

Youth Studies Ireland

Volume 4
Number 1
Spring/Summer 2009

PRESS

Youth Studies Ireland is an initiative of the Irish YouthWork Centre which currently receives financial and/or staff support from the following agencies:

Applied Social Studies Dept., NUI Maynooth;
City of Dublin Youth Service Board;
Irish Youth Foundation and **Youth Work Ireland**

Editorial Board

Maurice Devlin (Editor),
Applied Social Studies,
National University of Ireland Maynooth,
County Kildare, Ireland.
Tel. + 353 (0)1 7083781
Fax + 353 (0)1 7084708
Email: maurice.devlin@nuim.ie

Paula Mayock,
Children's Research Centre,
Trinity College Dublin.
Tel. + 353 (0)1 8962636
Email: pmayock@tcd.ie

Sam McCready,
Community Youth Studies Unit/Centre for Young Mens' Studies,
University of Ulster at Jordanstown.
Tel. + 44 (0)28 90366457
Email: sh.mccready@ulster.ac.uk

Majella Mulkeen,
Applied Social Studies,
Institute of Technology, Sligo.
Tel. + 353 (0)71 9155354
Email: mulkeen.majella@itsligo.ie

Administrator/Secretariat

Fran Bissett,
Irish YouthWork Centre,
Youth Work Ireland,
20 Lower Dominick Street,
Dublin 1.
Tel. + 353 (0)1 8729933
Email: fbissett@youthworkireland.ie

Advisory Committee

Matt Bowden, *School of Social Science and Law, DIT*
Tom Costello, *Atlantic Philanthropies*
Eddie Darcy, *Catholic Youth Care*
John Farrelly, *City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB)*
Louise Fitzpatrick, *Dundalk Institute of Technology*
Martin Geoghegan, *Department of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork*
Sinead Hanafin, *Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs*
Nóirín Hayes, *Centre for Social & Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology*
John McCormick, *Youth Council for Northern Ireland*
Gerry McDonald, *Foróige*
Michael McLoughlin, *Youth Work Ireland*
Liam O'Dwyer, *Irish Youth Foundation*
Michael O'hAodain, *Department of Applied Social Studies, UCC*
Siobhan O'Higgins, *Centre for Health Promotion Studies, NUI Galway*
Hilary Tierney, *NUI Maynooth*
David Treacy, *City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC)*
Gillian Wynne, *The Ireland Funds*

Editorial Assistants

Orla Hill and Kathryn Mc Garry
Youth Research Programme, Applied Social Studies,
NUI Maynooth

Youth Studies Ireland is published biannually by Irish Youth Work Press in Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter. Youth Studies Ireland gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the agencies named opposite for the pilot phase and continued production of the journal.

ISSN: 1649-8747.

Copyright © 2009 Irish YouthWork Centre, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, and only as permitted under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, with the prior permission in writing of the Publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of the Copyright and Related Rights (Register of Copyright Licensing Bodies) Regulations, 2002. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers at the address below.

Subscription Fees (2009, 2 issues): individual rate €40; institutional rate €80. Electronic subscriptions for full issues and individual articles are available. Visit our website for more details: **www.iywc.com**

Abstracts and table of contents are available on this site free of charge.

Student discounts, single-issue rates and advertising details are available from:

Irish YouthWork Centre, Youth Work Ireland,
20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 (0)1 8729933
Fax: + 353 (0)1 8724183
Email: fbissett@youthworkireland.ie
Website: www.iywc.com

See the inside back cover for notes for contributors.
Cover and text design, typesetting and printing by:
Metaphor, Gandon House, Lucan Village, Dublin.
Tel: 01 6212007/6212008
Fax: 01 6212017
Email: info@metaphor.ie
Web: www.metaphor.ie

International Editorial Associates

Lynne Chisholm, *Institute of Education, University of Innsbruck, Austria*
Tom Dwyer, *Department of Political Science, State University of Campinas, Brazil*
Bryony Hoskins, *European Commission Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL), Ispra, Italy*
Marc Molgat, *School of Social Work, University of Ottawa/Observatory on Youth and Society, Quebec, Canada*
Ngan-Pun Ngai, *Department of Social Work, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China*
Malcolm Payne, *Youth Affairs Unit, De Montfort University, Leicester, England*
Ani Wierenga, *Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne, Australia*
Howard Williamson, *School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences, University of Glamorgan, Wales.*

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this journal are accurate at the time of going to print. The editorial board, the publisher and the editorial advisors and associates are not liable for any errors or omissions. Views expressed in the journal are those of the authors alone.

Youth Studies Ireland

Contents

Articles

The Function of History in the Debate on the Social Professions: The Case of Youth Work	3
<i>Walter Lorenz</i>	
Voices of Hidden Young Carers in Cork	14
<i>Joe Finnerty and Cathal O’Connell</i>	

Research Digest

Not Just Homelessness ... A Study of ‘Out of Home’ Young People in Cork City	28
<i>Paula Mayock and Nicola Carr</i>	

Notes on Practice

Diversity Toolkit for Youth Work: Increasing Participation and Inclusion for all Young People	35
<i>Matthew Seebach and Anne Walsh</i>	

Past Perspectives

Industrial Schools in Ireland (1884)	46
---	-----------

Review Article

Finding Youth: Exploring Theory and Experiences of Youth in Late Modern Societies	54
<i>Katharina Swirak</i>	

The Function of History in the Debate on the Social Professions

The Case of Youth Work¹

Walter Lorenz

Abstract

Measured by the standards of the traditional professions like medicine or law, professionalisation in the social field is at the very least incomplete. In contrast to these benchmark professions, those in the social area are invariably struggling to secure their profession's reputation in the eyes of the public; and they have no strict control over access to their profession, the curriculum content or designated fields of practice. Furthermore, they are experiencing the impact of a public crisis of confidence in professions in general, compounded by other, related challenges, such as greater emphasis on accountability, citizens' rights and 'consumer control', and the increasing prevalence of neo-liberal politics in Europe. This paper suggests that it may be fortunate that the general crisis in the professions is occurring just at the point where youth work is beginning to enter seriously the era of professionalisation. It argues that youth work, given its distinctive history, is characterised by inherent tensions and ambiguities. Is it primarily about autonomy and authenticity or assimilation and adjustment; about the reproduction of identities or their transformation; an organised element of public social policy or the spontaneous product of social movements? The author's view is that far from simply siding with one or the other, we should see the negotiation of such ambivalence as one of the core skills and competences of youth workers, and that such an approach is compatible with – and may draw inspiration from – the project of humanism.

Keywords

Social professions; youth work; professionalism; professionalisation

Professionalisation

Looking at the history of any of the social professions in Europe is a risky business because this history is complex, non-linear and fraught with moments when the profession developed in ways that today are not acceptable and probably embarrassing. In fact, in many of the social professions it is not even clear whether the aim was full professionalisation or whether the professional branch, like the voluntary sector, was just one strand among many others that together constitute the field.

Objectively, it can be said that professionalisation in the social field is at the very least incomplete, measured by the standards of the traditional professions like

medicine or law. In contrast to those benchmark professions, those in the social area are invariably struggling to secure their profession's reputation in the eyes of the public; and they have no strict control over access to their profession, the curriculum content or designated fields of practice.

Nevertheless, professionalisation has been part of their long-term aim to leave behind pre-professional forms of practice and embrace a rational, theory-based approach with certified training courses resulting in an approved form of practice. This emancipatory project was in line with the advance of rationality in modern societies alongside dreams of gaining control over social problems and rationalising the pedagogical transformation of society towards a better way of functioning.

For all professions, this process of rationalisation had the side effect of distancing them from their historical roots and giving them the appearance of a timeless activity, no longer contingent on incidentals such as language, traditional habits and customary narratives. Modern professions have a tendency to leave history behind, each new development turning a new page to emphasise the universality of the concepts they use, timeless and contextless.

A Crisis of Confidence

This distance has a price, because users of professional services may not fully identify themselves with these new practices. On the one hand, the public demand this universalism as part of their faith in rationality and the abstract laws of science, which offer reliable solutions to the problems of illness, social instability and ignorance. Rationality and science were the driving engines of the project of modernity and progress. But today this very project and its founding principles are in crisis, and with it the traditional professions. The promise on which they are founded cannot be redeemed, so they increasingly reveal their shortcomings in their own terms. Their reputation is dented by numerous cases of malpractice, which make the public doubt not just the reliability of the controls the professions exercise over their own practice but also the very principles of rationality and progress themselves.

Unpredictability haunts every professional practice area and undermines the universalism on which it was based. These challenges and the associated drop in public confidence are not incidental side issues, which could be overcome with more stringent quality controls and advances in research and knowledge, much as some social policies emphasise the need to modernise public services. Rather, they can be regarded as signs of a crisis of confidence, a failure to find common ground between the public and the experts.

This crisis corresponds to the growing importance that questions of identity have in all social contexts and in social policy. As globalisation advances and threatens to produce a universal sameness, belonging to an identifiable group acts as a counter-movement, and being understood by members of a group that share a common identity becomes all the more important. For instance, in the exercise of a profession, aspects like ethnicity, gender, age and life experiences start to count, side by side with formal qualifications and quality controls. This crisis therefore signals the return of historical dimensions and brings with it the necessity to redefine the parameters of professional conduct and professional identity.

A Time of Change

The crisis of confidence is compounded by other challenges to the self-image and autonomy of the professions. First among them is the emancipatory process of modernity itself, which has not confined itself to privileged groups but has become a defining characteristic of citizenship. Citizens demand increasingly that public services and expert systems become accountable to their users and to the general public, rather than just to politicians and administrators by a system of hierarchical control within each organisation. And consumer movements claim the same degree of control also over all private transactions, whether commercial or professional, so that the quality of a product or of a service can be monitored, not just through the balance of supply and demand but through watchdogs in the form of independent organisations which represent the interests of the public and consumers.

These consumer movements and the emphasis on citizens' rights resonate secondly in the principles of neo-liberal politics, which have swept across Europe. They impact not just on economic strategies but also on the organisation of public and professional services, particularly in the social field. Neo-liberalism seeks to extend market principles to services and transactions that were formerly organised with scant regard to choices made by non-expert users. These neo-liberal principles are hence perceived as (and largely intended as) an attack on privileges and autonomous organisations – mainly, but not exclusively, those of the state. The combined challenge of these factors requires a fresh look at the principles on which professions base their credibility and authority.

Youth work is directly affected by those developments and finds itself therefore in a state of transition. It can be argued that it is fortunate for the profession, now and in the future, that the general crisis in the professions (outlined above) is occurring just at the point where youth work is beginning to enter seriously the era of professionalisation. The crisis arrests any automatic assumption that sooner or later youth work will inevitably acquire full professional status and that all objections to this are expressions of backwardness.

An Opportunity

It will therefore be argued that controversies over the professional status of youth work and its reluctance to fully professionalise are not a sign of weakness, but offer an opportunity to examine not so much what professionalisation would mean theoretically for youth work but rather how the principles of youth work can be reconciled with principles of professionalisation. It is the right time to examine what kind of an agenda youth work has become (or would become) tied to as a result of professionalisation in the context of current social policies. To do this we need to trace the historical development of those principles in different cultural and national contexts, not as an abstract stream of development.

The challenge of this re-examination of professionalism in youth work is to combine cultural specificity with a concern for universality, which means a concern for equality, for a political commitment to transforming social processes and structures that disadvantage and exclude young people from fully participating in adult society and developing their abilities to the full, while fostering their individuality and cultural belonging.

It is probably not by accident that the surge in historical studies in the social professions coincides with a rupture in society's relationship with history. On the one hand, the post-1989 era has been characterised as 'the end of history', the dawn of a period when the struggle between the big ideologies has ceased (or has been won by one ideology, capitalism, which some would see not as a product of history but as a kind of law of nature whose truth will prevail sooner or later, the truth that no central political steering is possible, only that of the invisible hand of the market). This struggle for ideological supremacy, which drove history and politics for at least the past 150 years, is supposed now to have come to an end.

On the other hand, societies are being plunged into the depths of history, or rather of histories, especially their own national or ethnic histories. This has happened not just in post-colonial and post-Soviet trouble spots, with their struggle for autonomy and nationhood, but also within the seemingly settled boundaries of established nation states, where separatism and nationalism celebrate a dramatic resurgence. History suddenly seems all around us, instrumentalised as a legitimisation of territorial claims and a defence against the uncertainties and fears of societies that become once more aware of their ethnic and cultural diversity.

Two Approaches to the Crisis

This is where the social transformation of professions (as outlined above) links with broader historical and political processes of transformation, which by the way also affect the identity of academic disciplines (and this has a double impact on youth work). Identities are not only being newly defined, but claims of identity and authority have to be legitimated in fundamentally new terms. In this process, two principal approaches are discernible in current debates, approaches that aim to re-establish the credibility of – and confidence in – services, but fail to engage critically with history and hence with identity.

The Functional Approach

One approach uses functionalism: in the prevailing ideology of market choice, services seek to position themselves with the argument of efficiency. A customer – the state, a community or an individual – demands a certain service for a particular purpose, and a service provider bids to deliver the service at the best price. This approach neglects (or even deliberately eliminates) all reference to established traditions of principles and methodologies, value systems and intellectual continuities. Instead, such approaches seek to apply the criterion 'What works?'. The more sophisticated term (stemming significantly from medicine) is evidence-based practice.

I consider this to be an ahistorical approach which will have negative consequences, not because it ignores historical lines of development *per se*, but because it suggests an engagement with cultural diversity that eliminates an important social dimension. This missing dimension, obscured by the use of the seemingly neutral criterion 'evidence', can only be grasped from the premise of a profound, critical and differentiated engagement with history. I would argue that – even though this approach ostensibly leads to custom-made services, such as culturally specific services in the form of clubs and projects for members of religious or ethnic communities – it has the effect of either essentialising cultural differences and thereby fragmenting lines of social solidarity, or of trivialising cultural characteristics and reducing them to lifestyle choices.

In any case, the central mandate of the social professions, the establishment of 'the social', is being eliminated from the agenda, because service users are seen as individuals or groups of individuals defined by their own characteristics, whereas the key task of establishing a social dimension is to create bonds between people who are essentially different. In this functional perspective, society becomes a collection of individuals or an archipelago of communities, ghettoised by ideological or physical walls.

The construction of social solidarity is not an engineering task – or, if it is turned into a piece of engineering, it has dire consequences. This has been demonstrated not only by the racist social engineering and industrialised killing camps of the Nazis, but also by ethnic cleansing, which remains formidably real in many social conflict zones, from ex-Yugoslavia to Northern Ireland and many parts of Africa.

The Iconoclastic Approach

The other approach is what I would call an iconoclastic use of history, which also has its parallels in current politics: here reference to history and continuity is indeed made, but history is over-emphasised as a means of legitimating or claiming a particular, privileged or dominant position now. 'We were here first' is the battle cry: this territory, this range of competences is ours by tradition, and no further questions need be asked about our ownership. We must ask whether the surge in historical studies mentioned above, and not only in social work circles, is partly motivated, perhaps tacitly and implicitly, by fears of losing a privileged position, since neo-liberal social policies distribute tasks and contracts for services with scant regard to professional boundaries or convention.

In this type of approach the self-interest of the profession prevails again over the concern for carrying out a social mandate responsibly. An abstract notion of history and identity serves to consolidate privileges. It prevents a real engagement with historical processes, which always imply an engagement with, if not contamination by, the processes of today's world from which professions seek to free themselves.

This is now the nub of any engagement with history, be that from a national-political or a professional perspective: it has an immediate impact on current political or professional practice, but it can be constructive only if the dialogue with history is based on critical, hermeneutic premises; it must have the intention of introducing a critical distance to that immediacy and relativising any fixed, linear notion of development. By that I mean that the engagement with history needs to be always a two-way process, an interrogation of the past that remains conscious of the subjectivity of the questioner, and an examination of the present in the light of historical precursors and parallels that break open the 'facticity' of the present, a process in which the veracity of the information and the legitimacy of the claims derived from it are constantly being questioned.

It is the weaving of those questions, the creation of shared, meaningful symbols, that ultimately makes the fabric of society. Society derives its cohesion not from a-historical facts (biology) but from a commitment to shared principles, values and aspirations. Nothing else can hold a society together but this continual development and reworking of an incomplete project, the search for understanding.

Youth Work Pulled Two Ways

Youth work plays a crucial role in all this. In no other field is the tension so visible between the two approaches to social integration, the challenge that modern societies have to confront. On the one hand, youth work has the mandate to leave real-life processes to take the course of their self-generated dynamic as a constant source of renewal for society. Youth work, seen from this perspective, stems from youth movements, from the search for autonomy, identity and authenticity as the constituting tasks of adolescence. This type of youth work cannot be organised or controlled or professionalised without turning it into an instrument of assimilation and adjustment. This carries the risk that youth work will always disturb the established social order and cause instability – but it is also thereby a source of renewal and creativity for society.

On the other hand, youth work represents the interests of the system, which regards integration as an organisational task requiring structures, rational plans and utilitarian goals. Youth needs to be led and educated; youth needs to be closely tended, just as a tree needs tending if it is to bear fruit. The history of youth policies and the development of youth services in every region of Europe shows the constant oscillation between these two poles, demonstrating the promises and dangers of each of those sets of approaches.

In terms of lifeworld processes, youth movements have played an important part in shaping youth policies, but also in the development of national policies generally. The nation-state project, in countries like Germany and Italy for instance, derived much of its energy from the romantic youth movement, with all the negative implications that came to the fore in Fascism and Nazism. The events of 1968 were also associated with youth rebelling against a system that in their view had failed to face up to the past and was continuing to operate by means of colonialism, oppression and authoritarianism. It is understandable therefore that some countries like the UK limited the influence of the state on youth services and deliberately did not professionalise them, because this would suppress and restrict the energies and creativity that youth generates as a source of cultural renewal.

