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## **SPECIAL EDITION**

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## **"CHARTING OUR EDUCATION FUTURE"**

*The White Paper "Charting our Education future" is a seminal document which will shape education policy into the next millennium. The result of unprecedented consultation and negotiation it contains many worthwhile ideas for improving our education system, reflecting careful compromise between the main organised interests. In its own terms therefore it can only really be judged a success. But its focus on the institutional means rather than the ends of education policy is a serious weakness in the overall document.*

*The White Paper builds on the thrust of government policy in recent years in attempting to provide for remedial measures within the formal education system. These can and do have a role to play in tackling education failure. But of themselves they will never be enough to compensate for the existence of two distinct cultural approaches to education within Irish society.*

*The education system has been failing a significant minority of our young people for many years. The failure in question is not the fault of the young people concerned nor indeed of teachers or curriculum. The problem relates to broader and more intangible social factors as diverse as lifestyle and individual expectations. And until we have an education policy which acknowledges and in some meaningful way addresses the fact that for some young people it is absolutely rational to reject the education system as they experience it we will never be successful in achieving the ultimate goal of good education for all.*

*From this perspective education policy over recent years has if anything regressed. The increasing "academicisation" of access points to vocational training has effectively closed off an alternative route to qualification and working life from many who need such an option. The uncritical focus on keeping young people "in the system" ignores evidence that leaving school with a good junior certificate can be better than staying on for a weak or failed leaving certificate. And the academic inflation being fostered by mass extension of education participation is in danger of creating an anti-culture of disillusion and resentment.*

*The White Paper's treatment of youthwork is symptomatic of this conceptual failure. Youthwork is a form of education. It focuses on those aspects of the young person which are difficult for the formal education system to address. It takes place in an informal way, treating young people as partners in the creation of services they have a stake in rather than as passive consumers of services that are "good for them". Its effectiveness is reflected in the fact that youth organisations are being invited to provide in-service training for teachers and youthreach staff in non-formal methods of education.*

*Because the voluntary sector has traditionally operated with inadequate budgets in gaps left by the statutory services there is a tendency to equate "voluntary" with "amateur". Largely on this basis youthwork is regarded as quite literally cheap and cheerful. This attitude is out of date. Youthwork today requires professionalism of both its paid staff and its unpaid volunteers. The key value of volunteers within the process is not to provide cheap services but rather to enable a special dynamic between adult and young person. Young people value the commitment and motivation of volunteers and respond constructively to an ethos which dignifies them as partners in the process. Thus a voluntary ethos is at the heart of the implicit learning contract which underpins all youthwork.*

*The existence of professional voluntary youthwork organisations needs to be more widely recognised and reflected in our education policy. The White Paper's key concern - to integrate such services institutionally by giving regional education boards a statutory responsibility for "the coordination and development of youthwork" - rather misses the point in this regard. What is needed is a partnership in the context of a new holistic approach to education rather than a crude - and potentially deadly - enfolding of our existing youth services into the current institutional system.*

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## Education and Poverty:

A review of the White Paper on Education

## 'Charting our Education Future'

by David Silke, Research Officer, Combat Poverty Agency

Students may disagree with the old phrase that your school years are the best years of your life, but as adults they certainly learn to appreciate the importance of the time spent in the education system. This appreciation comes from the realisation that educational attainment is a major determinant of future life chances. Education policy is therefore an important instrument in the fight against poverty and unequal opportunity. Policies to tackle such disadvantage must take into consideration that young people from socially and economically deprived backgrounds benefit substantially less from educational expenditure than those from better off backgrounds.

This paper reviews the Government's recent White Paper on Education *Charting our Education Future* and examines its approach to the issues of educational disadvantage and poverty. It begins by outlining The Combat Poverty Agency's view of poverty and points to the serious implications of poor educational attainment, particularly for children from low income households. A critical assessment of the extent to which the White Paper addresses the needs of students from deprived backgrounds is then undertaken.

Poverty in Ireland today is about being excluded and marginalised from the general standard of living and way of life that is the norm for other people in society. People are living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from enjoying a lifestyle which would be regarded as acceptable by society generally. Poverty, in this context, is a multi-dimensional concept involving not just people's access to sufficient financial resources, but also their access to adequate housing, health and education. It emphasises that poverty is about exclusion, isolation and powerlessness as well as lack of money.

The link between leaving school with adequate qualifications and experiencing unemployment and poverty is well documented in both Irish and international research. Irish research has found that those who leave school without qualification were twice as likely to be unemployed six months after leaving school compared to those with a Leaving Certificate (48% compared with 28%) (Breen 1991). Furthermore, the research found that the gap in outcomes for those with and without qualifications increased with time: after two years, four in ten (41%) of those without qualifications were unemployed compared to one in eight (13%) of those with a Leaving Certificate. Without employment, many aspirations, such as setting up home and

gaining independence from parents, are very difficult if not impossible to achieve (Hannon and O'Riain 1993). The link between educational attainment and the likelihood of experiencing unemployment, poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion is therefore very strong.

The findings of research, supported by the experiences of pilot programmes to tackle educational disadvantage, show that education policies should focus not just at the post-primary level but must also identify and help those at risk of educational failure throughout the educational system. There is also a growing realisation that measures to tackle educational failure must also be inclusive in approach involving pupils, parents, teachers, schools/colleges and the community.

Turning now to the White Paper, to what extent does it acknowledge the long-term effects of educational disadvantage and what importance does it attach to tackling these inequalities? The opening line of the White Paper *Education makes a fundamentally important contribution to the quality and well-being of our society* (p.3), clearly acknowledges the important contribution of education to the betterment of society. The White Paper's commitment to tackling educational disadvantage, equality and social justice is less boldly set out. However, evidence of commitment to tackle these issues is to be found from a careful reading of selected passages dispersed throughout the report.

