NYCI | National
Youth
Council
of Ireland

8 STEPS
TO INCLUSIVE YOUTH WORK

3rd Edition

Promoting best quality inclusive
practice in youth work settings

NYCI EQUALITY AND INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMME

National Youth Council of Ireland

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It represents and supports the interests of youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people. **www.youth.ie**

NYCI Equality and Intercultural Programme

The NYCI Equality and Intercultural Programme delivers on NYCI's guiding principle 'to seek to challenge all forms of discrimination against young people' as part of its vision 'where all young persons are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society'. The Equality and Intercultural Programme supports youth organisations to adopt a responsive inclusion and diversity approach, so that it is integral to their engagement with young people. The programme works with member organisations and others to adopt practices and policies to promote equality, inclusion, diversity, and responsive youth work through its resources, information, training and advice on any aspect of inclusion, equality and interculturalism. **www.youth.ie/programmes/equality-intercultural**

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to the many youth groups we interviewed in building this resource, some of whom we are sad to say no longer exist. Your work has been inspirational:

Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS),

Friars' Gate Education and Outreach Department,

NYP2, Nth Inner City Neighbourhood YP,

Swan Youth Service,

Voluntary Service International (VSI),

BeLonG To Youth Services,

Foróige:–

- Dublin South (volunteer-led clubs),
- Tyrellstown Youth Initiative,
- Castlebar NYP

Irish Girl Guides (IGG),

YMCA Cork – Ninos Club,

The Base Youth Centre, Ballyfermot,

Ógra Chorchaí, Bishopstown YP,

Youth Work Ireland Galway – SPARK

Localise

No 4 Drop-in Centre, Galway

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FOREWORD

This newly reviewed and edited 8 Steps to Inclusive Practice reflects the journey that NYCI's Equality and Intercultural Programme team has travelled since the first issue of this resource in 2016. Our own inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice involves listening closely to young people who experience exclusion in their everyday lives and reflecting on how the youth work sector can best adapt and respond to meet their needs and support them to fulfil their potential. One such example was hearing the voice of minority ethnic young people whose experiences are described in our research report **Make Minority a Priority[1].** Their voice, and the voices of young people from other minority and marginalised identities that we have had the privilege of working with in the last four years, gives everything we say here a gravitas, and an urgency, to make a difference. **The young people's voices are represented in the self-reflection sections in each step where we sought to recreate the process of our own journey of reflection, and those of youth workers, who themselves are reflecting on their inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice.**

Youth work has made a significant impact in the lives of many young people from minority and marginalised identities. How youth work organisations have done this is at the core of this resource, with quotes from youth work practitioners incorporated throughout the text. These come from interviews with 16 youth work organisations. While each organisation we interviewed differed in their approach, often significantly, the common thread for all had been finding ways to adapt, upskill, understand, and reach out to young people from minority and marginalised identities. They all described it as hugely rewarding and energising work. It is also clear that **youth work organisations that prioritise inclusive practice are key actors in creating resilient communities who repel hateful narratives** that stoke up fear and incite protests. **This resource, therefore, presents indicators of inclusive practice that are grounded in the reality and demands of youth work provision** – both volunteer-led and staffed youth work.

Also new, is our framing of inclusive youth work as a critical practice that takes a social justice approach and challenges structural inequalities and systems of oppression. We call this practice Responsive Practice. By this we mean that we are responding proactively, with an awareness of prevailing systems of inequality and with a social justice lens. Adopting a social justice lens means that we seek to reverse inequalities by looking at access, equity (meeting needs to overcome inequalities), rights, participation (especially in decision making) and diversity (recognising and respecting difference). This approach is woven into the **Understanding Our Context sections in which each step is explored through an inclusive, diverse, and responsive lens.** For example, in Step 5 we apply an inclusion and diversity lens to the seven personal and social development outcomes.

We developed this resource because we know that inclusive youth work practice can be hard to articulate. Many wonder if they are doing enough, or they seek clarity on knowing what is enough when demands are so high and resources so few.

This resource was designed to guide you on a journey you are no doubt already on and to give clarity to what is involved in an equality-led and inclusive practice. How you work toward change, and the reflective practice involved, will be the key evidence of your inclusive practice. This resource is designed to clearly set out what you are working toward and furthermore to frame it under key national youth work policy outcomes. We look forward to journeying with you.

September 2024

Anne Walsh, Equality and Intercultural Programme Manager,
National Youth Council of Ireland,

[1]Make Minority a Priority, NYCI 2017 www.youth.ie/articles/make-minority-a-priority-report/

INTRODUCTION

What is this resource about?

This 8 Steps to Inclusive Youth Work resource can help you:

› Report within the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF),

› Write your continuous improvement plan,

› Develop a logic model or work plan toward realising the Objectives in Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work 2024 – 2028 and Core Principles and Standards in the NQSF.

› Report on the seven personal and social development outcomes for young people under UBU funding reporting guidelines,

› Meet your responsibilities under equality legislation,

› Follow the commitments set out in your organisation's diversity, equality, integration or inclusion policy,

› Act as an assessment and planning resource as you work toward developing an inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice,

› Understand inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice through a social justice framework (see more on this in Annexe 1, pages 77-85),

› Reflect on your personal and organisational practice,

› Begin a conversation amongst you and your colleagues.

This resource is designed to help you articulate your practice and reflect on how it meets objectives set out in national policy. It is not prescriptive – it is designed to spur you into thinking about your inclusive youth work practice.

Who is it for?

› Do you sometimes find it difficult to evidence how your practice ensures and promotes inclusion, diversity, and equity?

› Would you like to know more about what defines an inclusive, diverse, and responsive youth work setting?

› Would you like to improve your practice?

› Are you involved as Directors, Managers, Project and Team Leaders in reporting to the NQSF or on how you are meeting Objectives set out in Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work, in Young Ireland: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People or under UBU funding?

This resource helps you put your current practice into a framework that will enhance your reporting, and it can support you to further develop your inclusive practice.

Why do we need this resource in the youth sector?

The NQSF talks about "ensuring and promoting equality and inclusiveness" as a core principle of youth work. Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work states that young people should be "respected, and included", that "an equality and rights-based approach is embedded", and that "youth services reflect the diversity of the Irish youth population". Many groups struggle to know if, or how, they are meeting these criteria because there are no set indicators or measures on equality and inclusive work, and each organisation will approach it differently. This resource offers a comprehensive set of indicators, examples of good practice, a guided self-reflection, and an understanding of inclusive practice in a wider social justice context. The indicator checklists have been set out under 8 key steps, or aspects, of everyday youth work practice to demonstrate how good inclusive practice will be evident and measurable across all of your youth work practice. We therefore look at our inclusive work through a familiar set of youth work practices while also linking directly to the NQSF Core Principles and Standards, and the Objectives in Opportunities for Youth. Many of the indicators link to the Outcomes in Young Ireland especially Outcome 5 – that young people are Connected, Respected and Contributing to their world. We stress that young people cannot contribute until they are connected and feel respected.