It is equally understandable that most complex modern societies, faced with ever-increasing problems of governance and integration, sooner or later began to invest in and thus influence the development of youth services, utilising them as part of the system of social integration, for better and for worse. For better, because lifeworld processes, left to their own spontaneous dynamics, often reproduce social inequalities; and the state, if it is committed to greater equality, has a duty to compensate and even positively discriminate in favour of marginalised youth threatened with exclusion from mainstream society. This requires policies, training structures and methods. For worse, because totalitarian regimes picked up on the potential for early ideological manipulation vested in youth services and therefore targeted youth as the core component of a new society and as allies in political movements.

So why not leave this awkward ambivalence behind that is vested historically in youth work and rally round a rational, effective, fully professionalised approach to youth work? My answer is, because this tension cannot and must not be resolved simply by siding exclusively with one or the other model; rather, in every operational context, the parameters for the ‘right’ approach to youth work and youth service need to be negotiated against the background of a detailed examination of the past history of the interests, movements and resources that are manifest in these specific circumstances.

This reflection requires very particular skills, which are not additional to the skills of youth work itself, but rather constitute core elements of the required youth work competences. They are the core hermeneutic skills of ‘making sense’, making sense of the lives of young people not in an objectivising or in a psychologising perspective (although psychological and sociological reference points might well have their importance in this process of understanding), but by engaging in a joint project of sense-making that connects to traditions of previous hopes, life concepts and origins, and at the same time transcends them to form something new, something that has relevance now, that exposes itself to the multiple and contradictory pulls and pushes which characterise the lives of young people in particular.

I want to draw on just some of these controversial issues that have always been part of such an historical approach to youth work and which lead to practice-relevant discoveries and points of departure.

Identity

Historical change in all the social professions, and in youth work too, confronts us with multiple issues of identity, particularly in the three dimensions of gender, ethnicity and class. In each case, the underlying question is whether youth services are about the reproduction of identities or about their transformation.

Gender

Whereas the profession of social work has historically been clearly dominated by females, this is not the case in youth work, where males had greater influence or where associations were split on gender terms. This settlement has left gender identity under-conceptualised in youth work and it is only now being raised gradually as an issue worth examining. It needs to be asked why gender issues have not had a more contentious history in youth work and whether having such a debate would open up useful reference points for future development.

Ethnicity

This is often portrayed as a new issue, particularly in immigrant societies where youth services are meant to play a key role in the integration of young people from different ethnic backgrounds and where the question of separate, ethnicity-specific services has to be confronted. But, on closer examination, youth services always had a strong element of ethnicity in the interest of nation-building or in the treatment of cultural traditions, where for instance religion became a quasi-ethnic marker designed to form a particular identity orientation.

Culturally defined identities played a major part in the development of youth work. Many immigrant projects which are organised on ethnic lines only mimic a basic tenet of ‘indigenous’ youth work, namely that religious denominations and culturally defined groups can claim the right to give youth a cultural reference point in their specific traditions. Here we have not even begun to disentangle the awkward questions of the boundaries of a legitimate sense of belonging as against their exclusionary, discriminatory effects. It needs to be asked where offering reference points for identity formation around cultural traditions becomes an exercise in fostering exclusionary and even racist tendencies.

Class

Historically, youth work and youth movements show many complex fissures along class lines. There was always a clash between youth initiatives that emphasised being working class as a positive value in identity formation and those that tried to question that form of socialisation and impose an agenda of 'betterment' on disadvantaged youth. The latter usually sought to engender a class-neutral identity for youth and promote inclusion, but often this had (perhaps unintended) discriminatory effects.

Particularly in the area of sport, clear class divisions prevailed, besides nationalist sentiments. Success in sporting activities like boxing or football was often portrayed, and offered, as an escape route from class bonds, but it succeeded only on an individual basis and often in an ideological context that was designed to legitimate or even consolidate structural class divisions.

In many societies, belonging to privileged or elitist sporting associations paved the way for future career success and was a way of socialising young middle-class people into positions of privilege and superiority. Commercialisation of sports and leisure activities has often obscured the traces of these distinctions and produced an individualised approach to identity formation. However, in many neighbourhoods and increasingly among immigrant groups, youth clubs retain their identity-forming capacity and continue to bear signs, if not of class belonging, at least of protection against anonymity as a means of exclusion.

Inevitability of Politics

As the examples show, where youth work raises issues of identity – even where identity is constructed in a non-political sense – youth work inescapably meshes with political agendas.

Hence, historical reflections in this field must inevitably confront the degree to which in a given context these political implications were made explicit, or point out the implications of a version of youth work that presents itself in an apparently politically neutral sense. The inherent ambiguity of many forms of youth work, as an organised element in public social policy or as a spontaneous product of social movements or other initiatives in civil society, can easily be exploited for political purposes.

Here the uniformed youth movement merits particular attention as an example of a phenomenon that can be understood in opposite ways: it can either be read as a spontaneous response to young people's need to have clear reference points for the development of their identity, so the structure of activities, the rituals and the uniforms can be seen as an intrinsic characteristic of youth; or the identity-shaping element can be seen as an attempt by the system to control and channel the needs of young people in a direction that ultimately suits the need of the state for well-adjusted youth.

Totalitarian regimes in particular were always keen to exploit this ambiguity, yet an assessment of different forms of youth work and youth movements cannot focus on their presentation as such, but must place them in a precise historical and political context. This kind of detailed work on the complex underlying motives, strategies and agendas that drive youth work and youth policy, formally and informally, is not only of theoretical interest but has direct practical implications because it helps to sharpen those competences (essential in youth work) that recognise and deal with the social construction of needs and identities.

On the basis of such a differentiated analysis it might also be possible to bring together again the historical experiences of East and West in Europe. In youth work, even more than in the social professions generally, the potential benefits of using past experience in the East have been hampered by the verdict that all youth work under communism was ideologically premised and hence not comparable to approaches in the West, at least in non-totalitarian countries and times. This attitude is often tinged with neo-colonial interests that seek to install in post-communist countries wholly Western systems, including youth services, as if one could ever start from zero with such developments. Ideologically motivated youth services were never totally imposed but responded always to some extent to the needs, dreams of autonomy and even rebellion, and concerns for identity of young people, just as seemingly non-ideological forms of youth activities always resonate with political agendas. In such historical dialogues lies an enormous potential for practice innovation.

Questions of Guilt

These considerations finally touch on the most sensitive issue in approaches to youth (and hence to youth work in the broadest sense), a current sensitivity which is heightened by historical considerations and studies. Looking at how young people were treated in the past confronts us immediately with massive guilt. We become aware how much suffering adults inflicted on children, often under the pretext of good pedagogical intentions, 'for your own good', which at times amounted to regimes of systematic oppression and exploitation. The insidious and exploitative nature of some of those projects can lie hidden behind a façade that portrays them as a 'spontaneous outpouring of youthful zeal and enthusiasm'. Their history stretches from the grotesque (so-called) Children's Crusade of 1212 to the youth element in China's Cultural Revolution and the growing phenomenon of child soldiers.

But, even apart from these extremes, child care, education and youth work have changed considerably over the centuries; methods that at one time seemed acceptable or even enlightened now seem shameful. It is only in recent years that the stories of children and young people who suffered abuse – in children's homes, in sports associations, in activities associated with the churches and elsewhere – have been seriously listened to. Their stories are an important part of a historical perspective on the precariousness of all methods. For we must ask how today's approaches to youth work and child protection will be judged by future generations – methods such as computer games and leisure activities, freely available in youth clubs or pursued 'spontaneously' on the internet, or protective methods like constant supervision by social workers, curfews in inner cities or treatment methods for hyper-activity.

The balance between giving children and young people more responsibility for living their own lives or pursuing their interests and protecting them from damage is not a question that can be answered with reference to positivist scientific or abstract moral principles; rather, this balance has to be negotiated continually in each new generation and in each cultural and political context. But reflecting on history makes us aware of the relativity of all perspectives, which is a useful and probably necessary starting point if we are to face up to this enormous responsibility, in the full knowledge of the risks of facing up to historical guilt.

Conclusion

In all these areas, historical reflections seem to lead us into an abyss of uncertainty and relativity, so that any attempt at searching history for eternal, unequivocal answers seems doomed from the beginning. So why bother? The answer may lie in a fragile, historical, subjective reference to humanism. Because childhood and youth are, anthropologically speaking, not a biological given but a social construct that every epoch and every culture shapes differently, according to its prevailing values, as a result youth work becomes a necessary but delicate task that takes those values seriously but allows for a critical position to be taken towards them, a position which in itself feeds on awareness of its historical relativity.

The task evolves in a dialectical force field that on the one side pulls in the direction of greater control over youth, making young people adjust to what adults define as reality and its necessities, and on the other side maintains that spontaneity gives the chance of renewal, of innovation, of progress. The two aspects together define the project of humanism, a project fraught with misunderstandings but nevertheless a source of cultural inspiration and true scientific endeavour. Humanism is an incomplete project, a project without fixed reference points, a project that continually transcends boundaries and categories, a challenge which exceeds (and must exceed) technical competence if it is to remain true to its mandate of realising the human in a social context instead of dissolving it in a technical, ultimately dehumanising process. The confrontation with history suggests this humility, but that need not give rise to resignation.

Notes

1. Copyright Council of Europe. This article is based on a paper delivered at the First Workshop on the History of Youth Work in Europe, held in Blankenberge, Belgium, in May 2008 and organised by the Youth Partnership of the European Commission and Council of Europe and by the Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults (Division for Youth) of the Flemish Community. The full report of the workshop is published as *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*, edited by Griet Verschelden, Filip Coussée, Tineke Van de Walle and Howard Williamson (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009) and is available online at: <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/ekcyp/index>

Biographical Note

Prof. Walter A. Lorenz is Principal of the Free University of Bolzano, Italy. He received his social work education at the London School of Economics and worked for several years in London's East End, before moving to University College Cork where he taught social work for 22 years, during his later years as Jean Monnet Professor. He has headed several European research and cooperation projects and his main focus has been the development of European and intercultural dimensions in social work and youth work. He was one of the founding editors of the journal *Social Work & Society*.

Address

Prof. Walter A. Lorenz,
Principal, Free University of Bolzano,
8 Via dell'Ospedale,
C. p. 276,
39100 Bolzano,
Italy.
Tel: +39-0471-010200
Email: rectorate@unibz.it

Voices of Hidden Young Carers in Cork

Joe Finnerty and Cathal O'Connell

Abstract

Informal provision of care by family members of elderly, ill, and disabled persons is one of the foundations of caring in Ireland. The primary assumption underpinning much informal care is that it is provided by adults, and this undoubtedly is the case for the vast bulk of care provided. There are, however, others who provide informal care and who are rarely mentioned, seldom credited for the work they do, and are only beginning to be acknowledged at policy level. Specifically, these are 'hidden young carers' whose experiences are the focus of this article.

The findings of the small-scale, exploratory piece of research presented in this article point to the long term impact of caring on these young people's health and quality of life, education, employment, risk of poverty and social relationships. Hidden young carers are unable to live their lives as their peers do, and compounding this they have been largely invisible to policy makers and service providers.¹

The article begins with a review of the international literature on definitions and perspectives on young carers, followed by a brief overview of existing Irish research and policy. It then details the lived experiences of current and former young carers, based on interviews with a small Cork sample, to illustrate the impacts of caring on various aspects of their lives. The article concludes with some commentary on the issues arising from the research for policy and service provision.

Keywords

Informal care; experiences of young people; Irish social policy; young carers

Introduction

There are a number of key theoretical paradigms which inform research on young carers. These paradigms have evolved over time, and according to Halpenny and Gilligan, changes in societal conceptualisation and understanding of terms such as 'disability', 'caring' and 'childhood' contribute to a shift in emphasis from a focus primarily on outcomes and risks for children as carers to a broader focus which encompasses young carers as competent social agents (Halpenny and Gilligan, 2004:14).

Becker et al. (1998) outline the key perspectives as including the *medical perspective*, which originated in the early 1950s and is primarily concerned with the impact of ill-health and disability on families, including children. The *young carers perspective* is rooted in a children's and carers' rights model which views children and carers as

fulfilling distinct family and social roles, including being the main providers of care in the community. The *social perspective* on disability is primarily concerned with the rights and needs of disabled people and their experiences of 'disabling barriers' including discrimination and exclusion. Becker et al. (1998) identify what they term a 'sub-literature' of the social perspective on disability, which has challenged the mainstream work on young carers and has focused instead on the rights and needs of those who have physical or mental impairments (Keith and Morris, 1995; Parker and Olsen, 1995; Newman, 2002). Finally the *family perspective* has grown out of the debate between the rights of disabled people and the rights of children who care, emphasising prevention in a 'whole family' context as opposed to protection (Becker et al., 1998).

Due to the complexity and diversity surrounding the role of young carers, a satisfactory definition has proved difficult to arrive at. Several definitions of young carers can be identified within the literature on social work and from caring organisations. A range of factors can be cited which set young carers apart from both adult carers and other young children within families and households who do not take on a caring role. Aldridge and Becker (1997) suggest the following definition:

A child or young person (under 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another which would usually be undertaken by an adult.

Research on Young Carers in Ireland

There is little by way of a young carer research literature in Ireland, with existing research overwhelmingly focusing on adult caregivers (see for example O'Donovan et al., 1997; Garavan et al., 2001). While Halpenny and Gilligan (2004) have undertaken a wide-ranging literature review on young carers which surveyed the international literature and policy context, they did not undertake any primary research with hidden young carers.

Two short studies which made references to young carers were carried out in the mid-1990s. The first was by Multiple Sclerosis Ireland (1996) on MS sufferers and the second was a pilot study by Carers Association (Ireland) (1997) which aimed to obtain an overall picture of the contexts within which young people were providing care. The MS Ireland study was focused on care needs of sufferers of that condition and the source of the care they received while the Carers Association research focused on the nature of the tasks and extent of caring undertaken by young people rather than exploring the impacts on young carers and their attitudes and feelings in relation to their caring responsibilities.

Policy and Provision in Ireland

In the Irish context, recognition and responses to the existence and needs of young carers could be best described as uneven. No national policy strategy exists with an explicit focus on young carers, and no reference to young carers is made in either the *National Children's Strategy 2000–2010* or the Office for Social Inclusion (2007) publication *A Social Portrait of Children in Ireland*. Additionally, there is a noteworthy absence of mention of the 'young carer' issue in the Comhairle document *Supporting Carers* (2002), or in the Joint Oireachtas *Report on the Position of Full-Time Carers* (2003).

The same is true of other recent literature on caring in Ireland (Cullen et al., 2004; NESCS, 2005; Browne, 2005).

However, evidence is now emerging of a belated awareness of the roles played by young carers and the subsequent needs of these young people. Some recognition of young carers is evident in a report entitled *Implementing Equality for Carers* by the Equality Authority (2005), which asserts that 'the state has a clear responsibility to provide a full range of services for young carers', beginning by identifying the young carers, followed by the provision of practical supports such as counselling, respite, access to education, social inclusion and meeting personal development needs.

Most recently, policy documents arising from the social partnership process overtly acknowledge the existence of young carers as a specific cohort within the caring population overall, especially where they may be undertaking 'inappropriate care roles'. Arising from the participation of the Carers Association in the negotiation of the current national partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, there is a commitment to undertake research on 'the extent, degree and impact' of caring on the lives of the children concerned. It goes on to commit to the development of supports to 'alleviate specific problem areas identified for children', based on the findings of the research (Government of Ireland, 2006: 46; see also Carers Association of Ireland, Carer Alliance Ireland and Caring for Carers Ireland, 2008). The sporadic nature of policy recognition in Ireland of young carers contrasts with that of other countries such as the UK and Australia, where significant progress has been made in identifying and responding to their situation.²

The Prevalence of Young Carers in Ireland

It is difficult to assess the true extent of caring undertaken by young people in Ireland, though rough estimates can be made to gauge the extent of caring by young people from census sources. The Census of Ireland 2002 and 2006 (Volume 10 Carers and Disability) provides data on self-reported caring activities within the population as a whole. With respect to persons in younger age groups who provide care, however, Census 2002 data are only available for persons from the age of 15 years upwards. A total of 2,996 persons aged between 15 and 17 years were recorded as providing unpaid personal care. Of these 819 were aged 15 years, 1037 were aged 16 and 1,140 were aged 17, which in total accounted for 2 per cent of the total caring population (Halpenny and Gilligan, 2004). It is not possible to make comparisons between 2002 and 2006, as the latter census did not publish figures for persons in younger age groups who provide care.

Research Design and Methodology

The remainder of this article presents some of the findings of an exploratory Combat Poverty Agency funded study into young carers' experiences in the Cork region in the south of Ireland. Given the hidden nature of the role they fulfil, a major challenge facing the research was the identification of a sample of young carers and gaining their consent to participate in the study.³ In attempting to identify potential participants, contact was made with a wide range of organisations and individuals who work with families and young people in the wider Cork area and who could be in a position to identify and introduce young carers to the researchers.⁴ Data was gathered via

qualitative and semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in awareness of the sensitive nature of the material involved and the youth of some of the respondents.⁵

In total nine interviews with young carers – comprising five young carers and four former young carers – were conducted from 2004 onwards in Cork city and county. Two of the young carers are siblings. The interview sample reflects a range of age groups, with a roughly even balance of male and female participants (Table 1). While no young carers under twelve years of age were interviewed, a number of the participants had been caring from as young as four or five years of age.

Age	Female	Male	Total
12–13	1	1	2
14–15	0	2	2
16–17	0	0	0
18–19	1	0	1
20s	0	1	1
30s	1	0	1
40s	1	0	1
50s	1	0	1
Total	5	4	9

Table 1: *Interview participants by age and gender*

In the following section the young carers are profiled in terms of who they cared for, the duration of the care, and the nature of the care provided. This is followed by an account of their views on their caring role, and the effects it has had on various aspects of their lives.

Person Cared for and Reason for Caring

Eight of the nine young carers and former young carers interviewed were caring for their mother. The ninth interviewee took over caring for a younger sister when her mother suffered a nervous breakdown. Four of the young carers and former young carers were caring for more than one person. In three of these cases, the carer also took responsibility for the care of a younger sibling, as their mother was unable to do so. The fourth carer was responsible for caring for three people: her mother, aunt and grandfather.

