

An Evaluation of Youth Club Practice

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C O N T E N T S

The paper is structured in three parts.

Chapter 1

Historical Background to Youth Club Development

It is important to place the findings in a context and this section examines the issues relating to club work raised by successive government reports, as well as looking at the philosophy and practice of club work as presented by historical Federation publications.

Chapter 2

The Research Findings :

- Part 1 - The Philosophy of Youth Club Practice
- Part 2 - An Evaluation of Youth Club Practice

The research findings examine what the Federation says it wants to achieve and then looks at the realities in the light of guidelines for practice established by the Federation.

Chapter 3

The Recommendations

This section will summarise the key issues which emerge from the findings and examine a number of recommendations as possible responses.

Chapter One

Historical Background to Youth Club Development in the Federation

C H A P T E R O N E

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO YOUTH CLUB

DEVELOPMENT IN THE FEDERATION

In examining current youth club work practice, it is important to create the context by examining the issue of evaluating youth club work as addressed by

- A) Government Youth Policy
- B) the National Youth Federation.

A) Government Youth Policy

The Bruton Report entitled "A Policy for Youth & Sport" published in 1977 stated that

"the aims of an educational youth programme are to fashion an experience orientated, ongoing developmental exercise. To do so it must be set in the realities of the youth's own environment. It must be framed to assist those participating to become more capable of functioning as responsible members of society in ways that have meaning to them"

(1977, p. 38)

The Report (1978) failed to come to terms with the question of the effectiveness of youth work. It seemed to accept the case made by voluntary youth organisations, that youth work activities, were educationally beneficial to young people.

However, six months later, the challenge to prove the effectiveness of youth work was clearly stated, when after a change in Government the new Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Tunney established a committee to report on ;

"The nature and effectiveness of the programmes being carried out by youth organisations (non-uniformed) in receipt of grants direct or indirect from the Department of Education and make any recommendations deemed appropriate for the improvement and development of the Youth Services".

(cited in O'Sullivan Report 1980, p. 7)

For the first time the Government clearly indicated that it required some form of assessment of youth work.

The Committee commissioned two reports, a 'Research Report on Youth Organisations' and a 'Survey of 12 Youth Clubs' to help overcome this problem. The conclusion the Committee drew from examining these reports was :

"there is considerable variation in the learning content of programmes and organisations. Whilst we recognise that all learning is based on activity carried out by the learner, an activity is not necessarily 'ipso facto' a learning experience".

(O'Sullivan Report 1980, p. 43)

The community based youth clubs were specifically targeted by the Committee as in need of support and development. The research report highlighted a number of empirical indicators which the Committee judged :

"as important in attempting to assess the way the adult leaders are involved in implementing programmes at club and unit level".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 45)

They were :

(a) Ratio of Adults to Young People

"We wish to draw attention to the wide differences between organisations as to the ratio of adults to young people... This is a crucial matter for youth club work and it is our opinion that the degree of effectiveness decreases considerably as the ratio of adults to club members goes beyond 1 to 12".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 45)

(b) Age of Leaders

"The Committee is aware of an absence of leaders over 30 and of a growing trend of leadership passing into the hands of the young adults. For youth work to be effective, each club situation needs at least one senior competent leader who can provide leadership and management".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 45)

(c) Adult Leader Turnover

"In our opinion there is a high turnover (estimated at 25% per annum)... and it is a major deficiency in the conduct of programmes. Higher levels of volunteer involvement and commitment will need to be reached for more effective programme work at unit level".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 46)

It is clear that the O'Sullivan Committee were unclear of the educational benefits to young people of the average community youth club. Their report suggests that ;

"more effective progress can be achieved by organisations defining their objectives more precisely. In this way demonstrable progress can be more easily measured and monitored".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 43)

The Committee made two recommendations that would have made significant changes to the content and delivery of services to youth groups. Firstly, the committee suggested that a long term study into the effectiveness of youth programmes be undertaken. Secondly, it strongly advocated ;

"the appointment of professional advisers within the Youth Section of the Department of Education. This professional advisory service should include both a research and a development function".

(O'Sullivan 1980, p. 23)

Neither of these recommendations were implemented. A subsequent change in Government resulted in a further Youth Policy Committee being established in 1983 under the Chairmanship of Justice Costello.

The Costello Report (1984) endorsed the O'Sullivan recommendation for a long term study into the effectiveness of youth programmes as it concludes that ;

"In most cases youth club programmes are not structured on-going developmental programmes but consist largely of organised recreational activity, such as indoor/outdoor games, disco dancing, coffee bars and various creative activities such as drama, arts and crafts and so on".

(Costello 1984, p. 9)

The Costello Report went on to say ;

"The tendency has been to justify many activities as being educational or developmental in themselves...The theory behind much club based work emphasises personal development and self awareness and implies that relationships between a young person and a leader can be significant to a member's development. Because this work relies on sensitivity to personal interaction, it is difficult to describe its content, and consequently assess its contribution to the development of the young person".

(Costello 1984, p. 109)

The Report recognised that the Youth Service Grant Scheme includes a procedure for assessing the effectiveness of youth organisations, but found that the procedure relates to the

administration of an organisation...In fact it stated 'the scheme operates on the assumption that the programmes of an organisation are developmental and educational'. (Costello 1984, p. 111)

However, it recognised the limited options available to the Department of Education and suggested that youth organisations should develop on-going strategies for monitoring, developing and reporting on the nature and effectiveness of youth programmes. The Costello Report implied that an incentive may be needed to encourage youth organisations and recommended ;

"grants to youth organisations be made conditional on adequate arrangements being made for evaluating programmes covered by grants".

(Costello 1984, p. 120)

The Government responded in its policy document 'In Partnership with Youth' 1985, to the proposals of the Costello Report by reinforcing the need for organisations to demonstrate professional competence in all their activities. It stated that ;

"Youth organisations will be required to making continuing efforts to

1. define their objectives in down to earth terms
2. demonstrate clearly the effective use of all their human resources, both volunteer and full time
3. assess continuously the extent to which they are achieving their objectives
4. be willing to adapt structures and functions within their organisations better to meet the demands of young people
5. aim for greater co-ordination and co-operation between themselves and other youth organisations".

(National Youth Policy 1985, p. 30)

This was the first time that any policy document detailed the changes it required from voluntary youth organisation. Implicit in this proposal are strong criticisms of the existing programmes and structures of youth organisations. It challenges youth organisations to prove their ability to meet the needs of young people, to modify or change their structures to allow for the active participation of young people in the decision-making of the organisation, to actively co-operate in the delivery of services to young people, to share resources and developments at local level and to continuously evaluate their programmes. The Government left youth organisations in no doubt as to the seriousness of its intentions, as it proposed that ;

"Grants to youth organisations will be conditional on adequate arrangements being made for evaluating their programmes".

(National Youth Policy 1985, p. 30)

The Government proposed the appointment of two professional assessors, but once again a change in Government resulted in no action being taken in this area.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be seen that each of the four Government commissioned policy reviews of youth work, have questioned its educational value. Each has proposed to establish monitoring systems and in each case the subsequent change in Government resulted in no action being taken in this area. The result has been that each youth organisation has been asked to establish its own monitoring and evaluating system, and to account for the implementation of their stated objectives.

REVIEW WITHIN THE NATIONAL YOUTH FEDERATION

The Youth Club has been central to the evolution of the National Youth Federation since its foundation in 1962.

The development of the Federation as an National Agency with an emphasis on supporting the developing of autonomous regions, stems from the recognition of the independence of local groups to determine their own destiny at local level and to contribute to the direction of the region through participation in the democratic structures of the Federation at regional and national level.

Regions of the Federation have independently and collectively struggled with the issue of club development for many years. In the areas of training, programmes, events and competitions and programme development, many new initiatives and improvements have occurred.

Staff and volunteers have struggled with problems facing clubs and have attempted to respond to them. In all of this struggle one thing was never in doubt and that was the educational potential of the youth club for young people. Yet in all this time no national evaluation study occurred to investigate the realities of youth club work. It could be argued that there was no need to spell out realities that most people knew too well, e.g. not enough adult support, poor facilities, etc.. Yet while many people were aware of them, the National Youth Federation has never compiled the information into one central bank of information.

This failure resulted in individual regions addressing similar issues in isolation of each other.

The Regional Development Officers and NYFC HQ staff established a clear definition of the purpose of the youth club, identified variables and reviewed their own clubs at regional level. The youth club was defined as :

"a place where young people will be facilitated to explore issues of concern to them, to take on new responsibilities and to make decisions which promote the growth and development of formal and informal groups and which offer enjoyable activities to young people".

Action plans were developed and implemented during 1985/86. This research was conducted in 1989 to establish a further look at the realities at club level and to disseminate the results in such a way as to generate a debate and response.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH WORK

The historical development of the Federation is outlined in the publication the 'History of NFYC' (1985), so it is not my intention to examine the change in emphasis of the Federation over the years. Sufficient to say that the stated purpose of the Youth Club changed from a strong Catholic emphasis in the 1962 Constitution which stated

"The object of the Federation is to help affiliated clubs make their members better Catholics and better citizens".

(Article 3, 1962 Constitution)

to an emphasis on social education as illustrated by the submission to the Costello Committee entitled 'Youth Services 2000' (NYFC 1983). This submission suggested that

"The youth club is concerned with offering a range of opportunities to young people in their leisure time. These are usually only loosely defined but might include opportunities :

1. to find out more about oneself, one's abilities and limitations
2. to be able to relate satisfactorily with adults, to find and make new friends
3. to pursue interests which one already has, and to find new ones, and to pursue them to a personally satisfying level
4. to be able to be involved in social decisions and make choices
5. to find out more about and be involved in social decisions and make choices
6. to find out more about and be involved in one's local community.

("Youth Service 2000", p. 86)

The submission went on to state that :

"Youth work must work towards meeting the developmental needs of the individual through social education but must also be concerned with enabling the individual to develop his/her own vision of society and help him or her to develop the social skills needed to play an active political role in society".

(NYFC 1983, p. 33)

THE PRACTICE OF YOUTH CLUB WORK

The main vehicle for achieving this objective was through the active participation of young people in the structures of the club and the regional and national bodies. The submission suggested that it was important to create opportunities for :

"young people to participate with their peers in the exercise of responsibility and real participation in decision-making within the club or organisational setting".

(NYFC 1983, p. 33)

While the Federation actively encouraged adults to involve young people in the decision-making structures of the club, the main vehicle for member participation at club level was through a members committee. However, in reality the introduction of a members committee did not necessarily mean an active participation by the membership of the club. For the majority of members the only difference may have been that certain decisions affecting them were taken by a group of members, rather than the youth leaders. The research findings indicate that this model of participation is still dominant in clubs affiliated to the Federation. No real change in participants was seen to have occurred in the majority of youth clubs.

The Annual Report of 1986/87 introduced a club development strategy that was supposed to significantly change the focus of the youth club from providing a limited range of recreational activities to becoming

"a place where young people initiate their own programme around issues of concern to them".

(NYFC Annual Report 1986/87, p. 5)

The Annual Report identified three key factors as crucial...

1. Whether the programme of opportunities and activities in the club provides real learning experiences for the members primarily through the relationships formed in the club.
2. Whether the leader's style actively encourages and motivates full participation in all aspects of the club by members.
3. Whether the members have the chance to organise and implement their own programmes around issues which are important to them.

cited in NYFC Annual Report 1986/87, p. 60)

For the first time in the Federation, the National Organisation specified basic development guidelines which the youth club need to put in place before it can develop into a youth club which is owned and controlled by young people. Meanwhile, the NFYC changed its Constitution and established a National Youth Clubs Council to oversee the affairs of youth clubs in the Federation. These developmental guidelines were subsequently amended and adopted by the NYCC in 1989. They are as follows :

1. VOLUNTARY LEADERS

The club must have an adequate number of committed voluntary leaders, (over 18 years of age). The suggested ratio is at least one adult to every ten members.

2. AFFILIATION

Each club should affiliate for the period January to December. Late affiliations should only be received from time of affiliation until the end of the calendar year.

3. TRAINING

Youth leaders from a new club affiliating, or from an 'old' club re-affiliating after a number of years, must take part in an induction process, before the club is open or the affiliation accepted.

4. REGIONAL MEETINGS

A strong commitment should be sought from all clubs to participate in regional events and inter-club activities. It is recommended that club leaders would complete a basic training programme.

5. MEMBERSHIP CARDS

All club members should be issued with the National Youth Federation membership card.

6. FACILITIES

All clubs shall provide adequate facilities that allow members to develop through both large group activities and small group programmes.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Leaders and members involved in youth club activity shall not partake of alcohol while involved in these activities. Leaders are expected to show the highest degree of responsibility and example to club members.