How can you use it?

In each of the steps, you will be assessing your work against the suggested indicators together with self-reflection of your practice and deepening your understanding of inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice from the context sections. The various practice examples given in the quotes throughout the text are designed to help you identify and articulate your own practice. You will start by achieving a number of indicators in each step, building up over time to meeting more. Although the steps are laid out in a logical sequence you can start at any step and move on to whichever is most relevant to you at that time. It is really important that you work with your team – perhaps exploring a step at each team meeting and deciding who will take a lead on different actions (see ideas for how to work with this resource as a team in Annexe 2 pages 86 - 89).

As you look at the indicators ask yourselves 'Do we do that?' or 'Could we do that?'. This will help you articulate your own practice and develop your action plans simultaneously. This is NOT an additional piece of work on top of your other reporting processes. The evidence and anecdotes you tell in answering the questions will be the direct evidence that you can use to report under Objective 2 in Opportunities for Youth, and NQSF Core Principles or in any other reporting process you are involved in. **Your story will be different to others; there is no one way to be inclusive.**

In practice, no youth work organisation will meet all the indicators set out in each Step. They present an ideal scenario of what your organisation can achieve. You may find that you have achieved or could adopt a number of the practices in some steps, but struggle more with others. Some steps may become long-term goals for your organisation. This resource can help you map out the direction you wish to take over the coming years: by looking at what others have done, by using the self-reflection process, by building your understanding, applying an inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice lens, and deciding what is possible.

A note on terminology

'Minority and marginalised young people'

In this resource we use the term 'minority and marginalised young people' or 'young people from minority and marginalised identities' to represent the range of young people to which we refer when we speak about inclusion, diversity and equality. This mirrors the language used in national policies. Young Ireland and Opportunities for Youth refer to 'Groups who may face additional challenges' and 'particular barriers to opportunity'. They name groups which align very closely to the contexts and lived experiences of minority identity groups that we use:

> **Young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Travellers, Roma,international protection applicants (asylum seekers) and refugees (approx. 18% of all young people, Travellers represent 1% of the population),**

> **Disabled young people (including physical, sensory, intellectual, neurodiversity, learning disability or difficulty difficulty (approx. 10% of all young people, Autism is 1.5% of the population),**

> **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Intersex (LGBTQI+) young people (including those who are gender non-conforming). 8-11% of all young people identify as LGB; it is estimated that approx. 1.7% are transgender; 2.5% are unsure of their gender or identify as non-binary, and about 1.7% are intersex),**

> **Young carers (estimated to be as high as 8% of all young people),**

> **Young people with mental health issues (up to 25% of young people),**

> **Young parents (Mums and Dads)*,**

> **Young people involved in the juvenile justice system*,**

> **Young people who are homeless*,**

> **Young people who are not in education, training, or employment*,**

> **In all the above, gender, class and religion are critical dimensions. Youth work with single gender groups is also relevant.**

* These 4 groups are significant but statistically too small in number to include demographic data.

You are unlikely to be working directly with all of these groups, or aware of each young person's background, but inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice means working in a way that is cognisant of the range of young people who fit into these groups or life circumstances. Inclusive youth work is only partly about **who** you work with – it is predominantly about **how** you work with young people to build a society where discrimination is challenged, where equality is real and diversity is fully embraced and celebrated.

As most funded youth work organisations in Ireland are already engaging with working class young people, this resource has been designed to focus more specifically on inclusion of young people from the minority and marginalised identities listed above. Nevertheless, within a social justice framework, classism sits alongside all other systems of oppression and belonging to two or more identities and experiencing multiple discrimination is a reality for many young people. Many of the groups listed above experience discrimination based on their identity, as well as classism (see more on this on pages 77-85).

'Your organisation'

'Organisation' in this resource refers to all projects, clubs and services within the youth work sector – whether volunteer-led or staffed. **Any youth groups who do not report under DCEDIY reporting structures will find this resource equally helpful in guiding their inclusive practice.**

Getting started: What would good practice look like in an evidence framework?

In evidencing your promotion and provision of an inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice; in complying with equality legislation; and achieving specific outcomes for young people from minority and marginalised identities, a number of indicators are likely to be present.

In this resource we present a range of inclusive practice indicators that you might be meeting or working toward. To present evidence of your inclusive practice, we urge you to tell your own story about how you meet any of these indicators – choosing those that are most applicable to you. Your group or organisation might initially meet only a few indicators on each step, but as you go through it you will see others you can plan to meet over time.

Some of the evidence you identify will be relevant to several NQSF Standards and Core Principles. It will also align with the Objectives in Opportunities for Youth and Outcome 5 in Young Ireland so the same 'story' can be repeated across your reporting framework. The relevant NQSF Standards and Core Principles and details from Objective 2 in Opportunities for Youth that relate to each indicator are coded alongside them using the key set out on pages 8-9.

Use the blank check boxes beside each indicator to identify where your work matches these indicators and think about the evidence you have that demonstrates this. You will have different forms of evidence relating to your organisational work and your direct work with young people.

Examples of practice from youth organisations are presented in quotes throughout the text to inspire and stimulate you to think of the ways that you meet the criteria, or to decide what actions you might take in the future. The rationale behind these indicators will be further clarified by engaging with the self-reflection section in each step and reading the context sections. The self-reflection sections present searching questions and allow you to hear the voice of young people from minority and marginalised identities more directly. As much as possible we would encourage organisations to work with this resource as a team to elicit a range of responses and perspectives and to initiate new actions collectively.

Note: When the NQSF is reviewed in 2025 the coding may differ, however key Principles and Standards for inclusive youth work will remain.

Layout

The layout of each step links directly to how we work toward an inclusive, diverse, and responsive youth work approach. It focuses on how:

> **We connect with values of inclusion and social justice,**

> **We reflect on our practice,**

> **We explore diverse engagement strategies.**

We therefore explore these in each step under three headings:

1. **Understanding the context** - we explore wider social and political systems, and the impact of these on ourselves and our young people,

2. **Our self-reflection** – we explore inclusive and responsive practice as a critical learning space,

3. **Our practice** – we assess our work under a set of indicators that capture the environment we have created that facilitates rich and meaningful opportunities for learning and growth; and the strategies and methodologies we have employed to create inclusive, diverse and responsive youth settings.