Length of Time Caring

A total of five young carers began caring under the age of ten, four of whom began caring when they were less than six years of age. Four young carers and former young carers began caring in their teenage years. All those interviewed had been caring for a long period of time, from a minimum of around four years up to over forty years of caring. All interviewees were – or had been – caring on a daily basis, although there was variation in the nature and intensity of the caring.

Nature and Extent of Caring Responsibilities

The nature and extent of caring responsibilities varied among the young carers and former young carers interviewed. One former young carer was caring for three people – her mother, aunt and grandfather – from when she was a toddler. Her mother and aunt both suffered from mental illness, while the grandfather was elderly and physically ill. She cared for all of them daily and was also often up at night with them. Her father was present but was working, so she had primary responsibility for caring for them. A younger brother was also present but he was not expected to do the caring work. The caring involved personal care (such as dressing and emptying commodes), housework and cooking, as well as the need to constantly watch her aunt who was inclined to wander the roads, and her mother who was paranoid and would keep hiding things in the house.

Another former young carer took care of her sister, who has Down's Syndrome, from when she was nine years old and her sister was a baby. Her mother suffered a nervous breakdown and was unable to care for her. Her father was working, an older sister had left the country and her brothers played no role in caring. Her father died when she was sixteen, leaving her as primary carer. Caring responsibilities included personal care, cooking, shopping and housework. She also took care of her mother who was self-neglecting. At a later stage she arranged and monitored education and rehabilitative care for her sister.

Two young carers who are siblings provide a great deal of physical and personal care in addition to assisting with housework and cooking. This includes helping their mother in and out of bed, in and out of the car, on to and off the toilet and assisting with dressing. The daughter, on occasion, has had to assist in changing her mother's catheter.

Another young carer takes care of her younger sister (six years old) and used to also care for a younger brother. This involved all the tasks associated with caring for a young child as well as trying to make sure her brother went to school. She also has to watch her mother, who suffers from manic depression, and ensure that she has not fallen asleep smoking or left all the doors unlocked.

The Impact of Caring on the Lives of Young Carers

The research revealed that in a number of key aspects of their lives the caring responsibilities carried by young carers were significant, and usually negative. The impacts of caring at a young age are multidimensional, affecting education, physical and mental health, risk of poverty, social life, career and life chances and choices. In the following section of the article, a selection of experiences are reported which give a voice to the young people themselves and highlight the effects across a range of their life experiences.

Feelings about Caring Responsibilities

Interview participants expressed a range of emotions in relation to their caring role: acceptance, resentment, anger, annoyance, stress, trauma and upset. Some felt that caring for their relative, while difficult, was just something one did because of family bonds.

It's not all that bad like. The odd time there you'd get fed up of it like. But what can I do, it's my mam. You have to look after her. She does the same for me.

Some felt that they did it because they were used to it or knew no different. *'It was difficult but you knew nothing different at that time.'* Other young carers expressed a clear dislike and resentment of having to provide care. All the young carers and former young carers interviewed found the situation stressful and traumatic, to a greater or lesser extent. *'You were constantly stressed to the limit....terribly stressful; I grew up in a terribly stressful situation.'*

Education

Being a young carer had a significant impact on the education of the young carers and former young carers interviewed. For one of the former young carers, who was caring from when she was around six years of age, being a young carer resulted in her missing out almost completely on her education. Because of caring responsibilities she was kept home from school from an early age, which had significant implications for her education and life chances.

You'd have a couple of days at school, days off from school – you'd have to stay at home if there was no one to look after them. Now I loved school. I wanted to be educated. It affected me all through life. Now I can't apply for a job or anything like that now 'cos I'm not educated enough.

She was very angry that no-one intervened to ensure she received an education. Doctors, nurses, TDs and the school were all aware of her situation.

And yet I went through the net, stopping at home from school and caring at home. And nobody ever came to say this can't go on, this child has got to go to school.

There was an clearly discrimination in this case. Her brother was educated but it was not considered as important that she be educated because she was a girl.

And being a daughter, it was kinda seen in those days that a daughter, sure why would you bother educating her, she'd only be getting married. In those days it was nothing thought of a daughter. A son had to be educated but not a daughter. So I was the one.

Her lack of education impacted on her throughout her life, affecting in particular her self-confidence and work opportunities.

It has affected me now like if I'm applying for a job or talk up at meetings or things like that, I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing. I know it's all inside me what I want to say out but I'm afraid I'll say the wrong words, my grammar would be very bad.

She had wanted to work with children with special needs but didn't do well enough in her leaving certificate to enter the training course. Her practical experience in providing care for her sister with special needs was not taken into account.

Caring responsibilities also impacted significantly on the educational experience of an eighteen-year-old carer who was caring for her mother and younger siblings since she was twelve. She missed out on lots of school: she would miss a few days each week and would sometimes be out of school for a few months at a time.

I lost out, that was the main reason I never finished my leaving cert was 'cos I was always at home minding my sister. ... so I missed out so much at school that I never got to finish it. I missed out on lots of secondary school.

She has now returned to education and is attending Youthreach, which she really enjoys.

I love to come here in the morning. I'm the first up because it gets me out of the house for a few hours.....Hopefully I'll get college or something out of it.

A fifteen-year-old carer had been missing out on a lot of school, partly because of the situation at home.

I usen't go to school at all. Because my mam was sick I thought I didn't have to go to school. I didn't bother going.

His mother became very upset because he was missing school and getting into trouble. Given their close relationship, this affected him and he decided to go to a Youthreach programme, where he is now studying for his Junior Certificate Examination. He finds Youthreach to be a much more supportive environment than his previous school and they also understand if he needs to come to school late because he is helping his mother.

The interviews revealed that being a young carer adversely affected the education of the young carers and former young carers interviewed. This ranged from completely missing out on education, to difficulties balancing homework and caring responsibilities. Most received little or no support from their schools and there was little intervention to ensure that their education was not affected. Missing out on education has had implications for their life and career choices. It is positive to note, however, that two young carers' experience of education changed when they began to attend a Youthreach centre. Both are now enthusiastic about their education and have plans to continue with further education and training. This demonstrates how a more supportive and aware educational environment can mitigate the impact of caring on young carers' education.

Work/Career Experiences

It was clear from discussions with former young carers that it impacted significantly on their work and career paths. For most of them this was directly linked to the fact that their caring responsibilities had adversely affected their educational opportunities, as outlined above. This limited the range of employment opportunities open to them and many ended up in factory jobs or doing what one woman described as 'menial work'. For some the impact on employment prospects has been felt right through their lives and continued to affect their confidence to apply for jobs.

I've been offered different jobs since that are better paid but I feel I wouldn't be educated enough for it. It hits me all the time. You'd be knocked down all the time. You're being reminded all the time of what you missed out on.

Most of the former young carers have ended up working in the field of caring. One woman has spent her whole life providing care for family members and subsequently working as a carer in a convent. 'So the caring role is still there; it will never leave me; it's there.' Another woman wanted to train to work with people with special needs but, because she had missed out on so much of her education, didn't have the right educational qualifications and her practical work experience in this area wasn't taken into account. She now works as a home help where her years of caring experience are valued and she provides training for other home helps and works with 'high

maintenance' patients. Another woman went from school into factory work which she hated. She was in her twenties before she returned to education and trained as a social worker and now works as a social worker in the psychiatric services.

One of the current young carers wants to work in the medical field and feels that her experience in caring for her mother would be of benefit to her. *'Well I kind of want to do medicine when I'm older so I've kind of got a head start.'*

Social Life/Relationships

Most interviewees said that being a young carer impacted on their social lives and relationships. Because of their caring responsibilities they had less time to spend with friends, to develop relationships and to engage in social activities. Young carers who missed out on school because of their caring responsibilities also missed out on the opportunity to develop friendships with classmates. They also missed out on social aspects of school life, such as school outings. One former young carer has been providing care since she was nine years old. Now in her thirties she has never had a relationship and she feels that this is directly a result of being a carer.

I've never had time to get into a relationship because you couldn't go out, you didn't have babysitters and things like that. There was never any kind of a relationship. You couldn't. Being a carer is a very lonely experience.

Some of the young carers resented the fact that they had little time to 'hang out' with their friends and that while their friends were out playing and having fun they had to stay home and help out.

I went out for the first time in about a month last Sunday and stayed overnight in a friend's house. That was the first time in about a month that I done that, went out for longer than a few hours.

Others felt unable to invite friends to come to their homes because they were embarrassed about the situation at home or because their family didn't want anyone to know what was going on. *'I usually go to my friends' houses. I'm kind of embarrassed about the situation at home.'* For some young carers it was the constant interruptions which caused frustration. They would be in the middle of doing something, spending time with friends, being out, watching TV, and would be called away to help out and provide care. The lack of free time for their own activities also caused difficulties for young carers.

Like as a carer you were always clock watching, always, always clock watching. You never ever had free time. You might get two hours, you know what I mean.

Mental and Physical Health

Being a young carer can have a detrimental impact on the health (mental and physical) of the young people involved. This can be most clearly seen in health problems that are directly related to or caused by the caring work. Examples of this include tiredness, stress, physical exhaustion and back problems.

I don't like doing it. It hurts my back sometimes. And I pull my muscles a lot as well. My back, my arms and my legs.

Other physical health problems can be linked to the stress associated with being a young carer. One woman developed allergies, with associated health problems, which she feels was because she was in such a stressful situation at home.

My health was deteriorating; I had a lot of allergy problems, but that time they didn't know it was allergy problems. I was getting sick a lot, then the doctors, and in and out of hospitals; they didn't know what was wrong with me. Stress, my system had broken down.

For many young carers the greatest impact is on their emotional and mental health. The majority of the young carers and former young carers interviewed experienced stress because of their situation. For some this led to depression and anxiety. Some former young carers have needed to go to a counsellor to deal with the impact of this stress on their emotional and mental health and some of the current young carers felt that they needed to see a counsellor to help them deal with their current situation.

Looking back I would say most certainly my older brother and myself, I would say certainly our mental health suffered. And I would say that we became depressed for quite some time.

Poverty

Many of the young carers and former young carers interviewed had to deal with financial hardship directly linked to their position as young carers. For some this was because they were living alone with a parent who was unable to work because of illness or disability and the family was subsequently dependent on social welfare payments. 'We were completely pauperised through all this as well.' In one situation the young carer was caring for an ill parent and, when the situation worsened, the second parent had to give up work to help care for the ill parent. This had subsequent implications for the family's financial position. Another young carer had to leave school and to go to work to support her family because her father died when she was sixteen: 'There were days when we barely had food. There were days when we had to burn shoes, we didn't have coal.'

In one particular case, the current young carer and her siblings are occasionally in a position where they have no food or money. Their mother suffers from manic depression and when she is 'high' she takes the family's money and leaves nothing for the children.

'Cos when my mother gets like this she takes any money that we get and basically spends it on cigarettes and nothing else really. So there'd be no food or anything.

When asked what kind of supports would help to make her situation better her answer was: 'Financial really, because she takes money, and coal and stuff like that. It's just food basically and heating that is sometimes needed.'

Information, Professional Intervention and Supports

One of the biggest problems identified by the young carers and former young carers in the study was the lack of information and of professional interventions and supports for the young people. Many interviewees mentioned that they didn't understand what was going on when their parent became ill and that nobody explained the situation to them. This was very confusing and frightening, particularly when they were so young. Former young carers expressed anger that, even though professionals such as doctors, teachers or social workers would have been aware of their situation, nobody had intervened to assist the young people.

What hurts me most is the fact that all that went on and there was no one took any notice.

Discussions with current young carers show that there is still inadequate professional intervention and supports for young carers. For example, one young carer who is caring for a young sibling because of her mother's mental illness has stated that she receives no professional support, receives inadequate information and intervention from her mother's doctor and has never been contacted by a social worker. However, one of the other current young carers spoke of the difference that an engaged and supportive social worker had made to his family. She engages with the son as well as the mother and provides practical supports for the family.

She comes around a lot and helps out with stuff to do with the house, like the chairs and carpets. She'd be up the whole time. She and my mam talking and having a cup of tea. You wouldn't think she was a social worker at all, you'd think she was one of my mam's friends.

Both current and former young carers stressed the need for more adequate Home Help and Respite Care and expressed anger at the recent cutbacks in these services. In addition to the lack of adequate professional supports, some former young carers were angry at the lack of support and help from family members and at the fact that they were left with all the caring responsibilities: *'For years I was very angry that they weren't doing their bit like.'*

Contact with Other Young Carers

Isolation can be a major problem for young carers. Because of their caring responsibilities they often have less time to spend with their friends and peers. Young carers also felt that it could be difficult for friends to understand what it was like to be a young carer and some felt too embarrassed to discuss their home circumstances with their friends. Few of the young carers knew of, or had contact with, other young carers and they often felt that they were the only one in that situation. Two of the young carers had participated in an event for young carers which was organised by the local Multiple Sclerosis Society. They found it beneficial to learn that there were other young carers and that they shared similar experiences.

I actually didn't realise that there were others. I thought that there'd only be a few others but there was a good few.

Most of the current young carers expressed interest in meeting with other young carers and in participating in a Young Carers' Group if one were established. The prime motivation was to combat their sense of isolation and to be able to talk with other young carers who would understand their experiences.

Doing this you feel very alone. You feel that there's nobody else around. So it would be nice to find out how other people deal with it and stuff. I think that [a young carers' group] would be a very good idea alright.

Conclusions

It is clear that being a hidden young carer has significant implications for the lives and wellbeing of the young people involved. Being a young carer can lead to impoverishment, not only in terms of financial hardship and lack of basic resources such as food, but also in terms of affecting education and employment opportunities, social lives and interactions, and physical and mental health. Furthermore the lack of adequate information, supports, and professional interventions has exacerbated already difficult situations for young carers, and it is clear that adequate professional supports and interventions are essential in mediating the impact of caring on young people's lives.

A number of important conclusions emerged from the research, with implications at the level of policy formulation, service planning and practice interventions.

A greater level of awareness of the existence and of the needs of young carers on the part of social professionals such as social workers, youth workers, community development workers, health professionals and home-school community liaison officers is essential to help in early identification and in devising appropriate responses. For other organisations working with families where young carers may exist, strategies for heightened awareness of their needs should be devised.

The interruptions/ dilution of formal educational experiences caused by caring responsibilities places hidden young carers at a considerable disadvantage in terms of life chances, labour market participation or acquisition of formal qualifications. Nonetheless, the research outlined in this article has revealed that despite the adversities they endure, young carers build up significant skills and resources in taking on care responsibilities. In this regard consideration should be given to policy initiatives aimed at giving recognition to these experiences and skills through certified training initiatives, EU led vocational training initiatives and distance learning programmes, in line with recent proposals for recognition of adult carers (see for example Government of Ireland, 2006: 6).

Finally it is evident from the literature and policy review that official awareness levels of the existence, contribution, needs and experiences of hidden young carers in Ireland is uneven and needs to be strengthened. Future policy documents should directly acknowledge these young carers and highlight the necessity for policy and support measures to meet their needs. Having said that, policy responses to the negative impacts identified in the research must be carefully considered. Special initiatives, while welcome, must be sensitive to the dangers of isolation, stigmatisation and tokenism arising from targeted interventions. Since the burden on young carers is also bound up with the absence of, or lack of, access to services and supports for those

cared for, responding to the needs of young carers should ideally focus on the needs of all family and household members within a wider social policy context.

As the Irish welfare state faces into a period of uncertainty and fiscal rectitude, services such as caring which have traditionally been performed on an unpaid and informal basis, including those provided by young people, will come under greater strain. It is therefore imperative that policy recognition, appropriate interventions, and sensitive responses are put in place to prevent this vulnerable group of young people from experiencing even deeper levels of marginalisation both as young people now and as adults in the future.

Notes

1. This article draws on research commissioned by the Combat Poverty Agency and published as O'Connell, C., Finnerty, J., and Egan, O. (2008) *Hidden Voices: An Exploratory Study of Young Carers in Cork* (Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency). http://www.cpa.ie/publications/workingpapers/2008-07_WP_HiddenVoices-YoungCarersInCork.pdf
2. For a comparative discussion, see Becker (2007).
3. Difficulties in identifying and researching young carers arises partly out of the highly private nature of the role and the fear of both the young carer and the person they are caring for that either will be taken away from the family setting, and of stigma often associated with some kinds of mental or physical disability (Multiple Sclerosis Ireland, 2003; Halpenny and Gilligan, 2004; House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families, 2008). A further issue in relation to recognition is that many professionals who deal directly with children or with those being cared for, may not be sufficiently aware, informed or resourced in addressing the young carers issue (Gillam et al., 2003; Barnardo's, 2006; House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families, 2008).
4. Details of the organisations contacted, of the manner in which the interviews were arranged and conducted, and of the role of a consultative committee to advise on these aspects of the research, are contained in the CPA report.
5. A national strategy on carers was committed to in the last national partnership agreement *Towards 2016* (see Government of Ireland, 2006: 54). However, this has now been postponed or shelved by the government on the grounds of lack of resources (Department of Social and Family Affairs (2009).

