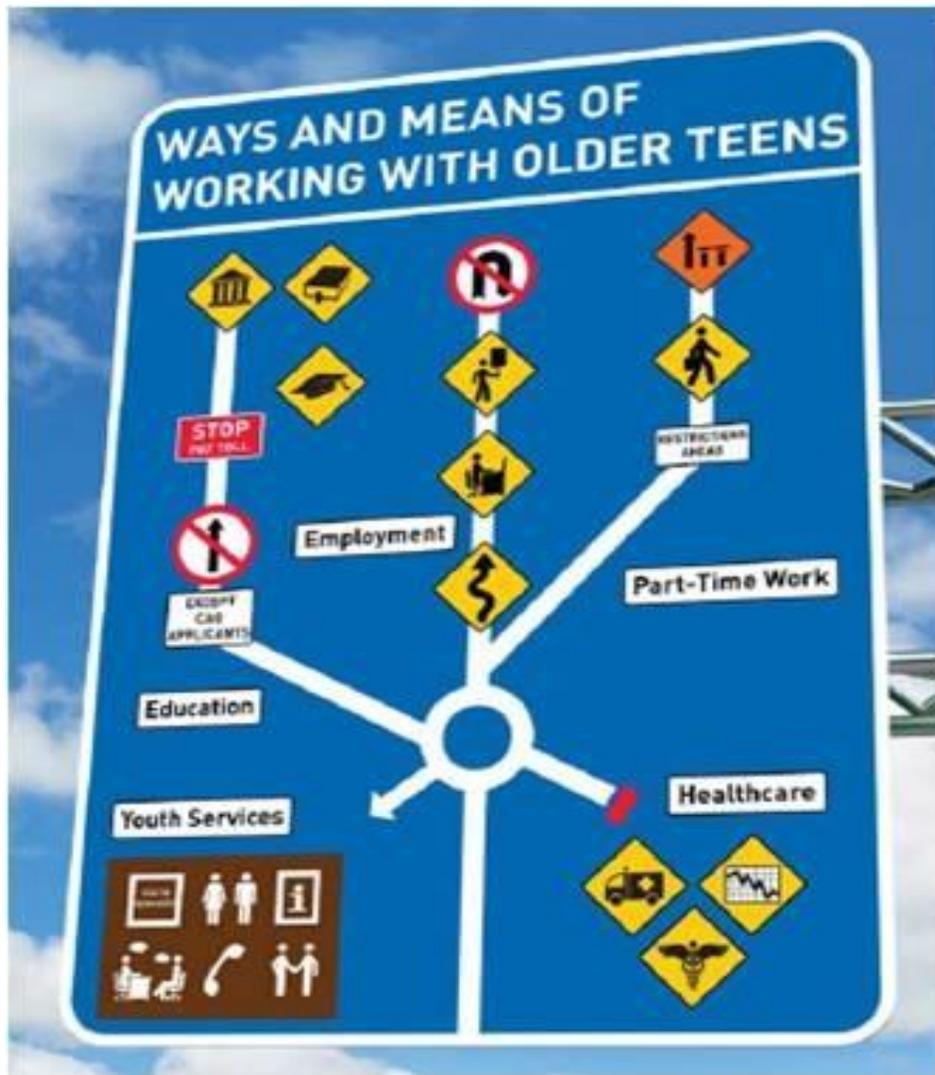


CONFERENCE REPORT 2009



Introduction

This document is a report on the proceedings of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) annual conference “Ways and Means of Working with Older Teens” held in the Emmaus Centre, Swords, County Dublin on Friday, 25th November 2009.

1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Conference

The main aim of the conference was to bring together youth work practitioners, managers and volunteers to share practice experience and learning.

The conference examined the social context and the role of youth organisations in the current climate; identifying opportunities; and developing positive, creative and innovative ways of working with, and providing supports for older teens.

The event promoted and facilitated debate and discussion on the barriers and challenges of engaging with and working with older teenagers in the current climate, and explored opportunities and methods of improving practice and service delivery.

The conference followed the format of providing initial information by means of a panel of key-note speakers followed by a series of facilitated roundtable discussions which resulted in the identifying of best practice recommendations both for individual participants and their organisations and also for NYCI.

1.2 Conference Participants

The conference was primarily focused at practitioners from across the youth work spectrum. Participation was high and exceeded the original targets set. This is a particularly notable achievement in the current recessionary climate.

A wide range of other professionals who work directly with older young people and organisations with an interest in young people were represented including the Arts Council, An Garda Siochana, Vocational Education Committees and Local Authorities. There were more than 150 participants at the event.

1.3 Conference Process and Proceedings

The conference was carefully planned to achieve a mix of inspiring presentations chosen to inform and stimulate interactive discussion. Three speakers presented on the day, bringing a very diverse range of wisdom and experience to the event.