8. STRUCTURE

It is suggested that the structure of the club should reflect the involvement of young people in decision-making in a realistic way.

9. MEMBERSHIP

Recognising that the different age groups have different needs, it is recommended that club should operate in two different sections, one for the under 15 years age group and one for the over 15 years age group. Resources permitting, these groups should meet separately at different times.

To allow for the active participation of all members in decision-making and the implementation of these decisions, membership should be restricted to not more than sixty young people.

10. PROGRAMMES

Programmes should respond to the different needs of the members, particularly the minority interest and small groups in the club.

11. SUPPORT

The youth club must make a commitment to move towards achieving these guidelines, within a given period of time, to be negotiated with the Region. The Region should offer the necessary support to the club to enable them to achieve these guidelines.

The Federation established the affiliation guidelines because of a recognition that social learning in youth clubs occur through

- the social relationships
- the programme opportunities
- opportunities for decision-making and taking responsibilities.

The research sought to establish the reality of youth club practice by looking at the variables which effect good practice in each of the three situations of social learning stated above.

THE N.Y.F. APPROACH TO CLUB WORK

Central to the N.Y.F. definition of youth clubs is the concept of social learning. Many of these aims, learning new hobbies, activities, as well as learning about ourselves and others and about the world we live in. The purpose of this learning is to support young people develop a positive self-image, a sense of their own self-worth.

It is very important that the leadership team recognises that learning occurs in a number of ways in the club. It occurs around:

- (a) The social relationships in the club;
- (b) The programmes;
- (c) The opportunities for young people to be involved in decision-making and taking responsibilities in the running of the club.

(A) The Social Relationship in the Youth Club:

Social learning occurs around the personal encounters and situations which occur between members themselves and between adults and members. Some of the situations are planned, such as a discussion on unemployment, while the majority of learning situations for young people occur in the natural encounters which arise during a normal club night.

For example:

- * having an argument over the pool table;
- * refusing to pay subs;
- * winning a competition;
- * volunteering to help;
- * sitting chatting;
- * being slagged by the bully;
- * being left out of things.

All of these incidents centre on relations in the club, relationships between members themselves as well as between adults and members. The leadership team must be conscious of creating an atmosphere which encourages both the forming of relationships and the abilities to explore and deal with problems. At all times, the atmosphere should be friendly, accepting and encouraging. It must be remembered that it is the quality of these relationships that determines whether members will look back positively on their time in the youth club.

This implies that the leadership team should not just concentrate on the administration and 'smooth running' of the programme but recognises that learning occurs within the club environment. A leadership team should meet and discuss the recent happenings, assess their own and the members reactions to them. This type of regular monitoring is vital if the team is to ensure that the club is a positive experience for young people. Without this monitoring situation in the club at best will allow go unchallenged some of the perceptions, attitudes and biases which develop among the members towards each other and towards other members of the society. At worst the club can reinforce the rules of the street which emphasises that bullies win out. In this instance a youth club can be a negative experience for some young people.

Relationship with young people:

It is important that the adult leadership team recognise each member as unique with their own needs, wants and desires. Each person needs to be supported, encouraged and responded to. The team must recognise that a young person is more than just their behaviour for the two hours they're with you. They have a whole range of influences, pressures and difficulties facing them. The youth club may be the only situation where he or she can be involved with adults on an equal basis. It may be the only situation where they feel they really belong. This relationship between adult and member should not be underestimated. It can act as a support for a young person who is trying out a new activity or skill, it can encourage and motivate a young person to discuss issues of concern to themselves. The N.Y.F. proposes that leadership teams need to establish clear guidelines for operation.

(B) The Programme

Learning through 'doing' and reflecting on this experience is part of the philosophy of social education of the National Youth Federation.

The club programme needs:

- * To recognise that the membership is made up of small friendship groups, young people who have specific interests and some individual members who don't feel part of any particular group.
- * To offer something to everyone, while recognising that not all activities will suit every person

- * To recognise that there is a need for a mixed and varied programme which takes account of the diversity of general interests, offering choice rather than compulsory activities.
- * The programme should provide opportunities for young people:
 - to make friends in a relaxed comfortable atmosphere;
 - to explore issues of concern to themselves and to take some action through discussions and community action;
 - to participate in events which explore an understanding of their culture and heritage;
 - to participate in health education activities which promote positive health practices;
 - to test values and beliefs through discussions with adults and their peers on issues of concern to them.

These opportunities are created where young people are encouraged and supported to actively participate in the organisation and planning of their own club.

(C) Creating opportunities for young people to be involved in decision-making and taking responsibility in the club.

The N.Y.F. promotes the belief that young people have the right to run their own youth club or group. This has serious implications for the roles and responsibilities of the young people, the adult leadership team and the support group. It is essential that they all have the same expectations or someone is going to be disappointed. It must be clear that one cannot pretend to be allowing young people freedom and then step in to veto the action the moment the freedom is exercised. Everyone involved needs to know what their role is, what responsibilities they have and what freedom and action they enjoy.

This philosophy implies that the Leadership Team's primary responsibility is to facilitate through their relationship with young people the planning, preparation and implementation of activities of interest to them. Facilitation means aiding a group or an individual make an informed decision and to identify and take the necessary steps to put it into action. An important part of this process is the creation of an opportunity for the group or young person to evaluate the action, reflect on its consequences and learn from the experience.

In attempting to operate this philosophy of active participation the leadership team faces the dilemma of needing to give freedom and responsibility to young people while at the same time meeting the expectations of parents and the community that the club will be run in a well ordered fashion.

Four guiding principles should guide the Leadership Team in this area:

- * The leadership team have overall responsibility for ensuring that no one group of members in deciding what it wants to do is free to ignore the legitimate rights of others members of the club or community. A way of ensuring this is to involve members in drawing up their own set of rules to be adhered to.
- * The limitations of the responsibility given to young people must be clearly spelled out. It is important that within these limitations young people should be given full authority and supported to make informed decisions and implement their action.
- * The area of responsibility given should be important and relevant to the young people and not reduced to issues of little consequences.
- * The adult needs to motivate and support the group of young people to complete the steps of decision-making effectively. The role is therefore active, not one of passively letting them get on with making their mistakes.

Chapter Two

Part One

Research Findings - The Evaluation of Youth Club Philosophy

C H A P T E R T W O

PART ONE

RESEARCH FINDINGS -

THE EVALUATION OF YOUTH CLUB

PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION :

The review of the historical development of the National Youth Federation clearly shows that the Federation is actively promoting a model of youth work which recognises that social learning occurs in three situations in the youth club :

- * Informal education through social relationships,
- * Non-formal education through the programme content and
- * The structural opportunities created for young people to become actively involved in running the youth club.

The actuality of youth club practice will be examined in detail under these three specific headings. However, it is important to contrast the stated philosophy of the Federation, Social Education with the philosophy as professed by the three categories of respondents who completed the questionnaire, i.e. the staff involved in club development, adult volunteers holding a senior post in affiliated youth clubs, and senior members (16 + years) who in turn hold a post of responsibility in youth clubs.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Staff Profile

51.7% of staff who returned the questionnaire were female. 58.5% of staff were less than one year involved in their current role with 24.1% over three years involved.

Many of the staff have had a background in youth work, indicated by the fact that 65.6% have been involved for over three years.

The age range indicated that 34.5% are between 26 - 30 years and 31% are over 30 years.

Adult Volunteer Profile

The questionnaires were circulated to the volunteers listed as the Chairperson or key volunteer on the affiliation form.

The first interesting point to emerge is that 63% of volunteers who hold key roles are male. 73.8% of these volunteers were over 25 years.

The length of involvement of these volunteers in youth club work is as follows :

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Under 3 years | 32.6% |
| Over 3, under 5 years | 23.9% |
| Over 5, under 10 years | 15.2% |
| Over 10 years | 28.3% |

These statistics indicate that the volunteers who hold senior posts in youth clubs have a significant number of years experience. The findings also indicate that 65.2% have been involved in youth work over 3 years with 54.4% involved in their current role as Chairperson for over 3 years. These findings indicate a level of stability among key volunteers key volunteers and a significant amount of experience. 60% of these adults have completed a basic training course at Regional level and the vast majority found it beneficial.

Profile of Young People

The age range of senior members was 89.5% in the 15 - 18 years. 34.2% were members of a senior members committee, 52.6% were the member representative on the management committee and 13.2% were junior leaders.

55.3% were less than 1 year in their current role, with a further 21.1% between 1 and 2 years in their current role. However 67.9% of the respondents were over 3 years involved in the club indicating that members on committees tend to be the members who are more stable and committed to the club. It is interesting to note that 55.3% of respondents were male, indicating a tendency for senior member posts to be dominated by males. This pattern is reinforced when the level of participation of males and females are examined in the section on club programmes.

The stated philosophy of youth club work is determined by examining respondents' answers to two questions, firstly "the benefits of youth club work", and secondly "the role of the youth worker". The answers to these questions are linked to the typology of youth work developed in another paper entitled "Models of Youth Work". (A summary of the main characteristics of these models are provided in Appendix 1).

THE DOMINANT VISION OF THE YOUTH CLUB WORK

The questionnaire sought to explore the vision of youth work which guides the practice of both staff and adult volunteers and is reflected in the experiences of senior members. Eleven statements relating to potential benefits of youth work were listed and respondents were asked to select three statements in order of priority.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The purpose of this paper is to present the detailed findings of an investigation into the reality of youth club work in the National Youth Federation.

The Federation has prided itself on its youth club work, clearly stating that despite its expansion into other areas of work, youth club work services remains the central element to its response to the needs of young people.

For some years now I, among others, have been concerned that despite the expansion in resources in the Federation, club work didn't seem to have progressed in any significant way. Yet this seemed to be an impression rather than fact and so it was important to establish the facts.

The report is based on the research findings of a postal questionnaire circulated and returned in April/May 1989. All affiliated clubs were circulated and over 63% of questionnaires were returned. From a statistical point of view, this is an adequate sample in anybody's terms. I state this at the beginning because I think the realities highlighted are harsh and may be rationalised by some staff or volunteers as not reflecting the clubs in their Region. The lowest percentage return from any one Region was 43.7%, with 90% of clubs in six Regions returning questionnaires.

The research findings clearly illustrate that the difference between what the Federation states youth clubs should offer young people and what is actually happening is quite significant. The findings show that, for many young people, the youth club provides very limited recreational activities and rarely offers what might be loosely termed educational programmes. The club programmes is male dominated, sports and competition oriented, and seems to have changed little since the early seventies. Certainly concerns raised by the O'Sullivan Report in 1980, about youth club practice, have not been resolved in any significant way.

The structures of the youth club, while in place to promote active participation, at best give very little power to a small group of young people, leaving the majority of young people in clubs with little or no say in the running of the club. Certainly the vast majority of young people will never have the opportunity of learning from decision-making and taking responsibility if the existing structures in clubs are

continuously promoted and supported. It is time that the senior members committee was examined and a more effective alternative proposed.

Perhaps one of the most startling findings to emerge was the fact that no significant difference could be determined between the attitudes and approaches of leaders who had participated in a basic leadership course and those who had not. The fact that the majority of adult volunteers were in senior positions in the club and were over three years involved implied that the current work practice was developed on the club floor, with little or no influence or impact from basic training. This results in the need to seriously examine the transfer of learning from central courses to youth club practice.

I want to make one final comment in this introduction about the opportunities for young women in youth clubs. The lack of opportunities for equality of participation of young women is clearly identified in the research findings. While these findings are serious, perhaps what is more serious is the fact that there seems to be little or no awareness of the needs of young women at either volunteer or staff level. While 32.6% of volunteers and 13.8% of staff agree that "girls are harder to get involved in club programmes" only 2.2% of volunteers and 1% of staff felt that special programmes for young women needed to be developed. It is clear that there is a need to develop an awareness among staff and volunteers of the realities of the club experience for the vast majority of young women, as well as develop alternative responses to the existing club programme. It is very important to recognise the need to bring in from the margins of young club work the pilot work done on 'working with girls' initiatives. If youth work is about helping young people develop their own values and attitudes, then surely an important aspect of this is to raise their awareness of issues such as sexism and racism. Our club workers must be enabled to challenge the complacency which exists in society and reinforces discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, race, culture or class. A first step in this process must begin with challenging the limited opportunities offered by clubs to young people and the reasons for it.