References

- Aldridge, J. and Becker, S. (1997) *Prevention and Intervention: Young Carers and Their Families*. Loughborough: Young Carers Research Group.
- Barnardo's (2006) *Hidden lives – unidentified young carers in the UK*. http://www.barnardos.org.uk/hidden_lives_young_carer_report.pdf
- Becker, S., Aldridge, J. and Dearden, C. (1998) *Young Carers and their Families*. London: Blackwell.
- Becker, S. (2007) Global Perspectives on Children's Unpaid Caregiving in the Family, *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 23–50.
- Browne, M. (2005) *Family Matters – Ten Years On*. Dublin: Comhairle.
- Carers Association (Ireland) (1997) Pilot Study of the Needs of Young Carers in Ireland. Unpublished.
- Carer's Association of Ireland, Carer Alliance Ireland and Caring for Carers Ireland (2008) *Carers Consultation Report – Listening to Carers*, <http://www.carersireland.com/documents/ListeningtoCarersReport.pdf>
- Census of Ireland (2002, 2006) Volume 10 *Carers and Disability*. Dublin: Central Statistics Office.
- Comhairle (2002) *Supporting Carers*. Dublin: Comhairle.
- Cullen, K., Delaney, S. and Duff, P. (2004) *Caring, Working and Public Policy*. Dublin: Equality Authority.
- Department of Social and Family Affairs (2009) Government not proceeding with publication of a National Carers' Strategy <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Press/PressReleases/2009/Pages/pr030309.aspx>
- Equality Authority (2005) *Implementing Equality for Carers*. Dublin: Equality Authority.
- Garavan, R., Winder, R. and McGee, H. (2001) *Health and Social Services for Older People (HeSSOP). Consulting Older People on Health and Social Services: A Survey of Service Use, Experiences and Needs*. Dublin: National Council on Ageing and Older People, Report No. 64.
- Gillam, T., Crofts, M., Fadden, G. and Corbett, K. (2003) *The Interfaces Project Report – Exploring the links between mental health services for children, adults and families*. http://www.meridenfamilyprogramme.com/documents/research/Interfaces_Project_Report.pdf
- Government of Ireland (2006) *Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006–2015*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Halpenny, A.M. and Gilligan, R. (2004) *Caring Before Their Time? Research and Policy Perspectives on Young Carers*. Dublin: Children's Research Centre, TCD.
- House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Minutes of Evidence 6 February 2008*, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmchilsch/331/8020603.htm>
- Joint Oireachtas Report (2003) *Report on the Position of Full-Time Carers*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Keith, L. and Morris, J. (1995) 'Easy Targets: A Disability Rights Perspective on the 'Children as Carers' Debate', *Critical Social Policy*, 44/45, 36–57.
- Multiple Sclerosis Ireland (1996) *Multiple Sclerosis, Multiple Challenges*. Dublin and Cork, MS (Ireland) and Nexus Research Co-Operative.
- NESC (National Economic and Social Council) (2005) *The Developmental Welfare State Report No. 113*. Dublin, NESC.
- Newman, T. (2002) 'Young Carers' and Disabled Parents: time for a change of direction?, *Disability & Society*, 17(6): 613–625.

- O' Donovan, O., Hodgins, M., Mc Kenna, V. and Kelleher, C., (1997) *Training Carers of Older People: An Advisory Report*. Dublin: National Council on Ageing and Older People. Report No. 47
- Office for Social Inclusion (2007) *A Social Portrait of Children in Ireland*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Parker, D. and Olsen. R. (1995) 'A Sideways Glance at Young Carers', pp. 63–74 in Social Services Inspectorate, *Young Carers: Something to Think About*. London: Department of Health.

Biographical Note

Cathal O'Connell and Joe Finnerty both lecture in social policy at the Department of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork, where they are also research associates of the Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century.

Address

Dept. of Applied Social Studies,
University College Cork,
William Thompson House,
Donovan's Road,
Cork, Ireland.
Tel: + 353-21-4902228
Email: c.oconnell@ucc.ie
j.finnerty@ucc.ie

Research Digest

Not Just Homelessness ...

A Study of 'Out of Home' Young People in Cork City

Paula Mayock and Nicola Carr

Introduction

This Research Digest presents the key findings and policy and practice implications of *Not Just Homelessness ... A Study of 'Out of Home' Young People in Cork City*, undertaken by the Children's Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin and funded by the Health Service Executive, South. The study aimed to identify young people's paths into homelessness, to examine the experiences and challenges of living 'out of home', and to make policy recommendations related to prevention, intervention and service provision. Thirty seven young people (20 men and 17 women) aged 16 to 25 years were interviewed for the purposes of the study. All were homeless or living in insecure accommodation at the time of interview.

Key Findings

- A number of distinct pathways 'out of home' were identified, namely young people with a care history, those having experienced an abusive family situation, those affected by family conflict and those reporting 'problematic' behaviour as teenagers.
- One third of the sample reported a care pathway into homelessness. This group was most strongly represented amongst those who were accessing adult hostel provision.
- There was considerable diversity in the range of accommodation types accessed by the young people, from that provided by social services to the private rented sector. A considerable number had spent time in prisons and/or in psychiatric hospitals.
- The under-18s did have access to age-appropriate accommodation but on reaching the age of 18 years many were forced to use adult hostels. The transition from children's to adults' services emerged as a critical marker of more persistent homelessness.
- High levels of mental health difficulties were reported by the study's young people, from depression, loneliness and social isolation to self-injury, suicide attempts and suicidal ideation. They also reported high rates of alcohol and poly-drug use and a range of physical health problems consonant with exposure to the elements, general self neglect and substance misuse.

Key Policy Recommendations

- The cut-off point of 18 years for eligibility for statutory child care services is problematic. For those who remain out of home on reaching the age of 18, ongoing support is needed in the context of youth – rather than adult-oriented homeless services.
- Professional care planners need to be aware of the vulnerability of care leavers to homelessness and of the consequent need for robust and appropriately resourced care plans. All care leavers need to have their housing needs assessed well in advance of leaving care.
- Wider awareness among professionals of the impact of domestic violence on children, adolescents and their families is required. The HSE and partner agencies should develop protocols in order to provide an appropriate response to these children and families.
- There is an urgent need for appropriate community-based mental health services that cater specifically for the needs of adolescents and young adults. Youth friendly drug treatment services are required for young people who are homeless and abusing drugs.

Background to Study

This study was undertaken to generate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the experiences of homeless young people in the Southern region of the Republic of Ireland, with particular attention to Cork City. After Dublin, Cork has consistently recorded one of the highest numbers of ‘out of home’ young people nationally, yet relatively little is known about the factors leading to young people becoming homeless in this region or about the impact of housing instability on their lives.

Methodology

Following the broad methodological framework utilised in a recent study of homeless youth in Dublin city (see Mayock & Vekic, 2006; Mayock & O’Sullivan, 2007), the ‘life history’ interview was the core method of data collection, an approach particularly good at capturing biographical details relevant to understanding youth homeless pathways.

Interviews were conducted with young people aged 16 to 25 years over a seven month period between April and October 2006. Commencing with an invitation to tell their ‘life stories’, several key topic areas relating to family history, childhood experiences, school, history of alcohol and drug use, accommodation history and key life events were then prompted for discussion and questioning. Prior to this, contact had been established with service providers and senior managers in statutory and voluntary sector agencies to facilitate access to field sites and to guide the recruitment process.

Not Just Homelessness ...

The life histories of the young people in this study strongly suggest that homelessness is one of the multiple adversities they faced as they moved through adolescence towards young adulthood. The stories depicted in this study speak to the marginalisation and risk that characterise the lives of socially excluded youth and to deficits within the systems of intervention designed to serve and protect them.

Pathways 'Out of Home'

The identification of pathways into, through and out of homelessness can be useful in developing strategies for intervention and in adapting services to meet the needs of particular groups of young people. This study's findings reveal the diversity of experience associated with becoming homeless as well as the complex mix of factors and circumstances that can potentially place children and young people 'at risk' of homelessness.

Pathway 1: Care History

Over one third reported this route into homelessness. Their care histories were generally highly problematic and five reported sexual, physical or emotional abuse in a care setting. Practically all reported multiple care placements and the transitions out of care to independent living proved extremely difficult for the majority. Accordingly, the study's findings highlight specific challenges and difficulties related to aftercare provision and support for young people leaving care as well as the ongoing necessity for monitoring and evaluation of foster and residential care placements.

And I think when you're in care you don't have a clue basically. Like I didn't have any family contact really so, in a way, they're kind of raising you and they're kind of family to you and then they say to you, 'You're 18, here's the door, out you go', kind of thing. Sharon (19)

Pathway 2: Abusive Family Situation

This route was characterised by descriptions of physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse and neglect and/or domestic violence in the family situation. Social work involvement was unsuccessful in some cases because of young people's fear of the negative repercussions of drawing attention to their families, or lack of knowledge as to how to engage with support services. The findings of this study suggest that the full extent of the abuse that young people experienced in their own homes was not adequately understood or recognised by professionals. They also indicate that young people need to know more about available services and to feel that seeking help is a positive step.

I never answered their [social workers'] questions because, I don't know, the whole lot of us would have gone straight into foster care. I knew it and my mother would have been left with nothing, like with no one except herself, and I didn't need that either for her and also the fact that I wouldn't tell anything [about the abuse] to my mother or my sister or my brother 'cos I know for a fact they'd be all put into different foster placements. Donna (19)

Pathway 3: Family Conflict

Difficult relationships within the family home and arguments with parents or carers emerged as factors leading to young people leaving home. In such cases, family mediation services were perceived by young people to be less threatening than individual counselling since the focus was on the family as a unit. Early intervention by the Adolescent 'Out of Home' Service facilitated the return home of a number of the participants in this study.

The place where I stayed ['Out of Home' service] taught me a lot of social skills you know, taught me how to get out there and have some fun and actually enjoy myself for once in my life, taught me how to cook and clean ... basically taught me how to behave myself. Frank (20)

Pathway 4: Problematic Behaviour

This path relates to features of the young person's behaviour, such as substance misuse or criminality, which led to tensions within the family home and precipitated their leaving. As well as impacting on their relationships with their families, substance misuse affected their ability to cope with daily life. The lack of ongoing support for those in treatment and the inability of care placements to cope with young people who present challenging behaviour were issues highlighted by this study.

Living 'Out of Home': Young People's Experiences

- Young people's experiences of under-18s 'out of home' accommodation were largely positive and some had moved back home having accessed supports from the Southern HSE's adolescent 'Out of Home' services.
- The private rental sector was viewed more problematically by young people with problems relating to poor quality accommodation, inadequate financial resources and feelings of loneliness and isolation present in many accounts.

It's very hard to get any suitable accommodation for rent allowance, no place takes it. Everything is a dive hole, do you know what I mean like, and the landlords don't want to do nothing for you. Sharon (19)

- For those over the age of 18 the main form of emergency accommodation was an adult hostel. Entry into this environment was associated with a sense of stigma, confirming their homeless identity. The change from children's to adults' services emerged as a critical transition into more persistent homelessness.
- A more marginal group reported movement between psychiatric hospitals, prison, homeless hostels and sleeping rough. All were young men who experienced a range of difficulties exacerbated by mental health and substance misuse issues.
- Reports of depression amongst the study's young people were commonplace and an alarming number reported suicidal ideation and/or acts of self-harm. Young people had few coping strategies and lack of access to mental health services is significant.

I grew into depression. Everyone noticed that my self-harming grew worse at one stage. I did have to go to hospital but it wasn't that bad because I'm a superficial cutter. I didn't do it anymore. I managed to overcome it. Donna (19)

- Poly-drug use emerged as the dominant pattern amongst the group. Cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and prescription medicine, all easily available, were the most commonly used substances with LSD and amphetamine being used less frequently. The study points to the particular vulnerability of this group and the difficulty of engaging and retaining them in treatment.

So I stay away from people who are into drugs. I just have to, I just corner myself off from everyone ... I corner myself off from everyone 'cos I'm afraid in case I get into it again because it's such a good feeling to take drugs 'cos it stops all the stress and worry that you have inside you. And when people think that you're a junkie you're not a junkie. You're just taking drugs to stop all that hurt inside you 'cos that's what I was doing. Sheila (22)

Recommendations

This study suggests that the diversity of experience and complexity of young people's lives requires interventions across a continuum, targeting young people who are at different 'phases' of the homeless experience. Recommendations point to specific areas of service provision that have relevance across the continuum of intervention. The points of intervention fall into three main categories targeting different phases of the homeless experience: prevention, early intervention and longer-term support. Recommendations are also made that have relevance across a continuum of intervention, i.e., to all three categories. This notion of a continuum of intervention is relevant to young people as they make transitions from children's to adult services. Undoubtedly, a key challenge identified in the report is the need for supports that enable young people to manage this transition successfully.

Prevention

- There is a need for greater awareness of the complex issues involved in premature home leaving in designing adequate preventative policies. The HSE, in collaboration with partner agencies, should develop an information campaign aimed at raising awareness of youth homelessness and of the services available to young people, parents and professionals.
- The HSE South should continue to provide preventative services and supports to young people and their families.
- There is a need for the systematic monitoring of care placements to allow for the identification of those at risk of breakdown. Young people need to be consulted regularly regarding their care experiences and when a breakdown occurs, the reasons should be systematically reviewed. For those leaving care, appropriate care plans must be put in place.

Early Intervention

- The HSE South should continue to provide support and mediation to young people and their families. This early intervention model should be considered for dissemination to other HSE regions.
- There is a greater need for engagement with children and young people on the part of professionals, and more comprehensive assessment of child protection concerns particularly in the context of domestic violence.
- Rigid differentiation between under- and over-18s when it comes to eligibility for emergency and respite accommodation should be replaced by a more flexible approach by the HSE and partner agencies.

Longer – Term Support

- The 18-year cut-off for eligibility for statutory child care services creates a barrier to service access and reduces the potential for young people to achieve housing stability. The matter of accommodation and support for 18–25 year olds needs urgent attention.
- Key support issues emerged for young people who moved from children/young people's services to adult services. The need to adequately support young people in transition is a key finding to emerge from this research. Consideration should be given to the development of models of housing provision for over-18s that prevent their entry to adult services.
- Models of transitional and supported housing tailored to meet the needs of specific groups require exploration.

Recommendations Across the Continuum of Intervention

- Within the HSE, improvements to leaving care and aftercare provision must be prioritised. The development of an assessment protocol aimed at identifying care leavers at risk of homelessness is urgently required.
- Multi-agency co-operation, particularly between the HSE and local authorities, should be developed in order to provide the accommodation options needed to meet the demands of care leavers.
- Protocols must be developed by the HSE and partner agencies to provide an appropriate response to children and families experiencing domestic violence.
- There is an urgent need for appropriate community based mental health services that cater specifically for the needs of adolescents and young adults.
- The Report of the Working Group on Treatment of Under 18 year olds Presenting to Treatment Services with Serious Drug Problems (Department of Health and Children, 2005) provides comprehensive guidelines in relation to the management of treatment services for this group. The development of such a model would be a substantial resource.

Notes

1. First published as the Children's Research Centre's *Research Briefing* issue no. 4, July 2008. Edited by Liz Kerrins, Policy Officer, Children's Research Centre. The full study *Not Just Homelessness ... A Study of 'Out of Home' Young People in Cork City* is available to download from the Children's Research Centre's website: www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre

References

Department of Health and Children (2005) *Report of the Working Group on Treatment of Under 18 year olds Presenting to Treatment Services with Serious Drug Problems*. Dublin: Department of Health and Children.

Mayock, P. and Carr, N. (2008) *Not Just Homelessness ... A Study of 'Out of Home' Young People in Cork City*. Dublin: Health Service Executive and Children's Research Centre.

Mayock, P. and O'Sullivan, E. (2007) *Lives in Crisis: Homeless Young People in Dublin City*. Dublin: The Liffey Press.

Mayock, P. and Vekic, K. (2006) *Understanding Youth Homelessness: Key Findings from the First Phase of a Longitudinal Cohort Study*. Dublin: Office of the Minister for Children.

Children's Research Centre

The Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin undertakes multidisciplinary policy and practice-relevant research into the lives of children and young people and the contexts in which they live their lives. Contact: + 353-0-1-8962901; crcentre@tcd.ie

Notes on Practice

Diversity Toolkit for Youth Work

Increasing Participation and Inclusion for all Young People

Matthew Seebach and Anne Walsh

Abstract

Equality is a named principle in contemporary Irish youth work. In practice, the provision of youth work can be understood as an equality initiative in that it is often targeted at young people who have not experienced equal opportunities. As such, the youth work equality agenda is often understood as an 'equality of opportunity' position. This article argues that such a position is not robust enough to be congruent with the articulation of equality in youth work policy, specifically the *National Youth Work Development Plan*, in which the discussion of equality is more in keeping with an 'equality of condition' perspective. Furthermore, youth work that ignores the plurality of young people simply fails to meet their needs. With these concerns in mind, youth work is in need of innovative policy and practice initiatives, such as equality audits, tracking and disaggregation of participants and greater understanding of the needs of young people from diverse identities and living circumstances. This paper describes such an initiative in the form of a Diversity Toolkit and names further steps that are required in the Irish youth work sector.

Introduction

The development of a Diversity Tool came about in response to a shared commitment within the youth work sector to increase participation and inclusion for all young people in youth groups/services in keeping with the vision of equality and inclusion in the *National Youth Work Development Plan* (NYWDP) (Department of Education and Science, 2003). As its starting point the Diversity Toolkit recognises the almost complete absence of data showing the levels of equality and inclusion that are being practiced in the youth work sector (Mauro-Bracken, 2009). Indeed, it has been recognised in studies of the youth sector that equality and inclusion initiatives are few in number with notable but isolated exceptions (McCrea, 2003; Mauro-Bracken, 2009). Within the Irish youth sector, practitioners with expertise in working with young people with diverse identities and living circumstances have strongly and consistently argued that this gap exists and needs to be addressed by providing for training, policies and a critical awareness of diversity within the sector and within youth services. It was for this reason that a number of such practitioners came together as a group to develop the Diversity Toolkit under the lead of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI).

An Argument for the Diversity Toolkit Based On the Needs and Circumstances of Young People

So often those of us who promote diversity jump straight into ‘why not diversity’ mode, offering advice and support, promoting legislation and insisting that diversity be part of all funding criteria, policy development, legislation and so on. Too often we ignore the process in between – the fact that we wouldn’t be talking about diversity so much if there wasn’t a large degree of resistance to it or difficulty around it. So let’s step back a bit and try to picture what diversity means, and why it is articulated so clearly in the *National Youth Work Development Plan*.

First we need to agree that youth work is about meeting the needs of young people. The NYWDP is clear about this when it says: ‘Throughout its history, the success or otherwise of youth work has depended most centrally on the extent to which it has remained in touch with the changing needs and circumstances of young people’ (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 2). If this is the case, youth work must cater to the diverse circumstances and identities of young people. Let’s take a moment to think about what those circumstances and identities are in contemporary Ireland.