The White Paper begins by setting out five guiding principles to inform policy formation and educational practice: pluralism, equality, partnership, quality and accountability. The inclusion of equality as a principle for the formation of education policy is welcome, particularly the statement that *A sustaining philosophy should seek to promote equality of access, participation and benefit for all in accordance with their needs and abilities*. (p.7). The emerging recognition that educational disadvantage is not just about special needs and remedial teaching, but is also about equality of opportunity, is encouraging. However, as outlined below, it is doubtful whether the changes outlined in the White Paper are radical enough to achieve real educational equality.

The second section of the White Paper discusses the different stages in the education system. It rightly identifies the development of pre-school as an important instrument in tackling educational disadvantage and also correctly stresses the importance of parental involvement. It is encouraging that the White Paper is committed to the



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evaluation of pilot pre-school programmes and is aware of the importance of a systematic follow-through of support for children into primary school so that the benefits of pre-schooling are not lost. Unfortunately, the White Paper does not offer proper recognition and support for community pre-school initiatives and ignores the shortage of pre-school places currently available.

Within the primary education system, the White Paper reaffirms the importance of enabling primary school pupils to acquire satisfactory numeracy and literacy skills. It acknowledges that those who do not acquire these skills while at primary school are most at risk of dropping out of school and becoming long-term unemployed. Special measures, including early identification of children with learning difficulties and adapting the curriculum to individual needs, are planned with the overall aim of ensuring that, except due to ability, there will be no students with serious literacy and numeracy problems in early primary education within the next five years. The White Paper also plans welcomed revisions to the curriculum to include science, European awareness and health and well-being. Unfortunately, little attention is given to the possible role which the curriculum could play in fostering citizenship and social awareness. However, the White Paper's objective that children from the Travelling Community should be integrated into the mainstream education system is to be welcomed as it shows a commitment to the equal rights of marginalised groups in Irish society. Such integration should, however, be accompanied by a greater understanding within the education system of Travellers' issues and lifestyles and should also be reflected in the curricular development.

The White Paper's objective that within ten years, all Traveller children of second-level, school going age will complete junior cycle education and 50 per cent will complete the senior cycle, is very optimistic and ignores wider issues such as the lack of adequate accommodation/halting sites for the Travelling community, which hinders school attendance amongst these children. The White Paper lacks detailed assessment in a number of places: for example, in relation to second-level education, plans to broaden the curriculum by the introduction of new Leaving Certification programmes, while welcome, lack detailed discussion. It would have been useful for the White Paper to discuss the potential of these new programmes to address educational disadvantage. The White Paper, also, unfortunately, gives very little attention to the role of programmes such as Youthreach, which is aimed at early school leavers, in tackling inequalities in education.

In relation to Further Education, the call for a more cohesive and systemic development of vocational education and training is welcome and it is hoped that the resources necessary to achieve this goal are made available. In relation to adult and continuing education and training, the White paper gives inadequate attention to the need for pre-training in personal and social development for many

disadvantaged groups who may lack the self-esteem and confidence necessary to participate in courses.

The White paper rightly acknowledges that the poorer socio-economic groups are significantly under-represented in higher education and admits that this reflects the inequalities present in earlier stages of the education system. Plans to achieve an annual increase in participation of 500 students from lower socio-economic groups in third level education over the next five years is called for, and if achieved will go some way to address these inequalities. The abolition of undergraduate fees is presented as a breakthrough for equality (a point which is yet to be proved), but the inadequate level of maintenance grants, a major deterrent for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, is ignored. No student should be deprived of their choice of third level education because of their financial circumstances.

Throughout the White Paper, and in relation to educational disadvantage, the importance of parental involvement in education is stressed. While this is to be welcomed, it is unfortunate that the role of community and youth groups is less well integrated into the body of the report. A short chapter in the White Paper discusses the value of youth work, however the importance of this sector in helping to tackle educational disadvantage, is underestimated.

Overall then, the White Paper is aspirational, which is not necessarily a fault if adequate resources are available, or can be made available, to tackle issues such as educational inequality. The publication of this White Paper is timely in light of the Government's recent commitment to the development of a National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS). Under NAPS, all government departments and state agencies will be expected to include the reduction and prevention of poverty as key objectives in the development and implementation of their policies and programmes. With this White Paper, the Department of Education is in a position of already having a framework from which to develop its thinking on how educational disadvantage can best be tackled.

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## Education Opportunity for All: Participating or Manipulation

**Paul Burgess, Director, B.Soc.Sc. (Youth & Community Work) at UCC**

*Educational opportunity in Ireland, was and is, the privilege of the white, settled, Catholic middle-classes. A deliberately contentious assertion to open any critique on contemporary educational policy I'll grant you, but no less justified for all that.*

In 1992, in the Government's Green Paper on education, Seamus Brennan, the then Minister for Education, shared his belief that,

*The Irish people are rightly proud of their education system.*

and that there was...

*... a need to ensure that the handicap of social and economic disadvantage is alleviated and not aggravated... by that system.*

Let's fast-forward for a moment from 1992, on to this year. The report from the ESRI entitled *Poverty and Time: Perspectives on the Dynamics of Poverty* would categorically suggest the Minister's feelings of optimism were as misplaced then as they are now. The report revealed that those in the un-skilled, manual classes face a poverty risk as much as 20 times higher than those in the professional and managerial sectors, with their lack of education playing a central role in determining their life chances.

Additionally, it was pointed out that the priority for poverty in this area must be in the targeting of specially designed programmes for those who have already left school with little or no qualifications, and the introduction of measures to reduce the numbers leaving school each year in that position.

*Education has become increasingly important over time in determining life chances, and the consequences of failing to acquire any educational qualification for successful participation in the labour market have become much more pronounced.*

In short, the risk of poverty is about five times as high for someone with no qualifications as it is for someone with a Leaving Certificate. Or to put it another way, for a minority, inequality in the area of educational opportunity is arguably as stark and discriminatory in socio-economic class terms, today as it ever was. Access to all levels of education provision in Ireland may have dramatically increased from the 1960s onward, but for too long, the overall participation rate has been consistently presented as an end in itself. Often employed as deliberate distraction from where the real debated should take place.

