

INSIDE

IRISH YOUTH WORK CENTRE'S

Scene

MAGAZINE

OUTCOMES IN YOUTH WORK

Contributions from
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Louise Cadwell &
Janice McGarry



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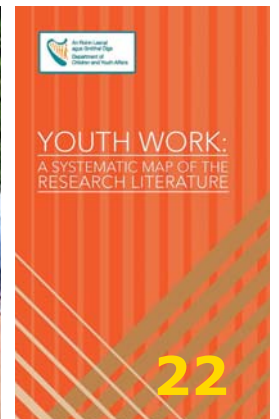
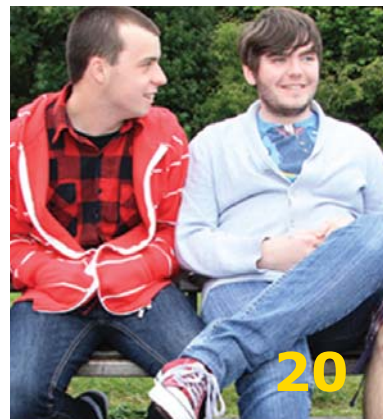


Scene Magazine

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A word from our CEO...

Calling on the government to recommit to the young people of Ireland and to the youth work sector

Young people and youth organisations all over the country are only too well aware that the current recession is negatively impacting more on young people than on every other sector. Youth unemployment stands at a staggering 28.6% which is more than double the equivalent figure for 2008 (13.3%). Youth emigration has also grown hugely with over 200,000 young people having left these shores in search of a better life since 2008. There simply aren't sufficient jobs, training or educational opportunities available for young people in Ireland. Through the imposition of successive severe cuts to annual budgets, this current government is compromising the ability of the youth work sector to respond to the needs of young people and to work with them to find creative ways forward and new solutions for exiting this crisis.

As a nation we are letting our young people down and preventing them from playing an active part in forging a better and more just future for our country. In their pre-budget submissions many of the national youth organisations including Youth Work Ireland have reminded the government to this reality once again.

Budget 2014 is scheduled for 15th October. We call on the government to develop and implement a comprehensive Youth Unemployment Strategy which is adequately resourced, to prioritise the Youth Guarantee Scheme and to impose no further cuts to the youth work sector. Currently all over the country there are innovative and creative programmes implemented by the youth work sector which are bringing young people closer to the labour market and help young people to move from labour to work. These initiatives must be further supported and resourced, replicated where appropriate and expanded to meet local needs. The government must see that the youth work sector is and can increasingly be a significant part of the solution to our current crisis. They must believe in young people and believe in the youth sector.

Dr. Patrick J. Burke

CEO, Youth Work Ireland





Using an Outcomes Focused Approach in Youth Work

by Dr. Sue Redmond, Foróige

Outcomes and Accountability

Outcomes have been a hot topic for the past few years. Many funders and managers have started to incorporate outcomes as a key way to focus work carried out with young people. Very simply, outcomes are what you hope to achieve with the young people you engage. As well as this, they increase facilitator's accountability to the programme and the young people as they focus on outcomes or results they would like to see at the end of their engagement with participants.

Debate Between Process and Outcomes

Some people talk about preferring process to outcomes (or vice-versa) with a concern that if you focus on outcomes that you can forget the process. However, to achieve an outcome there needs to be a process and both are necessary as you can't have one without the other. When we have a really good process we also achieve really good outcomes. To try to separate them from each other denies their interconnectedness. Indeed quite often in youth work we also generate many unexpected outcomes, both good and bad.

Flexible, Focused and Achievable!

When you think of outcomes ask yourself this question: 'When I see this young person at the end of this programme (or in several years), what would I like them to be able to do as a result of their engagement with me?' Being outcomes focused means that you always have the particular goal or outcome in mind, and it means that you can be more flexible in your approach and change the activity or methodology depending on how the young

person engages and their particular learning style. If you, as the facilitator, have a clear picture of the outcome you are working towards then you can ditch an activity if it simply isn't working and be reflective-in-action and come up with a different approach to achieving the same outcome. Quite often as facilitators we get protective over the work we've put into developing a session or an activity and don't want to let go of our hard work. When you are focused on the outcome of, for example, improving team work you can replace an unsuccessful activity with many others and even draw on the group to come up with some ideas to still achieve the same outcome.

What Outcomes are Most Useful?

This depends on your programme or intervention. Some projects focus specifically on youth offending behaviour and seek to reduce impulsiveness, increase empathy and enhance pro-social behaviour in a way to reduce youth crime. Other projects focus on youth development and seek to enhance specific areas such as literacy and may use methodologies such as cooking from a recipe to achieve this outcome. Other youth workers may want to improve outcomes such as young people's ability to work as part of a team and communicate assertively and use different team building and communication activities to achieve these goals.

How to Plan Using Outcomes?

Three important steps occur in developing an outcomes focused plan: firstly you need to carry out a needs assessment and determine exactly what the particular needs or strengths of the young people you are working with are. Secondly, you need to develop your plan to meet these needs, with a focus on clear, realistic and achievable

outcomes. Finally, you need to evaluate to see what outcomes you have achieved.

Needs Assessment

The first thing to do is to look at the needs and assets (strengths) of your group. What areas are they particularly strong in and consider how you can build on these strengths? What areas do they have particular needs in? e.g. health or emotional well-being, anger management and emotional control, or low literacy and numeracy levels. Once you have identified your needs and assets you can begin to make your plan. Foróige have developed a **Needs & Assets Resource**¹ and this may be useful to you and may support you in identifying needs and assets with young people.

Planning

Once you have identified the needs and assets the young people have you can then decide what outcomes are realistic and achievable to work towards. In this case you could start to develop a plan using a logic model. There are other planning tools available but we find this extremely useful in Foróige, ensuring everyone speaks a common language. A logic model is a simple plan that takes account of the needs or the situation arising, and from here outcomes both short and longer term are identified. Once the outcomes are set then the activities or interventions to be used to achieve the outcomes are developed. It is important to revisit your plan regularly. Does the plan still stand or have certain things changed? It is also important to consider if there are any assumptions you have made about the participants or their involvement, as well as whether there are any external factors that may prevent or enhance your progress?

Foróige have developed a **Logic Model Resource**² and this may support you in developing a logic model plan. We also use logic models with young people to help them to have a say in the development of their plans, as well as for them to develop their own plans in projects such as citizenship and leadership.

Evaluation

The final step is evaluation. Once the plan has been executed it is important to revisit it and see what was

achieved and why, as well as what wasn't achieved and why. Evaluation is a crucial step as it ensures that the rich information from the programme is used to inform future programmes and ways of working. Evaluation can be formal or informal, it can be quantitative/qualitative, it can focus on the process or on the outcomes. Evaluation isn't something to be afraid of as every youth worker is continually evaluating their work. The important part is to plan your evaluation and record your findings which makes it more robust and objective. Foróige commissioned the Child and Family Research Centre to develop an **Evaluation Resource**³ which may support you in evaluating your work.

To sum up, using an outcomes focused approach to work ensures that the needs of the young people are being met and that the limited time you have as a youth worker is being used to best serve the young people, their families and ultimately society as a whole. We have also found that using logic models in an organisation wide way has helped make planning easier, quicker and more focused. Feedback from many of our staff has been that it has revolutionised the way they think about developing their programmes in a much more simple and effective way.

Dr. Sue Redmond is Manager with Foróige's Best Practice Manager Unit

See www.foroige.ie

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¹ What's the Focus? Needs & Assets for Foróige Staff / Foróige's Best Practice Unit, 2013

² What's the Plan? A Logic Model Resource for Foróige Staff / Foróige's Best Practice Unit, 2013

³ How are we doing? An Evaluation Resource for Foróige Staff / Foróige's Best Practice Unit, 2013

These publications are available to download from the Foróige website at www.foroige.ie/about/publications





The Gap for Measuring Outcomes in the National Context

by Janice McGarry

This article reflects on the use of the Youthpass tool and shows how such a tool can assist in measuring outcomes with young people.