KEY TO:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQSF) CORE PRINCIPLES*
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQSF) STANDARDS
OPPORTUNITES FOR YOUTH: NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH WORK

*(we have only included those that are most relevant to diversity, equality and inclusion)

	NQSF CORE PRINCIPLES
1.1	Young person centred: systematic needs assessment
1.2	Young person centred: services responsive to requirements of young people
1.3	Young person centred: services promote the strengths of young people
1.4	Young person centred: young people involved in the design delivery and evaluation of services
2.1	Safety and well-being: provision of supportive environments and programmes
3.3	Educational and Developmental: relevant and diverse programme provision
3.4	Educational and Developmental: evidence of planned and unplanned learning
3.5	Educational and Developmental: developing personal and social capacities and competencies
4.1	Equal and Inclusive: accessible, inclusive and integrated services
4.2	Equal and Inclusive: policies, programmes and practices comply with equality legislation
4.3	Equal and Inclusive: policies, programmes and practices promote diversity, equality and inclusiveness
5.4	Quality and Continuous improvement: commitment to resource effectiveness

● Core Principles

NQSF STANDARDS

1	Planning
2	Practice
3	Progression
4	Monitoring and assessment
5	Policies
6	Governance and operational management
7	Strategy
8	Volunteers
9	Human resource management
10	Collaboration

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH: OBJECTIVE 2

Objective 2: An equality and rights-based approach is embedded across all youth work services and supporting structures. This means that:

2.1	Youth work services reflect the diversity of the Irish youth population.
2.2	Universal and targeted provision work alongside each other effectively to enable the participation and flourishing of young people from all backgrounds and communities.
2.3	Young people are able to meaningfully shape the content of youth work services, schemes and policy.
2.4	Youth work services are experienced by all young people as places of belonging, safety and empowerment.
2.5	Youth work services are actively inclusive and accessible to all young people, including through active outreach to engage cohorts experiencing particular barriers to opportunity.
2.6	Capacity-building on rights, equality, outreach and inclusion is supported.
2.7	Youth services reflect and support Ireland's commitments to promoting equality, including gender equality, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.
2.8	Youth work services and supporting organisations have access to reliable local and national data about different cohorts of young people and their needs.

● Standards   ● Objective

INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE AND RESPONSIVE YOUTH WORK IN A NUTSHELL

In an inclusive youth setting, all young people will feel a sense of belonging, knowing that they matter for who they are, and that they are accepted on their own terms. Inclusion will be "core and seamless" and not an "addition to what we are doing". At its essence, inclusion involves working from youth work or community principles where the focus is on empowerment, engagement, upskilling and capacity building, equity, social justice, and advocacy. It is based on values rooted in the principles of social justice.

If our approach is inclusive, diverse, and responsive, it will be evident across all areas in an organisation from youth work activities to policy and planning. An intrinsic goal will be the active involvement of people from minority and marginalised identities across the organisation – in staff, volunteers, management and at Board level, as well as youth members. Moreover, as our practice becomes more inclusive, diverse, and responsive in our organisations it will also influence how diversity and inclusion is accepted and embraced in the wider community.

To achieve this, inclusive attitudes and values amongst staff and volunteers, along with increased understanding, will in turn lead to good practice. Notwithstanding all the learning and signposting of indicators outlined in this resource, **if an organisation is inclusive and responsive it is usually evident within a few minutes of entering a youth setting – it is a feeling we get that shines out to us with its intent and commitment.**

Creating a space that is responsive to the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities – including those with intersectional identities - will mean that inclusive practice is spread throughout the organisation. Many organisations can describe themselves as inclusive based on practice within some of their youth groups and through some of the staff and volunteers. However, **for our work to be inclusive, diverse, and responsive it needs to be evidenced in all our groups, and a whole organisation approach needs to be in place.**

Acknowledging and valuing the identities of minority and marginalised young people will happen in a variety of ways. **It will involve journeying with young people as they negotiate their own sense of belonging and acceptance for who they are, especially when they take on different identities in different social spaces,** such as being out as LGBTQI+ in one environment and not in others; finding ways to fit into different cultural norms depending whether they are in their home culture or an outside culture, such as the youth group; or negotiating social settings where they feel their life experiences are not understood by their peers (being a young carer for example).

"Our inclusive youth work is not just about working with minority groups – it is also about preventing social unrest such racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, and disablism etc. in the wider community. Our inclusion work focuses equally on building acceptance, understanding and inclusive competencies with the young people we already work with." [Friars' Gate]

Integration is a critical question that is often raised in relation to inclusive youth work

During the research conducted for this resource a group of young people insisted that young people need to be "forced together" (compelled to interact) and that you need to "actively fight against segregation and exclusion" if you are an open and inviting service. They suggested bringing people together on residentials to break down any barriers.

However, many young people from minority and marginalised groups told us that what they need, as a priority, is space and opportunities to spend time separately with young people who share a similar identity and experience.

Other young people from minority and marginalised identities want to be involved in youth groups, to feel just like any other young person with the same interests and they don't want any specific attention brought to their identity.

An inclusive service will try to provide all of these spaces in response to the needs of the young people.

Where young people need a space to self-organise in identity/affinity groups, a youth service can offer their building space, leadership training, mentoring and practical support – such as insurance, child protection training and garda vetting.

Key to inclusion is embracing the unknown and supporting all young people to do the same.

"My understanding of inclusion is that it is what we do, being open to anyone, being a space that is welcoming, and also a learning process. 'Open to anyone' to me means there is always an embracing of new people, of being totally okay with transience, being stable in ourselves, always having the right atmosphere". [BeLonG To]

Minority ethnic young people speaking about the value of having their own spaces:

"I wouldn't feel comfortable to talk and share in a group of Irish people who have no experience."[2]

"That's what this group is about, like giving us a voice, bringing everyone together,… getting different perspectives… just like a community feeling and just like voicing things you wouldn't voice like on the kitchen table… Because we don't talk about this in college, like address stuff we wouldn't normally want to talk about."[3]

[2] & [3] Make Minority a Priority, NYCI 2017 www.youth.ie/articles/make-minority-a-priority-report/
[2] Black female talking about her youth organisation pg. 90
[3] Black female talking about her youth work organisation pg 90-91

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Going the extra mile

A term often used with inclusive youth work is the idea, and need, to go the extra mile. For many youth organisations this is **described as providing additional support to young people during vulnerable times** – from providing them with practical support such as access to phones and IT equipment to advocating with statutory services for them. We also argue that **it means looking at structures within an organisation and deeply challenging the inequalities and power dynamics that exist.** Understanding how our own organisational cultures impact on equality, diversity and inclusive practice is critical.