Imagine you are at a football match, Ireland is playing, the crowd in green is 60,000 strong and is really eager for a win. Let us also imagine that the crowd is fully representative of the population of Ireland. In one brief, quiet moment you look around you. 10 per cent, or 6,000 people in the crowd, are foreign nationals – you know this because their skin colour, languages or accents are different to yours (CSO, 2007). 1.2 per cent of all the 12–18 year olds are members of the Traveller Community (CSO, 2007). At least 7 per cent are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. Some are obviously so, holding hands, maybe kissing (Belong To, 2009). 10.2 per cent of the 15 – 24 year olds have a chronic physical or mental health problem, illness or disability – again sometimes obvious, sometimes not (Gannon and Nolan, 2005; cited in Lalor et al, 2007). One in five of this crowd will have a mental illness during their lives, you have no idea how many in the stadium are currently on medication, feeling suicidal or getting over a serious bout of depression. There are 6600 early school leavers (CSO, 2008a) wearing green and at least 90 of the fans are young unmarried parents and their children are with them (CSO 2008b). To cap it all 50 per cent are a different gender to you (CSO, 2007). Are you feeling a little uncomfortable in this scenario? Could this scenario ever be a reality?

In such a seemingly diverse country you might wonder who the majority really is. The dominant voice and the dominant representation if people who are Irish, settled, from a Catholic background, white, literate, able bodied, heterosexual and not suffering from a mental health issue. To belong to a minority group often means having different – and lower – expectations from others due to our life’s circumstances. This is not what our equality legislation supports, nor, as we will see, the vision of the youth work sector, especially the NYWDP (2003). But what is it like in reality? What does the football stadium actually look like? What does it feel like?

Let us transpose this model into the youth work sector. What do youth groups look like? What do they feel like? And for whom do they feel that way, the majority or minority? We live in a world where it is much more likely to consist of the majority grouping than a statistical representation given in the breakdown above. Why? Well it’s easier for a start. And being easier for some means that it is so much harder for the minority to attend and be fully included.

This hardness is institutionalised. We have made it hard – over centuries of thinking and practice. In fact it is so institutionalised we often don't see that it should be any different. Except that we remember vividly within our own lifetimes when women were not treated equally, a situation that has changed beyond recognition today. Was it so hard to make the changes that made gender equality a reality? Hard is often just a frame of mind and because others around us make it so. The diversity tool seeks to support youth workers, to make it as easy as possible to implement change and embed equality and inclusiveness in youth work.

An Argument for the Diversity Toolkit based on the NYWDP and Equality Theory

So far this article has proposed that there is a need for youth work to employ tools such as the Diversity Toolkit because youth work has a responsibility to meet the needs of young people from diverse identities and living circumstances. The next few pages will present an argument that youth work services should employ tools such as those found in the Diversity Toolkit because equality is a key principle in youth work and consequently youth work policy and legislation compel youth workers to act to realise equality in their work.

Firstly, what is it that we mean when we talk about equality? Baker et al (2004) have developed a framework which helps us to understand the key elements of equality as well as the various ways that equality is articulated. The framework identifies three perspectives, or types of equality which can roughly be understood as follows:

Basic Equality – essentially the belief that we are all equally entitled to basic rights and security (right to life, right to justice and so on).

Liberal Egalitarianism – essentially can be understood as equality of opportunity: we should all have an equal chance to get into school, get a job and that who we were born as should not affect this.

Equality of Condition – is a much more robust understanding of equality and includes the ideas that:

- Everybody is of equal value and deserves equal respect and dignity, and in fact we should celebrate diversity;
- Everybody should have equal prospects of wellbeing and having their needs met, and resources should be distributed in such a way as to provide for this;
- Everybody should have equal prospects to develop relationships;
- Everybody should have equal rights including an equal chance to have their say.

If we understand liberal egalitarianism in its simplest form as providing for the equal opportunity to participate (Brighouse, 2002), then we argue that equality in the youth sector is largely oriented towards liberal egalitarianism. Certainly, it is largely the case that equality is understood as equality of opportunity (Smith and Lusthaus, 1995; Lynch and Baker, 2006). In youth work, an instance of the focus on equality of opportunity can be found in the way that youth work is evaluated in relation to equality. We are all familiar with participant analysis forms, these forms provide data which are employed in equality evaluation as they collect data in relation to named groups such as young Travellers, early school leavers, young men and young women. As anyone knows who has completed such forms, they measure attendance rates, not

participation; in other words whether young people showed up, not what they did. They assess whether young people have received an opportunity to participate, not whether they have actually participated in a meaningful and equal way.

More simply, equality is evaluated largely based on the presence or otherwise of young people from named groups. An example of this is a study to evaluate gender equality in the youth sector. The previous National Development Plan included the commitment to 'women and men's equitable involvement and contribution to youth service activity', which was identified as a 'a core EU and Irish government policy priority, due to the gender mainstreaming strategy adopted under the NDP and in EU Structural Funds' (NDP, 2002: 6). To ensure that progress on this commitment was made, an assessment of gender equality in the youth sector was undertaken in 2002. Tellingly, the analysis in this study of gender equality in the youth sector consisted almost entirely of a statistical analysis of the respective attendance rates of young men and women and specifically noted that it did not address uptake of activities.

So, in youth work, we have participant analysis forms and we have some monitoring of the overall attendance rates. However, as previously discussed, we don't have sector-wide initiatives to ensure that we give everyone equal prospects to participate in a manner which ensures equal respect and dignity. Nevertheless, such initiatives are clearly called for in the actions and in the principles for the *National Youth Work Development Plan*. In fact, this article argues that policy and legislation governing youth work articulates a position that is in keeping with equality of condition and suggests that we should be doing much more as youth workers.

There are several pieces of policy and legislation relating to youth work and equality. They include the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004, which are a key part of Ireland's equality legislation and the National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) (DOJELR, 2005) a strategic plan to combat racism employing an intercultural approach. Not yet policy but currently under consideration by the Youth Affairs Unit within the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA), is the Report and Recommendations for an Intercultural Strategy for the Youth Work Sector, which was prepared by NYCI building on the commitment in the NYWDP to 'equality and inclusiveness' (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 13).

There is also of course the Youth Work Act 2001, which evinces a concern for access to youth work of young people from a number of named groups. The Act obligates providers to deliver youth work services with particular regard to young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and on equal basis with regard to gender. It emphasises the needs of young Irish speakers and those living in the Gaeltacht. It urges Vocational Education Committees to ensure that people working with young Travellers are represented on Voluntary Youth Councils (which should also have a gender balance).

However, the key piece of policy is the *National Youth Work Development Plan* (Department of Education and Science, 2003) which should serve as the touchstone for the development of any equality response in the Youth Sector. Under the heading 'Equality and Inclusiveness' the NYWDP states:

These proposals for a National Youth Work Development Plan...[aim] to uphold *in spirit as well as in letter* the provisions of the Equal Status Act, whereby no adult or young person may experience discrimination on the

basis of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality or ethnicity, including membership of the Traveller community (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 15).

This statement makes clear the breadth of equality concerns as they are understood in the NYWDP. In keeping with the legislation, a broad range of grounds for equality are identified. Any theoretical construct which informs practice and which aims to comprehensively address this range of grounds must itself be comprehensive.

Constructs such as anti-racism, or interculturalism, which focus primarily on ethnicity or race, are not in themselves comprehensive enough to address all of the grounds of equality identified in the Equal Status Act, and echoed in the NYWDP. Such approaches, which are already widely employed in youth work (Alluffi – Pentini and Lorenz, 1996), must be seen as only a partial response to the broad terms of the equality legislation and youth work policy. Other approaches which have already provided for a broader range of grounds must also be employed, or, alternatively, an encompassing approach must be identified.

While the NYWDP clearly indicates a broad and comprehensive equality position this policy does not identify any particular equality perspective, such as equality of condition or liberal egalitarianism. There are, however, a number of statements relating to equality in youth work which, when taken together, describe a coherent position in relation to equality. This position, as will be seen, most closely resembles that of equality of condition as identified by Lynch and Baker (2005). This resemblance is most evident in the overarching goal of the NYWDP in relation to equality in youth work. The NYWDP state that its proposals *'are based on a commitment to a vision of youth work which values diversity, aims to eradicate injustice and inequality and strives for openness and inclusiveness in all its dealings with young people and adults'* (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 15). This aim is a normative aim; it describes not what is, but what ought to be. This statement clearly recognises the existence of inequalities and suggests a reformist or activist agenda that resonates with the equality agenda proposed by equality of condition, which is to *'eradicate inequality'* (Baker, 2006: 34). The NYWDP also unambiguously supports the proposition that diversity needs to be valued in order to achieve equality of condition, which is a belief of egalitarians who hold an equality of condition perspective (Baker et al, 2004).

Likewise, egalitarians who are focused on equality of condition are concerned that in educational institutions the rights of learners are provided for and that participatory structures and processes are in place that are accessible to all (Lynch and Baker, 2005). The NYWDP firmly places rights and participation at the heart of youth work by emphasizing that the *'active and critical participation of young people is in keeping with the view that young people have rights as citizens'* (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 14).

Taken together these statements describe an equality position that is much more rigorous than equal opportunity; the NYWDP articulates a position that is much more consistent with an equality of condition perspective. Such a perspective requires robust efforts to promote equality. Such aims are not unrealistic, and there are practical steps that can be taken to realise this vision. The Diversity Toolkit attempts to outline such steps so that a wider range of young people have their needs met in youth work; so that everyone feels that their identity is accepted and celebrated; so that everybody can have equal prospects to develop relationships in youth work; so that all young people are respected and have an equal chance to learn and develop within youth work.

A Description of the Diversity Toolkit

As outlined above, meeting the needs of young people who have diverse needs and living circumstances is the essence of youth work. In response to this imperative youth workers will assert that they meet the individual young people 'where they are at'. However, this notion of 'at-ness' is frequently interpreted as the young person's journey through life and it presupposes that the young person is already physically in contact with the youth service. So if a young person with specific needs seeks to join a youth group we would expect that they would be welcomed. However, the question remains as to whether – once there – their needs would be adequately met, the service is prepared in advance and the youth workers feel confident in meeting the young person's needs. But the more important consideration is whether the young person knows about the service and feels that they can even join the group in the first place. Evidence suggests that young people with diverse needs are not accessing youth services (Mauro-Bracken 2009) but clear and broad ranging data is not available to verify or contradict this. This can only become evident when youth services themselves question how they are meeting the needs of young people with specific needs. This means youth services questioning whether they engage with young members of the Traveller Community, *and* young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, *and* early school leavers, *and* young people with a disability, *and* young LGBT people, *and* young parents, *and* young people with mental health issues *and* geographically isolated young people *and* young people who have been involved in the juvenile justice system – in numbers that are representative of the diversity in their own wider community. When questioned specifically about this, youth workers often say that their group is a special interest group or that they don't have the skills to work with young people that identify with these issues.

We would say that their youth work skills *do* equip them to work with these young people and what they need is some extra support and awareness raising. We also stress that young people have multiple identities and living conditions and youth work should address as broad a range of needs as possible to reflect the reality for the young person – at least by consideration. In other words, are youth groups discriminating by unconscious omission? Are some youth groups leaving inclusion of young people with diverse needs to specialist groups? We would argue that such responses are not only prevalent throughout the country but they also defy the whole ethos of inclusion that the NYWDP demands. It was this need that led to the development of the Diversity Toolkit as a means by which to gently challenge our frames of mind, our working practices, our policies and procedures across a broad range of needs.

What then does the Diversity Toolkit look like? In practice, the Diversity Toolkit was inspired by the idea of Equality Audits and derives a number of key elements from experiences in implementing these. In format and presentation the Toolkit draws upon an equality tool for youth work that was produced in Australia.¹ The tool, entitled *Opening the Doors* (New South Wales Department of Community Services, 2006) is described as a 'Do It Yourself' Access and Equity manual for working with young people.

Opening the Doors has three features:

- Practical advice which includes a description of the needs and issues facing particular groups;
- Checklists for thinking about how your service is performing on access and equity issues;
- Contacts for further resources.

The NYCI Diversity Toolkit adopts the checklists and the practical advice of *Opening the Doors*, but also includes several features inspired by equality audits. Equality audits, also known as ‘equity audits’ and ‘representivity audits’, have long been used to monitor and enforce civil rights in the United States, Scotland, Great Britain, and Australia (Skria et al, 2004). Audits have been used in education, but also in other areas such as enforcing workplace equality. Here in Ireland Morrison and Lumby (2007) have piloted an equality audit in education and Pavee Point (2006) has piloted ethnicity tracking tools necessary for effective auditing systems.

These audits vary widely in form and process, but share the same premise. That is, within institutions, we are all aware of individual instances of inequality, but we rarely have opportunities to systematically examine educational provision to ensure that it is equitable (Skria et al, 2004). The Diversity Toolkit is like an equality audit in that its key aim and function is to provide an opportunity to systematically and holistically examine the practice and policy of youth work organisations to identify inequalities, gaps in provision and policy deficits.

The literature of equality audits is replete with frameworks for understanding and examining educational services. These include Norte (1999), Skria et al (2004) and Opfer (2006). In the end, the Diversity Toolkit adopted a framework employed by BeLonG To (the youth service for LGBT young people) which focuses on the youth service’s public image, programme planning, participation of young people, professional development of staff and their policies and procedures. Encompassing these five criteria is the question of practice which looks beyond the practical application of youth work to the values and attitudes that pervade the youth service. It is important to point out that the elements within this framework are common to the equality audits named above.

Just as with the *Opening the Doors* toolkit, the Diversity Toolkit is conceived of as a do-it-yourself activity – this is for two reasons. One is that centrally mandated audits are often seen as box-ticking exercises (Morrison, 2007). The second is that self-assessment is a valuable developmental process. Participants of audits have found that the process of doing an audit provides an opportunity to learn a great deal about their obligations under the equal status legislation and also about best practice. Creating space for honestly reflecting on practice is a valuable developmental experience. This is one reason why self assessment is built into the new framework for quality standards in youth work (OMCYA, 2009).

It is clear also from the experience of those examining the effectiveness of equality audits that it is vitally important to ensure that disaggregated data tracking takes place (Morrison and Osler, 2002; Young, 2001). This is simply because we cannot tell how well an educational institution is involving a particular group, for instance young people with disabilities, if there are no records of how many young people with disabilities participate in that service. For this reason the Diversity Toolkit includes a data collection tool.

In its entirety the Diversity Toolkit is designed to be user friendly and practical, with an emphasis on raising awareness and providing clear and practical tips to directly meet specific needs of young people. It presents the diversity issues together (as a whole document) and in their specificity (in specialised chapters), thus recognising the multi-faceted identities of young people together with the specific needs they may have. For example, a young person may be an early school leaver, a young woman and also be a member of the Traveller community. Alternatively a young gay person may have a mental health issue and be geographically isolated or someone with a physical disability may be a young parent and come from a minority ethnic background.

The Diversity Toolkit chapters include:

1. Introduction – Equality, Access, Inclusion & Master Questionnaire
2. Working with Young People with a Physical or Sensory Disability
3. Working with Young People from Minority Ethnic Background
4. Working with Young Travellers
5. Working with Young LGBT people
6. Working with Young People with Mental Health Issues
7. Working with Early School Leavers
8. Working with Young Women
9. Working with Young Parents
10. Working with Rural and Geographically Isolated Young People

As a web-based tool it has the capacity for additions and edits to be made and further chapters are envisioned. These include:

- Working with Young People involved in Juvenile Justice System
- Working with Young People with a Learning Disability
- Working with Young Carers
- Working with Young Men

Conclusion

The aim of the Diversity Toolkit is to realise the vision of the *National Youth Work Development Plan* and embed equality and inclusiveness in all youth work. It is designed to help youth workers to adopt an inclusion and equality approach and it stresses that skills development is important in meeting the needs of all young people. The Diversity Toolkit is a resource that offers information, advice and guidance. However, it needs to fit into a wider framework and work in cohesion with a number of other sector wide initiatives that are also necessary.

Principal amongst these initiatives is the ongoing need for specialist training programmes to incorporate the principles and practice contained within the Diversity Toolkit – i.e. the need for disaggregation of data, evaluation and monitoring, planning and practice, together with policy development. To this end the Diversity Toolkit development team will work toward developing a standardised training module to be disseminated as widely as possible throughout the sector. In doing so it will be guided by the learning from the very successful Health Quality Mark initiative, a model that promotes and develops best practice in health promoting youth work and that NYCI has been operating for many years (see Hodgins and Swinburne, 2008).

Another sector wide initiative already underway is the development and implementation of the Quality Standards Framework (QSF) within the youth work sector (OMCYA, 2009). In essence quality standard processes demand a link between policy and practice, a whole organisation approach and sector wide support. Currently at the end of its pilot phase the QSF has the potential and vision to be utilised by all youth services in Ireland to assess their achievements across the core principles of youth work. The QSF identifies one such principle as being that all youth work practice must be committed to ensuring and promoting equality and inclusiveness in all its dealings with young people and adults. The Diversity Toolkit will work to uphold this core principle, offering effective tools toward achieving the verifiable indicators sought by the QSF.

Another pillar of youth work is the principle of participation which is the natural progression beyond inclusion. It is, in reality, inclusion's verifiable indicator – real inclusion and real equality demands full participation. Initiatives to promote youth participation have been taken on several fronts ranging from local and national structures such as Comhairlí na Óg and Dáil na nÓg to leadership programmes for young people within individual youth organisations. Participation must also be mirrored at staff and volunteer level. The Diversity Toolkit promotes participation – meaning the full involvement – of youth work teams. Working in a team environment, working together toward a common goal, supporting one another, recognising and facing the ongoing challenges, taking a whole organisational approach and having strong leadership is the only way to achieve the vision of a truly equal society on which the Diversity Toolkit is based.