The absence of an agreed and universally used outcomes evaluation tool in the national context leaves the outcomes of youth work programmes invisible.

The implementation of the NQSF has acknowledged the standards in youth work practice for youth work organisations, but there is still a gap in terms of how we measure youth work outcomes. The Minister, in recent speeches, has suggested that youth work needs to be more visible to highlight the soft skills gained for young people through participation in youth work programmes.

In my own opinion youth work goes further than supporting the development of soft skills, young people are gaining key competence for participation in society that we need to make more visible.

Measuring Outcomes in the European Context

During the last nine months St. Michael's Youth Project has provided opportunities for local young people from Inchicore and their youth workers to participate in a variety of European youth work programmes in Salzburg, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain

and Macedonia. In addition to these programmes we have hosted a short term EVS project "Express Yourself" involving Irish, Romanian, Finish and Lithuanian young people in a community enhancement project where they worked together and revamped the local community garden and painted a set of murals for the garden walls.

Participation in these programmes supports young people to feel a sense of solidarity with their peers, build tolerance of other cultures, beliefs and attitudes for everyday life. But more importantly young people develop a set of key competences for participation in civic life and the future employment market.

Competences gained through participation in European youth work programmes are measured using a tool which was developed by the European Commission. This measurement tool is called Youthpass. A competence is defined as the possession of a required skill, knowledge, qualification or capacity to perform an action.

Youthpass has three key aims:

- To promote the process of self reflection for identification of ones own learning.

- To provide recognition of non formal learning within the context of the Youth In Action Programme.
- To support the employability of young people and youth workers throughout the European Union.

The Youthpass certificate contains a set of eight headings which are the eight key competences:

- Digital competence
- Mathematical and scientific competence
- Learning to learn
- Communication in a foreign language
- Communication in the mother tongue
- Cultural awareness
- Social and civic competence
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

How do we measure the learning outcomes with regard to these key competences?

We don't, the young person does! This is the beauty of Youthpass. As mentioned previously the young person is responsible for identifying

their own learning through the process of self reflection. Youth workers are using a variety of creative methods to support young people with this process. The following article was written by one of our young people following her participation in a short term EVS project. This article demonstrates how the volunteer developed her competence in some of the areas above.

Young Persons Article

This year I participated in an EVS project for one month in Moldova. It was my first time to travel alone and it was also my first time to live away from my family. Travelling through the different airports was a challenge as I didn't know how to connect flights. I had to ask a lot of questions I felt a bit paranoid doing this as some of them didn't understand, but when I landed I felt very proud of myself. It was an achievement in itself not to have missed my flight.

When I arrived I met with my mentor who gave me my pocket money allowance and my food allowance. This was another challenge as it was my first time to shop, prepare and cook food for myself. I had €70 per month for food which didn't seem enough at the time. I had to calculate how much I could spend per day and then figure out what to buy. I had to ask my mentor for recipes. My next challenge was using the transport system. It was very different. There was no limit to the amount of people who could get on the bus. This was very different. When I got on I would pay the driver and he would pass my change back through other people on the bus. The host family that I stayed with did not have any English and my Romanian lessons hadn't started. I Googled different phrases to find a way of communicating with them. I volunteered at the Case de familia in Don Bosco with Don Sergio who was an Italian priest. He didn't speak English or Romanian but we found a way to communicate through sport, art and music.

I was responsible for afterschool activities with the children and some basic English lessons. One day I didn't know what to do so I "Googled" origami and did it the next day with the children. I loved being there, we all communicated with smiles and I always felt welcome.

Measuring the Outcomes through Youth Pass

When the EVS project was complete we met to evaluate the project and to complete the youth pass process. These are some of the competence areas identified by the volunteer as a result of her experience.

Mathematical and Scientific Competence

I had to use my brain to solve problems for myself. I had to work out my budget to make sure I had enough money for every day. It was challenging but that was a good thing because I learnt a lot.

Sense of Initiative, Entrepreneurship and Communication in my Mother Tongue

When I could not communicate with my host family or the people I worked with I had to "Google" phrases which would help me to communicate with them. This worked and it really helped me to develop my relationship with them as it was fun when I would make mistakes they would help me to pronounce the words correctly. On the day that I wasn't sure what to do I Googled Oragami in a YouTube video and ran the same activity with the children.

Social and Civic Competence

Living in Moldova and understanding the way of life there helped me to adjust to certain customs like the public transport, eating in

restaurants, understanding their social context.

Current Actions

As a result of a round table discussion organised by Leargas during their Youth Day at Croke Park in March of this year a group of youth work managers and youth workers agreed to meet in October to explore the possibility of developing a tool in the Irish context. Léargas is working to engage key stakeholders in conversation on this topic using the experience of Key Competences and Youthpass from the European context as a base point for the developing a "National approach" or something like it.

This tool would be similar to Youthpass in that it uses a similar framework, it would recognise non-formal learning and it would identify a set of key competence relevant to youth work practice in the national context. The development of such a tool in Ireland would address key policy issues such as youth unemployment. This tool, similar to Youthpass would support the employability of young people and give recognition for non-formal learning and key competence gained through local and national youth work programmes which would in turn make youth work more visible in the national and European contexts.

Janice McGarry is manager with St. Michael's Youth Project.

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Critical Incidents: Our experience, our response and our plans

by Adam Byrne

“Even though you’re fed up you gotta keep your head up”

Earlier this year, Carlow town was shaken by the deaths of a number of young people by suicide. The impact on friends, family and the wider community was immense. This is a story of resilience, of how young people, youth services and the community have responded.

Carlow Regional Youth Service worked closely with a number of young people affected by the deaths. The National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) worked to help the schools cope in the aftermath of these critical incidents. However, grave concern was expressed for those young people affected, who were not in these particular schools or attending any school.

Our responses had to be measured and appropriate. We extended our opening hours in our Youth Café to provide a safe space for young people to meet and grieve together. The value of trusting relationships in youth work was an essential factor in this response. This focal point

facilitated youth workers to engage with young people and offer supports. We identified the young people about whom we had particular concerns. Our specialist services provided intensive support; these included our counselling services and further individual work through our Garda Youth Diversion Project and our Youth At-Risk Project. One of the young people who died was a keen football player with the local GAA club. The club asked us contribute to an information evening for parents and young people. Strong links with the local community made this possible.

Such was the impact of the death of these young people on their friends, that widespread concern was raised amongst youth workers, parents and staff from other agencies. We used our links with NEPS and the relevant schools to highlight our concerns. NEPS responded by implementing their critical incident protocols in a wider range of schools. We linked with the HSE and Co. Carlow Children and Young People’s Services Committee to highlight our concerns. This initiated an interagency critical incident meeting.

At the time there was no interagency protocol for such incidents. There was a dire need for a co-ordinated and managed multidisciplinary response. The outcomes of these meetings identified particular young people thought to be ‘at-risk’ and matched support persons for them. A small working group was also set up to identify ways to

strengthen community resilience over the medium and long term. Other positive results included information evenings for the community led by HSE Child and Adolescent Psychology Service. The aim of these information evenings was to communicate to parents and young people the range of support services available to them and how they could support each other in times of crisis.

Carlow Regional Youth Service continued to operate its flexible and measured response for the young people affected by the deaths. We ran a series of open workshops where young people worked together to develop and display a slogan of support: **'Even though you're fed up you gotta keep your head up'**. In addition, our Garda Youth Diversion Project responded to the need of their clients by establishing a Bereavement Support Group. The group has developed their own social enterprise whereby the proceeds of their work go towards support services for those affected by suicide.