Finally, I would like to state that these findings are presented so that they can be considered seriously by the policy makers and support personnel, both staff and volunteers at Regional level. I have no doubt that many people who put such high effort into supporting youth club work will wonder about the benefits now of such effort. I can only say that the basic vision which is promoted is correct, but in many instances we need to be very clear about the practical implications for the

TABLE 6.1

STATEMENTS OF 'BENEFITS' OF YOUTH WORK
DIFFERENTIATED
BY CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS

| BENEFITS | SENIOR MEMBER | | ADULT VOLUNTEER | | STAFF | |
|--|------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|------|
| | 1st | 1-3 | 1st | 1-3 | 1st | 1-3 |
| 1.Control own lives | 14.0 | 12.0 | 37.0 | 23.0 | 41.0 | 28.0 |
| 2.Develop a moral awareness | 3.7 | - | - | 1.0 | - | - |
| 3.Get away from pressures | 8.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 7.0 | 5.0 |
| 4.Develop skill to cope with change | - | 6.0 | 11.0 | 9.0 | 14.0 | 9.0 |
| 5.Empower to emerge from state of depression | 19.0 | 10.0 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 14.0 | 17.0 |
| 6.Recreational opportunities | 24.0 | 20.0 | 13.0 | 17.0 | 3.0 | 7.0 |
| 7.Support Christian and democratic practice | - | - | 4.0 | 4.0 | - | - |
| 8.Try out new activities | - | - | - | 8.0 | - | 7.0 |
| 9.Develop critical awareness | - | 10.0 | - | - | - | 5.0 |
| 10.Campaign for change | - | - | - | - | - | 1.0 |
| 11.Place to meet friends | 32.0 | 31.0 | 22.0 | 23.0 | 21.0 | 21.0 |
| | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The results show that averaged over three selected priorities 31% of senior members believe the main benefit is a "place to go", with an additional 20% seeing its main benefit to be one of "providing recreational opportunities" and a further 10% see the clubs main benefit as a place to "get away from the pressures of life". Each of these statements are links in that they reflect a social benefit rather than an educational benefit for young people. The figures, totalling 61% over the three priorities, reflect a high percentage and consistency among senior members in their experience of youth clubs as social and recreational.

Secondly, there is significant contrast between staff and adult volunteers on this issue of social or educational benefits. Table 6.1 shows that 33% of staff identify recreation as the primary benefit of youth club membership, as demonstrated on statements 3, 6 and 11 in Table 6.1. The score for adult volunteers is 51% over these three statements, indicating a strong preference for a recreational based youth club with social spin-offs as a natural consequence. This is the first indication of a difference in view between the staff and adult volunteers involved. The extent of this difference becomes more obvious when examining their respective approaches to youth club practice. This may indicate a difference between the 'ideal' as presented by the staff and the 'reality' as operated by adult volunteers.

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH WORKER

A further insight into the model of youth work subscribed to by the respondents may be gained by looking at their view of the role of the youth worker. Table 6.3 illustrates their attitudes

TABLE 6.3

1st PRIORITY ON ROLE OF WORKER FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

| ROLE | SENIOR MEMBER | | ADULT VOLUNTEER | | STAFF | |
|----------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|------|
| | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Facilitator | 13.2 | (5) | 17.4 | (8) | 51.7 | (15) |
| Role Model | 21.0 | (8) | 26.1 | (12) | 3.5 | (1) |
| Enabler | 5.3 | (2) | 6.5 | (3) | 37.8 | (11) |
| Character Builder | 7.9 | (3) | 4.3 | (2) | - | - |
| Supervisor | 10.5 | (4) | 15.2 | (7) | - | - |
| Consciousness Raiser | 5.3 | (2) | 2.2 | (1) | - | - |
| Problem Solver | 2.6 | (1) | 2.2 | (1) | 7.0 | (2) |
| Organiser | 26.3 | (10) | 23.9 | (11) | - | - |
| Problem Poser | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Campaigner | 7.9 | (3) | 2.2 | (1) | - | - |
| | ---- | -- | ---- | -- | ---- | -- |
| | 100 | (38) | 100 | (46) | 100 | (29) |

Table 6.3 indicates that over 36% of senior members and over 39% of adult volunteers see the role of the leader as the 'organiser' and 'supervisor' of the youth club's programme. These figures would seem to reflect the approach of the adult volunteers and the experience of senior members. The implication of these figures are that adult volunteers fulfil the main tasks of the youth club, indicating that in many youth clubs the young people are just 'passive consumers' of the activities organised by adult volunteers. The research findings on the practice of youth club work, discussed later, confirms this indication.

It is also clear from Table 6.3, that the staff reject this role, with over 58% of staff selecting the term 'facilitator' or 'problem solver', both terms associated with a model of social education.

These figures clearly demonstrate a wide divergence in attitude between staff on the one hand and volunteer adults on the other regarding the purpose of youth work. It also suggests an incongruity between the theory of youth work as stated by youth work 'professionals' and the reality of youth work as practised in day-to-day youth club activity by adult volunteers.

A number of people have interpreted this as an indication of how out of touch with reality staff are. I believe it is an indication of the aspirations of staff for youth club practice. However, in looking at youth club practice the findings show that staff differ in the practical implications for a social education, and as such may have difficulty in encouraging volunteers in changing their ways of doing things. The Federation needs to develop very specific guidelines for the implementation of a social education model on the club floor.

It is important too, to note that 60% of adult volunteer respondents have attended at least basic training courses. This suggests that there may be an inconsistency between the 'theory' promoted by the staff and the examples of good practice which they encourage and train adult volunteers to operate. The examination of youth club practice will also focus on the type of practice encouraged by staff. This divergence in view, highlighted here, is likely to be reflected in further divergence between staff and adult volunteers around issues of practice. If the suggestion that staff are unclear about the practice implications of a Social Education philosophy is correct, then the examination should highlight staff identifying with structures and practices which do not empower young people, but are more likely to result in some forms of tokenism.

Chapter Two

Part Two

The Evaluation of Youth Club Practice

C H A P T E R T W O

PART TWO

THE EVALUATION OF YOUTH CLUB PRACTICE

This part of the research is presented in three sections reflecting the three areas in which the Federation have identified social learning occurring in the youth club setting.

- A) THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE
YOUTH CLUB
- B) THE BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME
- C) THE STRUCTURAL OPPORTUNITIES WHICH
FACILITATE DECISION-MAKING BY YOUNG
PEOPLE

SECTION A :

THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE YOUTH CLUB

(INFORMAL EDUCATION)

In the draft copy of the Federation's new club development booklet it states :

"Social learning occurs around the personal encounters and situations which occur between members themselves, and between adults and members..."

(N.Y.F. 1989, p. 5)

It is beyond the scope of this study to measure accurately the social learning which occurs in youth clubs around personal encounters between members themselves and between adult volunteers and members. However, it is recognised that certain features must exist of the adult volunteers are to be able to use these personal encounters for positive constructive learning. These prerequisites form the core of the Social Education Model's guidelines.

The research survey sought to establish the extent to which each of these prerequisites exist in youth club settings. It also examined whether discipline in the youth club was an issue identified by respondents as a further indicator of the quality of relationships in the club.

(1) Ratio of adults to members

According to the National Youth Federation the ratio of adults to members should be at least 1 to 10 to enable the adult volunteers to get to know the members. A detailed examination of the affiliation forms of the 220 clubs affiliated on March 1st 1989 yielded the following results :

Table 6.7

RATIO OF ADULT VOLUNTEERS TO MEMBERS
IN YOUTH CLUBS

| RATIO | % | ACCUMULATED % |
|-------|------|---------------|
| 1:4 | 8.5 | 8.5 |
| 1:5 | 12.6 | 21.1 |
| 1:6 | 16.2 | 37.3 |
| 1:8 | 15.3 | 52.6 |
| 1:10 | 21.2 | 73.8 |
| 1:12 | 6.7 | 80.5 |
| 1:15 | 5.8 | 86.3 |
| 1:18 | 3.5 | 89.8 |
| 1:20 | 6.1 | 95.9 |
| 1:30 | 4.1 | 100 |
| | ---- | |
| | 100 | |

Table 6.7 indicated that 73.8% of youth clubs have at least a ratio of one adult to every ten members. This would seem to indicate a very positive situation. However, all three categories of respondents identified 'low adult involvement' as the biggest difficulty facing their youth club. The research findings offer no explanation for this apparent contradiction. However it may be speculated that as this information was extracted from the affiliation form and the ratio of 1:10 is recognised criteria for affiliation, then it is either correct or completed to meet requirements and may not reflect reality.

(2) Size of Membership

A further prerequisite for the successful formation of relationships is the size of club membership. The Federation development guidelines, discussed earlier, suggest that a maximum number of sixty members be permitted. The thinking behind the proposal is that a positive learning experience through relationships can be developed more easily in smaller groups. However an examination of the 220 affiliated forms indicates that in many instances the recommended size limit is exceeded.

The research findings further indicate that 57.2% of youth clubs have a total membership within the recommended limit, 25.4% of clubs with over 80 members and 12.6% of clubs with over 100 members.

It is clear, therefore, that while the ratio of adult volunteers to members is well within the recommendations, the size of the membership for almost 50% of the youth clubs may be prohibitive to effective relationship building. Similarly given the numbers involved and the inadequate premises and limited resources available, it is likely that a sense of chaos exists in many clubs.

(3) The Membership

The Federation recommends that youth clubs recognise that different age groups have different characteristics and needs and suggests that where possible the club establish two sections :

Intermediate Section = 12 - 15 years

Senior Section = 16 + years

There were a total of 84 youth clubs surveyed for this question and 69% of them (58) stated that they cater for all age groups together. Of the remaining 26 youth clubs, 18 have senior sections, 23 clubs have intermediate sections and only 9 clubs have junior sections. These figures indicate that some youth clubs consist of a number of sections divided according to age groupings.

It is important to note that 69% of clubs operate with all age groups present. It is possible therefore that the needs of specific age groups are not being met and the youth club programme will probably be reduced to a recreational one.

The discussion on club facilities later in this section highlights the lack of suitable premises available to youth clubs. Many of the clubs may only be able to obtain the premises on one night a week. This is particularly true of clubs in rural areas, which face the additional difficulty of transport for

members. Investigation of respondent clubs show that 50% of respondents classified their clubs as rural while 33.7% classified their club as a mixed rural/urban club. Many of these clubs, because of difficulties with transport and premises, tend to cater for all age groups. This would offer some explanation for the fact that 69% of respondents state their clubs cater for all age groups together. However, it is important to note that the mixing of all age groups is another factor which will act as a block to the successful implementation of Social Education.

(4) The Youth Club Premises

In 1983 the Federation stated that :

"nearly all one-night-a-week clubs met in premises owned by churches, community associations or similar bodies and have to share space accordingly. This normally meant that any equipment must be stored in inadequate cupboard space or taken away in the back of somebody's car. Any attempt to improve the appearance and atmosphere of the building must use materials which can be removed at the end of the club evening".

(N.F.Y.C. 1983, p. 50)

In 1986 the Federation conducted a detailed survey of the premises and facilities available to youth clubs throughout the country. It is important to examine these findings in some detail for two reasons. Firstly, the National Youth Bureau reminds youth workers that :

"The physical environment will give strong messages to the membership about which groups of young people are welcome and valued".

(N.Y.B. 1983, p. 2)

Secondly, "inadequately premises" was identified by all three categories of respondents as the third most important difficulty facing their youth clubs. It may be assumed that the situation has not significantly changed since 1986. Therefore, the type of premises being used by clubs will effect the formation of relationships and the opportunities which can be made available to young people. The 1986 survey highlighted such startling facts that it is worth quoting extensively from it.

TYPE OF PREMISES USED BY YOUTH CLUBS

"41.7% of clubs use the Parish Hall,
30.4% use a Community Centre,
9.5% have use of a Youth Centre,
6.0% use a school class room or hall".

(N.Y.F.C. 1986, p. 9)

What is surprising here is the limited access to school facilities, 73.7% of youth clubs stated that they were refused access because of the following reasons :

- (a) "Difficulties with caretaker/school manager
- (b) Local clergy not being helpful
- (c) Gaining access to classrooms
- (d) High rent and insurance".

(N.Y.F.C. 1986, p. 10)

It is interesting to note that the main reasons given are centred on attitudinal people-based issues rather than on more practical ones. The implication which could be drawn from some of the answers is that the value of the youth club work and its standing in the local community is not very high. The Federation survey (1986) also identified "cold and damp" (15.9%) and "badly in need of repair" (17%) as major problems. Some of the problems were listed as follows :

"bulging floor boards, loose wiring, holes in floors, walls falling out and in need of being plastered, leaking roofs, no water".

(N.F.Y.C. 1986, p. 8)

The Federation Survey Report concluded :

"It is clear that for many young people the facilities offered by their local community confirms for them their low status in the community. As one respondent states - 'we get a general feeling of not being wanted'".