All youth organisations have a distinctive way of working with young people – most will have particular approaches which they promote and defend as distinct and effective ways of working with young people. They will also have a range of structures and procedures developed to sustain their youth work and to establish, grow and expand their organisations. Many of these structures may become an established and 'traditional' way of doing things. However, these structures and procedures can inadvertently result in social exclusion of some groups and may even result in forms of discrimination. For example, strict adherence to a waiting list process and communicating only within familiar and established social networks will result in exclusion of people outside of these networks, especially those who are new to the community or who have a history of exclusion. Similarly, decision making, and committee structures may make it difficult to introduce new policies or adopt new ways of working to allow for the necessary adaptations to be made to be fully inclusive, especially when diverse voices are absent.

Creating a space that is responsive to the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities always involves adapting our ways of working. This may involve structural changes such as setting up an inclusion committee or dissolving practices that block inclusion. It could demand more team work to avoid young people falling through gaps or missing opportunities. Change can challenge staff and volunteers, but youth work organisations take pride in being learning organisations for all.

Minority ethnic young people speaking about inclusion:

"I remember they used to call me on my way in to make sure that I'd make it to the building and like stay on the phone with me the whole time so that I'd literally walk into the building. And like everybody [here] is willing to do so many things for people, the minute they say that they want to achieve something, it's like straight away everyone is there like supporting people and like pushing people, like in a good way though" [4]

[4] Make Minority a Priority, NYCI 2017 www.youth.ie/articles/make-minority-a-priority-report/ pg. 84 Black male speaking about his youth group

Change involves self-reflection and brave conversations. Some organisations we spoke with reflected on the religious foundation of their organisations and how this could potentially exclude some groups. However, they worked through this by focusing on their intrinsic values and ethos and stressed these as being more important than the 'rules' of their religion that could be used to exclude people.

Other organisations reflected on their secular and mixed gender (gender equality) ethos and on how these may exclude young people from some religious or cultural groups. **Honesty, respect, dialogue and grounding our approach in a human rights framework has been effective in leading organisations toward reconciliation of conflicting demands.**

Evidence of inclusive practice may involve describing how difficult situations such as these are worked through, and noting the level of reflective practice, honesty and dialogue involved, even when positive results are not yet evident.

All the youth organisations interviewed for this resource spoke about the **positive energy and pleasure they gained from their inclusive work.** Their overriding advice was to say how important it is 'not to be afraid to ask questions'. They described how **it isn't easy work, but it is essential work.**

The following 8 Steps will hopefully guide and accompany you on your journey.

"In some ways we went into it in a naïve way. We just saw young people [from minority ethnic groups] who wanted to get involved. It seemed like a really organic thing for the organisation. But it's transformed our youth programmes in such a positive way." [VSI]

1

ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

STEP 1 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

UNDERSTANDING OUR CONTEXT

An organisational review involves undertaking an assessment of our current practice. It allows us to stand back and take a strategic approach based on evidence, it helps us to build links across the community, and to put the resources in place to engage with, and include, people from different minority and marginalised identities. It allows us to re-think and re-evaluate our approach to inclusion and diversity.

When looked at through an equality, inclusion and diversity lens our review and planning process will lead us to further deepen our youth work practice.

It helps us decide what will work best for the young people we want to include, and also for our organisation. It will point to the adaptations we need make to the way we have customarily worked.

An inclusive youth service will work toward having young people, staff, volunteers, and management that reflect the diversity of our communities. It usually involves including young people from minority and marginalised groups in our mainstream youth groups but can equally involve working with, or creating spaces for, single identity groups where requested by the young people from minority groups themselves. An organisational review will collate data on diversity in the community and will explore ways to measure the levels in the youth organisation to assess the relative degree of diversity that is present. It will assess what would be most beneficial to the demographic in the community and to consider the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities not met by other services?

An organisational review will ensure that programmes and practices that promote equality, respect and social justice are present throughout the organisation and that they build competencies in all young people to live and thrive in diverse communities.

"

"Having data collection in place such as asking about ethnicity and having gender identity options that includes non-binary in our registration forms have been important for us to know about our current levels of diversity." [NYCI]

"A review will ask if you are adhering to the mission statement of your organisation and remaining consistent in the type of service you run and what you offer – if not what needs to change." [VSI]

"We focussed on building capacity of staff and volunteers and working with volunteers from minority groups. We found that a good way to introduce ethnic diversity was to bring in volunteers from overseas (see Step 4)." [NYP2]

"It takes long term planning. For example, organising international exchanges which can help build openness and awareness. (See Steps 4 & 6)." [IGG]

"

Inclusive youth work often starts from staff and volunteer's personal commitment to equality and inclusion before knowing the specific needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities in the community, so most youth organisations are already doing some inclusive youth work. **An organisational review allows you to be more strategic and to see what more needs to happen.**

Inclusion and Diversity – unpacking the meaning behind the words

"Diversity is being asked to the dance, Inclusion is being asked up to dance, Belonging is dancing in the style you want, Equity is getting to choose the DJ every so often"

Dereca Blackmon quoting Verna Meyers

Diversity describes just one aspect of inclusiveness: the extent to which an organisation involves people from diverse backgrounds or communities as Board members, management, staff, volunteers, and members.

Inclusive organisations not only engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds but, more importantly, they are learning-centred organisations that value and incorporate the needs, assets, contributions and perspectives of people from different minority and marginalised identities into the design and implementation of the youth work practice.

Inclusion embraces the concepts of awareness, understanding, acceptance and adapting. Each individual is valued for their distinctive skills, experiences and perspectives. Inclusive practice fosters an environment where people from minority or marginalised identities feel empowered and where they fulfil their potential.

In an inclusive culture, people feel valued, listened to and respected, all if which create a sense of belonging.

> "It happens in that we're out there, we're in the community. As a worker on the ground you establish the youth needs within the community. Then we ask what appropriate responses we can put in place. It relies on the analysis the youth workers and volunteers on the ground make. That's where it stems from." [KDYS]

> **"Our youth service has a volunteer structure under which we set up an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee and it has decision making powers and funding." [IGG] (see Step 4)**

> "We identify key organisations such as support groups, inter-agency partnerships and other youth work organisations that we need to network with." [KDYS] (see Step 7)

> "It's important to explore ways to adapt your structures, practice and programmes in order to be fully open and inclusive." [Friars' Gate]

Equity is a concept that differs from equality in that it prioritises the actions that need to be taken to ensure fairness for everyone based on meeting the different needs of diverse groups. For example, ensuring access for wheelchair users, providing transport for those that can't attend without it, providing gender neutral toilets, etc. At its essence it involves sharing in decision making, and power.