We had to be mindful of a number of factors to ensure that our response was measured and appropriate to meet the emerging needs of the young people. We had to constantly review the response to the incident to ensure the appropriate level of resources were available. Consideration was also given to scaling back the response at the appropriate time.

There was also a pressing need to support and resource our staff. We had to be attentive to the possibility that staff and volunteers could be affected by the deaths. This support happened through informal and as well as formal group debriefing sessions with an outside facilitator. Another consideration

"The Vault in Carlow are very helpful when people are in need. They are so supportive, after one of my friends died they put us in a group to check up on us"

Young person from Bereavement Support Group.

"The Vault is a great place if you need to talk to someone and has helped me through tough times"

Young person from Bereavement Support Group.

"The Youth Service helped us a lot, it kept me occupied and it gave me something to look forward to. The workers are really friendly"

Young person from Bereavement Support Group.

"The Vault youth service helped us a lot by talking about feelings and emotions"

Young person from Bereavement Support Group.

was confidentiality. Even though the events surrounding the critical incidents in the community were very much in the public domain it was critically important to ensure that individual's privacy was respected.

The importance of a critical incident plan on a number of levels is evident. At present, a county wide plan is being developed by Co. Carlow Children and Young Peoples' Services Committee. We too are developing our own organisational critical incident plan to ensure we contribute to the best possible outcomes for young people involved in our service. Our experience has shown that the existence of strong partnerships and positive interagency relationships can bolster these wide ranging responses.

Effective partnership has been a major challenge for the Irish public service and partner organisations, for some time now Government policy has placed an emphasis on integrated services. Collaboration and partnership between Government agencies and organisations has become a key concept underlying how services are provided to children and families.

When communities experience a crisis, these co-ordinated and managed responses are critical to providing the right responses, at the right time, by the right people.



Adam Byrne is a senior youth worker with Carlow Regional Youth Service

For more information see Carlow Regional Youth Service

**www.carlowys.ie
www.facebook.com/TheVaultcry**



“There’s no getting away from evidence in the youth work field”

by Dr. John Bamber

The context for youth work in many parts of the world is about accountability, results, measurement, and evaluation. At its heart is the drive to secure effectiveness and efficiencies through market mechanisms such as competition, commissioning and contracting. These require ever greater levels of planning and specification of results in advance, as well as more stringent monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and they bring in their wake burdensome levels of oversight and bureaucracy (Bamber, 2000). **Box 1** provides one example of a report form currently being used in England, in which the focus is on one session of 2 to 3 hours. The questions have to be completed following every single engagement with young people.

Box 1: Report Form from one Session in Youth Work

- What curriculum outcomes areas are you seeking to address (Every Child Matters – 5)?
- Were the planned objectives met?
- Describe the process
- Quality of youth work (7 point scale)
- Issues raised by young people?
- Actions for next session - responsibility?
- Attendance register (DoB/postcode/M-F/outcome achieved)
- New client registration forms
- Hate incident (nil return), sexual health intervention, drugs incident

Learning Outcomes

What do the young people know, understand, value or are able to do better, as a result of taking part in this youth work activity?

Such questions may be useful to promote professional learning and development after a considerable length of engagement, when relationships have had time to develop between workers and young people. Suitably modified they may be useful for research or evaluation purposes, or even as a basis for external assessment in the form of inspection. They are too many and too complex to be meaningful in the timeframe proposed, and they lack a proper understanding of the youth work process, and of how people learn and develop.

During the current world-wide recession with its immense pressure on the public funding, the lack of evidence of effectiveness is a major challenge. After hearing from expert witnesses from across the sector, a House of

Commons Committee of Enquiry into Services for Young People in England concludes (2011, Para 30):

Despite the weight of individual testimonies, we experienced great difficulty in finding objective evidence of the impact of services, whether in the guise of thematic research studies by academics and independent bodies, or of evaluations of individual services. This problem plagued our investigations and was recognised by many in the youth sector itself as a historic and continuing problem (our emphasis).

By 'objective' the Committee means being able to detect intended outcomes while at the same time proving that these outcomes were caused by particular interventions. It is a 'cause and effect' model. Starting with this premise inevitably leads in the direction of evidence-based programmes which are deemed to have predictable and repeatable results assuming strict fidelity to the programme manual (see **Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development - www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints**). A common characteristic of evidence-based programmes, however, is that they are premised on a deficit model, which means that they are targeted at particular individuals, groups or populations that are considered to be at risk, in trouble or troublesome. Such programmes would appear to be at odds with youth work, which is more likely to regard social conditions as problematic rather than the young people who suffer from them.

Another problem is that the research paradigm upon which the programmes are judged to be proven is the so called 'gold standard' that requires the use of control groups to detect differences between those who have and those who have not participated in the provision. It is not that youth work is deficient because it cannot meet this requirement but that the standard itself is not ideally suited for a practice that is essentially fluid and responsive. For these and other reasons, a credible alternative to the gold standard is needed, one which in its own way is robust and rigorous while being realistic. In search of an alternative, the starting point is to accept that the evidence challenge poses three valid questions to youth work:

1. What does youth work do?
2. What difference does it make (outcomes)?
3. Can the outcomes be attributed to youth work interventions?

It is important to understand that youth work is concerned with personal and social development. In the words of Merton et al (Youth Affairs Unit, 2004: 5):

There is widespread consensus that youth work's core purpose is the personal and social development of young people, provided through informal education. Linked to this, its purpose is increasingly framed in terms of its contribution to social inclusion [and] the development of social capital.

It is useful to think, therefore, of a spectrum of outcomes, with micro level changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours at one end, and macro level change in systems, institutions, and socio-economic conditions at the other. In the middle there are 'meso' level changes in practices, agencies, local communities, and local services. While change at the micro level is increasingly favoured by funders and policy makers, change at the meso level is not sufficiently appreciated in terms of its potential to demonstrate outcomes in youth work. One example of this could be seen at the Impacts and Outcomes Conference in May 2011 in London, organised by Children and Young People Now (CYPN). At this event there were many examples of changes in service provision, for example from directors of social services, housing, and health services, as a result of the participation of young people in planning, decision-making and evaluation. This is important evidence of outcomes that are not confined to personal development. Moreover, it is credible, external evidence and research is not necessary to confirm this. Crucially, given the comments from the UK enquiry that we referred to earlier, it does not depend on stories from youth workers themselves.

Importantly, research in the sector is beginning to focus on outcomes. As a consequence, it becomes easier to explain the results of youth work to outside audiences. **Table 1** (below) presents findings from research undertaken in Ireland by Devlin and Gunning (2009).

Outcome Area	Sample Outcome Statements
Attitudes, Beliefs	Participants are more ready to take on new and more diverse experiences Enhanced confidence, self-esteem, awareness (personal and social) More open to people from diverse backgrounds
Knowledge	Increased knowledge about youth development milestones Increased knowledge of group dynamics More informed about health, sexuality, the law, careers and formal education
Skills	Enhanced capacity regarding: public speaking , problem solving, self-efficacy, making decisions, critical thinking Enhanced interpersonal abilities in relation to: teamwork, group work, communications Increased abilities in arts and creativity regarding: music, dance, drama and writing Increase in physical competence in relation to: sports, games and outdoor activities
Behaviour	More engagement in structured and constructive activities Increased involvement in decision-making Enhanced positive and pro-social behaviour and diminishing negative and anti-social behaviour

More recently, to take another example, the Young Foundation in the United Kingdom produced **Noticing the Change: a framework of outcomes for young people – in practice** (www.youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Presentation-FINAL.pdf). Although focused on individual change, as opposed to social change outcomes, it does draw attention to theory, it is based on credible research studies, and it provides a careful look at ways of measuring development in youth work.