(N.F.Y.C. 1986, p. 3)

In view of the information collected by that survey, the conclusion drawn is not an unreasonable one. The issue of club premises has been recognised for a long time with little in practice being done about it. The Federation had in fact made two specific proposals to the Costello Committee in 1983 relating to premises and facilities for youth clubs. The first suggested that :

"...access to schools after hours be actively pursued by the Department of Education and school managements be encouraged to enter into formal arrangements with youth organisations to sort out any local problems or anxieties".

(N.F.Y.C. 1983, p. 51)

The Government Youth Policy 'In Partnership with Youth', published in 1985, accepted the recommendation stating that :

"The Department of Education will ensure that all facilities within the educational system, paid by public funds, will be accessible to the National Youth Service and will seek to ensure that charges for caretaking or heating will not prevent such access".

(1985, p. 26)

However, in reality, no such directive was issued by the Department of Education, and access to facilities is still determined by the local school management board.

The second proposal made by the Federation to the Costello Committee suggested that :

"'Face lift' grants be provided once in ten years to any club/youth group to improve existing facilities".

(N.F.Y.C. 1983, p. 51)

Again the Government Policy accepted this recommendation and proposed that :

"A new face lift grant scheme be introduced to assist youth organisations to improve their facilities".

(1985, p. 26)

However, in reality, the money available went to assist national youth organisations improve their facilities such as holiday centres, headquarters, residential training centres, drop-in centres and information centres. While it can be agreed that young people gained from these developments, it was an indirect gain and did nothing to improve the difficulties facing many of the youth clubs at local level. Therefore it may be concluded that the premises and facilities available to youth clubs do nothing to enhance the Social Education opportunities available to young people. In fact, it may be said that the facilities act as a negative learning experience in that they reinforce for young people their low status, and perhaps for some, contributes to a developing sense of alienation.

(5) Discipline in the Youth Club

This research sought to establish whether or not there were discipline problems in the club, as a further indication of the level of relationships. All respondents were asked to place in order of importance a list of fourteen difficulties they encountered in their club (see Appendix 2).

Out of this list of fourteen difficulties, senior members rated both 'discipline' and 'problem members' as the tenth. This indication of a low level of discipline problems is confirmed by the figures relating to the frequency with which adult volunteers deal with problems in the club. Only 11% of adult volunteers stated that they frequently 'stop arguments', while 54% said they 'sometimes' or 'seldom' do so. Furthermore, 67% of adult volunteers maintain that they 'chat to small groups' of young people very frequently, while 80% state that they 'circulate and chat' to members frequently. However the research findings are somewhat ambiguous because 43.5% of volunteer adults stated that they 'deal with problems' frequently and 54.3% stated that they 'check on members' frequently. A conclusion which may be drawn is that while there are no major discipline problems at club level, the volunteer adults seem to feel they need to keep a close check on members, indicating a directive style of supervision, contradictory to the role promoted by Social Education.

SECTION B :
THE YOUTH CLUB PROGRAMME
(NON-FORMAL EDUCATION)

The National Youth Federation suggests that there should be a variety of recreational and educational activities available at club level.

The Annual Reports of the Federation and its affiliated regions list the following programmes as operating at club and regional level and these are classified as 'recreational' or 'educational' as follows :

Table 6.11

CLASSIFICATION OF PROGRAMMES

| RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES | EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Pool | Outdoor Pursuits |
| Table Tennis | Group Discussions |
| Uni-hoc | Film/Video |
| Basketball | Arts and Crafts |
| Soccer | Cookery |
| Fun Games | Educational Workshops |
| Chess Competitions | Community Projects |
| | Tops of the Clubs |

This research seeks to establish how frequently each of the programmes in the two categories above are conducted in the club. As the programme is identified as a vehicle for social learning, a knowledge of the level of male and female participation in each programme will give some indication of the equality of opportunities available to both sexes.

These two issues will be examined separately in the research findings.

Firstly, the research findings relating to the frequency with which clubs offer specific programmes will be presented and discussed. Secondly, the issue of gender participation in the most frequently run programmes will be examined based on the research findings.

Table 6.12

FREQUENCY OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| PROGRAMME | FREQUENCY | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------------|-------|
| | Weekly | Monthly | Every 6 months | Never |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Pool | 66 | 5 | - | 29 |
| Table Tennis | 68 | 8 | 5 | 19 |
| Uni-hoc | 30 | 10 | - | 60 |
| Basketball | 36 | 26 | 12 | 26 |
| Soccer | 65 | 10 | 12 | 13 |
| Fun Games | 63 | 13 | 16 | 8 |
| Chess | 39 | 13 | 9 | 39 |
| Regional Events | - | 39 | 51 | 10 |
| Competitions | 37 | 32 | 13 | 8 |

Table 6.12 indicates that the majority of clubs run a variety of sports orientated recreational programmes. The most popular events conducted on a weekly basis in over 60% of the youth clubs are :

- (1) Pool (66%)
- (2) Table Tennis (68%)
- (3) Soccer (65%)
- (4) Fun Games (63%)

Furthermore, the majority of clubs conduct the following programmes on at least a monthly basis :

- (1) Basketball (62%)
- (2) Chess (52%)
- (3) Competitions (69%)

It is important to recognise the emphasis on sports activities and competitions in the standard club programme. Over 69% hold competitions on a weekly or monthly basis. This emphasis on competitive sporting activities is reflected in the fact that the Federation has continued to promote a National Competitions Programme which has not significantly changed in fifteen years. Some staff and volunteers have wished to see this changed, but they are virtually powerless to do so in the face of opposition from members of clubs, and a high proportion of adult volunteers and regional executives. In 1986 the National Executive dropped the National Competitions Programme and found that the National Council, which was made up of three club representatives from each affiliated region, reversed this decision at the first available opportunity. This was a significant event, because many senior staff and volunteers had regarded the Council as the rubber stamping body for the Executive activities. One of the justifications advanced by the supporters of the competitive tradition in youth clubs is that, throughout their provision, members experience a sense of achievement that may be absent from other aspects of their lives. There are, of course, countless instances where winning a youth club tournament has only provided needed status but has also boosted that member's self confidence. This argument is persuasive enough if one counts the credits alone, but for every winner there has to be one or more losers. Feasey (1972) clearly articulates the counter argument :

"The intrinsic worth of an activity too often raises questions of standards and competition which can actually harm the process of personal self-development, which it purports to serve. So often competitions in games sours into rivalry of personalities. Most of us can recall the sense of humiliation felt in defeat, or the shame felt when we have behaved as unpleasant, ungenerous victors".

Attachment to competition and reward is a reflection of the ethos of society in general, so any attempt to make an abrupt change in policy is unlikely to amount to more than a futile gesture.

This is confirmed when one considers 'competitions' were ranked by adult volunteers as the second most important service offered to clubs. This is in contrast with senior members who ranked competitions sixth and staff who ranked them eighth. Therefore, staff and volunteers who are seeking to changed the emphasis on competitions are unlikely to be able to modify the competitive instincts of adult volunteers overnight, anymore than young people can be helped so quickly to shake off the competitive conditioning that they have acquired from school and society at large.

Over the last five years the Federation has been promoting co-operative games as an alternative to competitions. The fact that 76.4% of clubs enjoy fun and games at least monthly with

over 60% playing them on a weekly basis, is a positive indication of the gradual take-up of non-competitive games in clubs. As yet, there is no indication that this take-up has led to a change from competitive to co-operative games. Attempts to draw attention to the destructive results of competitions and alternative possibilities will have to be slow and patient.

'EDUCATIONAL' PROGRAMMES

There is a significant difference between the frequency of recreational programmes and educational programmes conducted at club level.

Table 6.13

THE FREQUENCY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| PROGRAMME | FREQUENCY | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | Weekly % | Monthly % | Over 6 Months % | Never % |
| Outdoor Pursuits | - | 18 | 40 | 42 |
| Group Discussions | 20 | 37 | 5 | 38 |
| Film/Video | 3 | 28 | 39 | 30 |
| Arts & Crafts | 5 | 16 | 16 | 63 |
| Cookery | 2 | - | 8 | 90 |
| Educational Workshops | - | - | 40 | 60 |
| Community Projects | - | 8 | 55 | 37 |
| 'Tops of the Clubs' | - | - | 44 | 56 |

Table 6.13 also illustrates that for over 40% of clubs, the majority of educational programmes listed are conducted once every six months or so, while a further significant number of

clubs have 'never' conducted some of the programmes. It is also likely that the film/video category with a rating of 22% on a monthly basis and 8% on a weekly basis showing films, is used as a recreational programme rather than an educational programme. The Ogra Chorcai Club Development Manual explains the difference:

"Many films communicate a message which is connected to, but distinct from, the actual plot itself. The purpose of this programme is to help young people acquire a more critical approach to films. Films are explored under a suggested framework... discussion based on a number of themes such as scenery, special effects..."

(Ogra Chorcai 1985, p. 214)

Although respondents were not asked to categorise the event as educational or recreational, the fact that respondents indicated that the majority of both male and female members participate (see Table 6.14) indicates that it is a large group event, and therefore likely to be recreational based, with no structured follow-up to the showing of the film.

It is interesting to note that arts and crafts are available in 37% of clubs, and even amongst these, on an infrequent basis. This is an extremely low level of participation especially when one considers that arts and crafts and creative activities have been programmes actively promoted by the Federation over the last fifteen years.

Table 6.13 also indicates that 37% of youth clubs do not ever participate in community projects, while 55% participate every six months or so. It is likely that youth clubs engage in a community project to meet criteria for the Club Award Scheme operated by some regions or to participate in the Federation's annual National Community Involvement Awards. In reviewing the entries into this national event over the last three years, an average of 90% could be classified as community service projects, such as cleaning up a graveyard, redecorating a parish hall, or building a play ground. Many of these actions have given the youth club a higher and more respectable profile at community level.

Bunt and Gargrave maintain :

"that by encouraging club members to participate in community service, youth club workers were reinforcing the view that by and large the social structures were benign but that they occasionally and inevitably caused some slight discomfort to a few unfortunate minority groups, which could be remedied by harnessing the enthusiasm and idealism of the young".

(Bunt and Gargrave 1980, p. 120)

However within the Federation particularly through the Youth Forum, young people are being encouraged to look instead at the causes of the malfunctioning of the social system and to direct their energies more effectively to this way of thinking. The National Youth Forum Report outlines a work programme in which young people will examine such issues as education, welfare rights, young people and the law. However, such attempts at the political education of young people is still a minority concern within the youth clubs affiliated to the Federation.

In conclusion therefore it may be said that 60% of youth clubs do not conduct educational workshops and that the remaining 40% of clubs only do so on a six monthly basis. This figure implies that such events are conducted on a once off basis during the club calendar year. This should be of major concern to the Federation as their emphasis on programme development in the 1980's has been on developing educational programmes such as "Education for Life", "Development Education" and "Working with Girls". In examining the annual reports for the period 1986/87, it seems that many of these programmes were conducted through workshops for adult volunteers on a national basis. However, it was felt that this strategy was not successful as it did not ensure the transfer of learning to the local youth clubs. The successful introduction of educational programmes into clubs can only occur as part of an overall strategy pursued by regions. The pattern which emerges emphasising recreational programmes is further confirmed when respondents were asked to prioritize new developments.

28.6% of members and adult volunteers and 23.5% of staff identified the need for 'new programme ideas'. However 13.3% of adults and 10.8% of staff identified new recreational programmes while 8.5% of staff and 1.9% of adults identified new educational programmes as a first priority need. This competitive aspect of recreation programmes can be recognised when 13.4% of adult volunteers as compared to 4.2% of staff identified new competitions as a first priority.

MALE/FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH CLUB PROGRAMMES

The questionnaire sought to establish an indication of the take-up of the programmes of the youth clubs by both male and female participation. This is an important issue when one considered that the purpose of the youth club is to give all young people, both male and female, the opportunity to develop themselves. Equality of opportunity therefore is a central principle of Social Education.

Research conducted in England by the Inner London Education Authority (I.L.E.A.) (1984) showed the position of young women in youth clubs had not changed significantly since similar research had been conducted by Hammer in 1964. The researchers concluded that :

there is considerable sex-stereotyping of activities, both in provision and in the extent to which one sex predominates in participation".

(I.L.E.A. 1984, p. 11)

The I.L.E.A. research also found that many girls were unhappy about the activities provided at their clubs and centres. Girls "complained that most of the activities were orientated towards the interests of boys rather than girls". (1984, p. 16)

This study asked respondents to indicate for each programme area whether a majority/minority or males/females took part. Despite the fact that this was a rather crude indicator of the level of male/female participation, it highlighted some interesting results. Firstly, the 'recreational' programme category is presented in Table 6.14 below. The programmes which are conducted by the majority of clubs on a weekly basis are examined in this Table.