Notes

- 1 The Opening the Doors Tool was produced by an initiative of the Youth Action and Policy Association and the Access Project Reference Group for the Nepean Better Futures Strategy

References

- Aluffi-Pentini, A. (1996) 'The specific and complementary nature of inter-cultural and anti-racist pedagogical approaches', in A. Aluffi-Pentini & W. Lorenz (eds) *Anti-Racist Work with Young People*. Lyme Regis. Russell House.
- Baker, J, Lynch K, Cantillon S, and Walsh J. (2004) *Equality: From Theory to Action*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baker, J. (2006) 'Equality', pp 24–45 in Healy, S., Reynolds, B. And Collins, M. (eds) *Social Policy in Ireland: Practices, Principles and Problems*. Dublin: Liffey Press.
- Brighouse, H. (2002) 'Egalitarian liberalism and justice in education', *The Political Quarterly*, 73(2): 181–190.
- Central Statistics Office [CSO] (2007) *Census 2006, Principal Demographic Results*. Dublin: Government Stationary Office.
- Central Statistics Office (2008a) *Quarterly National Household Survey, Educational Attainment, Quarter 2 2002 to Quarter 2 2008*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

- Central Statistics Office (2008b) *Vital Statistics Quarter 1*. Dublin: Government Stationary Office.
- Department of Education and Science (2003) *National Youth Work Development Plan 2003–2007*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform [DOJELR] (2005) *National Action Plan against Racism*. Dublin: DOJELR.
- Hodgins, M. and Swinburne, L. (2008) “‘It Sort of Widens the Health Word’”: Evaluation of a Health Promotion Intervention in the Youth Work Setting’, *Youth Studies Ireland*, 3 (1): 30–44.
- Lalor, K., de Roiste, A. & Devlin, M. (2007) *Young People in Contemporary Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.
- Lynch, K. and Baker, J. (2005) ‘Equality in Education: The Importance of Equality of Condition’, *Theory and Research in Education*, 3 (2): 131–164.
- Mauro-Bracken, L. (2009) *Report on Consultations for an Intercultural Strategy for Youth Work: Shaping Intercultural Youth Work*. Dublin: National Youth Council of Ireland.
- McCrea, N. (2003) *Steps Towards Inclusion: Developing Youth Work with Separated Children*. Dublin: National Youth Council of Ireland.
- Morrison, M. (2007) ‘Equality audits in education: exercises in compliance or frameworks for inclusion?’, *Ethnography and Education*, 2(3): 327–347.
- Morrison, M. & Osler, A. (2002) ‘Can race equality be inspected? Challenges for policy and practice raised by the OFSTED school inspection framework’, *British Educational Research Journal*, 28(3): 327–338.
- NDP [National Development Plan] Gender Equality Unit (2002) *Gender Equality in Youth Services and Facilities*. Dublin: National Development Plan.
- New South Wales Department of Community Services (2006). *Opening the Doors: A Do-It-Yourself Access and Equity Manual for Working with Young People*. Nepean, NSW: Department of Community Services.
- Norte, E. (1999) ‘Structures beneath the skin: how school leaders use their power and authority to create institutional opportunities for developing positive interethnic communities’, *Journal of Negro Education*, 68(4), 466–485.
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs [OMCYA] (2009) Quality Standards Framework Initiative for the Youth Work Sector. http://www.omc.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/youthaffairs/quality_standard_framework.pdf
- Opfer, V.D. (2006), ‘Evaluating Equity: A Framework for Understanding Action and Inaction on Social Justice Issues’, *Educational Policy*, 20 (1): 271–290.
- Pavee Point (2006) *The Development of Appropriate Mechanisms to Monitor Educational Access, Participation and Outcome by Gender for Travellers – the Role of Equality Data Mechanisms Focusing on Ethnic and Cultural Identity: Final Report* Pavee Point: Dublin.
- Skria, L., Scheurich, J.J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G. (2004). ‘Equity audits: A practical leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools’, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40: 135–164.
- Smith, W. and Lusthaus, C. (1995) ‘The nexus of equality and quality in education: a framework for debate’. *Canadian Journal of Education*. Toronto: 20 (3) 378–380.
- Young, I (2001) ‘Equality of Whom? Social Groups and Judgments of Injustice’ *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 9(1): 1–18.

Biographical Note

Matthew Seebach has worked in youth work and participation work in Canada, Ireland and in various field placements for the United Nations. In the course of completing a Masters in Education and an Egalitarian World Initiative Civil Society Research Scholarship at University College Dublin he has developed research interests in youth work and children's rights with a focus on participation, citizenship and equality.

Anne Walsh is an Intercultural Project Officer at the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) with responsibility for policy development and the promotion of cultural diversity within the youth work sector. She has a Masters in Anthropology from Auckland University and has more recently come from a practice background during which she developed and ran a number of integration projects with the organisation SPIRASI.

Address

Matthew Seebach,
Youth Work Ireland,
20 Lower Dominick Street,
Dublin 1.
Tel: +353-1-8729933
Email: mseebach@youthworkireland.ie

Anne Walsh,
Intercultural Project Officer,
National Youth Council of Ireland,
3 Montague Street,
Dublin 2.
Tel: +353-1-4784122
Email: anne@nyci.ie

Past Perspectives

Industrial Schools in Ireland

Irish Ecclesiastical Record 1884 (vol. iv)

Introduction

This issue of *Youth Studies Ireland* went to print very shortly after the publication of the *Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse*, or the ‘Ryan Commission Report’ (Dublin: Stationery Office, 2009). The Commission (originally the ‘Laffoy Commission’) was formally established by legislation in 2000, one year after the government issued an unprecedented public apology ‘to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue’. The Commission was concerned with the experiences of former residents of the industrial schools, reformatory schools and other institutional settings.

The reformatory schools dated from 1858 when the Reformatory Schools (Youth Offenders) Act certified a number of voluntary (mostly religious run) institutions as suitable for the reception and reformatory treatment of 12- to 16- year-olds committed through the courts. The industrial school system, also run for the most part by religious orders, began some ten years later and catered for younger children and those who committed only minor offences or none at all. As the Ryan Commission itself says, ‘although reformatory schools were established first, industrial schools soon surpassed them, both in numbers of schools and of pupils’ (p. 36, par. 2.08). There were never more than ten reformatories (and that was in the early years of their existence); while the industrial schools grew steadily to reach a peak of 71 just before the end of the nineteenth century, with a total population of 7,998 residents.

The following article was first published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* in 1884 (vol. iv, 437–45), the same year that there was a strong endorsement of the industrial schools from the Aberdare Commission of Enquiry, leading to a rapid expansion in their number. The article is itself strongly supportive of, indeed enthusiastic about, the schools. The history of the industrial school system is probably not sufficiently well developed for the modern reader to judge conclusively the accuracy of what the writer, John Curry, Adm., had to say of the schools in his own time. But in the light of what the Ryan Commission has recently revealed (or confirmed) about the workings of the system in the twentieth century at least, there cannot but be bitter irony in reading such lines as: ‘What an advantage to have such homes for the poor destitute children in our midst! What blessings they bestow! What happiness and prosperity they create!’

Maurice Devlin

There is scarcely a priest in Ireland who does not frequently feel embarrassed by finding, in the region of his ministration, helpless and destitute children. To provide for such is always a work of great charity, and to do so satisfactorily is frequently a task of great difficulty, if not, an impossibility. The relieving officer, in most cases, will give them temporary relief, and the Poor Law guardians will offer them the shelter of the workhouse. But the workhouse is, admittedly, a bad place to bring up children. Idleness, meanness, and a spirit of dependence, together with a tendency to crime, are frequently the habits acquired in our Poor-law institutions. Nor is the system of sending out children to 'nurse' – 'baby-farming', as it is sometimes called – a satisfactory one. As a rule, such children are not well clothed, nor well housed, nor well fed; while their education, both secular and religious, is frequently neglected. Besides, the example and associations in which they move are not always such as children should have. Hence, the Poor-law system for relieving destitute children is not a good one, though if properly looked after, in some instances it may be turned to good account,

There is a better way to provide for such children than by sending them to the poorhouse or by 'farming' them out, and that is by having them committed to Industrial schools.

These institutions, if not called into existence in Ireland, were first legally recognised and subsidised by the Industrial School Act passed in 1868. This Act was slightly amended in 1880; and it is by virtue of these two pieces of legislation the schools in question do so much good to the poor classes and to the country at large. As Catholics enjoy them, they may be described as institutions under religious management and supported by public funds, where destitute innocent children, or juveniles who have manifested only slight tendencies to crime, are legally detained till they attain their sixteenth year, for the purpose of being so educated and trained that they may afterwards become useful and respectable members of society.

Industrial schools differ from Reformatories, as these suppose the juveniles to be convicted of some legal crime. The Industrial schools are open to juvenile criminals too, but only when the "criminals" are under the age of twelve. Juveniles convicted of crime under that age may be committed to either class of school, but the Governmental Inspector of Reformatories, in his report published in 1883, strongly urges on magistrates to send them, in preference, to Industrial schools, unless their criminal tendencies be very much developed.

Industrial schools are strictly sectarian. They are, as we have them, either exclusively for Catholics or for Protestants: and those for Catholics are all under the management and control of religious, and subject to Government inspection. There are Industrial schools for boys, and Industrial schools for girls – all separate institutions; and, in both classes of schools, the juveniles who would otherwise be the arabs of our streets, or the inmates of our workhouses, or prisons, are healthily housed, comfortably clad, abundantly fed, trained in secular knowledge and in handicraft for their success in after life, and carefully brought up in the knowledge and practice of their holy faith. A visit to one of our Industrial schools will convince even a person prejudiced against religious institutions of the superior care taken of the inmates of these places. The rooms are cheerful and healthy, the food is good and abundant, the clothing neat and warm and the children are clean, mannerly, healthy, and happy. Under the care of religious – generally of holy nuns – who feel a Christian love for

them, and who minister in a Christian spirit to all their corporal, mental and religious requirements, what an advantage children in Industrial schools have over those brought up in workhouses somewhat in the Oliver Twist fashion!

As proof of their efficiency we subjoin two extracts from the Government Inspector's report published in 1883, one showing the interior working of the Industrial school at Strabane, selected at haphazard from the report, and the other showing the high name our Industrial schools in general have acquired:

St. Catherine's Industrial School for Roman Catholic Girls, Strabane.

Certified 30th November, 1869

Inspected 20th September 1882

Average number of inmates paid for by Treasury	100
Voluntary inmates	7
Externs who attend the school-on rolls, 420 ; average attendance	297.9

State of premises. – A sum amounting to pounds £1,065 2s.6d was expended on the buildings of this school in 1882. It is now becoming perfect in all its details, and meets the warm approval of everyone in the district. The new dressing room and lavatory have been completed. Two new dormitories have also been provided.

Health and general condition. – One girl died from consumption and another from disease of the bowels in 1882. The health of the other children was excellent, and I never saw a finer set of girls that I have met amongst pupils of this school.

Conduct and discipline. – Very satisfactory. The manager reports that no serious fault was committed by any of the children during the year. They are very cheery and happy.

Education state. – This school is managed in connexion with the Board of National Education, and is examined by the District Inspector, as if for results. He writes:

I have not had time to examine this large school since the results examination last August, but no school in my district needs a second examination in the year less. There were about 350 children examined (including externs) for results last year, of whom a more than average proportion stood in the higher classes. Their answering in the ordinary subjects was excellent, especially in arithmetic, writing, and dictation, while a large number were presented in French, music, drawing, cookery, and other extra subjects with success. In fact this school was specially exempted from the operation of the rule limiting the number of extra subjects, owing to the very favourable reports made on the ability, method, and industry with which all subjects are taught, the elementary subjects not having been sacrificed as is in other schools sometimes the case, to the extra subjects.

Signed:

W. Nicholls,

District Inspector, National Schools

French, drawing, vocal and instrumental music are well taught. Some of the Industrial school pupils are paid monitresses under the National Board, and passed most creditable examinations for the appointment.

Industrial training. – The public laundry continues to give the greatest satisfaction. The work of the girls cannot be surpassed. The whiteness of the linen washed in the school is, I am informed, due to the water for the laundry being filtered before being used, and also to the bleaching on the hill.

Needlework in its different branches is well taught. The girls make all the clothes they wear, and work for the shops. They upholster mattresses and palliasses. They work fine embroidery in gold and silk.

Ten cows are on the farm, and a number of calves and poultry are reared. The girls milk cows, and make butter. They bake all the bread used in the establishment and are instructed in cookery and confectionery. The elder girls care their younger companions ; each is instructed according to her capacity in the work, by which she can earn a livelihood when she leaves the school.

Staff. – Mrs. Atkinson and 12 Sisters of Mercy, with a laundress and school teacher, form staff of this establishment.

Total cost of the school in 1882, £3,091 16s. 4d. of which £1,065. 2s. 6d was for building. Cost per head, £18 18s. 9d. Industrial profits, £226 15s. 7d.

Results, 1879–80–81 – Fifty-five discharged; 51 doing well, 2 since dead and 2 re-admitted to school. Many of the girls trained in this school are now in good situations.

Those who reside near the school visit it often, and a regular correspondence is kept up with others living in England, Scotland, and various parts of America. Several applications were received during the year for servants from ladies who reside in England, and know the girls from this school who are living in their neighbourhoods. One girl sends money from America to educate her brother before bringing him to that country. And another (also living in America) pays to further her sister in industrial training in this school.

So much for the efficiency of one of our Industrial Schools. What follows is the character the Inspector gives of our Industrial schools in general.

The Industrial schools of Ireland need no comment from me. They are considered by the most distinguished publicists of Europe who have visited them to be models on which a general system of technical instruction might well be founded. Their future progress depends on the reports of the two Royal Commissions now sitting. The members of both Commissions have, I am happy to say, expressed to me their approval of the management of the Irish Industrial Schools, and, I have no doubt, the system will develop, and tend towards the spread of technical education throughout the country.

What an advantage to have such homes for the poor destitute children in our midst! What blessings they bestow! What happiness and prosperity they create!

From the same report on Industrial schools we learn there were in 1882 forty of these institutions for Catholic girls and 12 for Catholic boys, 62 being the entire number in Ireland. The number of children in the institutions on the 31st December 1882 was – boys 2418 ; girls, 3660 = 6078. Adding 377, who were then absent on leave, we have a total of 6455 destitute children, most of whom are Catholics, who were being usefully, comfortably, and religiously brought up, saved from the criminal habits that poverty so frequently teaches, and protected from the snares of proselytizing societies.

It is pleasant in a country overtaxed with demands for charitable objects as Ireland is supposed to be, to find that the charitable work of Industrial schools is carried on by aid from the public funds. The Industrial Schools Acts allow this, but it is to be regretted they do not enforce it. They allow no grants for the erection of Industrial schools, nor for their enlargement, nor their improvement, though Acts authorize such expenditure for Reformatories; but they allow interest on the money expended on the buildings to be charged in the accounts, and they allow grand juries in the several counties to contribute for each child sent to an Industrial school from their county, and they authorize the Treasury to supplement the grand jury allowance to a sufficient amount. Accommodation being provided, and the house and premises approved of by the inspector, a certificate describing the building as an Industrial school, and able to accommodate a certain number, is given to the manager; and thereupon he is authorized, though not obliged, to admit suitable persons after a certain legal process has been gone through. On their admission the grand juries of the counties, or of the counties of the towns, or of the cities from which the children are sent, are at liberty to contribute out of the funds at their disposal for their proper maintenance. The Treasury supplements such contributions, so that considerable, if not adequate, remuneration is given to the managers.

On looking over the report of 1883, it is seen that 36 grand juries are 'contributories', and that only three in Ireland – those of Carlow and of the two Ridings of Tipperary – are not. It is not to be concluded that all the grand juries that contribute act up to the spirit of the Act; for, some of them give only a very limited patronage to it by paying towards the support of a very limited number of destitute children; while others contribute in a very miserly way even for a limited number. The contributions of the grand juries vary from half a crown to a shilling each week per child. The system is evidently very faulty, but nevertheless the amount given the Industrial schools annually is considerable. In 1882 grand juries gave £26,702; the Treasury £74,997; and the incomes from all sources were £120,177 against £143,843 expenditure.

The report so often alluded to in this paper is very satisfactory where it shows the efficacy of Industrial schools in the after life of those trained in them. Everyone knows how badly workhouse children turn out in after life, and it is therefore all the more to be rejoiced at when, as an almost universal rule children, of the same class brought up in these schools go on well in their subsequent career. In recent years, upwards of a thousand on an average leave them annually. Most have suitable employment provided for them before they leave. Some join Her Majesty's forces, and some seek prosperity in foreign lands. A knowledge is kept up of almost all of them, and the influence their

education and training exercises upon them, is clearly shown by what is reported of those who left in the years 1879, '80 and '81:

Total number who left the schools in the three years 1879, '80-'81 was 3,029, viz., boys 1308; girls, 1,721.

Of these, 15 boys and 8 girls were committed to Reformatories, 104 boys and 114 girls died in the schools, 18 boys and 32 girls for whose detention orders were deemed insufficient were discharged by the Chief Secretary, and 119 boys and 44 girls were transferred to other Industrial schools.

The total to be reported on up to 31 December, 1882, was therefore, 2,575, viz., 1,052 boys, 1,523 girls.

Of the boys, 24 died after discharge, leaving 1,028 to be reported on, of whom –

930, or 90.5	per cent	were reported as doing well
22, or 2.1	“ “ “ “ “	doubtful
6, or 0.5	“ “ “ “ “	convicted
67, or 6.5	“ “ “ “ “	unknown
3	recommitted to school	

Of the 1,523 girls, 46 have since died, leaving 1477 to be reported on, of whom –

1,405, or 91.5	per cent	were reported doing well
23, or 1.5	“ “ “ “ “	doubtful
43, or 2.9	“ “ “ “ “	unknown
6, or 0.4	“ “	were recommitted to an Industrial school.

The preceding table gives a proportion of 90.5 per cent., of males and 91.5 per cent, of females discharged from Industrial schools during the three years 1879 – '80-'81 who are reported to have been doing well since they left the schools, and 'in no instance can I trace', says the Inspector, 'that of the 1,523 girls discharged from Industrial schools during the period, any one of them was convicted of crime during 1882.

There is abundant proof in the above quotations of the advantage Industrial schools are to this country, and of how satisfactorily the system fits in with the conscientious requirements of its people. Though they are now pretty large and numerous and though they shelter thousands, yet they are not large enough for all they contain, nor are they adequate to the wants of the poor. They were overcrowded in '82, the Inspector tells us; they are so still. The writer of this paper had recently to make application in a score of schools before finding vacancies for three destitute orphans, and he finally succeeded in getting admission for them only after waiting a considerable time for vacancies to occur. There is no more meritorious charity then to relieve and train, as Industrial schools do, the helpless and destitute young; and it is to be hoped that such abodes for them will increase and multiply till juvenile beggars disappear from our streets, and our workhouses have none but the old and infirm. There are destitute children in every county for a least one male and one female Industrial school; and even if money had to be borrowed for its erection, its interest would be admitted as a proper charge in the accounts submitted to the Government Inspector. Seeing the vast strides made in sixteen years in the erection of upwards of fifty such institutions, it may be

reasonably hoped that the charity of the faithful, the sacrifices of religious, and the zeal and tact of the bishops and priests of Ireland, will soon supply all that is needed.