Inclusive organisations pay attention to power relations and the distribution of power within youth organisations (on a micro level) and in society (on a macro level) and how these impact young people and families from minority and marginalised communities. This approach demonstrates our commitment to social justice; to advocating for equal access, equity, rights, participation in decision making, and recognising and respecting difference.

Inclusive practice requires a culture of inclusive leadership, where leaders promote an environment in which people feel comfortable to contribute their true self. This involves building trust, respect, and a feeling of safety within an organisation. Inclusive leaders acknowledge when things go well and share responsibility if/when things go wrong.

"We reviewed the fundamental pillars of our work and adapted them to be more inclusive. We made our religious services ecumenical, and we changed the wording in the Guide Promise to include diverse religions and none. We also made a commitment to put our publications through an inclusion audit." [IGG]

SELF-REFLECTION

Reviewing what you need to do as an organisation – hearing the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities - and assessing your capacity to act

Questions that allow you to think about some of the issues that can impact on young people from minority and marginalised identities:

> How hard would it be for young people and their families from a range of minority and marginalised backgrounds to communicate their needs to your organisation?

> What needs are you hearing from young people in the community?

> What young people are you listening to? Whose voices might not be heard?

> What research is getting your attention? What research needs to be done?

> How are you hearing what is relevant for your members?

Suggestions

> Develop a simple auditing system to look at how you communicate what you do with the community and other services

> Develop an accessibility audit/review to identify areas that may need your attention to make your organisation more accessible - from the physical space to having access to transport and the resources to access your service.

> Allow time and resources to creatively adapt your service to the specific needs of minority and marginalised young people. Examples might include providing opportunities for single identity spaces; working with single gender groups; figuring out how to connect with the hardest to reach; getting relevant equipment and resources that make the service more accessible.

> Allow time and resources to build relationships with parents and guardians to foster trust and understanding.

> Think of ways to adapt your ongoing programmes and services in order to respond to the needs of minority and marginalised young people, as well as fostering inclusion, diversity, and equality with your current groups of young people.

> Consider how you will maintain ongoing contact with and support for the young people from minority and marginalised backgrounds when their formal/organised engagement with you ends, if they still want or need it.

"A review will ask if your 'open door' policy is meaningful, i.e. whether young people from minority and marginalised groups know about and feel they can easily engage with your organisation, that they know what you offer, how safe your organisation is and how to join. Going out to meet the young people directly is crucial." [NYP2]

"We network with other organisations in our community to collectively look at meeting the needs of as many young people from minority and marginalised groups as possible. And we identify groups in the community we can refer young people to that have needs that we can't meet. This also helps avoid duplication of services." [KDYS]

"Young people from a minority background may experience a range of personal issues such as isolation; confusion over their identity; uncertainty about their future; stress/trauma; vulnerability to exploitation; and so on. These needs are often hidden but it should not be assumed that if a young person doesn't express a need that they don't have any, especially those related to their identity. It may be that they find it hard to describe, or they don't think you will understand their life, culture or circumstances." [NYP2]

① OUR PRACTICE ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION	
A 1.1 1.2 1 2 7 2.5 2.8	**NEEDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:** • We have a record of statistics on local demographics such as religious and ethnic groups, and we are aware of disabled young people in our community, young carers, LGBTQI+ young people, young parents etc. • We are responding to a piece of research that identifies the needs of young people from minority and marginalised groups. • We are seeing emerging needs from young people at our service or in our community. • Schools or the HSE have made referrals to us. • We have completed a self-assessment process to identify issues relating to minority and marginalised groups that we hadn't considered (e.g. NYCI Access All Areas Diversity Toolkit checklists).	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
B 1.1 1.2 2.1 1 2 7 10 2.5 2.6 2.8	**YOU HAVE ASSESSED YOUR CAPACITY:** • We participate in local inter-agency networks to ensure collaboration, to maximise capacity and to prevent duplication. • We have mapped other services and support organisations (including places of worship) in the area. • We have a list of relevant organisations we can refer young people to as needed, especially when we can't meet their immediate needs or if we can't currently work with them. • We have ensured the openness of staff to adopt new approaches, and work with new groups through mechanisms such as supervision, staff planning and training etc. • Staff and volunteer training needs have been identified. • We have completed an accessibility review – of our space and activities – with the needs of all minority and marginalised groups in mind and with a focus on adaptations that we can make.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

● Core Principles   ● Standards   ■ Objective

YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION

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RESOURCES ARE IN PLACE:

- Staff, volunteers, funding, expertise, materials, training, premises and access to the targeted minority and marginalised group(s) we are working with, or are planning to work with, are in place.

See more on Resources in Step 6

2

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

STEP 2 POLICY AND GUIDELINES

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

When our work involves new approaches and practices it is important to document it. The best way to do this is by developing a policy or guideline document. This becomes a roadmap that keeps us on track, provides a structure that supports the work and a guide when challenges arise. It is connected strongly to practice; as an organisation, we build and own it, and everyone in the organisation buys into it.

An Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy[5] – or alternative document such as Practice Guidelines, Statement of Practice, etc., – lays out a route to inclusion for us and others to follow. It is where we state what we stand for, what our values are, and it documents the practice we believe in.

A policy lays out our goals and guiding principles on inclusion along with how we are going to achieve this. It places the work we are doing in a legal context by citing equality and human rights legislation, and how the legislation relates to our work and our responsibilities toward young people from a range of minority or marginalised communities.

Youth work is described in equality legislation as service provision. Under that heading there should be no discrimination (within what's termed 'reasonable accommodation') toward any person whose identity comes under the nine grounds. In addition, Public Sector Duty legislation requires those of us who receive significant state funding to take proactive steps to actively promote equality, protect human rights and combat discrimination. As such, we are required to consider how we will advance equality for the groups protected under the nine grounds and how we will protect the human rights of all citizens. Under equality legislation and Public Sector Duty, positive action (i.e. positive discrimination) is encouraged.

"Policy should always be connected to practice. Our practice guided our policy especially when we developed new areas of work, for example, when we wrote our transgender policy. The policy sustains and cements our practice by ensuring continuity should staff leave."
[IGG]

"With the LGBTQI+ work, we've been doing a review of what we have in place, in terms of policies across the board, and looking at some areas that need attention. That comes out of how the work progresses and from the fact of having areas of work that we hadn't really thought of previously. We've taken a fairly clear stance that generally all our policies have come from the need on the ground."
[Youth Worker, KDYS]

[5] We use the term Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy in this resource, but you may have a different title on your Policy or Guidelines document. By naming Equality, Inclusion and Diversity it allows you to address all three concepts individually but they can be addressed without having them in the title of the document.