Table 6.14

GENDER PARTICIPATION LEVELS IN RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| PROGRAMME | MALE PARTICIPATION | | | FEMALE PARTICIPATION | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------------------|---------------|------------|
| | MAJORITY % | MINORITY % | NEVER % | MAJORITY % | MINORITY % | NEVER % |
| Pool *(66%) | 78 | 3 | 19 | 13 | 48 | 29 |
| Table Tennis (68%) | 65 | 22 | 13 | 37 | 48 | 15 |
| Uni-hoc (30%) | 38 | 3 | 59 | 36 | 5 | 59 |
| Basketball(36%) | 57 | 17 | 26 | 51 | 23 | 26 |
| Soccer (65%) | 83 | 9 | 8 | 35 | 52 | 13 |
| Fun Games (63%) | 76 | 13 | 11 | 70 | 15 | 15 |
| Chess (39%) | 30 | 24 | 46 | 4 | 39 | 57 |
| Competitions (37%) | 76 | 13 | 11 | 65 | 17 | 18 |

(*The percentage figures in brackets represents the percentage of clubs which operate this programme on a weekly basis)

'cooking' were not included in Table 6.15 because Table 6.13 indicates that these events are only occasionally conducted by a small minority of youth clubs.

Secondly, Table 6.15 clearly indicates where 53% of clubs say that only a minority of males participate in group discussions, whereas 59% of clubs said that a majority of females participate. As stated earlier, it is unclear what respondents meant by the term 'group discussion'. It was intended to mean a prepared group discussion on a topic of interest, but the fact that 56.6% of clubs state that they have 'group discussions' weekly or monthly, could simply mean that respondents were referring to spontaneous and informal group conversation. Should this be correct, then it can be no surprise that the female participation score is high, because as we have seen, recreational programmes are weekly events and are dominated by males.

Table 6.15 also highlights the fact that females are more likely to be found in community orientated activities than are males. While one can only tentatively speculate as to the reasons for the different levels of participation, it is reasonable to suspect that broad gender stereotypes are being mirrored rather than challenged within the club programme. This view is supported by the survey findings.

Firstly, the level of participation of young women has been interpreted by some adult volunteers as a lack of motivation or interest. For instance, 41.3% of adult volunteers agreed with the statement that "girls are harder to get involved in club programmes". However the majority of adult volunteers and staff alike are not aware of the fact that young women may need alternative programme responses to meet their specific needs. This may be illustrated in two ways.

Secondly, respondents rated programmes 'for girls' as a very low area of difficulty for their club. Out of a possible ranking of 1-14, senior members ranked it 8, adult volunteer 10 and staff as 11. This could imply one of two things. All three groups feel there are enough specific programmes available to meet the needs of girls or they are not conscious of the fact that the needs of girls may need to be met by different means. The results of Question 16 show that 59.1% of adult volunteers 'seldom' or 'never' run a 'girls only event', while only 29.5% say 'sometimes'. The implication being that very little, if any, specific provision is made for girls.

One could infer that young women are forced into possible roles in the youth clubs which lead to further sex stereo-typing. Frost describes the reality of many young women's experience of youth clubs as follows :

"Boys encourage girls to be admiring audiences for their prowess at football, pool, basketball, etc. The girls,

Table 6.14 shows that there are four events - pool, table tennis, soccer and fun games - which are conducted in over 60% of clubs on a weekly basis. This implies that these activities form the core of the programme for many clubs. Table 6.14 clearly indicates that in three of these top four activities - pool, table tennis and soccer - over 75% of clubs have indicated that the majority of males participate in these events. These figures are in marked contrast with the fact that over 65% of clubs rated female participation as in a 'minority' or 'never' for the same three events. The fourth event is a non-competitive programme of fun games which involves the majority of males and females. This statistic can be no surprise because, as stated earlier, co-operative fun games are promoted by the Federation in an attempt to reduce the emphasis on competitions. It is also interesting to note that Uni-hoc and basketball are promoted by the Federation as mixed team events and this is reflected in the fact that clubs rated male and female participation in 'majority'.

Table 6.15

GENDER PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| PROGRAMME | MALE PARTICIPATION | | | FEMALE PARTICIPATION | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------|--------|----------------------|----------|-------|
| | MAJORITY | MINORITY | NEVER* | MAJORITY | MINORITY | NEVER |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Outdoor Pursuits | 73 | 14 | 13 | 48 | 17 | 35 |
| Group Discussions | 32 | 53 | 15 | 59 | 29 | 12 |
| Film\Video | 60 | 16 | 24 | 68 | 8 | 24 |
| Educational | | | | | | |
| Workshop | 11 | 22 | 67 | 24 | 11 | 65 |
| Community Projects | 19 | 36 | 45 | 40 | 17 | 43 |
| Tops of the Clubs | 23 | 17 | 60 | 37 | 5 | 58 |

Table 6.15 illustrates that in all the educational events, except 'outdoor pursuits' there is a higher percentage of clubs showing a majority level of female participation than male participation. This is in contrast with the opposite findings for recreational sports programmes. 'Arts and crafts' and

once they have tired of being the admiring audience and realising that they will wait all evening for their turn on the pool table, congregate in the ladies loo and complain that there is nothing in the club for them".

(Frost 1987, p. 41)

The implication of this is that the message which young women receive from their experience of youth clubs may in fact be reinforcing their lack of self-confidence rather than supporting their development. In this way the hidden curriculum of the club undermines the stated curriculum. It can therefore be suggested that the egalitarian position which believes that the needs of young women can best be served in mixed provision, dominates youth work. Yet this research has shown that in existing youth clubs, the needs of young women are not recognised as necessarily different from those men, and as such, no special provision is made.

It can be argued, therefore, that once again, via a classically social democratic analysis, the crucial structural determinants of young people's individual development - in this case the deeply embedded power relationship between men and women - are entirely ignored. It can also be suggested that this is apparent where there is a lack of awareness of the needs of young women and where the stable diet of programmes is dominated by the males, which seems to respond only to their needs. Hammer's comments in 1964 can be used as a summary of these research findings :

"The difficulty of catering for girls in clubs is not a problem of knowledge, but one of attitudes, values and expectations".

(Hammer 1964, p. 17)

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the research findings presented above clearly indicate that the programmes available in the majority of youth clubs are recreational sporting activities, with a very small minority of clubs offering any programmes which could be loosely termed educational.

These findings explain why 67.3% of senior members and 48.8% of adult volunteers describe the purpose of the youth club in terms such as "a place to meet friends, to try out new activities, and to take part in recreational activities". In contrast 34.7% of staff describe the benefits of a youth club in the same terms. It must be concluded therefore that the vast majority of youth clubs do not provide social education opportunities as defined by the Federation rather, they offer a very basic recreational programme. This point will be discussed in detail later.

The strong grip that competitions have on clubs can be traced to the attitudes of adult volunteers who see them as the second most important service to clubs. It is more than a little ironic that competitions come second to 'training' as a priority service. It is clear that the Federation needs to approach the development of programmes at club level in a more imaginative and innovative way. It cannot assume that because its training programme emphasises the 'process' dimension of youth work, it is clear supports for more effective educational programmes that support the fostering of good relationships at all levels in the club, are not required.

The lack of opportunities for equality of participation by young women in the club is clearly identified by the research findings. While these findings should be of grave concern, it should be of even greater concern that there is little awareness among staff and volunteers about the needs of young people in the club. It is difficult to understand that in this day and age only 2.2% of volunteers and 1% of staff felt that special programmes for girls needed to be developed.

The Federation needs to recognise that the critical component of any learning experience is the method or process through which the learning occurs. The Federation therefore must reflect on all aspects of its work, not just in the training it offers, but on its programmes and services. In particular, it must develop an awareness of sexism and discrimination against young women. This must become an integrated part of the process of the organisation and should be not developed as a 'programme for girls' which operates separately from the male dominated youth club. Regional Executive or National Board.

SECTION C:

THE STRUCTURAL OPPORTUNITIES WHICH FACILITATE DECISION-MAKING BY YOUNG PEOPLE

The Federation Guidelines relating to the structures which support decision-making suggests that :

- (a) All young people should contribute and make :
 - 1. Operational Decisions
 - 2. Management Decisions
 - 3. Political Decisions
- (b) All young people should :
 - 1. Take responsibility for the organisation and implementation of programme ideas
 - 2. Initiate new programmes based on their own interests.

In this section it is recognised that the attitudes of respondents to the participation of young people in decision-making will affect the structures used in youth clubs and how young people get to participate in the structures.

The research findings will examine youth club practice under each of these headings, together with an examination of 'who' makes 'what' type of decisions in the youth club. In reviewing these three areas, clear indications of the extent of the existence of the Federation Guidelines will emerge.

Finally, Arnstein's ladder of participation will be used to indicate levels of non-participation, degrees of tokenism and levels of member power at the end of this examination.

The research focused on the following areas :

- 1. The attitude of respondents to the participation of young people in decision-making.
- 2. The structures which exist to facilitate the participation of young people.
- 3. How young people are elected or selected to take part in the structures.
- 4. The reality of who makes decisions in the club, categorised as 'operational', 'managerial' and 'political'.

1. ATTITUDES TO PARTICIPATION

"Value questions run throughout all that youth workers do, yet they are rarely talked about in detail. One of the main reasons for this is the inconsistencies that often emerge between our personal values and our practice".

(Smith 1981, p. 8)

There are three statements included in the questionnaire which indicate respondents' attitude to participation of young people in decision-making.

The first statement covered the general principle that...

"Members should be involved in Club Management".

This statement received 93.4% agreement from volunteer adults, 68.5% agreement from senior members and 96.6% agreement from staff. This result was not expected, nevertheless the almost total generalised support of the principle of member participation should not be ignored. Such generalised support however does not follow through on more specific statements. Table 6.16 shows a breakdown of responses on the statement that :

"Members are not capable of organising the club activities on their own".

The contrast between staff and both senior members and adult volunteers is marked. The fact that 39.2% of adult volunteers agree with the statement is the first indication that the principle of member participation may be limited in its practical application.

The fact that more than 31% of senior members agree with this statement indicates a dependency on adult volunteers. This view is supported by reference to the findings presented earlier where 36.8% defined the role of the adult volunteer as an 'organiser' and 'supervisor', while a further 21.1% defined the role as 'role model' and finally, 7.9% defined the role as 'character-building'. In reality therefore it can be estimated that 65.8% of senior members experience adult volunteers in roles that may be considered to be 'controlling', 'directive' or 'authoritarian'.

The figure of 39.2% of adults who agree with the statement should be no surprise, when one considers that fact that 39.1% of adult volunteers define their role as 'organisers' and 'supervisors', while a further 30.4% of adults see their role as a 'role model' or 'character-builder'. This figure is also

consistent with the 45.1% (see Table 6.20) of clubs which operate a structure which gives members control over the affairs of the club. The fact that 96.1% of staff disagree is consistent with their view of the role of the youth worker when they rejected the role of organiser (0%) and supervisor (0%) and only 3.4% described the role as 'role model'. Yet it is consistent with the fact that 69.2% of staff prefer a structure that leaves the control of the club in the hands of adult volunteers, with senior members in a more token role (see Table 6.20).

The third statement presented to the respondents was as follows :

"Adults need to take control in difficult situations".

The results are illustrated in Table 6.17.

Once again there is a contrast between staff at 58.6% and senior members 18.4% and adult volunteers at 21.7%. It is interesting to note that the staff figure has dropped from 96.6% agreement with the principle of participation in decision-making to 58.6% agreeing to allow young people handle difficult situations. This shift seems to indicate that in reality staff believe that young people should be encouraged to participate in decision-making, but not to the extent that problems may arise. This attitude is more in line with the implications of the staffs' preference for a club structure. In other words, young people should be making decision, but when difficulties arise the leaders should step in to sort things out. This position is understandable when one considers the pressure on adult volunteers from parents, clergy, community associations, to manage what they regard as a well run club, and which usually means an adult directed club. However, the N.F.Y.C. Training Officers Report in 1985 recognises the difficulties facing adult volunteers and states that :

"in spite of this, many workers have experimented with varying degrees of self-government in clubs by delegating a good deal of responsibility for the management of affairs within the club to a committee elected by members".

(N.F.Y.C. 1985, p. 2)

2. STRUCTURES AT CLUB LEVEL

The research questionnaire examined the type of structural opportunities which youth clubs offered to young people. The research findings are presented in Table 6.18.

The Federation over the last fifteen years has encouraged youth clubs to operate a structure which reflects the principle of adults and young people working together in partnership, i.e.

in a joint management committee or a members committee with adult representatives. It comes as no surprise therefore that 65.4% of staff encourage these models and 61% of clubs operate them. Yet as far back as 1967 Batten was criticising this approach to participation.