In addition to the main programme, a showcase took place where a number of organisations highlighted their best practice in working with teenagers for the benefit of other participants. The showcase took place during registration, morning coffee and the lunch break, and provided a positive networking opportunity for delegates outside of the main discussions.

The opening sessions were devoted to setting the scene by reminding participants of the wider economic and social context that young people in Ireland are living in; drawing attention to 'where young people are at' in Ireland of 2009; and hearing first hand experiences from young people, and examining some of the stressors that young people experience which impacts on their mental health.

The remaining sessions were devoted to a series of roundtable discussions each commencing with a DVD presentation from a diverse range of youth work providers. The speakers and the visual presentations were selected to inform, inspire and stimulate discussion.

The roundtable discussions were facilitated and an assigned note-taker was present to record proceedings. The key messages from the discussion groups are captured in this report.

Participants were invited to complete an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the conference. 111 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 92%.

The results of the analysis of this feedback will inform the design of NYCI's next conference to be held on Friday 26th November 2010.

1.4 Structure of this Report

This report serves as a record of the conference. It presents a summary of the presentations and the key points from the roundtable discussions. The final section draws together the overall messages from the day. The presentations are available to view on NYCI's website www.youth.ie

Opening Addresses

Proceedings commenced with **Mary Cunningham, Director of NYCI (as pictured below)**, acting as Master of Ceremonies for the day, bringing the conference to order and explaining the running order for the day.



Eddie D'Arcy, Head of Youth Work Services, Catholic Youth Care and President of NYCI formally welcomed all participants and set the scene for a lively and participative day.

The conference was formally opened by **Barry Andrews TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (as pictured below)**. The Minister thanked NYCI for the invitation and the opportunity to open the event. The Minister briefly viewed the showcase on arrival, and commented on the amount of good work that was taking place in the sector. He reflected on the current economic climate, and the need for everybody to be conscious of the challenges and pressures facing the country. He emphasised the need for organisations to be as vigilant as possible in reducing costs, avoiding duplication and sharing resources. He concluded by wishing the participants an enjoyable and constructive day and said he looked forward to hearing the outcomes.



The Minister was followed by the keynote inputs provided by Claire Byrne, Dr. Maurice Devlin, Celtic Youth Bray and Dr. Paul Miller.

The main part of the day then involved three roundtable discussions with each being preceded by a video input setting the scene. Each roundtable followed the same structure of focusing on three key questions.

To close, Eddie D'Arcy, NYCI President, asked all participants to take the learning from the day and bring it back to their organisation to use in improving practice and programme delivery to older teenagers.

The event finished with delegates highlighting key learning from the day and making recommendations to NYCI on how to further support this work.

Keynote Speakers/Inputs

“Setting the scene on the economic and social climate in Ireland today and its impact on young people”

Presenter - Claire Byrne is a Broadcaster and Journalist, currently the co-anchor on Newstalk's Breakfast Show.



Claire has a wealth of broadcasting experience spanning 13 years in the business. She began her career in radio and worked for the BBC in the Channel Islands as a broadcast journalist before joining TV3 as early morning News Anchor with the station's breakfast programme, Ireland AM; News Anchor with Channel 5 and the ITN News Channel in the UK; and a return to Ireland AM as presenter. As well as being a newspaper columnist, Claire currently co-hosts Newstalk's morning programme.

She discussed recent changes to policy and a number of proposals outlined in the McCarthy and other reports which directly impact on young people. Claire looked at this in the context of Government commitment in the National Development Plan and the programme for Government etc to provide for and support children and young people.

Whilst acknowledging the current economic crisis, Claire expressed her concern about the lack of support and commitment to retain young people in Ireland. She stated that in fact, current policy appears designed to encourage emigration rather than regeneration.

Claire went on to examine the current climate in Ireland compared to the one she grew up with and identified key areas such as:

- Loss of employment opportunities – impact on self-esteem and behaviour
- Possible increase in risk of criminal activity
- Possible increase in risk of substance misuse
- Feeling of marginalisation and hopelessness
- Lack of cash and resources to do any real socialising – increase in just “hanging out”
- Resulting increase in negative media portrayal/society perception
- Resulting spiral of no-win scenario

Claire also included stark statistics in relation to unemployment including support, education and health care as they impacted on young people.

“The Impact of the Recession on Young People”

Presenter: Dr. Maurice Devlin is a lecturer in Youth and Community Studies at the Centre for Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth.

He has a long association with NYCI and has been a driving force in youth work in Ireland for many years. He is one of NYCI’s representatives to the National Youth Work Advisory Committee.

Dr. Devlin has engaged in significant research on young people in Ireland. He is co-author of *Young People in Contemporary Ireland*, published in 2007 and of the National Youth Work Development Plan. He has written or contributed to a wide range of publications including the NYCI/Equality Authority Report “Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People”.