In our inclusion policy or guidelines all these groups, covered under the nine grounds, will be named:

1. LGB, (sexual orientation ground)
2. Travellers, (membership of the Traveller community ground) and Roma (race ground)
3. Women, intersex and transgender people, (gender ground)
4. Black and minority ethnic people (race ground)
5. Disabled people (disability ground)
6. People of faith and none, (religious ground)
7. Lone parents and (young) carers, (family status ground)
8. Married, single, divorced, separated and cohabiting people, (civil status ground)
9. The age ground, (this only refers to your leadership as it relates to older people being excluded from opportunities because of their age)

Note: A 10th ground is anticipated that will be called the socio-economic or class ground.

In addition to those covered by the ten grounds many organisations choose to include:

› Young people involved in juvenile justice,

› People out of education or employment,

› Homeless people,

› People with addiction.

Policies are statements of practice; they will reflect the practice of the organisation and/or the planned for practice. They will have an implementation plan. They should ideally be written in consultation with everyone involved – from Board to youth members. It is crucial that all staff, volunteers, members and their parents/guardians are aware of the inclusion policy and familiar with its content.

"Many make the mistake of using the term 'Equality of Opportunity' which we don't feel is robust enough because it puts the onus back on the young person to 'find us first to take the opportunity we offer'. Similarly saying that 'all our welcome' is not proactive as it still puts the onus on the young person to find us and apply to join. However, making the welcome meaningful is very powerful when it becomes a lived practice. The young people in our group speak about the welcome they feel in our groups and they share the welcome out by inviting others to join." [Friars' Gate]

"The Policy Statement should use the language of 'reaching out to young people from minority groups." [NYP2]

"A policy has to be known and familiar to anyone involved or potentially becoming involved in your organisation. Ideally you would have it on your website and/or named on your publicity about your services." [NYP2]

Headings for an Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

1. The Mission Statement of the group: what is our organisation about

2. Core values that we bring to our work

3. Policy Statement: a clear statement on your inclusive practice and ethos, and what you aim to achieve

4. Who we (as an organisation) are including: name the groups covered in the legislation and any other groups targeted under our inclusion focus

5. Implementation plan: the concrete guidelines for practice in relation to our inclusion and diversity work

6. Responsibility of staff and volunteers: what is expected

7. Accountability: where we acknowledge and assume responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies originating from our organisation (including our members) that impact anyone from groups named in this policy

8. Underpinning legislation, national policy and definitions: Equality Act 2004, Public Sector Duty (if relevant), as well as a definition of human rights and interculturalism

9. Dissemination of the policy: how we will make it known to workers, young people and parents/guardians

10. Monitoring and review: how and when we will monitor, review and update the policy

Your organisation's policy may use the list above as headings, or it may stress the relevant actions involved – the what, who, when, where, how and why. For more guidance on writing an Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy go to go to pages 86-88

"There should be integrity between your Policy Statement and the ethos of your organisation. You may need to relook at your Mission Statement to make sure it refers directly to the inclusion and equality of all young people. Sometimes adding the word 'all' is adequate if it refers to your service being 'for all young people ...' and then is strongly backed up by actions as to how this will happen." [The Base YC]

"A policy is never static. Legislation changes. Staff and volunteers change. Roles change. As our practice improves, we will set new targets. As new challenges emerge, we will identify new guidelines. We will then need to measure our work against our stated aims. A two to three-year review to do this is what we find reasonable." [KDYS]

Legal considerations

Within any policy or guideline document, there will be a statement that young people from named groups have equal access to our services 'on the basis of reasonable accommodation' (such as capacity, and financial constraints etc). However, this cannot be used to absolve us of responsibility and the requirement to demonstrate that we are being proactive (it could be used if we have significant numbers of young people from minority and marginalised groups already and we haven't been able to source the necessary number of volunteers needed to support more young people despite several determined attempts. It can be used if adapting our buildings to be wheelchair accessible is more costly than the resources we have available). We have to be able to demonstrate that we have explored alternative ways of including someone.

The values of the organisation

Key to any policy or guideline development is the need to align it to organisational and personal values. It is important to take time out as a team to explore and name our personal values, and to do the same exercise as an organisation. As a self-reflection exercise it is energising to connect with our values and to share these with our teams. It also helps to enter into a personal practice of asking if we have been true to our values each day or week, or with each group.

Connecting personal values with organisational values is not always easy. It is good to take the time to explore what happens when we feel that our organisational values have not lived up to our hopes or expectations. We may need to ask how, as an organisation, we can get back on track and live our values in our work. Being a learning organisation that supports self-reflection is critical to make this happen. It is helpful to re-look at values as part of a policy review.

"

"Implementation plans are the detailed part of a policy document. These take time to get right; there may be a lot of trial and error in establishing processes and procedures that work. Regular reviews are important."
[Swan YS]

"We used the implementation section to set out an action plan, identifying key goals, timelines and means of achieving it. We used Access All Areas checklists* to determine our key goals and decide on our actions." [IGG]

"You may develop policy rules specifically for your young people. For example, we developed rules on no excessive PDAs (Personal Displays of Affection). And we also place a high value on sobriety which establishes an onus on us as an organisation to give young people social spaces and experiences which are alcohol free. In turn we use this to challenge the traditional practice of only meeting other LGBTQ+ young people in pubs and clubs."
[BeLonG To]

"

*Access All Areas: www.youth.ie/articles/access-all-areas

SELF-REFLECTION

When developed in consultation with the young people policies and practice guidelines are a valuable roadmap that supports you to stay on course

Questions to ask everyone in an organisation to reflect on – personally and collectively:

> ❯ What values do I bring to my work?
>
> ❯ What are the values of our organisation?
>
> ❯ What practice do I believe in?
>
> ❯ What does the organisation believe in?

Suggestions

❯ Reconnect with the usefulness of policies and practice guidelines, not to see them as documents that end on a shelf and are never used but as live documents that guide your work and ground your practice.

❯ Ask who in the organisation has an interest in developing roadmaps so they can identify the policies needed, develop those policies, and review them regularly against the daily practice of the youth workers.

❯ Ensure the participation of young people from minority and marginalised groups who show an interest in the process of drafting your policies.

❯ Use an equity and equality lens when drafting all the organisation policies and strategic plans - for example your bullying guidelines will name identity-based hate (use the Access All Areas Diversity Toolkit checklists as your lens). It is a good idea to incorporate an inclusion and equality statement in all your policies.

❯ Clearly state the position of your organisation on discrimination and ensure there is a step by step guide on procedures and processes to be used when discrimination occurs. It should be easily accessible for the team and the young people.

❯ Introduce or reinforce discussion-based reflective spaces within the team to discuss ethical and value-based issues in order to reach consensus on how the organisation as a whole: responds to discrimination, accommodates diversity, and challenges injustice and inequality faced by the young people and their communities.