The *Investment in Education* report of 1965 showed the existence of large social class and regional disparities in educational participation. As any educationalist or historian will tell you, steps were successfully implemented then to redress this imbalance, amongst them the abolition of fees for post-primary education, the provision of free school transport and the creation of comprehensive and community schools. And yes, for the majority of children the desired effect was achieved. Participation levels increased dramatically, and on a superficial level anyway, policy makers could point to headline grabbing successes.

It's always around this time, when regaled with the currently healthy state of the nation's education service, that I am reminded of two old adages, the former a popular misconception, the latter, all too true. Firstly, we are often told that *A rising tide lifts all boats*. In accepting this premise we accept the notion that any funding, resource or initiative aimed at increased participation and accessibility will trickle down to some degree, to those who need it most. As the ESRI report suggests, we can safely refute the validity of that claim. Secondly, there's the old saying, *there are lies, damn lies, then statistics!* When we question the equality of educational opportunity, it is those same statistics on increasing participation rates, that are proudly cited by policy makers, as an unshakeable indication of their having gotten it right. When it was pointed out that the country enjoyed vastly increased access to, and vastly increased government spending on education we glowed with self assurance and complacency. Or I should say, those who were the beneficiaries of these developments glowed.

In Ireland, North and South, there has always been a tendency for public opinion to support the notion that Irish solutions to Irish problems can be found internally, without recourse to alternative theories or ideologies. There has maintained the widespread belief that we are a pragmatic, tolerant people, who take pride in our independence, in keeping our own house in order. What is often not acknowledged, is the unquestioning allegiance and acquiescence we offer to a conservative, all embracing, dominant culture, which has failed to benefit from the lessons learned by some of our European partners, in the areas of pluralism, multi-culturalism and social equality. As a full national state within the European Union, poised to enter a new millennium, our failure to understand the inherent inadequacies of educational policy - in relation to educational provisions



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for Travellers, the multi-denominational schools debate, or the disproportionate academic failure of working class students at all levels of educational experience, still stands as an indictment in an otherwise progressive educational system.

The failure of government and policy makers to understand or embrace the struggle that goes on for resources and power within Irish society, still inhibits educational policy. Quite simply, those who are disadvantaged already; socially, economically, physically, mentally or culturally, have not equitably benefitted from an expanded education system. And so when education became "free" in the 60s, it was the middle-classes, already sophisticated in accessing systems and resources, who undoubtedly benefitted and still benefit most. Overall participation may have increased, but levels of educational attainment, amongst the less well off remained and still remained lowest. As is often the case, to understand the nature of inequality in the area of educational opportunity, we must first establish a fundamental truism.

*Education is power.*

And power is guarded and protected hungrily by those who have it. Ask the Catholic Church.

Our education process still labours under the outmoded notion that we are training our people toward functional goals, that we are selecting candidates for the labour market, relative to their skills, aptitudes and abilities. Not surprisingly, this analysis rings hollow to the thousands of graduates who have left this country for work. Or those long-term un-employed who feel their only training has been to prepare them for the frustration, boredom and underachievement of the dole. This society still adheres to an outmoded meritocratic system of assessment and reward that can be defined in terms of  $IQ + Effort = merit$ . Put simply, if you have the latent intelligence, and you work hard, society will recognise your achievements in terms of employment, financial security and social status. Every one starts off equally, and if you have what it takes to make it, you'll succeed.

*If only it were that easy!*

Secondary schools in socially deprived areas struggle with a budget to maintain staff levels, whilst their more affluent counter-parts enjoy the benefits of developed sports and computer facilities. Gifted and enthusiastic teachers are lured away from the very schools that need them most and parents are invited to compete amongst themselves to secure places at the "better" schools. Those who don't make it, find themselves in the so-called "dump schools", where morale amongst the staff is low and self-esteem amongst the students, lower..... and we still wonder how working class children under-achieve.

A working-class single parent, on low paid income, trying to provide for a young family, is forced to decide between quality time spent with the children or earning a living to keep them. Whilst middle-class parents, beneficiaries of

the system themselves, invest in grinds, supply learning equipment in the home, and generally support and prepare their off-spring for the examination ordeal which will determine their future life chances.....and still we wonder how cycles of middle-class domination remain prevalent in the professions and in higher education. Clearly then, this is not a race where all the competitors begin from the same starting line. The goodwill, talent and resources are all in place and yet we are still clearly failing many of our citizens.

*So what can be done?*

The success of home/school/community liaison projects are to be recognised, congratulated and hopefully expanded. Similarly, "Head-Start" initiatives should be promoted, resourced and targeted at those areas, rural and urban, where need is greatest. It is imperative that we maintain a dialogue with disadvantaged communities, and make every reasonable attempt to incorporate their requests and recommendations into our policy making processes. To effectively do this we must be realistic about the social and economic impediments which stand in the way of disadvantaged students. the maximum grant is less than half of what it costs to survive for a nine-month academic year. Further more, the inflexible structure of most Irish third level courses, severely restrict a student's capacity to supplement grant with part-time work. For the working class student with no means of parental or domestic financial support, the considerable sacrifices made to get even thus far, often seem wasted. If you're poor enough to qualify for a grant, you are - by definition it would seem - too poor to survive on it.

Initiatives such as The Ballymun Project for Third Level Education in Dublin and The Cork Northside Development and Education Initiative, offer real opportunities for consortiums of resource holders, educationalists and communities, to explicitly design and embark on programmes which will facilitate access to the educational process. Perhaps then, we can justifiably take pride in an educational system which will be notable, not just in terms of increased levels of participation, but in its commitment to social justice and real equality of opportunity for all.

## Charting our Education Future: Regional Structures

**Pat Ryan, CEO, City of Galway Vocational Education Committee**

The White Paper on Education indicates that legislation will be introduced to provide for the establishment of education boards and that the legislation will set out the functions and composition of such boards. There will also be, it is stated, legislative reform and rationalisation of the Vocational Education Committee system. Functions, chiefly from the Department of Education and Vocational Education Committees, will transfer to the boards on a phased basis and there is to be an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the boards after five years. There will be ten education boards.