Maurice has delivered academic papers and keynote addresses at international as well as national conferences and seminars.

Maurice's input focused on "Where Teenagers are at!" in the current climate. He developed the theme of disaffection and exclusion started by Claire Byrne and built on the first input from an academic perspective in a humorous and engaging manner.

Maurice looked at the impact of a recession on young people in Ireland and talked about "The Lost Generation", – the feeling of marginalisation and disaffection along with exploring the role of the youth organisation and service in supporting young people.

Maurice, however, posed some challenging questions for the participants – and shared information and anecdotes that suggested that this was not the only "Lost generation" and this term seemed to be a constant in the development and life-cycle of young people over the decades and was not solely confined to young people growing up in the current recession.



Adam Benson and Gemma Plunkett (pictured above) are two young people from Celtic Youth, a youth club providing a range of services to young people in Bray. Adam and Gemma were involved in the club originally as members and have stayed on to become leaders. They shared their experiences of participating in a youth service, particularly focusing on why they became involved and what motivated them to become leaders.

They gave us an insight into where Irish young people really are at! They looked at the impact of the economic climate, particularly in terms of life/work/socialising/education etc. In addition they shared the benefits of engagement with youth organisation/club/service, looking at the barriers and challenges to engagement and participation from a teenager's perspective.

Dr. Paul Millar (pictured below) is a Consultant Psychiatrist working as a partner in the firm of TMR Health professionals in Belfast. A student of medicine at Queen's University he qualified in 1994 and subsequently obtained a Diploma in Mental Health from Queens. In 1999 he became a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.



Whilst Dr. Millar has a special interest in the psychological effects of trauma and has been involved in the setting up of units in Craigavon and Belfast Mater Hospital, he maintains a wide interest in mental health matters and issues and has previously contributed to conferences and seminars on the wider dimensions of young people's health and wellbeing.

He looked at the impact of recessions and cuts on a young person – looking at how the young brain copes with disaffection, disappointment, lack of self-esteem etc. He did this with an element of clinical content but with a very real and human approach. Whilst he focused primarily on the mental health aspect he also included reference to the wider wellbeing and substance reliance/misuse contexts.

He finished by considering the role of the youth sector/youth service in supporting young people at this time, and described the role of the youth worker as a "Dealer of Hope". He looked at what possible interventions/programmes/structures could be set up; not to replace the clinical provision, but as an early warning system. He looked at what kinds of things youth workers should look out for and made the point that we all had the duty and responsibility to ask the difficult questions.

ROUND-TABLE 1

“Setting the Scene”

Video Input: Loughlingstown Youth Project

Delegates considered the issues identified in the keynote inputs and identified and shared experience of the needs of young people today; and the readiness of youth services and organisations to address those needs.

Question 1: What is your current experience in engaging with older teens?

Overall, the feedback identified that there was substantial work happening with older teens, but it was also significant that there were clear divisions in this provision. By far the largest element was in the area of intervention or attendance programmes such as justice and Garda diversion or substance interventions. Outreach and street-work was common as were programmes for young people out of school. Many also identified the wider community as an important setting for interventions. Youth work in this context was seen as providing advice and support and meeting basic needs.

Another key element in this feedback was the inclusion of leadership development programmes in mainstream youth work. This was seen as a key factor in keeping older teenagers involved by providing them with additional opportunities to the standard participation programme. It started at a relatively young age with junior volunteer programmes. The key factors in these approaches included participation in decision making; ownership of programmes; opportunities to lead activities and progress to roles of more responsibility.

Other methodologies that proved popular were Arts projects; Live Band and other music/drama competitions; and technology projects, particularly in the areas of IT creativity, digital film-making and music editing. Another side to this work was the whole area of overseas exchanges; education seminars; and more widely physical and outdoor activity programmes.

Generally, the provision focused on the development of skills; the provision of practical supports; or just places to “hang out”.

Examples of skill programmes were in the areas of behaviour, confidence and self-esteem, motivational work, and programmes addressing relationship issues. Places to “hang out” included community centres and youth cafes. Educational supports included breakfast or homework clubs, or even specific issues like help in opening bank accounts or compiling CV’s and job applications.

Whatever the nature of the provision, the session demonstrated the wide variety and diversity of service within similar programmes or projects. It was also noticeable that the experience appeared different depending on the nature of the organisation and at different levels with organisations, such as the position of the employee e.g. staff/volunteer or youth worker/management.

Question 2: What specific issues do teenagers face in your locality, organization or programme?

The main inputs under this question provided answers in 4 main areas of influence. The issues can be broadly defined as follows:

- Family/Parental
- Peer influence
- Economic and social
- External pressures e.g. exams etc.

What is clear from the feedback is that any one or all of these areas provide significant challenges to young people growing up. The influence of role models in particular; be it parent, sibling, peer or public personality is significant.