"It is important for the youth workers and youth leaders to have a policy that translates on the ground. If the policy or the procedure doesn't spell clearly what is expected from you as a youth worker it becomes tricky and relies on individual styles of challenging abusive language for example" [The Base YC]

"You need to state how you will deal with issues such as racism, homophobia, disablism and sexism etc. These may vary depending on the source i.e. staff versus youth members. You may have a policy to use restorative justice for example." [KDYS]

"Inclusion sits within our Code of Conduct which every young person has to sign. It has a very clear outline of our inclusion policy and what the young people can expect and also what is expected of them: so, it's a two-way contract. It would cover stuff like racism etc."
[Artistic Director, Friars' Gate]

"Young people should be able to influence your policy through consultation. Policies aren't just important at organisational level – statutory level policies also impact young people. Young people from minority and marginalised groups should be given opportunities to influence national and international policy (for example, through Young Voices, various youth consultations, getting involved in referenda and voting etc.)." [The Base YC]

"Familiarity with policies, statements of practice, guidelines or group contracts can be beneficial when incidents occur outside of youth centres in schools or the community. Young people can apply their knowledge of policy content along with their negotiation skills to deal with conflict (such as working through an issue to find resolutions or standing on their principles of respect and solidarity to support someone)." [Friars' Gate]

"Influencing policy at a higher statutory level is critical as it directly affects the young people you work with and others in the community. Organisations that have the capacity to do so should feed where possible into submissions and advocacy work. The development of the National Youth Strategy and the Department of Education's anti-bullying guidelines are examples of where youth organisations have played a key role." [BeLonG To]

2 OUR PRACTICE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 4.1 4.2 4.3 5 2.5	**POLICY** • We have an inclusion, equality, and diversity policy in place. • Our inclusion, equality and diversity policy is mirrored by our practice. • Our inclusion, equality and diversity policy aligns with our values and ethos. • We publicly share our inclusion policy or statement (e.g. on our website) and make parents, guardians, and families aware of it. • Our policy is known to all staff and youth members.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
B 4.1 4.2 4.3 5 2.2 2.4 2.7	**EQUITY** • We have made reasonable accommodations (adaptations based on equity of service) to proactively include young people from a range of minority backgrounds, for example LGBTQI+, disability, minority ethnic, Travellers, young carers, young parents etc.; such as providing disability access, change of meeting times, single gender groups, outreach to schools, childcare facilities, etc.	○
C 4.1 4.3 5 2.7	**STATEMENTS OF PRACTICE** • Inclusion is explicitly stated as an aim of our work, for example in other policies and strategies in our organisation including our mission statement.	○

● Core Principles   ● Standards   ● Objective

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
D 2.1 4.1 4.2 4.3 5 2.4 2.5	NON- DISCRIMINATION PRACTICE • Our organisation is open and genuinely welcoming to people from all religions, beliefs, and none. • Our organisation's staff and volunteers feel confident in addressing racist, xenophobic, sexist, classist, disablist, islamophobic, homophobic and transphobic comments, and behaviour.	
E 4.2 5 2.6	STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS • Staff and volunteers receive training on equality issues, including their responsibilities under our organisation's equality, inclusion, and diversity policy, and under equality legislation and public sector duty (if relevant).	
F 4.2 5 2.4	REPORTING • Our organisation has procedures and processes for breaches of the policy, such as incidents of bullying, use of hate speech or hateful behaviours, discrimination, and prejudice.	

● Core Principles　● Standards　■ Objectives

3

SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

STEP 3 SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Making our youth centres safe, approachable, and welcoming is critical to engaging with young people from minority and marginalised backgrounds. Try to imagine how your space and environment looks and feels to someone who is unfamiliar with it and who may well think that it is a space for other young people and not them.

Many youth organisations rent or share spaces, and this may limit how much we can adapt the physical setting, but youth workers often find creative ways to positively affect the spaces they use. Advocating for changes in shared spaces is also beneficial for everyone in the community as whatever is put in place for one group always benefits more people in making it safer and more welcoming[6]. Accessibility is important. Some groups may have accessible buildings for disabled people, but even these may need adaptations to be fully inclusive of an individual's specific needs.

It is important to see our youth spaces not just as rooms and a building, but also as all the people who use the space. We would then ask if all our youth groups are welcoming and inclusive, and if not what needs to be done to change this (see Step 5)?

We should think of our space and environment as also stretching beyond our physical building into our presence in the community - sometimes our space and environment will change to an outreach or street setting, sometimes to events we organise or our presence in the media or our own social media. It includes how we are perceived through the messaging we put out – such as notices about joining the group, getting involved, etc.

"We use public events – such as youth days - to promote inclusive practice and get groups mixing and working together." [KDYS]

"Use your walls well. We prominently display our Code of Conduct/Group Agreement which includes strong inclusion statements. We also put up other inclusion and equality themed messages and posters such as Stand Up posters etc." [Foróige]

"In our promotional material, we think about the language and images we use with an equity lens. We avoid jargon and use plain English. Where possible we would include maps to our meeting places in any of our written material." [IGG]

"Visit schools to tell them about your work and use the opportunity to demonstrate your inclusive ethos." [NYP2]

"Local media, our brochures, newsletters and our website are used to tell the public and our own leaders and members about our practice and highlight our inclusive ethos. We use visuals that portray diversity but are not tokenistic." [Foróige]

[6]This is known as the Universal Design Model. For example, access for wheelchairs benefits parents using prams or buggies, removing obstacles for people with sight loss makes it safer for all, etc.

Safer space

Inclusive spaces will also be safer spaces. Beyond our physical spaces, we strive to create an environment conducive to sharing, learning, and growing, an environment of care, connection, and active engagement. However, we will be aware that we work with people who experience specific inequalities, for example LGBTQI+, minority ethnic or Traveller young people, disabled young people, or young parents etc., and also those who experience intersectional discrimination (those who experiencing multiple discrimination due to having two or more minority identities such as a disabled person of colour, a female Traveller, an LGBTQI+ person of African descent etc.).

Discrimination and oppression are experienced at a number of levels – directly as individuals, systematically at institutional and structural levels, and at intergenerational (historical) levels (see pages 77-78 for more detail on this). All of these experiences become evident to minority identity groups as experiences of power that are reproduced across all of society. This can be equally true of youth work settings unless we work hard to prevent it.

One of the ways to alleviate and address the effects of this on our youth members and colleagues and to challenge our own practice, is by creating "safer spaces". A safer learning space is created when the identities and lived experiences of people from minority and marginalised identities are acknowledged and respected. Safer spaces allow for minority and marginalised voices to be articulated, heard, and understood. This happens through dialogue, and the exchange of ideas in a "supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, and a willingness to learn from others"[7] and where physical and mental safety are prioritised.