"The introduction of a members committee does not necessarily mean an active participation by the membership of the club. Even if such a committee works well, its members are only a small minority of the membership".

(Batten 1967, p. 12)

Furthermore in reality it is difficult to see how a joint adult members committee will actually work in partnership, given the imbalance in experience between the adults and the young people. It is more likely that in practice, the adults would control such a committee. This is more clearly seen when the above club structures are placed on a continuum from an adult controlled to a member controlled structure.

Arnstein's ladder of participation, when applied to members decision-making in youth club affairs, results in the following representation :

Table 6.19

ARNSTEIN'S LADDER APPLIED TO MEMBERS' DECISION-MAKING

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Degrees of Member Power | MEMBER CONTROL | Members can negotiate with adults and hold the veto in decision- making within the club. |
| | DELEGATED POWER | |
| | PARTNERSHIP | |
| Degrees of Tokenism | PLACATION | Members are offered to present their views /are informed of programme. Adult has veto. No change in status quo. |
| | CONSULTATION | |
| | INFORMING | |
| Non- Participation | THERAPY | Adult sees members as incapable of decision- making, but feels they could be educated to the process. Members are apathetic. Adult role authoritarian. |
| | MANIPULATION | |
| | | |

Arnstein's ladder of participation was again used to create a continuum of decision-making from adult volunteer controlled to member controlled. This continuum is illustrated in the table below.

Table 6.24 CONTINUUM OF DECISION-MAKING IN YOUTH CLUBS BASED ON ARNSTEIN'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---|---|--|-------------|
| Adult Only | Adult decides and sells | Adult consults and then makes decisions | Members make the decisions Adult has veto | Member makes decision with Adult (no veto) | Member only |
| Non-Participation | | Degrees of Tokenism | | Degrees of Member Power | |

In this research fourteen decisions which are made on a regular basis in clubs were listed, and all three categories of respondents were asked to identify who made these decisions along the continuum outlined above.

Table 6.25 illustrates the level of participation of young people in operational decisions in the youth club. The first point to be made is that there is a significant difference on all five areas between staff and both volunteer adults and senior members. This reinforces the difference earlier in their commitment to the principle of participation and in their vision of youth work.

In particular, it is interesting to note that 94.6% of senior members identify the opportunity for them to 'arrange a programme' as being 'token participation'. As identified earlier, the opportunity to participate is restricted to some form of senior members committee (80.5%) (see Table 6.20) which has been criticised because it only offers a small number of young people the opportunity to play an active role in decision-making.

However from the adult volunteer's point of view, 51.2% gave members real control in this area, while a further 42.2% operate degrees of tokenism in this area of decision-making. Thus, while staff and volunteer adults support the principle of allowing young people to arrange the programme, the opportunities in most

clubs are restricted to those members elected to a Management Committee, and for 48.8% of clubs the opportunities are so restricted as to be defined as tokenism.

It is also important to note that, in areas of minor consequence such as 'running the coffee bar' or 'deciding what records should be bought', 69.7% of adult volunteers, 72% senior members and 92.5% staff believe that members should make the decision. As the decisions became more important, such as 'changing the layout of the club' and 'raising funds' the adult volunteers take more control with only 47% of adult volunteers giving power to members in the former area and 48.8% in the latter area. This is confirmed by the experience of the senior members who score the former area at 46.8% and the latter at 52.7%

In conclusion therefore it may be said that young people have control over areas of little consequence in the running of the club.

Table 6.26 shows that the scoring for 'member power, is highest over all three categories of respondents for the decision on members electing their own representatives onto the Management Committee. It is interesting to note that the adult volunteer score of 54.8% is reflected in the figure of 61% of clubs of adult volunteers which operate on electoral systems for member selection to the club Management Committee (see Table 6.21). Finally, the figure of 75% of staff corresponds to the 77.7% of staff who encourage clubs to operate an electoral system for the selection of members to the Management Committee.

It is also interesting to note that, in all other management decisions, except 'enforcing club rules', senior members score higher in giving power to members than adult volunteers. In this instance 30.3% of adult volunteers in comparison to 16.6% of senior members favour members enforcing club rules. It is likely that this figure 16.6% reflects the reality of the members experience, given also the fact that 48.8% of adults, and 58.4% of senior members, believe that adults only should enforce club rules.

In other areas such as 'deciding on how money is spent', 'deciding on equipment' and 'on subs', some form of consultation with young people is favoured by the majority of adult volunteers, while the majority of staff favour leaving such decisions to young people themselves.

In summary therefore, the majority of adult volunteers operate a system of consultation and/or informing young people of the outcome of five of the six management decisions listed. The adult volunteers support the democratic principle of membership elections to posts of responsibility on the Management Committee. In contrast, the majority of staff favour members having control over all the management decisions listed. In practice this means

the management of the internal affairs of the youth club. However, it must be recognised that there was some hesitancy on the part of the staff to allowing total freedom in decision-making to members in what may be regarded as important areas, such as finance and discipline. This information is not unexpected when one considers the high score of both staff (34%) and volunteers (73.9%) to the 'need for adults to take control in different situations' (see Table 6.17).

The final classification of decision-making in the youth club deals with external relationships and has been termed 'political' because of the consequences for the club in the community.

The first decision to invite local politicians into the club indicates that 41.9% of adult volunteers would not do so without at least consulting the members, while a further 35.5% believe that members should do so themselves. The figures for senior members are very similar, 39.2% for consulting them and 32.3% for allowing them to make the decision. This is likely to reflect the reality in current youth club practice, as adult volunteers are unlikely to risk bringing politicians into the club without the members agreement for fear of the consequences, such as possible disinterest, boisterousness or boredom.

The second decision, to challenge a community association, 40% of adult volunteers and 45.2% of senior members believe that members should not be involved at all.

This is likely to reflect the attitude that such issues as 'charges for the use of the premises' are the concern of the adults who are the providers of the youth club, rather than the members who are just the 'consumers' of the youth club service. Yet both of these decisions should be made by members of a club operating according to Social Education principles.

CONCLUSIONS

"One of the most common criticisms made of participation in youth work is that the matters covered are trivial".

(Smith 1981, p. 9)

It is clear from the research findings that this criticism has direct relevance to the practice in youth clubs within the Federation. In general terms it can be said that the majority of youth clubs operate a structure designed to facilitate the participation of young people. The election of young people is by a democratic electoral process, but by its nature only gives a small responsibility through decision-making. The research findings also show that the electoral system ensures that there is a high turnover every year of senior members on the Management Committee. This has the effect of reducing the operational abilities of the committee each year and requires the adult volunteers to put energy and resources into the new committee, often to the disadvantage of the rank and file members of the club.

A second consequence has been the tendency to reduce the power of this committee to organisational and operational decisions and to maintain the management and political decisions in the hands of the adult volunteers. The research finds confirm this practice. It is clear from the attitudinal scales examined, that the view of young people's abilities held by adult volunteers acts as a block to giving power to young people. This has the effect of reducing the influence of young people to areas of minor consequence in the club, resulting in young people being demotivated. This, in turn, confirms for adults that young people really do not want responsibility.

This point is illustrated by the fact that both staff and adult volunteers rated "getting young people involved in running the club" as the fourth most difficult problem facing youth clubs. This is in contrast with the figure 5.9% for senior members who saw it as a 'difficulty', indicating that motivation to participate is not a problem from the senior members perspective. This process can be illustrated as follows :

As the cycle illustrates, the process of participation through delegation can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if the attitudes of the adult volunteers are limiting the opportunities available to young people. Another factor which influences this process is that the adults may be hesitant to give young people total responsibility without being sure they have the skills to complete the tasks successfully. It is not clear from the Federation documentation what the guidelines are to volunteer adults for supporting and training members to take effective control of the youth club management. It is apparent that without such guidelines, adult volunteers will be unable to support young people to become managers of their own clubs. The research finds show that 60.3% of senior members come to the youth clubs to 'meet friends and engage in recreational activities'. Young people need to be convinced that they have a role in running their club and that their contribution will be welcomed and accepted.

What is also clear from the research findings is that the senior member committee or member representation on the Management Committee is not an effective way of involving young people in the process of decision-making. It limits the number of young people who can participate to a very small minority and diverts the focus of the adult volunteers from the ordinary members to the small numbers of committee members. An alternative approach is proposed in Appendix One.

Chapter Three

Conclusions and Recommendations

C H A P T E R T H R E E

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction :

Denis Staunton, the Executive Officer in the Federation in 1975, presented a rather dismal picture of the working conditions of volunteers.

"If I were to paint a picture of the voluntary youth worker, it would be that he is all the time placed in a dilemma between realising his aspirations for the members, but faced with the reality of little encouragement... He finds himself in a cold bleak building, where there are few facilities, little equipment and no financial assistance available".

(cited in N.F.Y.C. 1975, P. 2)

He concluded that

"If the government were to allocate additional finance for the employment of staff, this situation would be changed significantly".

(N.F.Y.C. 1975, P. 2)

The research findings show that despite the growth in resources and staff in the 1980's, the experience of young people in youth clubs has not changed significantly since the early seventies. In a presentation to the N.F.Y.C. Members Conference in 1974, Rev. Roger Kelleher stated

"The purpose and functioning of the club must change. Gone are the days when the youth club existed merely to keep young people off the street...Gone too are the days when the club was run by one or two people who had little knowledge of method or approach, and thus never allowed the young people to have a worthwhile part in the running of the club. I would urge those in charge of youth clubs to think out clearly and make explicit the nature and contribution they wish to make. It is only when each club has clearly defined aims and objectives for itself that it can achieve anything for its' members".

(N.F.Y.C. 1974, P. 32)

- (f) While there is a very limited opportunity for structural participation it does not include a conscious political education strategy, as advocated by Bunt and Gargrave (1980). They state that

"...Allied with creating structural opportunities for participation, it is important to have a conscious political education strategy designed to broaden young people's awareness of political processes, of ways in which power is attained, held and used and of how they may involve themselves in these processes so that, given greater understanding, they can exercise a stronger influence on the forces that shape their lives"

(Bunt & Gargrave, 1980, p. 12)

It is clear that the Federation needs to take the following steps :

1. Recognise that the values and attitudes of the majority of adult volunteers act as blocks to the participation of young people and develop a training programme which will address this issue with existing adult volunteers
2. Establish a recruitment policy which recognises the need to recruit adults committed to the practical application of the principle of 'empowering' members which underlay the philosophy of the Federation
3. Introduce an induction programme for newly recruited adults which gives them the skills to support the introduction of a suitable club structure along the principles of Social Education (an example is presented in Appendix One)
4. Publish a club development booklet illustrating the principles of the Federation's philosophy in practical examples to be used by existing clubs to bring about change.

5. Training Services

A review of the Federation's document highlighted the following points :

- (1) In the 1970's and early 1980's the emphasis of training for volunteers was towards the introduction of group work skills and personal development programmes. However, these programmes only catered for a small minority of adults and did little to address the issues in the majority of youth clubs

limited experience of small groups an experience of working with them. This experience could lead them to develop confidence in this work which, with further training, could lead to the use of more advanced and in depth group work programmes.

2. Develop a club leaders manual which focuses on the role of the adult volunteers and assists them involve young people in programme development and club management.
3. Expand the 'equipment library scheme' which Waterford, Galway and Kildare regions have developed. This allows youth clubs borrow and use expensive equipment such as computers, pottery ovens and photography equipment, as well as less expensive equipment such as sports, arts and crafts.
4. Continue to encourage a shift in emphasis away from competitive to co-operative games by introducing training workshops for adults and senior members in the running of same.
5. Introduce national events which encourage small group co-operative activities with adult involvement.

4. Structural Participation of Young People in Decision-Making

The research findings related to this area may be summarised as follows :

- (a) Adult volunteers endorse the principle of member participation, but limit their involvement in decision-making to minor 'operational' decisions, with a reduced involvement in management decisions (see Table 6.15)
- (b) Staff are prepared to give more responsibility to young people than adult volunteers (see Tables 6.16, 6.17)
- (c) 69.2% of staff encourage a structure for the youth club which leaves control in the hands of adult volunteers (see Table 6.20)
- (d) There is a discrepancy between the stated philosophy and practice of both the staff and adult volunteers
- (e) There is very limited involvement of young people in what was labelled 'political' decisions, i.e. any decision which involved the club in dispute with individuals or the community (see Table 6.27)

- (c) Seeking the development of a grant scheme for youth groups, clubs, etc. to assist them in the refurbishment of premises. This scheme should be administered by national or regional organisations, but not be open to them to apply for funding themselves.