Issues included -

Family/Parental

- Issues with home life – disengaged parents
- Parent position as role model not taken on by parents
- Lack of inter-generational connection – parental understanding – “them and us”
- Relationship issues with family, siblings and friends
- Inherited apathy – parents/siblings out of work

Peer Influence

- Drugs/Alcohol/Substance misuse
- Street-drinking/smoking
- Able to make money selling drugs – macho image of such behavior
- Violence-Destructive behavior
- Peer pressure to conform/rebel – “not cool” to be in youth club etc – “Badges of Honour”
- Sensuality and image issues/ health and nutrition

- Coming through adolescence – Individuality

Economic and Social

- Uncertainty about the future
- Money/Finances
- Unemployment – impact on self-esteem
- Long-term poverty and exclusion
- Class differences – Hard to “buck the trend” and make something of your life
- Getting young people to take responsibility and ownership – lack of coping skills
- Sense of identity and motivation to do things
- Sexual health – particularly unplanned pregnancy

External pressures

- Lack of facilities and opportunities
- Access issues including transport
- Use of public, community and green spaces challenged by adults/society/Garda
- Adult stereotyping of young people particularly older teens – seen as troublemakers
- Lack of provisions in certain areas and certain cohorts – adult fear of working with certain groups
- Lack of trust
- Stress/Mental Health/thoughts of suicide
- Inability to cope with pressures of daily life – sense of hopelessness - isolation
- Bullying – Loneliness – Social Networking – Emotional and physical abuse
- Personal safety and security
- Academic nature of education not appropriate for all
- Balancing work-load of exams with other activities
- Engagement with the law and justice systems – negative – particularly with Garda
- Immigrant communities

Question 3: What are the specific challenges of barriers in engaging with and delivering service supports to the older teen group?

There was general consensus that the nature of youth has changed and that older teens are “in a different place” to that of the same group 5 to 10 years ago. There was also agreement on the fact that within the target group, sub-groups again had different needs, for example it was noted that 16/17 year old males were not always comfortable being in a youth club and therefore different methods of working were required. This

created specific challenges with regard to the safety and security aspect of street/night work and the need to deal with worker concerns and fears around working with certain “high risk” groups and the perception that older males may be physically dangerous, have drug or alcohol dependencies, and have significant behaviour issues.

Other inputs here identified the importance of ensuring the relevance of the programme/activity/project; the question of whether specific or integrated provision was the best way forward; and the need for audience specific programmes (e.g. for young mothers) were key considerations.

Delegates commented that they were finding it harder to generate and maintain interest against competition from so-called “up-market” attractions such as social network sites and there was a need for greater innovation in our approaches. Additionally, there was a fundamental difficulty in engaging with non-traditional users and new minority ethnic groups.

It was also noted that the challenges weren’t solely created by the young people. Many organisational issues also provided significant challenges. Facilities and premises; supports and information; training; lack of male youth workers; funding and the ability to forward plan were all identified as contributing factor. Also delegates commented on the lack of cohesion between on the ground work and national policy; as well as a lack of engagement and information sharing with other professional sectors as challenging.

Towards the end of this session, delegates however started to acknowledge that challenges were also an opportunity, and in recognising this started to prepare for the discussion in the next roundtable.

It was noted that building relationships was fundamental to youth work. Starting the work with 13/14 year olds was seen as a positive approach to getting them to take ownership of the work. It is essential that **young people are included as active participants in the work.**

Following on from this, building participation structures involving parents, family and community was a very positive and worthwhile process which resulted in additional benefits such as creating a more positive image of young people, challenging stereotyped views and negative peer pressure which could result in improved relations with authority.

The key to this work was being able to create an environment where discussion can occur based on trust and transparency.

ROUND-TABLE 2 **"Models of Practice"**

Video Input: Sphere 17 Volunteer recruitment **National Association of Youth Drama (NAYD)**

Delegates were asked to discuss their experiences and share successes in engaging with older teens, giving specific attention to the structures and methodologies used to do so.

Question 1: What are the main opportunities for engaging with older teens? Please give examples from your projects or organisations.

The over-riding aspect of this feed-back focused on the building of relationships between the organisation/worker and young person. There was significant synergy between this question and Question 2 of the first roundtable where the roles of influencers were identified.

Whilst there were examples quoted showing the use of innovation, artistic methodologies, and development of relevant programmes and activities. The key element was about building the foundation of trust, creating the safe space and combating initial mistrust and suspicion. It was also considered important to portray the participation in the right light and that it "was cool" to attend a youth club/youth group.

A number of participants identified the relationship and the working environment as focal points. They listed the importance of creating a positive environment, making new friends, creating a safe space, sharing fears and concerns along with combating suspicions as fundamental to a solid foundation.