It may be useful to specify the classes of children that are fit subjects for admission to Industrial schools, and how an order for the detention is to be obtained. The Act of 1868 states that any two justices at petty sessions, or a divisional magistrate in the city of Dublin can make the required order on the application of anyone in a suitable case. Thereupon, the police take charge of the child, and are responsible for its safe delivery, free of all cost, to the Industrial school for which the order is made. Previous to the application, it is well to have the consent of the manager to admit the child in case the magistrates commit it, but if that be not done, the police are to take it to the workhouse till a vacancy is found, which is to be done within eight days. The Industrial school named in the order must be one 'under the exclusive management of persons of the same religious persuasion as that professed by the parents, or, should that be unknown, by the guardians of such child. In all cases in which the religion of the parents and guardians of such child is unknown the said child shall be considered as belonging to that religious persuasion in which he shall appear to have been baptized, or, that not appearing, to which he shall profess to belong' (31 Vic., cap.25, sec 14).

The following is a summary of the grounds upon which a lawful order for admission to Industrial schools can be made:

Under the Industrial Schools Act (Ireland), 1868 (31 Vic., c.25, s.11), the child must be apparently under fourteen years of age, and must also be –

1. A child found begging or receiving alms, whether doing so actually or under pretext of selling anything or offering anything for sale; or
2. A child being in any street or public place for the purpose of begging or receiving alms whether actually doing so or under pretext of selling anything or offering anything for sale; or
3. A child found wandering, and not having any home; or
4. A child found wandering and not having any settled place or abode; or
5. A child found wandering and not having proper guardianship; or
6. A child found wandering and not having visible means of subsistence; or
7. A child found destitute and being an orphan without any parent; or
8. A child found destitute and having a surviving parent who is undergoing penal servitude or imprisonment; or
9. A child who frequents the company of reputed thieves.

The 13th section of the Industrial Schools Act (Ireland) 1868 (31 Vic., c.25) specifies also a class additional to the classes above enumerated, and requires that the child shall be apparently under twelve years of age and charged before two or more magistrates in petty sessions, or before a divisional magistrate in a Dublin police court, with an offence punishable by imprisonment, or a less punishment, but who has been convicted of felony, and who, in the opinion of such magistrates or divisional magistrate, ought (regard being had to the age of the child and the circumstances of the case) to be dealt with under the Act.

In any of the foregoing cases the detention order may be made by two magistrates in petty sessions, or a divisional magistrate in a Dublin police court.

In addition to the classes above specified the Prevention of Crimes Act 1871 (34 & 35 Vic., c.112, s.14) enacts that, when a woman is convicted of crime, as defined by the 20th section of that Act, and a previous conviction is proved against her, her child or children, fulfilling all of the following conditions, namely:

- (a) Under fourteen years of age,
- (b) And under her care and control when she is convicted of the last of such crimes,
- (c) And who have no visible means of subsistence; or are without proper guardianship

may be sentenced to detention under the Industrial Schools Act (Ireland), 1868, either by the court before which such a woman is convicted, or by two magistrates in petty sessions, or by a divisional magistrate in a Dublin police court.

By the Act of 1880 (43 and 44 Vic., c.15) a child under fourteen years of age is a fit subject for committal to Industrial schools – who is ‘lodging, living or residing with common or reputed prostitutes, or in a house resided in or frequented by prostitutes for the purpose of prostitution’, or who ‘frequents the company of prostitutes’.

From this summary, which is taken from authentic sources, it is evident that the Industrial Schools Acts could be very extensively availed of in this country – even much more so than they are – to the incalculable advantage of the poor. An amendment of them, however, is much needed, giving means for the erection of suitable buildings, making it compulsory for magistrates to commit in the cases specified, and requiring grand juries to contribute uniformly and adequately. Were the laws improved in these particulars, schools of Industrial education that a Catholic country could accept, would soon be sufficiently numerous for our destitute poor. Industrial learning would spread, and tend very considerably to revive the prosperity of Ireland.

John Curry, Adm.

Review Article

Finding Youth: Exploring Theory and Experiences of Youth in Late Modern Societies

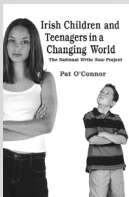


Gill Jones

Youth

Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009. 224pp. €22.99

ISBN 978-0-7456-4094-5



Pat O'Connor

Irish Children and Teenagers in a Changing World –

The National 'Write Now' Project

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008. 181pp. €17.00

ISBN 978 0 7190 7820 0

Katharina Swirak

Research Officer

Civil society, youth and youth policy in modern Ireland –
an IRCHSS funded project, University College Cork

Young people's experiences of growing up in late-modern societies and the implications of deep social transformations for the conceptualisation and understanding of 'youth' as a theoretical category are among the main areas for debate in youth studies. Many youth sociologists, like so many other social scientists, have been stimulated by the catalytic concepts of the 'risk society' (Beck 1992), 'reflexivity' (Giddens, 1991) and 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 1995) and have been investigating to what extent young people's lives reflect or provide evidence of these relatively novel social theories. Their respective deliberations often conclude with divergent and context-specific interpretations. Some highlight young people's ability to transcend traditional categories such as class, gender and race and claim that their identities are predominantly expressed through global lifestyles and consumption (Maffesoli, 1996). Others argue that within the framework of fundamental social change, young people's choices are still – at least partially – constrained and shaped by social structures (Furlong and Cartmel 2006; Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998). Although the two books under review in this article are approached from fundamentally different angles in terms of scope and approach, it is within this 'middle-ground' that they can both be

located. Gill Jones's important work aims to re-evaluate the significance and meaning of a wide range of social theories and their relationship with the concept of 'youth'. While underpinning her arguments by empirical studies, mainly from the UK and the US, the book's contribution lies in a re-positioning and re-assertion of the concept of 'youth'. In *Irish Children and Teenagers in a Changing World*, Pat O'Connor conducts a ground-breaking and detailed analysis of thousands of written texts of Irish children and teenagers with the aim to investigate 'whether and to what extent the self has become a reflexive project amongst young people' (p. 154), with a particular emphasis on gendered identities in late modern Ireland.

To the traveller who is embarking on the journey to comprehensively trace the key theoretical debates which shape our understanding of the concept of 'youth' in late modernity, Gill Jones offers a compass to navigate through the inter-disciplinary maze of youth studies. Given Professor Jones's longstanding background in youth research, this book seems to be mirroring what has also characterised her academic and research career: contributing to social policy debates which affect young people in very real ways in their daily lives, while simultaneously shaping theoretical debates in the field of youth studies.

Before reviewing the core aspects of the book and its potential to throw light on the Irish context, it is worthwhile to consider Jones's conceptual and analytical approach to the volume, which significantly differentiates it in ambition and scope from most other youth studies books.

Firstly, Jones does not focus on one area of life of young people (work, health, family) or on debates within one theoretical strand of youth studies (transition, sub-cultural), but aims to evaluate whether broader developments within social theories in a late-modern context 'can help inform current constructions of the concept of youth or prompt a process of reconstructions' (p. 27). In doing so, she maintains a central focus on the theoretical concept of youth throughout the book, trying to demonstrate how youth has to be re-embedded and understood in broader social contexts and structures. By doing so, she successfully manages to construct a counter-debate to the popularly used deficit construction and culture of blame regarding young people, as well as to the neo-liberal assertions of the empowered individual:

Young people are blamed for many things, which is why I have not succumbed to the prevailing political correctness of stressing young people's agency, but instead questioned the extent to which they can as individuals and collectives, be held responsible for their actions (p. 172).

Secondly, Jones applies the theoretical discussions in each chapter to very current youth phenomena (for example youth activism and music styles) with the aim of showing whether these can be meaningfully understood and explained by the respective social theories. Thirdly, she succeeds in linking the theoretical debates to policy analysis and recommendations based on research undertaken within the British context, demonstrating how underlying assumptions rooted in social psychology and economics, rather than sociology, dominate policy formulations, thus often neglecting lived realities of young people. With these latter two strategies, she manages to enrich a theoretical book with very lively debates that also clearly resonate with issues around youth in contemporary Ireland.

After shortly outlining the development of the social construction of youth in her introductory chapter, she sketches the debates that have characterised academic discussion of youth (science or nature; age/generation or social class; conflict or consensus; structure or agency/process, contributors or dependants), and as a result distils the broad conceptual themes (action, identity, transition, inequality and dependence) that form the core chapters to follow. To anybody who is new to the field of youth studies, this first chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the main debates which have dominated youth studies over the past decades.

Investigating how the longstanding sociological agency-structure debate is relevant for young people, the second chapter 'Youth as Action' argues that young people are often unjustifiably ascribed unlimited individual agency by public discourse and social policy. This argument can well be extended to Ireland, if one thinks for example of the blame discourse surrounding the introduction of ASBOs in 2001, youth crime and general stereotyping of young people (Devlin, 2006). Similarly, her call for greater use of sociology in evidence based social policy formulation aimed at young people, rather than 'efficiency'- based sciences, could also be well extrapolated to the Irish situation, where 'new public management' discourses dominate much of the social policy debates (Kirby, 2006).

In the next chapter, 'Youth as Identity', Jones considers 'changing theories of self and identity in relation to youth and young people' (p. 58). She proposes that theories of reflexivity with their origins in symbolic interactionism offer an alternative to postmodern debates on the relationship between self and society, which according to Jones, ultimately end in a 'blind conceptual alley' (p. 71). Ultimately, she adopts a middle-ground position, arguing that young people in late modernity change identities over time in a 'continuous project of self' (p.83) rather than fixed by adulthood in the manner described by Erikson (1965) or free-floating as proposed by Baumann (1995). As will become evident later in this essay, Pat O'Connor comes to a very similar conclusion for young people in the Irish context.

In the chapters that follow, Jones moves her analysis to the impact of state institutional structures on young people's lived experiences. A chapter on 'Youth as Transition' demonstrates how social policies for young people, particularly around education and social welfare, are designed according to linear life-stage models. These she argues don't capture young people's lived experiences, particularly given extended and sometimes complex school-to-work and domestic transitions. Differentiating between 'slow and fast-track transitions' and arguing that 'risk' is unevenly distributed, she demonstrates how social class, gender and ethnicity continue to influence young people's life transitions. A look at the often contradictory definitions of young people in Irish welfare and social policy (see for example Kilkelly, 2008) could lead us to a similar conclusion as Jones's in the British context: 'Youth has never been successfully incorporated into UK policy thinking' (p. 89).

In her chapter on 'Youth and Inequality', Jones sets out to identify to what extent structures of inequality persist for young people in late-modern societies. She points out the difficulties in measuring inequality among young people, due to their often hidden and semi-independent position in the family at different stages of their life cycle. Jones argues for considering identities, cultures and interests as important factors in the analysis of inequalities particularly amongst young people. In this

respect, her recurring criticism of the neglect of the impacts of social and cultural capital in reproduction of social inequalities amongst policy makers, seems to be applicable to the Irish context as well, if we think for example of the impacts that the re-introduction of tuition fees at third level institutions will have on non-traditional students.

In the penultimate chapter on 'Youth and Dependence', Jones demonstrates how age structures which arbitrarily differentiate dependence and independence, in both private and public spheres, put particular groups of young people at risk. Based on research from England and Wales, which demonstrates that most parents don't necessarily feel responsible for offering support to their children during extended transitions from dependence to independence, she demands that any formulation of policy must recognise that 'family resources are not equally distributed...that cultural beliefs affect the legitimacy of claims for support...[and] that family bonds could be strengthened by supporting a reciprocal relationship between young people and their parents'. The fact that Jobseekers' benefit has been halved for claimants under 20 years of age in the most recent Irish budget cuts (Irish Times, April 8, 2009) demonstrates the underlying assumption of the availability of family support to young people, which is however not always given.

In her final chapter, Jones draws together the different strings of her book, to firmly demonstrate the social connectednesses of young people in society. She postulates a new theoretical framework for youth studies in the late modern age, arguing for the inclusion of different social sciences into youth studies, and particularly emphasises the need to re-focus on the social. Both throughout the book and in this last chapter, she offers insightful ideas which could also be useful for an Irish youth-studies agenda: firstly, youth research should concern itself with systemic analysis of structural issues that affect young people's lives, rather than merely emphasising how young people can manage challenges. Secondly, the private spheres of young people should be taken seriously, both in research and in policy formulation, if we want to make a difference to young people's lives. Thirdly, it is critical to identify the sources of cultural differences and investigate the differential impacts of public and private institutions on young people's lives. Finally, she reminds us that reducing youth to age, as is often done in social policy, individualises young people, rather than understanding their particular social position as a group in society. Gill Jones manages to paint a rich canvass of the varied and complex theoretical questions that have emerged around the concept of 'youth' over the past decades, by offering a very dense treatment of conceptual issues, which combines theory, applied research and policy debates. This makes the book an excellent resource for students, policy makers and anybody working with young people, and reminds us all to abandon our 'blame culture' and remember that 'in reality, it is young people who might lack care, or at least compassion, and who might be at greater and more immediate risk' (p.182).

Many of the issues taken up in Jones's book, but particularly her analysis of young people's identity formation and persistent influences of gender cultures on young people's lives, are also being acted out in contemporary Ireland and form the core of Pat O'Connor's study *Irish Children and Teenagers in a Changing World*. O'Connor analyses a unique dataset, obtained from the national *Write Now* project which, on the occasion of the Millennium, invited young people in over three and a half thousand

Irish schools to write a page describing themselves and their lives. The book explores the ways in which rapid social, economic and cultural changes in Ireland are reflected in young people's constructions of their identities. O'Connor's timely study draws upon the rich evidence provided by young people's voices, providing an empirical rather than speculative account of the fundamental shifts which have taken place in Ireland over the last decade or so.

A stratified random sample of 4,100 pieces of text (and in many cases drawings, song lyrics, poems), selected from young people in Fifth Grade in First Level (aged between 10-12 years) and in Transition Year in Second Level (aged between 14-17 years) served as the basis for quantitative and qualitative textual analysis. The main themes of the study were initially determined by a quantitative analysis of the texts, which distilled topics such as family, friends, school, descriptions of self, hobbies and activities, pets, family roots, the future and current affairs as recurring themes in young people's lives. School class groups (and indirectly approximate age) and gender were the only independent variables available for analysis. The qualitative analysis of O'Connor's study is based on these themes as well as additional themes she theorises around literature on identity in late modernity. Based on this foundation, O'Connor pursues the study by drawing upon key concepts of global/local, doing boy/girl and individualisation/structural embeddedness, allowing for a very systematic analysis of young people's positioning on the 'late-modernity scale' in the Irish context. After having outlined the context of social change in Ireland and the key concepts/indicators in the first two chapters of the book, the main analysis takes place in five chapters on different themes. By drawing upon young people's relative closeness to family or friends, chapter three on 'Love and Work', explores to what extent young people's accounts of their lives and identities reflect structural embeddedness or individualisation. Similarly, young people's narratives of work, which O'Connor defines very broadly, including school attendance, part-time work and helping out at home, are used to comment upon the level of individualisation. Her findings, as she puts it herself, are 'both very predictable and very unexpected'. Consequently, the large majority of young people (82 per cent) referred to family settings as forming the focus of their social life. Variations existed both between age groups (with the younger age group more likely to be referring to family ties than the older age group) and between male and female teenagers. Among the older group, references to family ties were significantly more frequent amongst girls than boys (55 per cent vs 37 per cent). O'Connor goes so far as to interpret the relatively weak relational discourse of older teenage boys as a 'bleak emotional landscape' - potentially contextualising high levels of suicide and risky behaviour amongst young Irish men. Surprisingly, much fewer young people referred to friends in their texts and less than one third of the whole sample referred to best friends. With regard to work, young people's references to different work experiences seemed to be largely positive and they were often described and defined in the context of relationships, particularly in unpaid work. For O'Connor these results underline young people's social connectedness, contrary to popular accounts of alienation and social anomie.

In the next chapter O'Connor is particularly effective in drawing upon young people's biographies to comment upon how they understand and imagine their present and future lives in terms of occupational and personal choices. Basing her

analysis on a framework of three kinds of orientations to temporal discourses developed by sociologists Brannen and Nilsen (2007), she demonstrates that only the younger participants had images of a linear life course, particularly with regard to occupational ambitions. The older teenagers reflected symptoms of late modernity in their accounts by expressing self-doubt and anxieties about the future. As with Jones, O'Connor pulls out the persisting power of different gender cultures when it comes to young people's identities. Girls tended to live in an 'extended presence', aiming to keep the future at bay. For the boys, she found that they expressed an exaggerated focus on 'frantic hedonistic pleasure' while shutting out the future. Similarly, gender differences were also evident in more frequent references to 'contingent futures' by girls, outlining their occupational or personal dreams. Hence, O'Connor concludes that patterns of identity with regards to biographies were 'only to some extent typical of late modern society', particularly for the younger cohort in the study (p. 77).

In the next chapter, O'Connor's findings with regards to spatial discourses confirm a new emerging consensus, namely that the global finds specific re-articulations on the local level, while the latter is not simply overridden (Massey, 2005). Thus, she identifies that almost two thirds of young people in the study (63 per cent) referred both in their texts and in their drawings to their local area, in terms of location, available facilities, but also 'local historical and material artefacts' (p. 80). With regard to global indicators, the study identified that the main references were made to personal experiences or aspirations of travelling/living abroad and in terms of entertainment/sports culture - and here particularly geared towards the UK (for boys) and the US (for girls). A concern about global issues such as environmental hazards existed only to a very limited extent and were mostly referred to by the older boys 'with some of them indicating a sense of impotence, global responsibility and a latent sense of despair' (p. 87).