3. Programme Development

The following conclusions can be drawn from the research findings :

1. The programme conducted by the majority of youth clubs are recreational activities, usually sports orientated, often just played for their own sake, with no underlying or even remotely visible educational objectives (see Tables 6.12, 6.13)
2. There is considerable sex stereotyping of activities, both in the programme provision and in the extent of male domination of the programme (see Tables 6.14, 6.15)
3. The adult volunteers and members identify the need for new recreational programmes as an urgent priority
4. The staff identify the need for new educational programmes as an urgent priority, while both adult volunteers and senior members scored this as a low need
5. Programme development in the Federation has concentrated on educational programmes based on small group processes, relying on adults with considerable skills. This has resulted in a very small minority of youth clubs participating.
6. The highest take-up of a national event organised by the Federation is its National Games, a sports competition, with the majority of youth clubs participating in it at regional and national level.

There is obviously a difference between what staff identify and respond to and what volunteers and young people want. This is a further manifestation of the difference in philosophies between these groups.

The Federation needs to recognise the reality of programme development at club level, and respond to that reality, rather than developing educational programmes that would be appropriate if the 'ideal' were in operation. The Federation needs to :

1. Develop basic programmes for adults to operate with small groups. These 'starter packs' would give adults with

(c) Age Differentiation

It is clear from the research findings (see Table 6.9) that 69% of clubs operate with all age groups present.

It is recommended that the Federation encourage clubs to cater separately for different age groupings. The age divisions could correspond to the divisions within the educational system, i.e. primary level, intermediate level and senior level.

(d) Discipline

The research findings (see Table 6.3) indicate that there seems to be no serious discipline problems at club level. However, a conclusion which may be drawn is that the adults keep a close check on members possibly indicating a directive style of supervision. This corresponds with the fact that the majority of adults identified their role as supervisors and organisers.

There is no specific recommendations required here as the recommendations relating to training and other support services will address the issue of changing the role of the adult from supervisor to critical educator and thus improving the social relationships in the club.

(e) Youth Club Premises

It is only fair to start with the observation that on this matter the old saying "beggars can't be choosers" is appropriate. Youth clubs in many instances meet in school or community halls or in old buildings that nobody else wants any more. Less than 10% of youth clubs have access to purpose built youth centres. The researching findings clearly show that the facilities available restrict the potential of the majority of youth clubs. While the Federation in 1983 recognised this issue it seems to have done little or nothing to assist youth clubs address the issue. The approach of the Federation in just assuming that the community should supply adequate premises is in direct contrast to the emphasis placed for instance by the Scout Movements on each unit owning its own 'den'.

The Federation needs to address urgently the issue of premises by :

- (a) Seeking support from the Department of Education for the more widespread availability of school premises
- (b) Issuing guidelines to youth clubs on creative ways of improving the physical environment by using portable, storable decorations

- (b) on the part of the club agreement
 - to give support
 - to give training opportunities
 - to recognise experience
- (c) on the part of the Region
 - to give training and development support such as programme initiatives and Regional events
 - to offer further development opportunities for leaders

The Federation needs to recognise that the meaning of the principle of voluntarism, which is the foundation stone of the Federation, needs to be reviewed. There tends to be at least three approaches to voluntarism which can be observed in operation in the Federation.

- (1) In the democratic structures volunteers are elected by their peers to posts of responsibility irrespective of their personal philosophy, skills or abilities
- (2) Volunteers are selected and co-opted into the structures because of the specific skills they have
- (3) Volunteers support the staff in the delivery of a service primarily controlled by the staff

This, together with the fact that, at local level, anyone can open a youth club or group and become involved in the Federation without restriction, leaves the whole area ambiguous. At National and Regional level with the expansion of resources and the increase in staff numbers, tension has arisen around the lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities and authority of both staff and volunteers. Within the Federation at both National and Regional level the organisation needs to develop a clarity of roles and link training and development supports to these roles. This will result in people being trained and developed to do the job required and the organisation in turn being able to develop clear performance indicators and criteria for evaluation.

(b) Size of Membership

The research findings (see Table 6.8) indicated that 52.8% of clubs have a membership over the Federation's recommended limit of sixty.

It is recommended therefore that the Federation should introduce the guideline as a criterion for affiliation and 'police' it strictly.

issues and the club premises. Conclusions and recommendations will be discussed for each of these areas, with the ratio of adults to members being discussed in the wider context of adult recruitment and involvement.

(a) Adult Recruitment and Involvement

While 67.4% of volunteers and 78.9% of members agree that "members should have a say in who can be leaders", this sentiment is not reflected in any structure or system in the club which will allow young people contribute to the selection of adult volunteers. There is obviously a need for the Federation to consider the development of a policy of adult recruitment when 57.7% of adults and 53.8% of staff identified "not enough adult involvement" as the biggest issue facing youth clubs. This issue of adult recruitment was identified by the Costello Report in 1980 and as yet it has not been resolved. The research findings overall imply that the values and attitudes of adults affect directly their approach to youth work. This implies that the Federation needs to look closely at the adults that it wishes to recruit into youth work. To-date there has been no such approach to recruitment.

Certainly it can be concluded that the Federation needs to develop a clear recruitment policy and procedures for the active involvement of suitable adults. By suitable it is meant - adults who actively support the stated philosophy of the Federation and are willing to work in appropriate ways with young people to achieve these objectives. Such adults need to be prepared to treat young people as equals and work in an active partnership with them. However, any recruitment policy of the Federation needs to recognise that adults need :

- (a) Clear statements of tasks and responsibilities
- (b) Clear examples of good practice
- (c) Training and support to do the job both at local and regional level.

It is also proposed that the Federation should establish a contract between the adult, the club and the Region, outlining the duties and mutual responsibilities. Part of this contract should include a commitment by all parties to empower young people to take control of their own club. The elements of such a contract were first proposed in the Federation's training policy in 1984

- (a) on the part of the volunteer agreement
 - to give time
 - to receive training
 - to adhere to the principles of social education and participation

In Table 6.20 69% of staff can be seen to promote a club structure which is biased in favour of power being retained by adult volunteers, while only 54.9% of clubs operate from such a structure.

This is a remarkable statistic since in the findings so far staff have always scored higher on participation rated than other respondents. This figure, together with the fact that 58% of staff under one year in their current job, seems to imply that staff have difficulty in translating the principle of participation into practical application in club structures.

The research addressed itself to the question of election or selection of members to the Management Committee. Senior members and adult volunteers were asked to identify the system which most closely described the practice of election/selection of members for the Management Committee, while staff were asked to identify the system they would encourage clubs to adopt.

As can be seen in Table 6.21, the majority of clubs operate either a member controlled or partnership with adult volunteers system of election of senior members to the Management Committee of the club. It is also interesting to note that there is no significant difference between the current club practice and the system preferred by staff.

The preferred systems and most common approach is that of 'members electing members', with 41.5% of adult volunteers and 40.7% of staff promoting that model. It is obvious that senior members prefer a system where the members and adults were elected by all 33.3% or by members only 11.1% totalling 44.4%. This system, if introduced, would be quite a marked change in current practice and yet would be more in line with the principles of Social Education. It is interesting that only 14.9% of staff prefer this approach. Again we see a resistance to giving too much power to young people.

Finally, the research sought to establish the nature of decision-making in the youth club.

3. THE REALITY OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE YOUTH CLUB

The examination of the structures of youth clubs highlighted the fact that 45.1% of clubs have a structure that favours member contribution while another 35.4% give the members equal control with the adults (see Table 6.20). However, a detailed examination of attitudes of adult volunteers seems to indicate that while they agree with the principle of participation, there are attitudinal blocks to allowing decision-making by young

people in areas of real consequence. This implication is examined in detail by Question 10. All three categories of respondents were asked to indicate who makes certain decisions.

Each situation was categorised under one of three headings, 'operational decisions', 'managerial decisions' and 'political decisions'. In the preparation of the questionnaire, seven staff were asked to categorise the decisions and the results of this exercise are presented in Table 6.23 below.

Table 6.23

CATEGORIZATION OF DECISIONS MADE IN YOUTH CLUB SETTING

| OPERATIONAL DECISIONS | MANAGEMENT DECISIONS | POLITICAL DECISIONS |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. Arrange the Programme</p> <p>3. Rise funds</p> <p>9. Run the Coffee Bar</p> <p>11. Decide what records should be bought</p> <p>12. Change Layout of the Club</p> | <p>2. Decide how to spend any funds raised</p> <p>4. Decide which member should be on the Management Committee</p> <p>5. Decide on maximum number</p> <p>6. Decide on subs</p> <p>7. Set the Rules</p> <p>8. Decide on equipment</p> <p>10. Enforce Club Rules</p> | <p>13. Invite Local politicians into the club to discuss community issues</p> <p>14. Challenge Community Association about charges for the use of premises.</p> |

Rev. Kelleher's assessment of the need to change the approach of club leaders is very relevant today as it was in 1974. It is difficult to comprehend, that despite the increase in resources to the National Youth Federation and its' affiliated Regions, these basic changes have not been made.

In this chapter there are a series of recommendations presented for action by the Federation. These cover the following areas :

- (1) Philosophy of youth work
- (2) Social Relationships in Clubs
 - a) Adult Recruitment
 - b) Age Differentiation
 - c) Size of Membership
 - d) Premises
- (3) Programme Development
- (4) Structural Participation
- (5) Training Services
- (6) Staff Development

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Philosophy

The research findings clearly show that there is a wide divergences in the philosophical approach of the respondents. Among adult volunteers the vision of a recreational based youth club with adults as supervisors and organisers predominates. The personal development model of social education dominates the responses from staff.

The implications of this diversity in philosophy are not significantly felt within the Federation because of ambiguity of the language used to describe the process of youth work, and because of the lack of significant guidelines for good practice available from the Federation. It requires the Federation to be very specific on the guidelines for good practice, to ensure that the ambiguities are overcome.

Finally, the Federation needs to recognise the political implications for the organisation in giving real opportunities to young people to become actively involved.

The history of the Federation and its current move towards participation through the Youth Forum, seems to indicate that it is prepared to move towards the active involvement and empowerment of young people. However, it must recognise that to continue in this direction with the inevitable conflict it faces both internally and externally, could have serious consequences for its funding, if other major voluntary youth organisations continue to contain young people, and limit their involvement to the sphere of recreation. It may be concluded, therefore, that the Federation is at a crossroads. It must make a clear decision to opt for what is little more than the continued containment of young people and therefore continue to support current practices in youth work without any significant changes or it must clearly stand for enabling and empowering young people, and it must examine current practices at all levels and put in place a gradual programme of development and change to support the successful transition for all parties concerned.

2. Social Relationships in the Club

While it was impossible to examine the social relationships within youth clubs, it was possible to examine the variables which influence social relationships, such as ratio of adults to members, the size of membership, age differentiation, discipline

- (2) With the introduction of staff in 1980, individual regions designed and developed basic and advanced leadership training programmes which were offered at regional level. These programmes attempted to address the development of social education in the youth club context. However, two issues emerged. It is clear that staff had difficulty in translating the concept of social education into practice models. This is reflected in the fact that the content of basic programmes differed from region to region as did the models of youth club structures and practices promoted by these courses. The second issue centres on the process of the training courses conducted by staff. While the trainers used participative exercises and group discussions they, in practice, controlled the course from beginning to end. According to educationalists "the medium is the message" implying that the trainers who role modelled the functions of planning, organising and implementing programmes, reinforce for adults the role of organiser and supervisor. While the philosophy promoted on courses may have been one of promoting the participation of young people, adults on courses did not experience the process of being empowered or enabled to take control. Without experiencing it, they could hardly be expected to be able to replicate it in the youth club. The fact that over 32.9% of adult volunteers surveyed described their role as organisers and supervisors and the majority of these had attended basic training programmes supports this point.
- (3) In 1986 the Federation introduced a volunteer training development programme at national and regional level to enable regions expand their training services.
- (4) An internal review of youth clubs highlighted that the basic programmes were not leading to effective change in club practice, so a new programme of in-club training was developed and introduced.
- (5) A review of the training programmes in 1988, conducted by regions, show that in-club training is offered by less than half the regional affiliates of the Federation.
- (6) The content of basic and induction programmes vary from region to region. For example, in this research staff were asked to identify the topic areas covered in basic training and the frequency of their inclusion in such a course. The 'core' content which emerged was as follows

Table 7

FREQUENCY OF TOPICS
ON BASIC TRAINING COURSES

| TOPICS | FREQUENCY | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| | ALWAYS% | SOMETIMES% | OTHERS% |
| Purpose of youth work | 72.4 | 13.8 | |
| Role of leaders | 93.1 | 3.4 | |
| Programme Planning | 82.8 | 13.8 | |
| Needs of young people | 72.4 | 24.1 | |
| Responsibilities of leaders | 89.7 | 3.4 | |
| Members Committee | 93.1 | 6.9 | |

The list above emerged as the most frequently covered topics on a basic course. It is clear from this list that the emphasis is on the structure and organisation of the youth club. While this may seem valid initially it is important that the reason and purpose of youth club work should influence the way the club operates. It is clear from the lower score for the 'purpose' and the 'needs of young people' that the core of the course is not the implementation of objectives, but the implementation of a youth club. Implicit in this approach is an assumption that participation in a youth club is a valuable experience once the club is open and programmes operating.