They also highlighted key service elements such as providing support and assistance, providing relevant information and just being there as important building blocks. The use of varied methodologies and programmes also received significant comment with the focus on relevant specific issue programmes, age-appropriate activities, hands on participation and ownership and responsibility as key ways of ensuring that teens are engaged.

Finally in this session, delegates identified the importance of creating the free space for self-directed engagement away from the structures of formal programmes as being very important. The development of youth-led cafes, social events, and diverse external activities were some examples of initiatives that worked.

Question 2: What methodologies have proved successful?

One of the key responses seemed to be the need for the young person to be able to see the result and benefit of participation. This did not always need to be in the form of a formal award, but needed to reflect the basic needs of the individual. Whilst for some, it was important to have responsibility and to develop leadership skills, for others, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, learning basic social and conversational skills was reward in itself.

The key message from the feedback is very much about “one size not fitting all” and the need to tailor work and activity to meet the needs. A further important principle that emerged is the importance of respecting the young person as an individual and not just as a group member.

Once again, there was a focus on the importance of the development of the relationship. Anything that develops a sense of friendship or belonging was important, whilst the use of peer group to influence participation highlighted the positive aspect of that dynamic.

There was a particular focus on the “out of building” approach with street work and outreach work being seen as particularly successful with specific groups with the aim of meeting young people in their own space.

Mutual respect, providing new and challenging experiences, broadening horizons, providing choice, and providing evidence of achievement were seen as key

Question 3: Has your organisation changed or modified its approach or models of practice to successfully engage with older teens?

The previous discussions had already illustrated the huge range of approaches being used in the sector.

What was evident was that the sector already evaluates and monitors its performance and actively seeks new and alternative ways of engaging with young people within their communities. As such, a number of participants fed back that they were already successful in engaging with older teens.

It was noted that whilst engagement does happen, particularly in examples such as Garda diversion projects and the like; or where the motivation is present as in groups such as Celtic Youth; there is nevertheless a significant section of disengaged “hard to reach” young people who are not being supported by the sector and in danger of

becoming a “lost generation”. It is these young people that organisations find it challenging to engage with.

In this context it was recognised that conventional activities do not always work and there is a need to include more “extreme” or challenging activities. The use of new technologies brings its own issues such as the policing of social networking and other IT based recreation taking young people away from reality. There was concern that this may lead to a loss of skills and confidence for face-to-face interaction and engagement.

Some delegates felt that organisations were (and should be) constantly changing and adapting whilst others felt the traditional ways were working best, focusing on revisiting key values and principles. There was consensus that it was important to focus the work on methodologies that are working and devoting resources in that direction.

The issue of worker supports was also discussed with the issue of training in areas that are relevant an important factor. Another important element is the process of challenging youth workers to let go of the reins and allow young people to determine their actions and this proved quite difficult for some.

It was noticeable that a number of delegates felt that the culture in youth work was changing – in that there was better linking to other services and including other structures such as the family; and the involvement of newer methodologies such as Open Space Technology and Arts based programmes.

Other methodologies highlighted were sharing meals/relaxation times, focusing programmes on processes that develop skills rather than activities and bringing in external speakers. Most importantly though, the focus on the engagement being fun and empowering was seen as the crux of the issue and this helps to compensate for the lack of programme resources.

ROUND-TABLE 3 **“Benefits and Learning”**

Video Input: Foroige Youth Citizenship Awards

Delegates were asked to consider the benefits gained by involving young people in the organisation and the community. They were also asked to identify opportunities for their organisation and the sector, set personal or organisational goals and make recommendations to NYCI on further work and initiatives.

Following discussions in this round-table, participants were asked to identify one key outcome from the three questions i.e. key learnings.

What will they bring back to their organisations?
Making recommendations to NYCI for future work

Question 1: What key learning have you identified from today? What factors do you think are important in engaging older teens?

In the responses to this roundtable, this question seemed the most pertinent and gathered a significant amount of useful feedback.

In general delegates identified key learning in a number of key areas:

- Their role as youth workers
- The youth work sector
- The environment for young people today
- The importance of continually developing practice

In terms of their role, the key theme that almost all had picked up was Dr. Paul Miller’s analogy of youth workers being “Dealer’s in Hope”. This had struck a particular chord with a number of comments regarding the importance of the positive attitude of the youth worker and the impact of their behaviour. It focused especially on the theme of mental health and the role of the youth worker in not being afraid to “ask the difficult questions” and to “challenge myself” in that role.

There was also focus here on the need to be adaptable and the fact that “what I’ve done for the last 10 years might not be right for today”. It was also commented that it was important to realise that the worker does not need to control everything and it’s all right

for the young people to take the lead. The importance and significance of peer learning and the sharing of experience was identified as a key factor here.

With regard to the sector in general, many delegates expressed a sense of relief that after gaining insight into the good work being done across the sector that “we weren’t doing too bad really!” The input of Celtic Youth Bray had been particularly well received.