The education boards, the White Paper states, will have substantial co-ordination and support service functions. Among those functions will be a *co-ordinating role in relation to publicly funded youth...activities*, according to **Chapter 14, Establishment of Education Boards**. That wording might be contrasted with the more extensive role suggested, albeit in a more tentative manner, in **Chapter 7, Youth Work**. In the latter, *it is envisaged, therefore, that each education board will be given statutory responsibility for the co-ordination and development (my emphasis) of youth work as an integral part of its overall responsibilities in the areas of formal and non-formal education*.

It is worth noting that when Chapter 7 spells out some of the functions relating to youth work which the boards *will* have, one is a research function, one is a liaison function, one is an evaluation function, one is a funding mechanism and two are development functions. The two development functions are, to me, crucial to true recognition of and true inclusion of youthwork as integral part of the education process. One of these functions is the development of links between youth work, adult and community education and formal education, with particular regard to the needs

of disadvantaged young people. The other is the development of effective networking of the various interests involved in youth work and other services, such as adult education, sport and recreation, home-school links, and other social services.

Before considering further how well the proposed regional structures might meet the stated developmental functions in relation to youth work, we should explore what the White Paper proposes by way of composition of the education boards. A core board will be formed initially with representation from management, parent and teacher interests, local elected representatives and Ministerial nominees. That core board will then put forward additional nominees, to a maximum defined in law, for appointment by the Minister. These could be selected, as appropriate to each region, the White Paper postulates, from the wider community and could include representatives of minorities and disadvantaged groups and people with special expertise. Clearly, the mechanisms to be adopted in arriving at this wider representation will be of considerable importance. The core-board would appear to be highly skewed in favour of the schooling element of education. With limited numbers, and perhaps the desire to make good on any geographical deficits in the core board, how much scope is there for real representation on behalf of each of the other elements of life-long education? Will there be youth work representation?

Partnership is more than membership of the board. Unless there is wide consultation and inclusive involvement in plans and actions, true partnership is unlikely to develop. There is scope for advisory committees to boards which may enhance the consultative and co-operative process. However, the committees are not normally to be permanent, which may rule out a Youth Affairs Sub-Committee with real



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responsibilities. The latter requirement is of great importance. There are too many existing examples of token committees which soon become demotivated and inactive in the light of minor influence and responsibility. For youth work to seek to become an integral part of the education system, it is necessary that comprehensive consultative structures exist at local level and that such be allied to a structure which can feed views, proposals and outcomes in the decision-making and executive entities. If youth work is to be fully integrated into the education process, then the obverse channel must also be built: that is, the wherewithal for other elements of the education system to exert influence on youth work. Through such positively critical interaction, confidence is built, leading to real partnership: which returns us to the developmental functions mentioned in Chapter 7 of the White Paper.

It is my very strongly held view that real long-lasting change in the concept of education and in the education process to the intellectual, spiritual social, cultural and economic benefit of all, will come about only through effective local networking, leading to community partnerships linked to comprehensive supports. Policy must, certainly, be set at national level but real change - as opposed to surface re-organisation - happens locally. National and regional structures may support that slow, local movement towards on-going change in a co-operative partnership, be neutral to it or oppose it, whether overtly or covertly. I am not yet convinced that such structures are the most appropriate catalyst for the local partnerships which will be the real instruments for fundamental change in our concept of learning. This change is of importance in general. It is of particular importance in the development of less-advantaged communities and neighbourhoods. A comprehensive, co-operative, approach - the so-called 'district approach' - to combating the effects of educational and social wider-development, and which is linked to economic development, is of fundamental importance to redressing balances which are negatively skewed for such communities and neighbourhoods.

A co-ordination entity at regional level for in-school provision would seem to be badly needed, if only to ensure that demographic changes do not bring about

destructive turf wars among schools. Such an entity might also ensure, for example, the sharing of scarce or under-utilised resources. What might be questioned is, if it is the most appropriate and effective instrument to undertake the developmental functions mentioned above? It seems to me that it would be more effective and more efficient to radically overhaul existing structures at the more local, county level with responsibility to develop relationships and networks towards co-operative partnerships for fundamental reform. Such structures would certainly be more democratic, giving neighbourhoods and various communities an effective, powerful voice in their own learning strategy. Equally importantly, they would be far more likely to effectively and efficiently implement an integrated development strategy for neighbourhood, being so much closer to the action.

The White Paper proposes many innovative, necessary and desirable reforms in the education system. It is to be warmly welcomed in that regard. Some of the structural change is also long overdue. However, it has sought to allocate too much power and too many responsibilities at too far a remove from the local scene of activity. The regional boards are not the most appropriate level at which to prioritise and support community and youth education. For example, the boards could, in consequence, become a focus for disenchantment by local communities which have serious intent to become learning neighbourhoods. The bottom-up model for community development is not enhanced by the white Paper proposals for the education boards. Hopefully, the legislation which will implement the White Paper decisions will place the decision making power at a more local level, at least in relation to those elements of the education process which are addressed in this article. We shall see.



## Underlying Issues in Youth Work Policy

**David Treacy, Director, Comhairle le Leas Oige.**

### INTRODUCTION

The recent White Paper on Education contained a chapter on the future development of youth work. In it, the Government made a commitment to provide a legislative base for youth work through the implementation of a Youth Service Act. The publication of the draft Bill is eagerly awaited by those involved in youth work who have high expectations and some anxieties about what it may contain. The Youth Service Bill alone will not meet the differing expectations of the many youth organisations involved because by its nature the Bill will only present the basic legislative framework for the future development. The operational details of the framework will be contained in the follow up Ministerial orders and it is these that will chart the direction. In this article, I wish to discuss a number of outstanding policy issues, which I believe need to be addressed, in both the legislation and Ministerial orders.