There is also increasing clarity about the concept of youth work itself. Although there are differences of view within the youth work community there is also a significant degree of consensus and overlap. In England, the **In Defence of Youth Work Campaign** (www.indefenceofyouthwork.org.uk/wordpress/?page_id=837) recently produced a book of well documented accounts of youth work in practice. From this it can be clearly seen that the work is value-led, dialogical, empowering and educative. It is now important to communicate this to other people outside of youth work, and in a language that they can understand. This is crucial, especially given the lack of independent corroboration of youth work from research.

To meet the challenge of corroboration, there is a need for an ‘evidence informed approach’. The term is used to describe practice based on the integration of experience, judgement and expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research. This approach involves sifting information gleaned from research and other sources such as practice wisdom, policy and consultations with users and experts.

An ‘evidence matrix’ could be used to marshal the range of available sources to inform understandings of youth work and to support practice (**Table 2 below**).

Workers could use such a matrix to make explicit and draw from accumulated practice wisdom – their own and the work of others. They could also try to locate independent research that is relevant to their area or topic, for instance in journals or through using search engines. An example of relevant research can be found in: **Youth Work: A Systematic Map of the Research Literature**

(www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/YouthWorkLR.pdf) produced by the EPPI Centre at the Institute of Education in London. Although the systematic map is by no means a full representation of the richness and variety of youth work practice, it is nevertheless the first such account of the relevant international research to date. When finalised, the map will provide a valuable database of research that will be available to the field.

What the workers would be seeking to achieve could also be informed by consultation with young people, who would help to establish the nature or extent of the need, issue or opportunity, and what is to be done in response. The worker’s thinking might also be strengthened by appropriate theoretical sources such as learning theory or community development theory. If an evaluation of their work has been conducted, or if an external assessment has been made, for example, through a formal inspection, then this information would also be available.

The workers may also access the often web-based and easily accessible ‘grey literature’, which contains unpublished sources, government reports, materials and resources that offer valuable information about experience in different parts of the world, or about practices, strategies, tools and materials that have been found to be useful.

A recent example is the **Route Map to Resources** (www.effectiveservices.org/our-work/National-Quality-Standards-Framework), produced by the Centre for Effective Services, Dublin, in support of the Irish National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work. The sources represent a valuable body of reliable knowledge that underpins and therefore gives credibility to youth work.

In conclusion, it has to be accepted that accountability is necessary, especially where public funds are concerned. It is more than a financial requirement, however, since accountability should be to a range of stakeholders with an interest in the well-being of young people, including young people themselves. It is also necessary to counter the claim that there is no objective evidence of impact in youth work, or that the only route to reliable evidence comes through meeting the ‘gold standard’ of research.

Table 2: An Evidence Matrix in Youth Work							
Level	Research	Theory	Grey Literature	Practice Wisdom	Consultation	Monitoring and Evaluation	External Assessment
Specific Intervention							
Area of Work							
Sector							

Instead, a more nuanced evidence-informed approach is needed, which is based on the integration of experience, judgement and expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research. If it is done rigorously, however, it may also help to substantiate the work at a time when the need to defend youth work has never been greater. Perhaps above all there is a need to remember that in comparison to major budget areas such as education, health, welfare, youth work attracts little support. In this case it is vital to maximise the impact of the resources to hand. Arguably, the best chance of achieving this is through fidelity to a well-defined, well understood and generally accepted youth work process.

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Irish Youth Work Centre

“Moving Beyond Survival Mode – Focusing on What’s Good in our Work” Networking and Sharing Session for Youth Workers

DATE: Wednesday, November 20

FACILITATOR: Liz Harper

WORKSHOP CONTENT:

Youth workers rarely have opportunities to meet, reflect, and share in a space free of the demands placed on them by funders, their own organisations, and the stresses that come with working in a social profession. This session is a new initiative from the Irish Youth Work Centre that will provide an open space for youth work practitioners to meet, discuss, and share on the practice issues that are important to them. The session will use Open Space Technology methodology, an innovative and creative method of facilitation, which allows participants to set the agenda for the day based on their interests and concerns.

The theme for this session will be “Moving Beyond Survival Mode – Focusing on Good Youth Work Practice Now”, which will open a space for youth workers to think about their practice work in the context of the challenges that face the sector and focus on what is good about their practice. This session provides a comfortable and relaxed space for youth workers to share what interests and concerns them, with other like-minded practitioners. Participants are free to participate in conversations to the extent they wish; all participants and knowledge are valued.

This is an evening session and it is hoped that the event will to be followed by an opportunity for further socialising at a local venue.

COST: This is a free service from the IYWC

TO BOOK: For full training details and bookings go to www.iywc.ie or phone 01-8584512

TRAINING P

Good Practice in Assessing Needs, Planning for and Measuring Outcomes In Youth Work: Issues, Challenges and Future Practice

DATE: Thursday, October 10*

TRAINER: Siobhán McGrory

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This coaching and mentoring session will provide a small group of practitioners with the opportunity to assess current practice and further develop and progress their organisation's work in the area of needs assessment and planning for and measuring outcomes. This will include assessing organisational progress to date, diagnosing and troubleshooting challenges and planning for next steps. The session will be limited to a small group of (10) practitioners and will take place in a supportive learning environment.

WORKSHOP CONTENT:

- Assessing current practice in organisations
- Diagnosing challenges and difficulties
- Troubleshooting challenges in progressing your outcomes planning and evaluation
- Identifying strategies to overcome problems
- Planning the next steps within your organisation.

COST: €55.00

TO BOOK: For full training details and bookings go to www.iywc.ie or phone 01-8584512

***ALL BOOKINGS FOR THIS TRAINING MUST BE MADE BY OCTOBER 4TH**

PROGRAMME: autumn 2013

Working with LGBT Young People

DATE: Wednesday, November 13
TRAINER: Davide Carroll, BeLonGTo

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this training is to familiarise workers and volunteers on issues related to LGBT identified young people.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

- Language and Terminology
- The 'coming out' process
- What research tells us about the lives of LGBT young people in Ireland
- Ways to build an LGBT inclusive service

COST: This training is provided as a free service by the Irish Youth Work Centre and BeLonGTo

TO BOOK: For full training details and bookings go to www.iywc.ie or phone 01-8584512

Legal Issues for the Youth Worker

DATE: Wednesday, December 4
TRAINER: Michael McLoughlin, Youth Work Ireland

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The law has a major impact on people who work directly with young people. Often we feel intimidated or unsure about where we stand on what appear to be complex legal issues. This seminar is designed to cover some of the most basic legal concepts such as duty of care, data protection, children's rights, the criminal law etc. It is a basic introduction to concepts, however, and in no way constitutes formal legal training, but hopefully will provide useful guidance for those working with young people in the teenage years.

WORKSHOP CONTENT:

- Duty of care
- Data Protection
- Young people and criminal law
- Children's Rights

COST: €20

TO BOOK: For full training details and bookings go to www.iywc.ie or phone 01-8584512

Bodywhys Training for Youth Workers

DATE: Tuesday, October 29
TRAINER: Fiona Flynn Dăscălescu, Bodywhys

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this training is to provide youth workers with an understanding of eating disorders and to discuss how we can help to improve body image and self esteem in young people to help prevent eating disorders and improve well-being.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

- What eating disorders are
- Signs and symptoms
- Risk factors for developing an eating disorder
- Recovery
- How to approach a young person you are concerned about
- Dealing with related issues such as body image and self esteem with young people

COST: This is a free service provided by Bodywhys and the Irish Youth Work Centre

TO BOOK: For full training details and bookings go to www.iywc.ie or phone 01-8584512

The learning space the IYWC provides, both independently and in partnership with other agencies through workshops and symposia, ensures youth workers gain practical training tools and skills to help them in their work practice with young people.