In saying this there was recognition that there wasn’t such a thing as “normal”; that the diversity of provision was huge; and that there was still some difficulty in describing the youth work process in view of that huge diversity. However, there was much similarity and synergy in the work being carried out, even if it was in different processes and with different audiences. From this it was felt that most workers were facing the same issues and dilemmas and as such there was a huge resource there in terms of sharing experience and learning from one another.

The current environment for young people was also identified as an important element to be aware of. The inputs of the keynote speakers had a significant impact on participants and the whole uncertainty of life facing young people is a real and current issue for them. The importance of the youth worker and organisation in providing support through this time cannot be underestimated.

Lastly, the importance of the continued professional development was a focus for many. The professionalism and passion of workers was acknowledged, but it was important to continually evaluate and monitor the provision and outcomes. There is a huge opportunity to create a positive environment that will support young people. Simple methodologies can be mixed with new ideas; ensuring that we use our young people as a resource and not just as service users.

Question 2: What particular inputs proved useful and what outcomes will you use to improve practice in your organisation or project?

The overall structure and programme of the conference was very well received and facilitated a positive discussion. The keynote speeches were very relevant with a number of delegates admitting to be shocked at the severity of the statistics quoted by Claire and the issues raised by Dr. Paul Miller and the way in which he presented his thoughts had been eye-opening and thought provoking.

The discussions were very well regarded with delegates commenting that whilst the groups were small enough to be able to participate, they also brought together a huge amount of shared experience.

A key message identified by many however, was the affirmation of the youth worker and their role, and that the underlying ethos of youth work being about “moments not money” made the work worthwhile. Networking opportunities such as the NYCI conference are an invaluable resource.

Many delegates also identified particular outcomes or pieces of learning that they planned to use in their own work. The most common thread was that of having learnt of different methodologies and ways of doing the same work. Many built on the idea of “having shared experience in the classroom, they would share resources and practice in the field”.

As previously noted, the input from Celtic Youth had a particular impact and many delegates identified the development of more formal graduation processes for young people in their programmes such as putting in place leadership programmes, engaging young people in the decision making structures developing award and recognition structures or simply just ensuring a more enabling approach to work that acknowledges the young person as an individual.

Lastly, in this section, there was a certain amount of interest in looking to build partnerships and relationships with other constituencies such as the family, the community, other voluntary structures and even the formal education sector.

Question 3: What recommendations would you make to NYCI to support organisations in their work with older teens?

A number of delegates had made recommendations in respect of operational and practical matters relating to conference organisation. These are not included in this report but have been fed back to the NYCI Board conference sub-group working on the 2010 conference.

All other recommendations relating to NYCI’s work were itemized and discussed by NYCI’s Board at their planning meeting in February 2010. The recommendations and the NYCI Board response are included in Appendix 4 attached.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

9.45 Registration

10.15 Introduction and Welcome

Mary Cunningham - MC

Eddie D'Arcy – NYCI President

Minister Barry Andrews TD – Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

10.30 Key-Note Inputs

The Current Climate/Social Context – Claire Byrne

“Where are Irish Teenagers at?” – Dr. Maurice Devlin

“Where Irish teenagers are at!” – Celtic Youth, Bray

The Impact on young people and their health – Dr. Paul Millar

11.30 Tea/Coffee Break

11.45 Round-table 1 – Setting the Scene/Identifying the Issues

Input – Engaging with Young people

A set of three questions based on the inputs of the panel of speakers – looking at issues such young people’s needs; the opportunities in the current environment; the social, cultural, health and psychological impact of a recession

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Round-table 2 – Models of Practice and Opportunities

Input – Ways and Means of engaging young people

A set of 3 questions looking at experiences of organisations and services in engaging older teen

3.15 Round-table 3 – The Way Forward

Input – The benefits of fully engaging teenagers

A set of 3 questions looking at the challenges and opportunities for organizations and the sector. Consider the relevance to the European Youth Policy,