### 1. RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

At present, youth work is not perceived by other providers and participants of the formal education and non-formal education systems as a valid educational process. The reality is that youth workers have been innovative in both programme development and methodologies particularly in working with marginalised young people who are at risk and those who have been failed by the formal education system. Many of these innovations have been subsequently adopted by more recent educational initiatives such as Youthreach and Community Training Workshops. These developments have been of the highest standard and have largely gone unrecognised by the Department of Education and other educational providers. However, youth work must take some responsibility for the perception of it held by other educators. Youth organisations have done little to review, evaluate and debate their philosophies and practice resulting in very little dissemination of information or publications of examples of 'good practice'. Examples of issues that need to be acknowledged or discussed within or between a majority of youth organisations are:

- (i) *programme developments have failed, in many instances, to filter to grass roots level and have little impact on the recreational model of provision.*
- (ii) *the decrease in the number of young people over 15 years of age actively involved in youth groups and the shift to working with the age group 7-9 years.*

There seems to be a fear that acknowledging a problem exists might result in reduced grant-aid. A further consequence of the lack of critical thinking within youth work is the lack of research on the values which underlie current practice models and outcomes. The debate which such research and publications would generate could contribute

to the development of a common set of standards in youth work practice. This is a significant area that needs to be addressed by the proposals being developed in the Department of Education.

All four Government reports, on youth work recommended the appointment of professional advisers/assessors to the Department of Education and the development of research and evaluation procedures. The recent White Paper supported the need for evaluation stating that *there is a need for a fully comprehensive system of evaluation, research and monitoring of all youth work provision, in order to facilitate the transfer of good practices and assess the effectiveness of grant-aided initiatives. A comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation will be established featuring:*

- *a) a requirement for continuing self-evaluation of all grant receiving organisations and initiatives*
- *b) a monitoring and evaluation capacity within the Department*
- *c) a monitoring and evaluation function at regional level by Education Boards*

The first section (a) above has already been implemented by the Department of Education with its new reporting requirements. The emphasis in this approach is to encourage organisations, projects and groups to engage in a planning and evaluation process which will identify clear objectives, set performance indicators and develop measures for determining the outcomes of the interventions and initiatives. The second aspect of this proposal is that the evaluation process considers all aspects of an organisation, project or group, that is, the management and structures in place in addition to the programmes and processes.

What is unclear is how the remaining proposals, (b) and (c) above, will be developed and implemented. The Department will need to be seen to develop an effective monitoring and evaluation system and to make decisions on the basis of the evaluation findings and recommendations. One action argued for is that the Department appoint the assessor as part of revised inspectorate. However, the Government embargo on employment in the civil service may pose a difficulty. A second option is that the Department establish a Youth Service Evaluation and Development Unit as a separate legal entity or attached to a University, with the Board appointed by the Minister. The Health Boards have successfully used this approach to achieve developments despite the embargo. The role of such a unit would be to undertake all necessary research and evaluation on behalf of the Department and to make recommendations to it on the future development of the youth service. The staff would be employed by the Unit and the funding required provided by the Department under the grant scheme.



# Education and Youth Work Policy

## 2 - STRUCTURES AT NATIONAL & REGIONAL LEVEL

It is important to note that to-date there has never been a consensus among the youth organisations on the structures which should be established at national and regional level. In particular, tension has existed around the issue of authority and responsibility for development at region level. Many organisations want to maintain their autonomy and argue for the statutory recognition for youth work with responsibility for funding the development being placed with a statutory authority. The tension exists because organisations recognise the risk of locating responsibility with a statutory agency as a potential loss of total autonomy. However, what we need to recognise is that there are two different dimensions to this debate which are often blurred. Firstly, there is the funding of national voluntary organisations and secondly, there is the development of generic youth services at regional level. The funding of national voluntary organisations to develop their own programmes and services *will be provided by the Department of Education at national level*. This means that organisations will continue to report on the effectiveness of their own development plans. The proposal implied in the White Paper is that the introduction of generic local youth services will support the development and expansion of voluntary provision at regional level. The services should be complementary to those provided by national organisations and should include the provision of grant aid. Such services must be of significant benefit to all voluntary providers and should result in an increase in the level of youth participation. It is this aspect of the development that the White Paper refers to when it proposes that the new Education Boards *will be given statutory responsibility for the co-ordination and development of youth work*.

A second important consideration is to devise a mechanism to ensure that the volunteers in receipt of the services provided by the generic youth service are in a position to influence the services provided and the policies which underlie the approach. The safeguard which must be put in place is a representative Voluntary Youth Council which should elect 50% of the Youth Sub-Committee of the Education Board. In establishing the Voluntary Youth Councils it is important to make a distinction between the interests of volunteers and the vested interests of voluntary organisations. The distinction between empowering volunteers and empowering voluntary organisations is overlooked in the rhetoric of youth work when the principle of volunteerism is being defended. The perception of voluntary organisations and volunteers can be best illustrated by the following example. The current proposal to extend on a nation-wide basis, the arrangements, now limited to a few areas, under which grant aid may be given to local voluntary groups has been criticised by the NYF as a *mis-allocation of scarce resources which will feed parish pump politics and bring about a qualitative loss of standards, co-ordination and integration*.. The experience of Comhairle le Leas Oige, the CDVEC Youth Service, which have operated a clear and transparent grant scheme for voluntary groups for over 50 years, is that consistently volunteers in youth clubs, scouts and guide units through the city state that these grants are a vital support to meeting the costs of their work, particularly in areas of disadvantage. This is a prime example of where the interests of voluntary organisations and volunteers may differ in policy recommendations.

The volunteer providers of face to face youth work are also the recipients of the generic services of a Local Youth Service and should have the opportunity to influence policy and programmes through representation on the Youth Sub-Committee of the Education Board. It is also important that any voluntary youth organisation which intends to compete for a contract or may be involved in the operations of such contracts, be excluded from any direct representation on the Youth Sub-Committee. The opportunity for representation and input into policy formation by voluntary youth organisations is adequately catered for in the proposed development of a National Youth Advisory Committee at national level.