Irish Youth Work Centre
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ADDICTED TO PROGRESS

Young people's journey in making a difference in their communities

by Rachel Kelly



The Finglas Youth Resource Centre hosted an exchange this July which involved 14 young people from Finglas and 7 people from Easter House in Glasgow. The theme of the exchange was addicted to progress, which got the young people to look at how addiction affects their community and what steps they can take to make a change in their community. The following piece is a reflection from both the young people and youth workers who participated in the exchange this summer.

The Finglas Youth Resource Centre promotes the Critical Social Education model of youth work, which encourages young people to critically evaluate the issues and circumstances that impact on their lives. Through participation in the Addicted to Progress exchange this summer their experience of being a young person in Finglas was explored as a way of raising consciousness of themselves, their community and wider issues. Through partnership with a group from Easter House in Glasgow the group explored similarities in the issues they face in their community.

The partnership with the group from Easter House began back at a contact making seminar with Léargas in June 2012 and from there both groups

worked together in partnership to develop a contact building exchange last February, where both groups got to meet each other for the first time and build a relationship with one another in Glasgow. It was during this exchange that the young people identified addiction as a common issue in both their communities. Identifying the issue of addiction laid the foundations for the theme of the second part of the exchange, which we hosted in July. The young people from both groups were actively involved in planning and decision making through group consultation where ideas were generated and put into action.

The exchange took place the first week of July, when the group traveled to Wicklow and Galway

together. During the time in Wicklow the group worked together in a group work setting, where they participated in various workshops around the Addicted to Progress theme.

From the workshops the young people identified issues which concerned them, and then identified the people or organisations who are responsible for the issues and for making changes. The young people did not just look at drugs and their effects, but the reasons drugs are prevalent in communities and looked at their role in the communities they live in. Below are just some of the findings of the group:

"I want my parents to listen be less strict and not yell"

"I can be the first step to change"

"I'd like schools to change the way they teach"



start to the finish. As a group of young people the overall impact was that they have now developed good friends outside of their smaller friendship groups and are also showing clear signs of future junior leadership.

This year, as a result of our exchange programme, we participated in the Youth Day 2013 hosted by Léargas.

There we got to promote what we were doing, but also got to see what other groups around the country were doing in regards to Youth in Action as well as make connections with these services and organisations.

Some advice that I would give anyone thinking of rolling out an exchange would be to make sure you allow for plenty of time for planning and preparing the group for such a project. In particular, preparing the group is essential during the actual exchange as it is really important that the young people are confident enough to be able to mix with other people and interact at a certain level to get the most out of the experience.

There is also great relationship development with both the young people and your co-workers throughout the whole experience due to the close working relationship that has to occur for this type of programme.

In doing another exchange some of the things I would do again would include:

“we built on our social skills during the whole process which has made us more confident”

Firstly, during the planning stages of an exchange there is an advanced planning visit (APV) that can be done, which I would strongly recommend to do. This is

where the visiting partner country visits the hosting country to plan for the exchange. The APV for us was very successful and a great asset to the overall planning of the exchange as it allowed both group leaders to discuss and plan for all young people that were going to be participating in the exchange so we were able for any situation that might have arisen.

Secondly, having the young people involved from the start is very much something that I would do, as it is a long process and to keep the buzz

My Learning and Suggestions

The overall experience of hosting an exchange and participating in the whole process brought new learning to me as a practitioner. At the beginning it was a daunting task that had begun and one that I questioned myself about. Looking back to the beginning I did not think that such a project would provide me with such knowledge and new skills as a youth worker. Participating in an exchange programme gets you looking more in depth at the community you work in, but also takes you out of this community which expands your thinking to a more national and global way. This, I feel, is very beneficial as when we are working in the one community for awhile we tend to get sucked in and not see the bigger picture.

Hosting an exchange also gets you to make links with other organisations and services, not only within your partner country, but through engaging in different events as a result of linking in with Léargas who provided the funding for exchanges.

“drug taking affects families friends and me”

“There can be negative consequences of all drugs, including alcohol”

“Business’s need to give young people a chance”

“There are not enough jobs to go around”

“The government should give business more money to create jobs”

“Teachers should resolve issues not fight with us” ”

During the time in Galway the young people developed their friendships and explored the different cultures and regions through activities and inputs from each other. This approach worked really well as it broke up the work that needed to be done with some fun elements.

I felt the overall impact to the young people’s participation on the exchange was very positive as individually they each developed in some way throughout the whole experience. In some young people, this development was more noticeable and could be seen in how they interacted and participated. However, each young person stood out in their own way and there were clear signs of development from the

going within the group it is needed to keep them fully engaged.

Thirdly, I would just make sure that you and the young people are able to commit to the whole project as a lot of time and

“communities in Scotland and Finglas have to deal with the same issues”

work goes into it, particularly when hosting an exchange.

If you are thinking of doing an exchange in your service my advice would be go for it as it is a great experience for all involved

and a piece of work that can influence so many peoples life's.

Rachel Kelly is a youth work with the Finglas Youth Resource Centre.



Young Peoples' Views on the Exchange Experience

Looking back on the exchange we feel that it was a good experience as we got to meet new people, who are now our friends. We also got to visit new places in Ireland this time around and also got to go to another country last February. By doing the exchange with the Glasgow group we got to learn all about their way of living and got to see the similarities and differences they have to us in their lives and their community.

Another good reason was that we built on our social skills during the whole process which has made us more confident.

The things that we feel were bad about the exchange were that sometimes not everyone participated or made an effort which was a pity because when everyone did it was much better and more fun. Other little things that we thought were bad were the midges in the Wicklow accommodation and that the Glasgow group was delayed getting to Dublin. Everything else was great about the exchange and we really enjoyed it and would love to do another one.

What we would like all the youth workers of Ireland to know about exchanges and why they should do one with their young people is that it is a great opportunity for them and their young people to get to know each other better and build a bond. It also helps young people to build new friendships and meet new people which helps boost young people's self-esteem and social skills. It's really good fun and you also get to bring them abroad and let's face it "everyone loves a break away"!

Youth exchanges are great fun, however you do have to put a lot of work in before, during and after but it's worth it. They do build on your confidence and you have to try get along with everyone including the leaders. Our advice if you are planning an exchange would be making the best of any bad situation if they happen and also consider everyone's opinion. We would also like you to know that it can be hard to be around people you are unfamiliar with for young people so take this into account when planning and try making it easier at the beginning.

Our last bit of information we would like you to know is that how much work you put into an exchange determines the result you get and also be positive



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Capturing and Documenting Outcomes in GYDPs

by Louise Cadwell



I have been involved in various capacities over the last fifteen years with Garda Youth Diversion Project's (GYDP's) and have seen many changes over that time. Regardless of changes, a number of things remain constant.

Firstly this group of projects have been about making things better for the young people who take part. Secondly, that while there has been much debate about the focus of the projects, what it should and shouldn't be, they are fundamentally about addressing youth offending.

Underlying this has been an understanding that there is a small group of young people who tend to be excluded from services and supports who will continue to offend into adulthood. Further to this, there is evidence that if we divert young people away from the traditional criminal justice agencies, we can interrupt this and reduce the likelihood that they will end up our criminal justice system as adults.

It was back in 1992 youth services were identified as well positioned to help to address this issue in partnership with local Gardaí. For good or bad we have been muddling our way through the challenges that this presents ever since. One of these

challenges, has been how we capture and document the work that we do and, as Dr. Swirak raises in her article, 'How can youth work assert its unique contribution to youth justice work' to the point at times of questioning whether or not it should?