In the next two chapters, O'Connor discusses multiple aspects of narratives of the self and issues around lifestyles. By looking at modes of reflexivity, such as a search for authenticity, references to internal emotional states and role models, she again identifies interesting gender differences between girls and boys. Thus the establishment of hierarchical dominance was most important to boys, while issues of connectedness were most important to girls. Similarly, the social commentaries were mostly written by young men, which O'Connor interprets as reflections of hegemonic male discourse. The importance of 'doing gender' is also reflected in her analysis of young people's lifestyles, such as participation in sports, music, other cultural media and shopping 'with global phenomena being drawn on selectively to reinforce ways of doing boy/girl' (p. 126).

Read in conjunction then, both books under review here shed light on the complexities of young people's lived realities in late modern societies. Pat O'Connor's study lets the voices of young people speak for themselves and thus provides us with a detailed insight into growing up in an Irish society which has undergone radical changes. O'Connor embeds each chapter in a theoretical framework that illustrates the importance of the respective themes in relation to the formation of young people's identities and also provides reference to comparable studies from other contexts. In doing so, her study delivers an excellent read for anybody interested in young people's identity formation in general and the Irish context in particular. Her 'cultural analysis of reflexive constructions of self' also allows us to gain a deeper understanding of some

of the specific social problems, such as high levels of suicide, alcohol and drug consumption, which prevail amongst young people in Ireland. Her conclusions are then very nuanced: while she finds sufficient evidence to argue that the sense of self of Irish young people has become a reflexive project, she also presents evidence which demonstrates that individualisation has not taken place to such an extreme level as some might argue. Ascribed relationships still played a major role in young people's lives and locality still penetrated their accounts. Above all though, O'Connor successfully demonstrates that for the upcoming generation, older patriarchal structures still seem to be active in shaping the outlook and experiences of young people's lives.

As has become evident, several of the decisions taken in recent months by the Irish government aiming to deal with the economic crisis will particularly affect young people and children. Having grown up in a predominantly booming (if also unequal) society, it will be interesting to follow how these changes will affect young people's narratives and their sense of self, as told and analysed in Pat O'Connor's study. It will also be an important task for youth researchers, policy makers and practitioners to pay close attention to whether and how some of the inherent tensions in the social position of young people that Gill Jones elaborates on in *Youth* will become further exacerbated by the present crisis.

References

- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society – Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Baumann, Z. (1995) *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brannen, J. and Nilsen, A. (2007) 'Young people, Time Horizons and Planning: A response to Anderson et al', *Sociology*, 41 (1): 153–60.
- Devlin, M. (2006) *Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People*. Dublin: Equality Authority.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1965) *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Furlong, A. and Cartmel F. (2006) *Young People and Social Change: New Perspectives* (2nd edn). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Kilkelly, U. (2008) *Children's Rights in Ireland: Law, Policy and Practice*. Haywards Heath: Tottel Publishing.
- Kirby, P. (2002) *The Celtic Tiger in Distress: Growth with Inequality in Ireland* (International Political Economy Series) Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Wallace, C. and Kovatcheva, S. (1998) *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe*. London: Macmillan.



‘Claiming Our Space’

*Youth work's contribution to an integrated approach to
meeting the needs of young people*

Youth Work Ireland's National Conference 2009

Tuesday 24th November 2009

Dublin Castle

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

A Youth Work Ireland conference aimed at those who work with young people in the fields of health, education and justice.

The conference will focus on the policy and practice of an integrated approach to working with young people.

Keynote speakers will include:

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D.

Dr. John Pinkerton (*Queens University, Belfast*)

Ms. Sylva Langford (*OMCYA*)

Ms. Anastasia Crickley (*NUI Maynooth*)

Dr. Maurice Devlin (*NUI Maynooth*)

Mr Denis Leamy (*Pobal*)

Mr Sean Redmond (*Irish Youth Justice Service*)

Mr Eddie Ward (*National Education and Welfare Board*)

Cost: €60 / €35 (unwaged)

For further information and to reserve a place, please contact Ethel Humphries or Gina Halpin at:

Youth Work Ireland

20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1

(t) 01-8584500

(e) ehumphries@youthworkireland.ie / ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie

(w) www.youthworkireland.ie



Youth Work Ireland





NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

Department of Applied Social Studies

Youth Research Programme

In addition to pursuing the research and scholarly interests of staff in the Department of Applied Social Studies, the Youth Research Programme at NUI Maynooth conducts a range of research projects which are commissioned, funded or otherwise supported by external organisations and agencies, currently including the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the National Youth Council of Ireland and Youth Work Ireland. Other commissioners of research recently conducted by departmental staff include the Equality Authority, the Combat Poverty Agency and Kildare Youth Services.

The programme is integrally related to the Department of Applied Social Studies' *professional education and training programmes* in community and youth work, and welcomes proposals for *MLitt and PhD research*. For details of undergraduate and postgraduate professional programmes and of research opportunities visit: <http://cappss.nuim.ie/>

The Youth Research Programme also has extensive links with *international partners*, for example as part of a consortium developing an MA in European Youth Studies. For more information see:

http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/about/MA_presentation.html

The Youth Research Programme is very pleased to be associated with *Youth Studies Ireland*, itself a partnership initiative at national and international level.

For further details contact: maurice.devlin@nuim.ie. Tel: 353-1-7083781



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

Civil society, youth and youth policy in modern Ireland

This Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) funded research project aims to provide a historical social scientific analysis of youth policy in Ireland.



Irish Research Council for the Humanities & Social Sciences
An Chomhairle um Thaighde sna Dana agus sna hEolaíochtaí Sóisialta



The research will chart the changing nature, form and consequences of youth policy from the time of the formation of the state to the present day.



The research will explore the historical role played by youth organisations in civil society, and their impact on Irish social life.



The project also aims to survey the contemporary provision of youth work in Ireland.

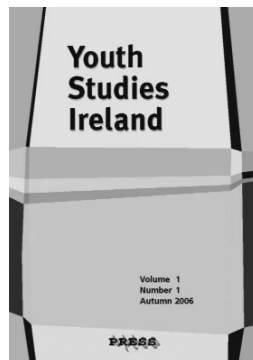


Research team: Prof. Fred Powell; Dr. Martin Geoghegan; Dr. Margaret Scanlon; Ms. Katharina Swirak.

Youth Studies Ireland Subscription Form 2009

“There has to date been relatively little social scientific research into the lives, needs and circumstances of young people in Ireland and the services and policies which are or might be provided for them This journal will fill that gap, and will also hopefully act as a spur to further research as well as contributing to best practice in work with young people”

Dr. Maurice Devlin, Youth Studies Ireland Editor



Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

Subscription for 2009 – 2 Issues. I enclose payment of:

Individual Subscription €40.00 ☐

Institutional Subscription €80.00 ☐

Student Subscription €30.00 ☐

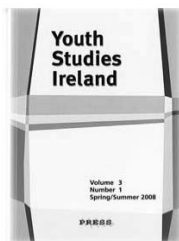
Payment Type (payable to Youth Work Ireland):

Cheque ☐ Postal Order/Bank Draft ☐ Invoice ☐

Please return completed subscription form and payment to:

**Youth Studies Ireland,
Irish Youth Work Centre,
20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1**

Electronic subscriptions for full issues and individual articles are available, please contact IYWC, Email: fbissett@youthworkireland.ie for further information or see our website: www.iywc.com



Subscription Form - Special Offer

"There has to date been relatively little social scientific research into the lives, needs and circumstances of young people in Ireland and the services and policies which are or might be provided for them.... This journal will fill that gap, and will also hopefully act as a spur to further research as well as contributing to best practice in work with young people" Dr. Maurice Devlin, Youth Studies Ireland Editor

Name: _____
Organisation: _____
Address: _____

Tel: _____ **Email:** _____

Subscription for 2009/10 – 4 issues for the cost of 3. I enclose payment of:

Institutional Subscription	€120.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual Subscription	€60.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Subscription	€45.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

Payment Type (payable to Youth Work Ireland):

Cheque ☐ Postal Order/Bank Draft ☐ Invoice ☐

Please return completed subscription form & payment to:

Youth Studies Ireland, Irish Youth Work Centre, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1

Electronic subscriptions for full issues & individual articles are available, please contact IYWC, Email: fbissett@youthworkireland.ie for further information or see our website: www.iywc.com

<u>YOUTH STUDIES IRELAND PREVIOUS CONTENT:</u> <u>VOL 3 NO. 1 - SPRING/SUMMER, 2008</u>	<u>YOUTH STUDIES IRELAND PREVIOUS CONTENT:</u> <u>VOL 3 NO. 2 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2008</u>
<p><u>Articles:</u> Youth, Intercultural Learning and Cultural Politics in Europe: Some Current Debates <i>By Gavan Titley</i> Youth Homelessness in Ireland: The Emergence of a Social Problem <i>By Eoin O'Sullivan and Paula Mayock</i> 'It sort of widens the health word ...': Evaluation of a Health Promotion Intervention in the Youth Work Setting <i>By Margaret Hodgins and Lynn Swinburne</i></p> <p><u>Research Digest</u> Coming of Age in the 21st Century: The New and Longer Road to Adulthood <i>By Liz Kerrins</i></p> <p><u>Notes on Practice</u> Going Global! Good Practice Guidelines for Development Education in Youth Work <i>By Niamh McCrea and Johnny Sheehan</i></p> <p><u>Past Perspectives</u> The Blind Alley: Some Aspects of Juvenile Employment in Ireland (1915)</p> <p><u>Reviews:</u> Youth and Social Capital A Great Feast of Light: Growing up Irish in the Television Age Young People in Contemporary Ireland</p>	<p><u>Articles:</u> Balancing Due Process Values with Welfare Objectives in Juvenile Justice Procedure: Some Strengths and Weaknesses in the Irish Approach <i>By Dermot P.J. Walsh</i> Choice and Resistance: Young People's Perspectives on Food and Eating at School <i>By Michelle Share</i> Youth Participation and Youth Work: A Conceptual Review <i>By Matthew Seebach</i></p> <p><u>Past Perspectives</u> Adolescence and the Vocational Educational Bill (1930)</p> <p><u>*Review Article</u> Are We Putting Children First? <i>By Majella Mulkeen</i></p> <p><u>*Books Reviewed</u> National Review of Compliance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children Analysis of Submissions made on the National Review of Compliance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children Service Users' Perceptions of the Irish Child Protection System</p>

Youth & Policy



Youth and Policy is the quarterly journal devoted to the critical study of youth affairs, youth policy and youth work, published by The National Youth Agency. Mixing original articles with reviews, it is an essential read for everyone involved in work with young people – researchers, academics, practitioners, managers and policy-makers.

To make sure of your copy place a subscription now. Price, including postage, is £28 UK; £36 rest of Europe and £38 rest of world.

Single issues and back issues available at £9 UK; £11 Europe and £11.50 world.

**For details on how to subscribe visit www.nya.org.uk or e-mail: sales@nya.org.uk
Tel: 0116 242 7427.**

The editorial group welcomes the submission of unsolicited articles which take an analytical approach to theoretical, policy or professional matters relating to young people in society. To submit articles or to request a copy of our guidelines for contributors
e-mail: youth.policy@durham.ac.uk

Suggestions for future review material and names of possible reviewers should be sent to
youthandpolicy@yahoo.co.uk

For administrative matters, including advertising, e-mail: **youthandpolicy@nya.org.uk**

The National Youth Agency

Eastgate House, 19–23 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 3GJ.
Tel: 0116 242 7350 Fax: 0116 242 7444 E-mail: nya@nya.org.uk
Websites: www.nya.org.uk www.youthinformation.com

Scottish Youth Issues Journal



The Scottish Youth Issues Journal provides a forum for reflection on policy and practice and for the dissemination of research on issues affecting young people – from education, health, housing and culture to employment, criminal justice and politics. Drawing mainly, but not exclusively from Scottish papers, policy analysis and book reviews. It is aimed at academic specialists, researchers, practitioners in a range of disciplines and to those involved in decision making policies affecting young people.

Contributions are welcome from outside, as well as within, Scotland. Submissions will be read by a member of the Editorial Board, before being submitted to a system of blind refereeing by two external assessors. To subscribe just complete this form and return it to YouthLink Scotland and we will send out the latest issue of the journal.

Costs of subscriptions for two issues per year:

	UK	Europe	Outwith Europe
One year (one copy per issue)	£30.00	£35.00	£40.00
One year (two copies per issue)	£40.00	£50.00	£60.00
Three years (one copy per issue)	£55.00	£70.00	£85.00
Bulk purchase (10 or more copies) 10% discount available on all rates.			

10% OFF – Students and YouthLink Scotland Members.

Back issues are available. Further information on request.

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Tel _____ Fax _____

Email _____

I/we would like to subscribe to the Scottish Youth Issues Journal:

One year (one copies per issue) ☐ One Year (two copies per issue) ☐

Three years (one copy per issue) ☐ Bulk purchase (10 or more copies) ☐

I enclose a cheque for _____ made payable to YouthLink Scotland

Please invoice me ☐

*Please return completed subscription forms to: Susan Symington,
Information & Events Officer, YouthLink Scotland, Rosebery House, 9
Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ. Tel: 0131 313 2488. Fax: 0131
313 6800. Email: ssymington@youthlink.co.uk*

YouthLink
Scotland
the national youth work agency for Scotland

Youth Studies Ireland

Notes for Contributors

1. Papers submitted for consideration will be sent for anonymous peer review. Manuscripts, which should normally be 4000–6000 words in length, should be sent to:

Maurice Devlin,
Applied Social Studies,
National University of Ireland Maynooth,
County Kildare, Ireland.
Tel. + 353 (0)1 7083781
Fax + 353 (0)1 7084708
E-mail: maurice.devlin@nuim.ie

All postal correspondence should have the author's contact information clearly displayed on the **outside**.

2. Submissions will be considered on the understanding that they are original articles that have not been published elsewhere or submitted to another journal or other publisher in any form. This does not exclude submissions that have had prior limited circulation and/or have been presented at a conference(s). Submission of a paper will be taken to imply that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere.
3. Papers will only be considered if **three complete copies of each manuscript** are submitted, along with the identical text on a diskette or CD. Please use a recent version of MS Word, with automatic formatting switched off. Articles should be typed on one side of the paper, double spaced, with ample margins and without justification. They should contain the full title of the contribution but **not** the name(s) of the author(s). The affiliation(s) of author(s), and a short biographical note (max. 50 words in each case) should be included on a separate sheet, along with the full postal address and email address of the author who will check proofs and receive correspondence and offprints. Each article should also be accompanied by a sheet with an abstract/summary of 100–150 words and no more than five keywords. All pages should be numbered. Endnotes should be used rather than footnotes. They should be kept to a minimum and should be located at the end of the text, before *References*.
4. If an article is accepted for publication, authors should send the final, revised version in both hard-copy (paper) and identical electronic form. It is essential that the hard copy **exactly** matches the material on disk. Please print out the hard copy from the disk being sent. Submit three printed copies of the final version with the disk to the address above.
5. Do not centre or indent headings. Indent the first line of paragraphs by one tab (except the first paragraph after a heading, which is not indented). Quotations of 40 words or more should be indented, without quotation marks. In the text, single quotation marks should be used, except for quotations within quotations. Leave only one space after all punctuation marks (full stops, commas, colons and semi-colons).
6. **Tables and figures** should be completely understandable independently of the text, and they should be placed appropriately in relation to the relevant part of the text. Tables and figures should be numbered by Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3 etc.). Please supply clear copies of artwork for figures in a finished form suitable for reproduction.
7. **References** in the text should be in the author, date, page form: (McDonagh, 2004: 53) or McDonagh and O'Neill (2004: 53–4), as appropriate. If several publications are cited by the same author and from the same year, a, b, c, etc. should be put after the year of publication. In the case of dual authorship, both names should be included in the text. In the case of three or more authors, 'et al.' should be used in the text (McDonagh et al., 2004) but all authors' names should be included in the list of references at the end. This should provide an alphabetical listing of all sources cited in the text, using Harvard conventions as shown below. *Please pay particular attention to punctuation within references.*
For books: Hunt, S. (2005) *The Life Course: a Sociological Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
For articles: Bamber, J. & Murphy, H. (1999) 'Youth Work: the Possibilities for Critical Practice', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2 (2): 227–242.
For chapters within books: Garat, D. (1997) 'Youth Cultures and Sub-Cultures', in J. Roche and S. Tucker (eds) *Youth in Society*, pp. 143–150. London: Sage/The Open University.
Internet sources should be also be listed alphabetically by author (or organisation) and year. The title of the article or document should be followed by the full URL, and the month/year of downloading in brackets.
8. **Proofs** will be sent to authors for checking. They should be corrected and returned within three days. Major alterations to the text cannot be accepted at this stage.
9. It is a condition of publication that authors assign **copyright** or license the publication rights in their articles, including abstracts, to the Irish YouthWork Centre. Authors may, of course, use the article elsewhere after publication provided that acknowledgement is given to the Journal as the original source of publication, and that the Irish YouthWork Centre is notified. Authors are themselves responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyright material from other sources.
10. Potential contributors are welcome to make contact with any member of the Editorial Board for further advice and/or guidance (see inside front cover for details).

Inside

Articles

**The Function of History in the Debate on the Social Professions:
The Case of Youth Work**

Walter Lorenz

Voices of Hidden Young Carers in Cork

Joe Finnerty and Cathal O'Connell

Research Digest

Not Just Homelessness ...

A Study of 'Out of Home' Young People in Cork City

Paula Mayock and Nicola Carr

Notes on Practice

**Diversity Toolkit for Youth Work: Increasing Participation and
Inclusion for all Young People**

Matthew Seebach and Anne Walsh

Past Perspectives

Industrial Schools in Ireland (1884)

Review Article

**Finding Youth: Exploring Theory and Experiences of Youth
in Late Modern Societies**

Katharina Swirak



Youth Work Ireland



NUI MAYNOOTH

Óliscail na hÉireann Mhá Nuad



Published by:

PRESS

ISSN 1649-8747



9 771649 874000

ISSN: 1649-8747

Irish Youth Work Press

20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: + 353 | 8729933

Fax: + 353 | 8724183

Website: www.iywc.com