## 3. CONTRACTING LOCAL YOUTH SERVICES.

The White paper seems to accept the Consultative Group's recommendation that the model of delivery of a generic youth service would rely sole on the contracting of services from voluntary youth organisations by the Education Board. This aspect of the Report is *fundamentally flawed* because it accepts and promotes one model of local youth service, without any analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of that model. It does not make any comparisons with other existing models, such as diocesan and regional youth services affiliated to the National Youth Federation, and the only statutory youth service, Comhairle le Leas Oige. It is important, for the lasting credibility of the future of local youth services, that the Department of Education examine the existing models before one model is copper fastened into the system through legislation. It is vital to recognise the unique characteristics and needs of communities and regions and to create the flexibility that will be required by Sub-Committees to respond effectively.

## 4. FUNDING

It is clear from all the responses to both the Green Paper, the consultative Group Report and the White Paper that the funding of the future youth service is of grave concern. Many organisations have lobbied that the first issue to be addressed is the differing salary scales operating within the grant aided youth organisations. The O'Sullivan Report (1980) proposed the establishment of common pay scales operating on the basis of a designated number of posts allocated to individual youth organisations, but this has never been introduced. Such a development would not cost a significant amount but would go a long way to addressing the inequalities that exist in the Youth Service Grant Scheme. A recommendation made in the Assessor's report is that organisations receive a *three year commitment to funding subject to the satisfactory progress of the work*. This would enable organisations and groups to introduce effective planning systems, set long term objectives and performance indicators and develop evaluation procedures. Ultimately this system would result in a more efficient use of limited resources and facilitate effective monitoring by the Department of Education.

## CONCLUSION

The introduction of a Youth Service Act could be the most significant development in the history of youth work to date. However, to achieve such a status, the Act and the subsequent Ministerial orders must present a coherent vision of the future and address the important issues and inequalities which exist in the current ad hoc system.



## Amnesty International Art Competition

Amnesty International (in association with Dolphin Records, HMV and others) is in search of two Irish designs for their Christmas card collection for 1996. There will be two categories, under 18 years and 18-23 years of age. The prizes will be the same in both categories; **First prize:** The winning entry will be printed and offered as part of Amnesty International's Christmas card collection. There will also be a prize of a gift voucher. **Second Prize:** Entry will receive Mary Black's complete collection (10 CD's) from Dolphin Records. **Third Prize:** Entry will receive a gift token (£50) from HMV.

For further details on the conditions of entry and application forms, contact:

**Karen O'Shea, Student & Youth Officer, Amnesty International Office, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.**

**Tel: 01/6776361**

*(closing date for entries is 15 Nov. 1995).*

## Youth Talent Search 1996

The Irish Centre for Talented Youth (CTYI) is an a national centre founded by Dublin City University in 1992. It aims to identify post-primary school students who reason exceptionally well mathematically or verbally and to provide services for them, their parents and teachers. Applicants are invited to sit an aptitude test and those scoring highly enough are offered places on all the academic programmes offered by CTYI. These programmes include:

- 3 Week Summer Residential Programmes
  - Saturday Courses
  - Residential Study Weekends
- Participating students will:
- Gain a certificate of participation from Dublin City University
  - Have the opportunity to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the most widely used test for college entry in the United States.
  - Have the opportunity to qualify for one of six £300 merit scholarships towards the cost of the 1996 summer course at Dublin City University or a variety of other awards.

For further details and application forms, contact:

**CTYI Talent Search, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.**

**Tel: 01/7045634 Fax: 01/7045693**

*(the closing date for applications is 10 November, 1995 and there is a £35.00 fee for the talent search)*

## Outdoor Pursuits Opportunities For Disadvantaged Young People

Kilnacrott House is a Residential Community Training, Holiday and Outdoor Pursuits Centre. It is a voluntary organisation run by a Management Board of youth and community workers from the greater Dublin area. The Centre has a fulltime professional staff and is funded by the Management Board of the Centre, Dublin Corporation and the Department of Education. There are three main aspects to the work undertaken at Kilnacrott House:

- To provide a residential community training, holiday and Outdoor Pursuits Centre.
- To provide a residential Care Programme for young adults at risk (16 -20 years of age).
- To identify and organise training programmes in leadership skills for those in the caring profession, to benefit the individual and the Community.

Kilnacrott House pursue a positive policy of discrimination in favour of disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and communities, and feel it necessary to bring this information to those who are in face to face contact with the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups from the community.

Kilnacrott House is used extensively by many groups including: Youth Clubs; Schools Groups; Senior Citizen Clubs; A.R.C.H Clubs; Scouts; Guides; Retreat Groups; Families etc.

Programme Options include: Holidays; Adventure Sports; Water Sports; Coaching Courses (Sports); Youth & Community Training; Retreats; Seminars; Outdoor Education; Family Holidays; Conferences.

For further Information contact:

**Celine Martin/Pat Carthy Tel: 049/44436**

## UUJ Seeking Rural Communities

The University of Ulster is looking to work with rural communities over the next five years as part of its practical teaching programme on the BA Economics degree. It is proposed that Year 2 students, under the direction Dr. Michael Murray in the School of Public Policy, Economics and Law, will prepare a community audit and development plan during the period February to June in each year. A completed report will be given to the community at the conclusion of the project. It is not anticipated that there will be a cost for participating communities. The programme is due to commence in February 1996. If your community would like to be considered, please write to

**Dr. Michael Murray, School of Public Policy,  
Economics and Law,  
University of Ulster at Jordanstown,  
Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT37 0QB.**



## MINISTER LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVES ON CHILDCARE PROVISION

Austin Currie, Minister for State at the Department of Health, with special responsibility for children, announced, in July this year, a number of new developments in child care provision in accordance with the Child Care Act, 1991. The Minister reaffirmed the commitment of the government to the full implementation of the Act before the end of 1996. He stated that a further 44 sections are to be brought into operation on 1 October 1995.