When I started in youth work annual reports and plans, if compiled, tended to be vague, aspirational, and were rarely referred back to once the work started and you became consumed with the day to day pressures of running a project.

The pressure finally came to justify the money we were spending, but the focus was very much on outlining what we did with the money we got. Did we spend it on what we planned to spend it on? If we spent it on something different could we justify why we changed our plan? The content of these reports as a result, was on what the project workers did and what did the twelve months of spending this money comprise of. Unsurprisingly the resulting reports focussed on 'what we did', 'what we want to do in the near future' and 'what we think will happen... eventually'.

The challenge has always been that youth work doesn't happen within a time scale that fits easily into financial reporting deadlines or government circulars. If you have a young person in custody, you can say they came back within a year or they didn't, in

school They either sit and get their exams or they don't. In youth work it isn't that easy. Many of our toughest cases have taken five or even ten years to turn things around; having said that, I have also seen huge progress being made within one or two years.

Over the past ten years or so, I have had the privilege of working with some truly inspiring youth workers on how to communicate their work to those that fund them. As a result I have read a lot of plans and a lot of reports. What always struck me was that what I read often fell far short of what I knew was actually happening on the ground. What we were missing out on in the reports was in telling the stories of the young people we were with, their struggles, the obstacles that they overcame or even what we had done to help them over these obstacles.

The real reflection of the work came when the youth workers told their stories, when they spoke about the journey of a young person or the process that a group of young people had been through. This gave an insight into where the young people had started and what had changed for them as a result of their time with the project. I think often we could talk about what had been achieved or our outcomes. What we weren't good at, was putting this in writing.

How we have been asked to report is not the only challenge for youth work. I think our understanding of the work has altered over this period as well. We know now that there is no 'magical pill' that is a cure all. There is nothing about producing a DVD, painting a mural or learning how to rock climb that alters the path a young person is on in their life. However, we do know that these can be used as a vehicle for bringing about change in a young person's circumstances. So there are aspects of how we carry out that piece of work that we know can contribute to bringing about change in a young person's life.

Dr. Susan Redmond mentions some of these in her article. For example, if we take increasing empathy as our desired outcome. So this is what we have identified as being a key part of what will bring about change for a particular group and we decide that the method of choice is creating a DVD. At the start we rationalise that if the young people get to produce a DVD on their community, this process will help them to see the impact that their behaviour has on the community, they will begin to see things differently and the increased empathy for their community will begin to impact on their offending behaviour.

What can happen, and if truth be told I have done this myself, is the focus shifts from all that wonderful rhetoric about getting them to 'understand the impact of their

offending' to getting that task of the DVD completed. What can end up happening is that the DVD gets completed, but somewhere along the way we forget, didn't get time for, or it becomes too difficult to do the reflective piece of the work that may have supported a change in the young people's ability to empathise. Dr Redmond puts this really well. She talks about us getting 'protective' over 'the work we've put into developing a session or activity', all the effort goes into the task, rather than the process or on achieving the outcome.

So while changing from this system of reporting has been tough and was alien for a lot of us who were used to the focussing on 'what did you do?', I have to agree with Dr Redmond that there is an 'interconnectedness' between process and outcomes. If done well, this way of planning can actually support the work to remain true to what we started out wanting to achieve.

In other words we know something about what can support a positive change, there is an evidence base for what we are doing. What is important is that we make sure this remains a focus in our planning and in how we deliver our work. To a certain extent, the current shift to an outcomes focussed approach appears to be supporting youth workers to do this.

The youth workers I have spoken to, both in CYC/Crosscare and on the

(NUIM) Certificate in Youth Justice that I help run, have found this a really challenging and steep learning curve. When I talk to them now, after using it for a couple of years, they talk about how it helps them to remember why they are doing what they are doing. That it helps to keep them focussed on what part of the work is important and helps them remember the small achievements that they make with young people.

Not all of our youth workers have made peace with this way of planning and reporting. Some believe that the outcomes being prescribed for GYDP's are restrictive, and don't sit well with a youth work approach. That focussing on outcomes like empathy, impulsiveness and pro-social behaviour is more about control and less about the positive development of young people. Others argue that much of what youth work was already doing was addressing these issues well before now and the only thing different is how we talk about it. Remembering of course that we aren't limited to these three outcomes and our challenge is to balance these with outcomes that are about positive development.

The key difference for me is the reports I get now go closer to telling the story of the young people that we are working with. It is the young person's story, not our story that is important. This approach communicates their story much clearer than before and in turn gives an insight into the hard work carried out by youth workers. What's more is we make it easier to understand what we can achieve by using this, often hard to explain, way of working to those who don't work in youth work.

Louise Cadwell
Crosscare/CYC

cross  care



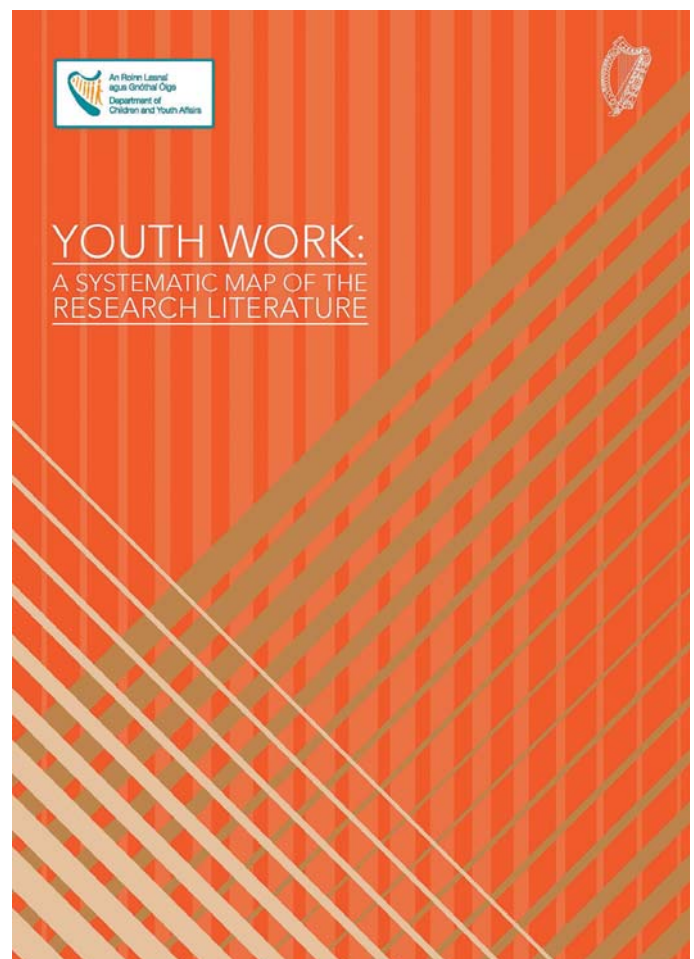
In this article three youth workers Leighann Ryan Culleton, Fran McVeigh and Alan Hayes, give their commentary on **Youth Work: A Systematic Map of the Research Literature**, a publication commissioned by the Centre for Effective Services and published by the DCYA.

A comment by Leighann Ryan Culleton, Carlow Regional Youth Services

The systematic map was commissioned by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) as part of a wider project seeking to develop an evidence informed 'Youth Policy Framework'. By definition an evidence informed approach helps people and organisations make well - informed decisions by putting the best available evidence at the heart of practice development and service delivery. In short the main aims and objectives of the systematic map are therefore to provide an overview of the research evidence literature and to identify gaps in future research.

While one of the major limitations of this report is the fact that the majority of the research reported on is USA based, it is important to note that this is the first systematic international map of youth work research. Furthermore the map provides a tool for policy-makers, practitioners and academics interested in interrogating and developing the evidence base further.

