonstrate for the first time that a whole range of social problems – from poor health to educational failure, from mental illness to obesity, from drug addiction to violence, from teenage births to the weakening of community life – share one overwhelming feature: they are all several times

more common in more unequal societies. The evidence that bigger income differences create more problems is conclusive. Rather than affecting just the poor, inequality reduces the quality of life for everyone in less equal. This groundbreaking book, based on 30 years research by two of the UK's leading social epidemiologists, provides a powerful and fascinating new perspective on the social failings of rich societies.

### Using Theory in Youth and Community Work Practice

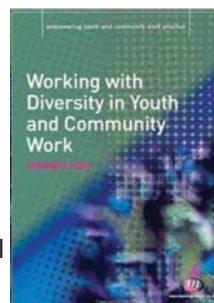
By Ilona Buchroth, Chris Parkin, Janet Batsleer and Keith Popple (Eds.) 2010



As the use of theory is an element of professional youth work practice that has received attention of late, both practitioners and students will find this book useful in developing their understanding. Practitioners will welcome the numerous real-world examples and exercises which will help them to apply their understanding of theory to their relevant practice situation. Key areas addressed by the authors include education, reflective practice and group work.

### Working with Diversity in Youth and Community Work

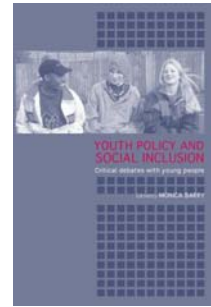
By Sangeeta Soni, 2011



This book provides solid practical exercises and techniques that can be applied to youth work with young people, whether they are from diverse backgrounds or not. Exercises and practical information on conversation, trust building and storytelling in youth work settings are presented along with easily understood discussions of key concepts related to diversity. The overall focus of the book is the nature of cross-cultural practice, an inevitable aspect of working as a youth and community worker in multicultural Britain today. It enables students to understand how cross-cultural dynamics can set the tone of their relationships and helps them to understand how individual action and some processes in society can contribute to the marginalisation of others.

### Youth Policy And Social Inclusion: Critical Debates With Young People

By Monica Barry, 2004



Addressing the context in the UK, this book includes contributions from such well known youth work and youth policy commentators such as Howard Sercombe and Williamson. Taking a holistic and multidisciplinary approach this book identifies and analyses the factors which promote or discourage social inclusion of young people in today's society. It critically examines the discriminatory attitudes towards young people and focuses on the 'problem' of adults rather than the 'problem' of young people themselves.

**The IYWC updates its holdings of publications every quarter using a dedicated budget to ensure that the most recent and relevant publications are available to youth work practitioners and students.**

**The publications listed above are just some of the new resources held in the library at the IYWC which relate to social inclusion and youth work.**

**These publications are available on loan to IYWC members. Members not able to visit the library in Dublin can avail of a postal lending service.**

**Contact [gina@iywc.ie](mailto:gina@iywc.ie) or see our website at [www.iywc.ie](http://www.iywc.ie)**

# Symposium on Social Inclusion

Wednesday June 26 2013

Youth Work Ireland National Office

The IYWC second symposium of 2013 will focus on the theme of Social Inclusion and will provide a space for practitioners to hear contributors and their collaborators speak on this topic, looking at the challenges for organisations, individuals and the sector of bringing social inclusion tools and practices into their work and asking the question "what now?".

## Programme

- 11:30 Registration  
tea/coffee and  
informal discussion.
- 12:00 Introductions  
(Matthew  
Seebach, Youth Work  
Ireland and Mary  
Robb, CDYSB).
- 12:15 Brief presentations  
from contributors.
- 1: 15 Light lunch and  
discussion groups  
with contributors.
- 2:45 Questions and  
Answers Sessions  
with contributors.
- 3:10 Close.

## Contributors

### **Delia Clarke, Galway Diocesan Youth Service**

Delia will discuss her contribution, 'Tithe na nÓg: Supporting Young People to Secure and Establish Sustainable Accommodation' and the role of relationships to support social inclusion.

### **Martin McMullan, YouthAction Northern Ireland**

Martin will discuss his contribution, 'Young people joining in with the world' and the importance of supporting young people in critical questioning and inquiry.

### **Susan Menton, St Andrew's Resource Centre**

Susan will discuss her contribution, 'Young People and Social Inclusion - where to begin!' and taking a whole organisation approach to the participation of young people.

### **Deirdre Bermingham, Youth Work Ireland Galway and Anne Walsh NYCI**

Deirdre will discuss her contribution, 'Creating A Space: A Youth Service's Journey to Social Inclusion' while Anne will discuss how to take a whole organisational approach to social inclusion and diversity.

### **David Carroll, Belong To and Leanne Sweeney, Carlow Regional Youth Service**

David will discuss the experience of assisting to establish projects like, 'My Unique Identity' and the challenges to social inclusion in the wider youth work sector. Leanne will discuss her article 'My Unique Individuality'.

### **TJ Hourihan, YMCA**

TJ will discuss his contribution, 'Addressing Interculturalism in NEETS - Not in Education, Employment or Training Programme Provision - The STEP Programme' and how a global perspective can inform efforts towards social inclusion.

Tickets for this event are **FREE of CHARGE**  
however there is limited availability and places will  
be issued on a first come first served basis.

<http://sceneinclusionsymposium.eventbrite.ie>



Irish Youth Work Centre



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