4.30 Summary of Day and Next Steps

Mary Cunningham MC

4.45 Closing Remarks

Eddie D'Arcy – NYCI President **Appendix 2**

Participants of conference
Michael Kelly (Roscommon Youth Officer)
Aine Campbell (Swords YS)
Michelle Fullam (DYS)
Noelle Muerphy (Linkpoint YS)
Cormac Lally (VSI)
Phil Stapleton (Scouting Ireland)
Justina Chmielewska (Chester Beatty)
Orla O'Shea (LDTF Bay Project)
Honor Sheridan (Club4U)
Sharon O'Connor (DYS)
Liam Doocey (Youth Health Service)
Evelyn Ward (Don Bosco)
David Rock (Methodist Youth)
Robert Mulhall (Lucca Leadership)
Frank Ryan (Blakestown)
Mary Teehan (DYS)
Andrew Fiddow (LDTF Douglas)
Breda Ruane (Co Mayo VEC)
Lisa McKenny (BelongTo)
Orla Doran (Blakestown)
Jacqueline Smith (RYS)
Kevin Mooney (Blarney Street YP)
Bronagh O'Gorman (Foroige)
Jerrienne Sullivan (ECO Unesco)
Jackie Stapleton (Bawnogue YP)
Maureen Dunne (CYC)
Caroline Lawless (RYS)
Shane O'Meara (Day Care Centre)
Tracy Lanigan (Tallaght Travellers)
Patrick McMullin (Claire Youth Service)
Marie Fitzpatrick (Pavee Point)
Niamh Murphy (Kildare Youth Service)
Eva Kelly (RYS)
Joanne Ryan (Day Care Centre)
James McMahon (YAP)
Jean Tierney (Clare Youth Service)
Colm Walsh (CYC)

Sinead Harris (RYS)
Sandra Trappe (Dun Laoghaire CC)
Caoimhe Dunn (Bui Bolg Ltd)
Clíodhna Mahoney (Ballymun Drugs T F)
Aine O'Callaghan (Cork YMCA)
Judy O'Mara (Day Care Centre)
Joe Marken (Scouting Ireland)
Allyson Lambert (CYC)
Eileen Kidd (Ballyfermot TAP)
Finola Gallagher (IGG)
Willie Morton (Dun Laoghaire CC)
David Brown (CIYD)
Fran Bissett (YWI)
Tammy Tallon (RYS)
Ailin Gray (IAYO)
Audrey Keane (Arts Council)
Martin Sanders (CYC)
Margaret-Ann O'Brien (Ballyfermot TAP)
Martin Ryan (No Name Club)
David Backhouse (Cork YMCA)
Sharon Hamill (CIYD)
Barbara Wood (IGG)
Michael Collins (Pavee Point)
Mark Roach (Meath Youth Fed)
Gaye Tanham (Arts Council)
Eddie D'Arcy (CYC)
Adam Benson (Celtic Youth)
Anthony McCormack (No Name Club)
Alan Walsh (SW Inner City Network)
Catherine Little (CIYD)
Jessisca Denio (DYS)
Mark Noble (Longford YS)
Margaret Rodgers (Arts Council)
Jenny Ryan (Sphere 17)
Aine Whyte (KYS)
Dermot O'Brien (Celtic Youth Bray)
Johana Macekova (SW Inner City Network)
Shane Tucker (CIYD)
David Lonergan (DYS)

Andrew Leeson (Foroige)
Daragh Kennedy (Irish Wheelchair Asssoc)
Leona Monaghan (Sphere 17)
Alison Fox (Co.Wicklow VEC)
Phil Duffy (SW Inner City Network)
Jenifer Davidson (DYS)
Paul Gralton (YWI)
Nigel Connor (IDYA)
Mathilde Veldt (Arts Council)
Niamh Cremins (Foroige)
Gemma Plunkett (Celtic Youth)
Tanya McEntaggart (CDYSB)
Cormac Doran (Swords YS)
Ian Walker (Co Louth VEC)
Anne Murphy (DYS)
Deborah Murphy (Linkpoint YS)
Martina Ghat (Copping On)
Elaine Nevin (ECO Unesco)
Irene Helen (Celtic Youth)
Orlaith McBride (Arts Council)
Anne Cheevers (CDYSB)
Noelle Quigley (Swords YS)
Jill Desmond (DYS)
Donna O'Sullivan (Linkpoint YS)
Claudie Mourcely (VSI)
Joan Nicholl (Girls Brigade)
Hedda Dick (ECO Unesco)
Mike Farrell (KYS)
Jenny McGarr (Bawnogue/Deansrath YP)
Grainne Redmond (Rapid Programme Kilkenny)
Patricia Dempsey (Cork YMCA)
Charlotte Doherty (Tallagaht Travellers)
Maria Doherty (Foroige)
Mags Webb (Swords YS)
Jack Gaffney (CYC)

Appendix 3

Delegate Evaluation

Overall Rating

110 evaluation forms were collected. 25 participants did not give an overall mark, but of the 85 who did the conference was marked as follows:

10	10
9	26
8	31
7	14
6	4
5	1

The average mark was 8.3 and of those forms that contained an overall mark 93% rated conference at 7 or more out of 10.

General Approach and Atmosphere

The overriding response is the number of positives identified. Most delegates marked up to 3 or 4 positive elements.

Preparation and Advance Notification

The majority of participants scored this phase as being good or excellent. 61 participants rated the preparation as excellent and 38 good. Ten participants rated the preparation as satisfactory whilst one person thought it was poor.

Presentations

All participants rated the presentations as *relevant/very relevant, stimulating/very stimulating; and clear & concise/excellent*.