For a youth work practitioner it provides a valuable resource that has the potential to positively improve the content, the process and the evaluation of youth work practice. The map provides evidence based validation for the youth work approach; a catalyst for future Irish based research which is currently very limited; awareness of the importance of recording and reporting on 'what works' and finally it encourages practitioners to be more creative and inclusive during the evaluation stage. Overall using an evidence informed approach to youth work is much more likely to lead to effective action when combined with a broad collection of accessible knowledge that is drawn from practice and theory as well as research (Schorr, L., 2003: 21-21).



The full document can be viewed at:

<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/Publications/YouthWorkLR.pdf>

About the Author: Leighann Ryan Culleton is a Youth at Risk worker with Carlow Regional Youth Services. Her role involves working with young people and their families to increase their capacity to recognise, manage and reduce 'at risk' behaviour.

A comment by Fran McVeigh, Poppintree Youth Project

Researching youth work and providing evidence of the contribution it makes to positive outcomes for young people, communities and society is now an essential part of the youth work sector's mandate. Ensuring that research skills are developed and frameworks put in place to collate relevant data for the development of policy, practice, and theory is essential. Youth Work: A Systematic Map of the Research Literature is seen as a resource tool for policy makers, youth work practitioners and other interested bodies to enhance the evidence base (research) element of our work.

In hearing that the Department of Children and Youth Affairs had commissioned the Centre for Effective Services (CES) to undertake a review of research on the impact of youth work at an international level I waited, not quite

with bated breath but certainly with anticipation, for the publication of the findings. And honestly I'm a bit disappointed.

The research was undertaken by The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) in London on behalf of CES. While the starting aim of the review was to "track down relevant information from theory, policy, practice and research and to distil out key findings or learning points that have relevance to the development of the Youth Policy Framework in Ireland." (p:vi) The uncertainty of "the nature and extent of the youth work evidence and whether there was sufficient studies of particular quality and/or relevance" (p:6) meant a refocusing of the aim and an initial systematic map, section 1.1 indicates that there may be more to come.

The systematic map provides us with research of research. Useful because it means that someone has trawled through databases, key youth work journals and relevant websites on our behalf, but maybe not so useful when there is no indication of the context, ethos, ideology, or methodology used to select the studies.

The findings give collate details of 175 separate studies in 214 documents. Figures, graphs and tables are presented to give information on year of publication going back as far as 1976, though when I tried to find which study that was in the bibliography I couldn't. Figure 3.2 provides details of the geographical location with 119 studies undertaken in the U.S. Unlike Ireland the U.S. has a history of research practice and while I value research I would be very cautious of the extent to which evidence from the USA can be generalised to fit the Irish context. We find out where the studies took place: golf course, farm, school, clinic, university and wilderness camp! Maybe it's unfair to highlight these un-youth work like venues but I do think that it is important to read research with a critical eye and put it into context regarding the relevance to Irish youth work. Have a look at page 18 of the Systematic Map in order to see the other settings for the studies and have a look at page 19 as the pie charts there provide visuals on where the studies were published and whether they were peer reviewed etc. that page also gives details on the aim of the studies which is probably one of the most relevant pieces

of information needed when deciding whether a study is going to be useful to you.

As a practitioner researcher having the bibliography, which provides details of author/s, date of publication, title and publisher makes the document invaluable. Access to the studies can and does cost so maybe the CES or the Irish Youth Work Centre could make them available (free of charge) through their libraries.

We, in Poppintree Youth Project, will certainly be using the Systematic Map of Research Literature, to support the evidence-based development for our own practice, but we won't be relying solely on it. It's important for youth work to undertake its own research, document the findings, publish the results in credible journals - remember the EPPI-Centre only looked at what were considered credible sources!

About the Author: Fran McVeigh is Project Manager with Poppintree Youth Project, she have over 35 years experience working with young people.

A comment by Alan Hayes, Liberties College

Youth Work in Ireland is becoming increasingly professionalised through policy development, strategic planning, evaluation and not least, by excellence in the field articulated by youth workers who have trained for their profession and demand quality practice and outcomes from themselves.

In June 2013 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs published a first of its kind literature review. A map of 175 studies, almost worldwide; exploring the impact of youth work practice on young people. This map highlights the areas that have been researched and



provides suggestions of those requiring further investigation.

The document explains that there is no commonly agreed international definition or aim of youth work and goes on to offer a consensus that a core purpose of the practice is the personal and social development of young people, backed up by 71 pieces of research in which this was presented as the primary aim. The rest were: Social Change 28, Safety & Well-being 26, Education & Career 24, Contribution to society 20.

It would be interesting to know if the high number apportioned to personal & social development is influenced in any great way as a result of that being where funding is allocated? If this is the case, what might the social reality of peoples' lives be if the funding was directed towards social change models of youth work?

Since 2008 youth work services have seen over 30% reduction in budgets. In the same time youth organisations have welcomed the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for staff led services and similar for volunteer led services and implemented new Garda vetting procedures. The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) released a research report in 2012 called "Assessment of the economic value of youth work" which found that for every €1 the government invests in youth work it saves them

€2.22 in the long run. What might the outcomes of youth work be if funding was restored? What are the risks associated with reduced funding in relation to outcomes?

The systematic map provides great insight to the shared areas of youth work between many countries. It doesn't seek to answer questions about any single piece of research and is clear that it aims to present what others have written about regarding the outcomes of youth work. As the DCYA works towards a Youth Policy Framework, this systematic map will provide the department and the sector with clear signposts for future research and may assist in the prioritisation of certain services and approaches to youth work, with this in mind, it would be beneficial for those involved in professional youth work to familiarise themselves with this document.

About the author: Alan Hayes facilitates learning in Youth & Community Studies at Liberties College, Dublin. He is an independent educator, trainer and facilitator. In his spare time he grows a beard.



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2into3 are Ireland's specialist advisors and capacity builders for the not-for-profit sector. We work with social sector leaders and collaborate with partners to help scale impact, develop sustainability, build leadership and innovate.

We operate a highly successful graduate internship scheme with each intern mentored throughout their placement. A number of previously placed interns have already converted into permanent employment roles.

2into3 are currently recruiting five enthusiastic fundraising interns to work in five arts organisations around Ireland. These are:


- The Irish Architecture Foundation – Dublin
- The Ouroboros Theatre Company – Dublin
- The Association of Irish Choirs – Limerick
- The Kinsale Arts Festival – Cork
- The Hawk's Well Theatre - Sligo

The positions are part of the Arts Council's RAISE initiative and are a unique opportunity for a driven candidate to gain exposure to, and experience in, the arts and not-for-profit sector.

Do you have a passion for the arts? Would you like to turn this passion into a career? Do you have?

- high motivation;
- outstanding interpersonal skills;
- analytical skills;
- strong commitment to teamwork;
- native or fluent English speaker;
- excellent communication skills;
- commitment to the not-for-profit sector.

If your ambitions are in any of these areas and you combine the above profile with the humility to recognise that it will be a continuous learning process then we would like to hear from you. Closing date for application is Friday the 20th of September. Please send a CV to claudia.hoareau@2into3.com



www.2into3.com

Bringing the Strands Together

'the challenges and opportunities in delivering joined up services for young people'

Youth Work Ireland's National Conference 2013

Dublin Castle

Saturday November 2nd, 2013

Joined up government and joined up services have long been an aspiration of policy makers. It is an important concept for all those working with children and young people to understand. Youth Work Ireland is offering a space for policy makers and practitioners to address joined up service delivery for young people.

The day will feature inputs from key experts, youth work practitioners and policy makers. The aim of the conference is to share best practice on the ground and examine the challenges faced in working across different policy areas to achieve best outcomes for children and young people.

Who should attend?

This conference will provide valuable policy and practice insights for practitioners, managers and policy makers working in the areas of youth work, social work, education and health. This conference will be of value to all those involved in trying to deliver better services for children and young people.