These will include the core provisions of the Act which deal with the protection of children in emergencies, care proceedings and the powers and duties of health boards in relation to children in their care. One of the most important of these provisions is Section 19 which will introduce a new development called **The Supervision Order**. This will give the District Court the power to authorise Health Boards to have children/young people-at-risk visited at home to ensure that they are being properly cared for.

The Minister also launched the 1995 Child Care Action Plan which outlines the new child care developments approved for each Health Board area. The new initiatives include:

- The creation of 342 new posts for the child care services
- The provision of additional accommodation/supports to help young homeless
- The establishment of a number of special care units catering for children who are deemed to be 'out of control'
- The expansion of assessment and therapeutic services for the victims of child abuse
- The development of locally-based helping services to assist families in difficulty
- An increase in funding for voluntary/community groups who provide services for victims of family violence

The Health Boards have been requested to take immediate steps to bring the new services into operation at the earliest possible date.

## MINISTER FOR JUSTICE OUTLINES GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO OVERCROWDING IN DETENTION CENTRES

Deputy Callely asked the Minister for Justice the total number and location of detention places available; and what steps, if any, the Minister would be taking to alleviate the problem of overcrowding and the concern and frustration being expressed by prison staff about this problem. In response, Minister Owen stated that there were a total of 2,210 detention places available within the 12 Prisons/Places of Detention around the country. The location and capacity is as follows:

Table 1

INSTITUTION	ADDRESS	CAPACITY
Mountjoy Prison	North Circular Road, Dublin 7	612 males 40 females
Limerick Prison	Mulgrave Street, Limerick	120 males 12 females
Cork Prison	Rathmore Road, Cork	250 males
Arbour Hill Prison	Arbour Hill, Dublin 7	130 males
Portlaoise Prison	Dublin Road, Portlaoise	207 males
Training Unit	Glengarriff Parade, Dublin 7	96 males
Shelton Abbey	Arklow, Co. Wicklow	54 males
St. Patrick's Institution	North Circular Road, Dublin 7	122 males
Shanganagh Castle	Shankill, Co. Dublin	60 males
Loughan House	Blacklion, Co. Cavan	85 males
Fort Mitchel	Spike Island, Cobh, Co. Cork	102 males
Place of Detention Wheatfield	Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22	320 males

With regard to the issue of overcrowding, the Minister acknowledged that there was not enough prison places to hold all offenders in custody without overcrowding. The Minister drew the deputy's attention to the Justice Department's policy document **The Management of Offenders - A Five Year Plan** which outlined the following three-pronged strategy designed to alleviate the problem: The provision of additional prison places; A change over to a system of planned and programmed early releases under the supervision of the probation and welfare service and; Greater reliance on community sanctions and other non-custodial measures imposed at the court stage.

**NOTICEBOARD**

Noticeboard contains information on conferences, seminars and training events of relevance to those involved in the youth and community work sector. This month's edition focuses on events taking place in Ireland.

### **From Social Welfare to Education, Training and Work**

**Galway: 11 - 12 October, 1995**

**Cork: 24 - 25 October, 1995**

**Dublin: 9 - 10 November, 1995**

Two-day course aimed at experienced workers, volunteers and paid staff and those who have completed introductory training on the social welfare system. The course covers the options open to unemployed people and social welfare recipients to progress from social welfare to education and training and with the interaction between these options and secondary benefits explained. The course content will cover part-time work; full-time work; training and education options. The sessions will be conducted by presentation, discussion and through case studies.

Cost: £70.00

Further Details: Training Service, NSSB, 71 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 6616422 (Minicom) Fax: 01 6764908

### **Reaching Out, Families and Professionals: Needs, Resources and Responses**

**St John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Dublin**

**5 - 6 October, 1995**

Conference organised and hosted by the Mental Health Services of the St. John of God Order as part of the Order's 5th Centenary celebration of the birth of its founder. The focus of the Conference is the forging of new alliances in the delivery of mental health services in way that achieve the ultimate goal of providing a more effective and sensitive service. The key themes will be: Inter-relationships between the family and provider systems; Meeting the changing needs; and Implications for policy and professional training. Presenters will include Department of Health representatives, consumers of mental health services, St. John of God Order and overseas presenters from the UK and the USA.

Cost: £80.00

Further Details: Mary Keane/Brigid Kennedy  
Tel: 01 2831201 Fax: 01 2831257

### **Homelessness**

**Dublin - 12 October, 1995**

Half-day session for volunteers and paid staff in organisations giving information on social services and the public. The course aims to provide an overview of homelessness and services for homeless people in Ireland. The session will cover the legal situation, statutory policies and practices, role of voluntary organisations; myths about homelessness; causes of homelessness and solutions to it and services for homeless people. The course will be conducted through presentation, discussion and case studies.

Cost: £15.00

Further Details: Training Service, NSSB, 71 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2. Tel: 01 6616422 (Minicom) Fax: 01 6764908

### **Social Housing - The Way Forward**

**Dublin - 19 October, 1995**

One-day seminar aimed at anyone providing housing advice, and to those interested in housing or social policy. It will provide an overview and critical analysis of the Government's recently published blueprint for housing over the coming years. The seminar will be conducted by presentation and discussion.

Cost: £35.00

Further Details: Training Service, NSSB, 71 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 6616422 (Minicom) Fax: 01 6764908

### **The Church & Parish Resource Exhibition**

**Berkeley Court Hotel, Dublin: 14-15 November, 1995**

Two-day exhibition of resources, products, services and ideas from and for clergy/lay Christians involved in churches, schools, youth ministry, the missions and charities. Exhibition space is also available for organisations who wish to exhibit/publicise the work they are involved in (£465.00 -£695.00 for a stand for the two days).

Further Details: Jim McGuirk, McCann McGuirk Presentations, Greenmount House, Harold's Cross Road, Dublin 6W.

Tel: 01 4532497 Fax: 01 4544179



## IRISH YOUTHWORK CENTRE

Many of these titles and others on related topics are available on loan from the Irish YouthWork Centre, the official sales agent in the Republic of Ireland for Youth Clubs UK and the National Youth Agency. The wide range of topics covered by the materials available for the Centre include youth service management policy and curriculum, detached and rural youth work, health education, art education, social and political education, leaving home, counselling, club work, games and simulations, youth work training and working with girls and young women.