As is usual however there was a disparity in the supporting comments particularly in relation to the young people with many participants having thoroughly enjoyed the input whilst a small number felt they “weren’t a true reflection of young people in Ireland” The presentation by Dr. Paul Miller was particularly well received.

Roundtable Inputs

The responses to the round-table inputs were in line with the presentations with the majority rating the inputs as *relevant* and *stimulating*. A small number rated the inputs as *satisfactory*.

Some pertinent comments however supported their use in that delegates found that they gave a background and set the scene for the group discussion to follow.

Group Discussions

Again these were generally well received. A small number of participants felt that they were too long and because of that discussion sometimes wandered off the main topic, but the majority considered that they were well structured and very well facilitated.

Facilities

Participants almost unanimously rated the facilities as *good* or *excellent* and there was particular favourable feedback on the ambience and layout of the room. As always there were some small criticisms. Three participants felt that the tables were too close together and one participant fed back negatively on the quality of the vegetarian option.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that the event was very well received and almost all participants enjoyed everything about the event. Feedback on the facilities and structure of conference were particularly positive. There were some minor dissenting comments in that a very small number felt that they would have enjoyed more speakers whilst other felt that the tables were too close together.

Recommendations to NYCI

Youth Worker Support and Development

NYCI to do more of this type of conference/network opportunity	Ongoing
More events for youth workers/organisations to share experience (also regionally)	Outside the role of NYCI
A question and answer session with the panel would have been useful	Build into next conference programme
More structured issue-based consultations	Included in work programme for 2010
Consider developing a mentoring system for the youth work sector	Outside the role of NYCI
Coordinate youth worker network meetings at a regional/local	Outside the role of NYCI

Organisational support

Continue to provide opportunities to “Showcase” success	Include in work programme
Bring together funding bodies/Government Agencies in Showcase forum	Include in work programme
Act as mediator between projects who could help each other	Outside the role of NYCI
Act as a central bank/distributor of youth work resources	This is the role of the Youth Work Centre
Ensure that Practice initiatives are communicated and shared	Specific web page developed to facilitate this.
Continue to support development of quality youth work – ensure that QSF is not a “tick-box”	Work ongoing
Develop a process to attract more men into youth work	Will be a focus in the volunteering resource
Look at the sector to identify where duplication happens and where savings can be made	Outside the role of NYCI

Youth Participation and Engagement

Involve more young people at conferences/events	Work ongoing
Create more opportunities for young people to participate in NYCI structures	Participants nominated by Member Orgs.
Lead on work to make the sector more appealing to younger volunteers	Will be a focus in the volunteering resource
Develop a model/strategy of youth participation for the sector	NYCI policy and resource pack 'Why don't We?' was launched in 2007. Pack is available to download on www.youth.ie

NYCI Advocacy

Act as lobbyist on issues affecting young people	Primary aim in current strategic plan
Continue work to combat negative stereotyping particularly in the media	Key cross-cutting theme to all the work of NYCI
Promote awareness of issues such as child poverty	Key objective in current plan. NYCI is founding member of the End Child Poverty Coalition
Ensure that all political parties understand the importance of youth work	Key objective in current Strategic Plan
Coordinate a campaign "Positive Images and Perceptions of Young People"	Deferred
Promote "non-capital dependant" youth work. Money is not everything!	NYCI promotes the value of all youth work
Gain higher profile of advocacy work and positive image of youth work	Key objective in current Strategic Plan
Lobby for shorter time-frame for Garda clearance	NYCI works closely with the GUV on all vetting issues
Continue the PR work on awareness of youth work	Key objective in current Strategic Plan

NYCI Practice

Minimise the cost of training	NYCI currently minimises the cost of all training. Most training offered by NYCI is free.
Develop a mechanism for evaluating and measuring impact of work	Key objective in 2010 work plan
Develop a system that measures personal development	Not the role of NYCI
Produce resource pack on grant availability/available resources	Irish Fundraising Handbook - Directory and Guide to Fundraising for non-profit work in Ireland produced by Create. Funding point – is a web based fundraising resource developed by the Wheel, see www.wheel.ie
Look at possibility of integrating parents/families into youth work processes	Will be a focus in the volunteering resource
Continue to support the varied models of practice and methodologies (Youth Arts)	NYCI continues to lead the development of specialist youth work practice in a range of areas
Highlight and support the development of training for volunteers	NYCI is currently leading the development of a National Training Resource for Volunteers
Develop a structure/mechanism for engaging with “hard to reach” young people	Not the role of NYCI

NYCI & the Wider Community

Act as link to bring community organisations working with young people together	Not the role of NYCI
Act as link/represent the youth sector to/with formal education institutions and structures	NYCI chairs the Education linkage group within the C&V Pillar



National Youth Council of Ireland
3 Montague Street
Dublin 2

Tel: 01-478 4122

Fax: 01- 478 3974

E-mail: info@nyci.ie

Web: www.youth.ie