Speakers on the day to include:

Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Francis Fitzgerald

Senator Jillian Van Turnhout - Keynote

Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Jim Breslin, Secretary General, Department of Children & Youth Affairs

Gordan Jeyes, National Director, Children & Family Services, HSE

Dr. Stella Owens, Centre for Effective Services

Ita Mangan, Chairperson of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare

Dr. John Bamber, Centre for Effective Services

For more information contact ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie / 01-8584512

Bookings for this conference can be made online at:

www.youthworkireland.ie/events



Conference Cost:

Youth Work Ireland Members €40.00
External Delegates €70.00

Garda Youth Diversion Projects in the Contemporary Youth Justice Landscape

What are some of the implications for youth work?

by Dr. Katharina Swirak

This research was conducted as part of a PhD study in the School of Applied Social Studies, UCC, between 2008-2012 and was partly funded by the Office of the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs (now Department of Children and Youth Affairs).

What was the Research About?

Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs), there are currently 100 in operation nationwide and they constitute a central feature of Irish youth justice provision. They are managed by the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) and are implemented by the Gardai in association with a variety of youth work organisations and independent community organisations.

This research study traced the development of the projects from loosely organised interventions to their current function as support structures to the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme and the implications of this for youth work practice and ultimately the young people participating in these projects.

How was the Research Conducted?

The study used the principles of *Foucauldian discourse analysis* to provide a deeper understanding of the core ideas underlying the operation of GYDP projects. This type of discourse analysis simply means analysing exactly what policy documents or people are saying about GYDPs and to identify which specific ideas are held in relation to these. *Foucauldian discourse analysis* follows from the research and writing of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who worked to show how a wide variety of actors (institutions, professionals etc.) are involved in producing discourse. The dominant discourses ultimately define how problems and their solutions are viewed and acted upon.

The study identified the discourses underlying official youth crime prevention and GYDP policy and analysed how

project workers and Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) relate to these discourses. The study was also particularly interested in the reception by practitioners of the recent reform process initiated by the IYJS in 2009 and implications for youth work practice.

Based on principles of *Foucauldian discourse analysis*, the research analysed official policy texts in relation to Irish youth crime prevention policy and the GYDPs and conducted interviews with 22 project workers and 8 JLOs across 12 project sites. The study set out to gain deeper insights into how GYDP policy enables particular ideas and attitudes about young people and the nature of their offending behaviour as well as how it shapes project practice with young people.

What are some of the Key Findings Relevant to Youth Work?

From Youth Work to Youth Justice Work

GYDPs have contributed to the evolution of 'youth justice work' with definite features:

- o An increasing tendency to work exclusively with those young people already in contact with the law.
- o A strong focus on challenging behaviour through individual work with young people.
- o More involvement of families than in general youth work type of interventions.

Several core youth work principles were challenged in many GYDP settings:

- o Young people's voluntary participation was sometimes compromised through close supervision and reports to JLOs and even the Courts.
- o Young people's active participation in GYDPs was in many cases limited to choosing activities.

- o Group work and critical social education were mostly used as an avenue to achieve individual behavioural change. Personal development with individual young people constituted the favoured sort of intervention.

Support and Resistance

The reform process initiated by the IYJS has led to the successful repositioning of the GYDPs as support structure to the Juvenile Diversion Programme. However, the various tools - changed reporting and auditing requirements, new training programmes, piloting - deployed to achieve this change have been received in varied ways by project workers and JLOs.

- Project workers and JLOs who participated in the first two phases of the piloting exercise generally positioned themselves as champions of the ongoing changes, explaining and defending the introduction of reforms. They felt that the piloting process acknowledged their input and created a form of partnership between them and the IYJS.
- Those workers who throughout associated themselves strongly with a youth work tradition were more critically reflective of many of these changes (e.g. building long-term relationships with young people) while those with other backgrounds (e.g. social care) were less so.
- Some strategies of resistance included:

Pragmatic adaptation: referring to the threat of discontinued funding and doing the minimum to avoid this.

De-authorisation: open criticism of the required changes and avoidance of adherence.

Carving out space: official agreement with introduced changes, while maintaining room for continuing with project work as before.

Strengthening of Dominant Discourses

Several imperatives promoted in official GYDP policy discourse were reproduced by a wide range of project workers and JLOs. These concepts appear to have become increasingly influential and uncontested. The most important were:

- The centralisation of leadership and shifting responsibility to partners: the overriding solution to the youth crime problem is seen to be based on improved systems of coordination. Projects are obliged to join a centrally steered youth crime prevention agenda and accept responsibility for the task of youth crime prevention.

- Actuarialism: An actuarialist discourse- characterised by increased monitoring, reporting and quantification of outcomes - emphasises the imperatives of evidence-based interventions, effectiveness and value-for-money.
- Individualisation: Youth crime prevention is conceived largely as an individual problem of young people and their families. As a consequence, interventions mainly focus on behaviouralist types of interventions to achieve individual change of the young person and their families, which evades issues related to poverty and social exclusion.

What are some of the Issues arising for Further Discussion?

- How can youth work assert its unique contribution to youth justice work?
- What avenues are there for project workers to collectively voice some of their concerns in relation to youth work practice on the GYDPs?
- What are the boundaries and limits of partnership?
- Is it necessary for youth work to buy into some of the dominant discourses (e.g. 'value for money') to be taken seriously as partners in interventions such as the GYDPs?

Please contact Dr. Katharina Swirak at the School of Applied Social Studies/UCC (k.swirak@ucc.ie) for further information on this research.

Glossary

Discourse: Can be understood as how a particular subject is represented in text and talk. Discourse includes all the ideas, attitudes, actions and practices that make up how we view a subject. In this case, how policy makers and we as youth workers view our work with young people who have become involved with the juvenile justice system.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Foucault tells us that when we look at what is behind a discourse we will find how power relations operate in every aspect of society. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis typically asks questions such as:

- What do key concepts that we often use (for example 'youth at risk' or 'anti-social behaviour') actually mean and what purpose does their use serve?
- Who is given authority to define and measure such concepts?
- What do such concepts imply in terms of how we view young people and our work with them?
- What alternative concepts and discourses could be used?

Irish Youth Work Centre

Symposium on Outcomes in Youth Work

Wednesday October 2, 2013
Youth Work Ireland National Office

The third Irish Youth Work Centre symposium of 2013 in partnership with CDYSB, will focus on Youth Work Outcomes and will provide a space for youth work practitioners to hear contributors speak on this topic as well as to share and learn from coming together with peers. These symposia build on practitioner contributions to Scene Magazine and provide an open and engaging environment for practitioners who wish to develop a deeper understanding of key issues in the youth sector.

Programme

- 11:30 Registration Tea/Coffee and informal discussion.
- 12:00 Introductions by 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 Question and Answer Session with contributors.
- 3:10 Close

Contributors

John Bamber - Centre for Effective Services

John will provide a "helicopter view" on the current role of outcomes in the Irish youth work sector and reflect on the next steps for the sector.

Janice McGarry - St. Michael's Youth Project

Janice's input will provide an understanding of how Youthpass certification can be used to capture and report on outcomes in youth work.

Isobel Phillips – Foróige Best Practice Unit

Isobel will build on the contribution of her colleague, Sue Redmond, to describe in plain and practical terms how to plan for and document outcomes in youth work.

Louise Cadwell – Crosscare/CYC

Louise will reflect on her work to support practitioners to document and report outcomes in Garda Youth Diversion Projects and share the practical lessons that she has learnt.

Places for this event are FREE of Charge, but limited and available on a first come first served basis, to book your place go to <https://youthworkoutcomes.eventbrite.ie>



Irish Youth Work Centre