### POVERTY

#### **POVERTY IN FOCUS\*** by Maureen Bassett

'Poverty in Focus' is a supplement to the post-primary resource pack 'Fair Shares?'. Produced for Transition Year it facilitates the teaching of a module on poverty in Irish society in a project-oriented way. It has five sections: guidelines on introducing poverty into the classroom, short teaching units on poverty related issues, fact pages, guidelines project work and selected reading/resource materials. The guidelines for teachers include teaching about issues which are sensitive and often controversial.

### PEER EDUCATION

#### **JUST US: YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACTION WITH YOUTH PEOPLE** by British Red Cross Youth

Training pack aimed at 14-21 year olds to give them both an understanding of and the tools to put peer education into practice. The pack can also be used by youth leaders in their work with young people to assist them in developing peer education peer education projects. The pack is broken down into five modules: Understanding peer education; Dealing with adults; Working with young people; Developing your skills; and Taking action.

### HIV / AIDS EDUCATION

#### **TAKE 4:VIDEO TEACHING PACK** by North Warwickshire NHS Trust

Video and resource pack which provides a holistic approach to HIV/AIDS education by focussing on the issues involved in personal relationships, in the context of young people's everyday lives. The video follows events in the lives of four young people with five pauses in each story to allow for discussion and activities to take place around the issues that arise.

### WORKING WITH MEN

#### **THE HIM BOOK** by Chris Meade

Resource pack packed with ideas, activities and worksheets aimed at exploring a range of issues related to sexism, male stereotypes, male roles and men's perceptions of themselves.

### FUNDING SOURCES

#### **GETTING GOING IN EUROPE: A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS\*** by Richard Armitage and Richard MacFarlane.

The time is ripe for voluntary groups to establish European partnerships and projects. This book will show you how. Packed with practical ideas, it also offers an overview and a range of case studies. Of interest to charity directors, development or project managers and fund-raisers; local authorities and TEC's and many other groups.

#### **UK CHARITABLE FUNDING FOR THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND \*** by Paul Caddick and Howard Hurd

In the new dawn of Anglo-Irish relations, this ground breaking guide to UK trust and corporate funding sources for the voluntary sector in Ireland, with research on the attitudes on UK funders, will be an invaluable source of information for fundraising bodies and organisations with an interest in Ireland.

#### **PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS \*** edited by Susan Forrester

Comprehensive directory containing details of funding sources for groups concerned with peace, human rights, and international relations. Commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

#### **THE THIRD WORLD DIRECTORY \*** edited by Lucy Stubbs

Essential reading for anyone interested in this area. Covers 200 UK development agencies, with the details of aims, major projects and volunteering schemes; over 60 funders; and funding from the European Community and the Overseas Development Agency.

## MANAGEMENT

### MANAGING PEOPLE \*

by Gill Taylor and Christine Thornton

An accessible new handbook with illustrated with scenarios that offers practical solutions to personnel management problems. You'll find it the soap opera of your working life - with solutions!

### MANAGING RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION \*

by Gill Taylor

Aims to unblock bottlenecks to action and give people direct ideas about what to do or say when recruiting paid and volunteer staff. Equal opportunities good practice is covered as an integral part of each chapter. Scenarios offer sample solutions and offer tips for introducing good practice policies and procedures.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION \*

by Combat Poverty Agency

Handbook that provides advice for individuals and groups who are engaged in local development. It examines the role of community development in local development and outlines the issues that exist for the community sector in partnership structures. It draws on the experience of other local development partnerships such as the PESP pilot initiative on long-term unemployment and the Third Poverty Programme. It also examines the issues around selection of representation and the processes of accountability and feedback, and identifies questions relating to training and resource needs for the community sector to enable it to participate effectively in partnership.

## CAMPAIGNING

### THE CAMPAIGNING HANDBOOK \*

by Mark Lattimer

A handbook on campaigning techniques and the law for pressure groups and voluntary organisations. Covers publicity, demonstration, research, fundraising, lobbying, influence in Europe, campaign evaluation, charitable status and political activity, and what happens if you break the law.

*All resources marked \* are available for sale as well as on loan from the IRISH YOUTHWORK CENTRE, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.  
Tel: 01/8729933*

## youthwork resources

## BOOK REVIEW

### ONE WORLD WEEK '95 THEMEPACK - YOUNG PEOPLE IMAGINE

Our world today is beset with a range of problems. conflict, famine, injustice, poverty are just some of the issues reported daily through the media. It is understandable that the scale and complexity of these can at times be overwhelming and develop in us a sense of frustration and helplessness.

This publication, produced by the Development Education for Youth Project (D.E.F.Y.) assists young people to explore and develop a greater understanding of these and other problems. It also encourages them to imagine how, through their positive action, they can create a better future for themselves, their local area and the world.

A recent DEFY/IMS survey indicated that young people considered war and famine as the biggest problems facing the world today. This finding was supported in the piloting of the themepack when the clear desire of young people was to create a world without war, without fear and a clean environment.

The publication has been developed with contributions from young people in Brazil, Botswana, India and Ireland and contains a range of activities which are fun, provide creative ideas which promote awareness and learning. The quality of this publication from DEFY, is impressive. The text is clearly presented with instructions on group facilitation, handouts which may be photocopied for activities and information on other resources available to explore an issue in greater depth.

The themepack is designed to provide ideas for youth groups which would like to organise an activity for One World Week, which takes place in November each year. This event aims to raise awareness of justice issues at local, national and global level. Workshops will be organised in regional locations to introduce the publication to youth leaders during October.

I predict "Young People Imagine" will be a valuable resource for those working with young people long after the dust settles on One World Week 1995. The pack is available from:

*Development Education For Youth Project,  
c/o National Youth Council of Ireland,  
3 Montague Street, Dublin 2.  
Cost £5.00*

Ken Keogh, National Youth Federation



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