This again reinforces the point that some staff are unable to clearly translate models into 'good' practice. For the majority of volunteers they perceive their role as character building through well run, organised and supervised activities.

- (7) At a general level in the Federation current courses neither explore that motivation of adult volunteers nor explore their perceptions of society and the blocks which

exist to young people's participation. It is important to recognise the need to explore the motivation of adults who volunteer to become involved with young people. In many cases, where adults working together have never shared their motivation and the values and attitudes they bring with them, one finds that young people are receiving contradictory messages about themselves and their role in the world. It is important to state here that the Federation needs to challenge existing volunteers to adopt the principles of Social Education in their work. Furthermore the Federation needs to screen adults who volunteer to ensure that their attitudes are compatible with the philosophy of the Federation. It is only if such action is taken will the Federation actively begin to change the experience of young people in youth work from passive consumers to active participants. It is only then that youth work will begin to be an educating and liberating experience.

The Federation therefore needs to :

- (a) Revise the content and process of all level courses to ensure that both reflect the principles and practices of Social Education.
- (b) Introduce a scheme to support the standardisation of the content and process of induction training, basic training and advanced training. Grant aid and centralised certification as suggested in the Federation's policy document in 1985 would assist this task.
- (c) Continue to promote the development of the in-club training module as a response to organisational development issues at club level.
- (d) Continue to support the development of regional voluntary training teams by conducting pre-service courses at regional level and in-service workshops at national level.
- (e) Support the quality of training by networking all registered trainers within the Federation and supplying them with up-dates on resource material and newly developed modules.

6. Staff Development

The research findings clearly show that the stated philosophy of staff differs from that of volunteer adults, with the majority of adults favouring the recreation model (39.1%) or

the character building model (30.4%). The staff, however, were divided with 58.7% in favour of social education and 37.8% in favour of a social education model (see Table 6.4). It is clear that staff are promoting a youth work model that is not reflected in youth work practice.

The research findings on youth club practice also highlights the fact that staff believe that young people should have more control on the decision-making process of the club. Yet it has also been shown that the staff promote structures which limit the power of young people (see Table 6.20). It is clear from these findings that staff have had difficulty translating their philosophy of youth work into youth club practice. Without clear practice models emerging from the Federation, individual staff or regions had to work out practice models for themselves. This resulted in limited continuity between regions and a lack of overall direction. This is one area of staff development which the Federation needs to address.

A second area which the Federation needs to address is the knowledge and skills development needs of the staff. In the research staff were asked to rate their own competencies on a range of skills and knowledge areas. The following areas were identified by significant numbers of staff as areas in which they were not competent and in need of training.

COMPETENT LEVELS OF STAFF IN
AREAS RELEVANT TO ROLE

| AREAS : | Not compet- ent | Competent but need training | Adequately competent | Highly compet- ent |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Understand patterns of group development | 18.0 (41.0) | 23.0 | 52.0 (59.0) | 7.0 |
| Using a variety of methods to help groups work together | 7.0 (58.0) | 51.0 | 35.0 (42.0) | 7.0 |
| Creating an atmosphere in a group | 0.0 (35.0) | 35.0 | 44.0 (65.0) | 21.0 |
| Being aware of own feelings and how they affect behaviour | 7.0 (35.0) | 28.0 | 41.0 (65.0) | 24.0 |
| Understanding how adults learn | 6.0 (41.0) | 28.0 | 38.0 (59.0) | 21.0 |
| Ability to engage learners | 11.0 (66.0) | 55.0 | 24.0 (34.0) | 10.0 |
| Understand your own training style | 8.0 (45.0) | 37.0 | 45.0 (55.0) | 10.0 |
| Knowledge of rationale for selection of materials, methods, etc. | 7.0 (52.0) | 45.0 | 38.0 (48.0) | 10.0 |
| Establishing learning styles of group | 25.0 (63.0) | 48.0 | 17.0 (27.0) | 10.0 |
| Plan a course | 0.0 (14.0) | 14.0 | 55.0 (86.0) | 31.0 |
| Evaluate a course | 18.0 (55.0) | 37.0 | 38.0 (45.0) | 7.0 |

This table clearly illustrates that staff need training in most of the areas relevant to conducting training programmes and working with groups successfully. This should be of major concern to the Federation when you consider that some key areas of competency, required for staff to do an effective job, have the majority of staff requiring training. These areas are :

| Area of Competency | % of staff |
|--|------------|
| Ability to engage learners | 66.0 |
| Establish learning styles of group | 63.0 |
| Evaluation | 55.0 |
| Using a variety of methods to help groups work together | 58.0 |
| Knowledge of rationale for selection of materials, methods, etc. | 52.0 |

When these areas are examined a pattern emerges. All of these areas relate to the ability of staff to identify the learning needs of a group as a course progresses and adjust the programme to respond. A further implication of staff not having a variety of methods available or not understanding the rationale behind selecting specific programmes is, that staff must be operating a pre-designed programme set in advance of the group formation with no flexibility irrespective of the needs of the group. This conclusion reinforces the point about the process of the basic courses made earlier. It was speculated in that discussion that the process used on basic courses was inflexible and not capable of using the group to identify learning needs. In this way the process reinforced the role of 'organiser' and 'controlled' in the participants because they experienced the tutor in this manner.

The Federation therefore needs to :

1. Identify clearly the implications of the philosophy of social education for the practice of youth club work, and introduce a programme of support services to move from the 'reality' to the 'ideal'.
2. One of the first steps needed in this process is to engage its staff in a range of in-service training and development programmes to address their training needs

a 1:10 ratio. This may account for the apparent contradiction and calls into question the validity of this finding.

- (D) Federation Guideline : The size of membership should not exceed sixty.

Research Findings : The research findings show that 42.8% of youth clubs do not meet this requirement (see Table 6.8). In fact 25.4% of clubs have a membership in excess of eighty members. It is clear that a process of Social Education could not be successfully operated with such members.

- (E) Federation Guideline : The age range of members should not be mixed, where resources permit.

Research Findings : The research findings show that 69% of clubs involve all age groups together. While there are many reasons why clubs continue to do this, it is another factor which acts as a block to a successful Social Education process.

- (F) Federation Guideline : Young men and women should have equal opportunities for participation in the club programme.

Research Findings : The research findings highlight the fact that programmes are sports orientated and dominated by male participation (see Tables 6.12, 6.14). The findings also show that there is little or no awareness of the needs of 'young women' in youth clubs, or the fact that they are currently being discriminated against in the male dominated youth club.

- (G) Federation Guideline : The premises should facilitate the formation of relationships in the club.

Research findings : The research findings highlight the very difficult circumstances in which many youth clubs operate. It can only be concluded that, for the majority of clubs, it is very difficult to create a warm and friendly atmosphere when over 90% of clubs operate in borrowed premises, some of which are in very bad condition.

In conclusion, it may be said that the research findings clearly show that one of the Federation Guidelines are operating in any significant way at club level. The implication is that 'social relationships' as a vehicle for Social Education are not successful in current youth club work in the Federation.

2. The Club Programme (Non-Formal Education)

The Federation Guidelines now linked to the Research Findings.

- (A) Federation Guideline : The programme should have a variety of educational and recreational activities.

Research Findings : The research findings show that the stable diet of the vast majority of youth clubs are limited sports recreational programmes. A small number of educational programmes are offered once every six months (see Tables 6.12, 6.13). None of these programmes could be seen as creative or aesthetic activities. It can be concluded that the current programme provision of the majority of youth clubs in the Federation meet only one of the seven areas listed by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland in their proposals for a youth club curriculum, i.e. the provision of sport.

- (B) Federation Guideline : All young people should be able to engage in activities that respond to their own specific needs and interests.

Research Findings : It is clear from the research findings that apart from a small number of young people on the Management Committee, young people are not actively involved in the design and planning of the club programme. It may be concluded that the programme does not vary from week to week and, as such, does not respond to the specific needs of individuals or small groups with specific needs or interests.

- (C) Federation Guideline : The programme content should be determined by all the young people.

Research Findings : Again, as above, the actuality of youth club practice is that very few people have an opportunity to contribute to the programme content.

- (D) Federation Guideline : Male/Female participation in the programme should be based on the principle of equality.

Research Findings : The research findings clearly indicate that young women do not have equal opportunities in the club. The weekly programme clearly responds to the interests of the male participants, indicated by their high take-over rate (see Tables 6.14, 6.15).

identified.

3. A further need is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff vis-a-vis volunteers as discussed earlier. In particular here, the nature of the support which volunteers require and expect from staff needs clarification, otherwise, the persistence of the rather dreary image of the volunteer youth worker, as depicted by Staunton, is inevitable.

A P P E N D I X O N E

THE EVALUATION OF YOUTH CLUB PRACTICE

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are summarised here and are matched with the Federation Guidelines and are summarised now under each of the three sections used to examine social learning in the youth club. The full result findings are presented in table form in the Appendix.

1. Social Relationships (Non-Formal Education)

- (A) Federation Guideline : The attitudes and values of the adult volunteers to youth work must reflect the philosophy of Social Education.

Research Findings : The research findings show that the majority of adult volunteers operate from a conservative ideological basis and are unlikely to recognise the need for political actions, which underlies Social Education (see Table 6.6). It is also clear from the research findings that adult volunteers are not prepared to give 'power' to young people to control all aspects of their own youth club (see Table 6.17).

- (B) Federation Guideline : The adult volunteers must spend a significant amount of time engaged in personal contact with the members.

Research Findings : The research findings show that, while adult volunteers seem to spend time involved with young people, it seems to have an underlying motive. (See discussion on Discipline).

- (C) Federation Guideline : The ratio of adult to members should be 10:1.

Research Findings : The research findings show that 73% of youth clubs meet this requirement (see Table 6.7). However, all three categories of respondents identified the "need for more adults involved" as the biggest difficulty facing youth clubs. One possible explanation for this ambiguity is the fact that the information was collected from affiliation forms completed by youth club committees for insurance purposes. The insurance stipulation of the Federation is also

In conclusion, it can be said that the youth club programme operating in the vast majority of youth clubs is of questionable benefit to the majority of members. It has been shown to excessively promote competitiveness and individualism and to reinforce the sex stereotyping which operates in the wider society.

3. Structural Participation of Young People in Decision-Making

The research findings related to the area may be summarised as follows :

- * Adult volunteers endorse the principle of member participation but limit their involvement in decision-making to minor 'operational' decisions, with very little involvement in management decisions.
- * Staff are prepared to give more responsibility to young people than adult volunteers (Tables 6.16, 6.17).
- * 69.2% of staff encourage a structure for the youth club which leaves control in the hands of adult volunteers.
- * There is a discrepancy between the stated philosophy and practice of both the staff and adult volunteers.
- * There is no involvement of young people in what was labelled 'political' decisions, i.e. any decision which involved the club in dispute with individuals or the community.
- * While there is a very limited opportunity for structural participation, it does not include a conscious political education strategy, as advocated by Bunt and Gargrave (1980). They state that

"...Allied with creating structural opportunities for participation, it is important to have a conscious political education strategy designed to broaden young people's awareness of political processes, of ways in which power is attained, held and used and of how they may involve themselves in these processes so that, given greater understanding, they can exercise a stronger influence on the forces that shape their lives".

(Bunt & Gargrave 1980)

- * Young people are seen as difficult to motivate, by both adults and staff, to become actively involved in the youth club structure. Young people do not see this as an issue

at all. A conclusion drawn is that power is so restricted that young people are not interested in tokenism.

- * Adults control all the decisions of any consequence at club level, so little scope is given to young people to think, discuss and decide for themselves the things that really matter to them.
- * It is clear that the majority of young people experience youth clubs as places of recreation that they can choose to attend or not, but into which they can make little or no input.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

It is clear that the Federation needs to take the following steps :

- 1) Recognise that the values and attitudes of some volunteers act as blocks to the participation of young people and develop a training programme which will address this issue with existing adult volunteers.
- 2) Establish a recruitment policy which recognises the need to recruit adults committed to the practical application of the principles of empowering numbers which underlie the philosophy of the Federation.
- 3) Introduce an induction programme for newly recruited adults which gives them the skills to support the introduction of the 'ideal' club structure.
- 4) Publish a club development booklet that illustrates the principles of the Federation's philosophy in practice examples, to be used by existing clubs to bring about change.