A safer space is one where people from minority and marginalised groups feel that it's their space to participate in, to freely contribute and where they do not feel intimidated by majority voices that may prevail. It is a space where difficult issues are discussed and addressed. It is where power dynamics, and the effects of our behaviour on others can be examined.

"We state in our literature if our service is wheelchair accessible." [KDYS]

"There's a lot of softer work that goes on in the corridors and other places. The kitchen is the heart of the centre and we don't distinguish between staff and young people there – so the softer stuff (the really good youth work) happens here too. It's about ownership of this service being for everyone– always subtly sending out the message that this is everybody's space".
[Swan Youth Service]

"There are personal topics that we [minority ethnic young people] need to talk about. There must be some way of bringing up this dialogue. You need to feel safe and comfortable talking about it".[8]

"All our toilets are unisex to meet the needs of transgender and binary non-conforming people. Sometimes just relabelling your current toilets to include both genders will work. There's some great gender-neutral door signs you can get." [BeLonG To]

[7]Coalition for Safer Spaces, 2017 https://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/
[8]Make Minority a Priority, NYCI 2017 www.youth.ie/articles/make-minority-a-priority-report/ pg. 90 Young person from central Europe talking about youth work spaces.

However, in difficult conversations we cannot guarantee that everyone will feel fully 'safe', that a person will not be triggered by something that is said or done by others in the space. This is why we use the term "safer space" instead of "safe space".

Although we strive to create the conditions that aim to prevent someone feeling unsafe, we acknowledge that a space cannot be safe in absolute terms and recognise that not everyone experiences spaces in the same way, so any set of guidelines established to create safety may not respond to the needs of everyone.

Creating safer spaces is a collective responsibility and always a work in progress. It is a concept that puts the young people - and their needs - at the centre. Young people, and all persons involved, will have a say in what an inclusive service means for each individual. It will involve drawing up a group agreement to include staff, volunteers and young people. The group agreement (group contract/code of behaviour etc.) will highlight the need for respect within the group and state how this will happen. For example, it will address the use of chosen pro-nouns, it will prohibit terminology that is racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, disablist, classist etc. It will also say what will happen if the safety of the group is broken. To see more about creating safer spaces see pages 84-85 in this report, and Chapter 1 in Transforming Hate in Youth Work Settings **www. youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings/**.

In youth and community settings, minority, and marginalised groups and/or individuals may ask for a space where they can have time with their own identity group (some groups will also include their allies). In these settings, stricter criteria may apply on what is perceived as a 'safer space' to ensure the necessary psychological and emotional support is provided. It will usually involve criteria on who can be in that space.

"

"It is important to become aware of any discriminatory behaviour and attitudes in your group. You may need to challenge young people through general chats and conversations or through participatory activities on identity, diversity and self-esteem. Don't assume that young people from minority backgrounds don't hold prejudicial attitudes toward others, especially when you are working with different minority and marginalised groups." [Swan YS]

"Space is about safety – ensuring that young people feel safe, including from other groups they might clash with both within our youth space and especially travelling to and from our centre. In our work with young people we emphasise what we expect of them both inside and outside of the youth centre. We agree a contract with them – this may, for example, refer to an expectation of a certain type of behaviour in all aspects of a young person's life such as refraining from racist behaviour in the wider community etc." [NYP2]

"Space is about trust – we go out to meet young people and bring them to our centre the first time and introduce them to staff and volunteers." [NYP2]

"It is important too, that whenever possible, we provide food or drink. And we make sure it's religiously appropriate." [NYP2]

"

SELF-REFLECTION

About creating a welcoming, safer, and respectful space, and reaching out to the community

Questions that young people from minority and marginalised identities may ask:

> What am I hearing about the youth group/service in my community?

> What do I see when I am nearby the youth group/service?

> What do I see when I walk in the door of the youth group/service?

> Will my identity be reflected? Will I see others like me?

> Will I feel safe?

> Will I feel that I can connect with others there?

> Will I be heard?

> Can I be myself there – my true self?

Suggestions

> Ask young people from minority and marginalised groups to contribute to how the space can look and operate in a welcoming way.

....

> Develop a specific focus on your outreach, street work and detached work to engage with minority and marginalised young people.

....

> Connect and start building a trusting relationship with parents and guardians.

....

> Display clearly within the physical space the position of the organisation towards hateful speech and behaviour, as well as displaying the step by step process of dealing with such behaviour.

....

> Offer and share your space with minority groups to build relationships and plan possible partnerships and common projects.

....

> Explore with your team and the young people how to create a "safer" space for all and reach consensus on what to do when it is broken.

"You should allow quite a bit of discussion to make your Group Agreements effective. Young people will have very different views on what is reasonable language or behaviour, and this will need to be teased out."
[The Base YC]

"If young people have ownership over what goes into a Group Agreement they will then ideally self-manage them. Young people may decide themselves what redress is appropriate when an incident occurs. Incidents vary, for example, deciding what to do if someone doesn't show up when they said they would and it affects everyone else." [KDYS]

"We found that we had to review our disability accessibility provision regularly and especially when we started working with someone new who has a disability – for example we had to put in flashing lights as a warning alarm for a Deaf person who wouldn't hear an alarm." [KDYS]

"We are very conscious that our 'space' might be a phone call, an email or our website. Sometimes we will be offering an emergency response by phone or email. We realised that we needed to factor this into our planning and our time allocations as remote contact demands flexibility." [BeLonG To]

"It was important for us to provide an option for parents and young people to meet us face-to-face, we found that people are often more confident communicating in person than speaking over the phone." [Ógra Chorchaí]

"The thing I love about drama group is when you walk in. Usually if you walk into a place you see your friends and you just immediately go to them, but here, because you know everyone you can literally just walk up to anybody and have a conversation with them. It's actually amazing."

"Its important to think about different ways of learning. Provide written notes and texts when someone in your group needs more time to process or to understand something." [Friars' Gate]

"Yeah it's very welcoming ever since the first day I joined. I remember I was shy because I knew no one. But what we do for any new members is we do name games and we make sure that everyone is comfortable. Now it's weird that the older group are gone and we have to be the 'older ones' and you realise 'oh we've to make these people feel welcome'. It's a nice place, every week you almost can't wait to get there." [Youth Members, Friars' Gate]

Young people spoke to us about what they wanted to say to the youth sector:

"Create safe, respectful and fluid spaces on our own terms:

- **Support us to run our own programmes and groups**
- **Facilitate single identity spaces**
- **Figure things out with us"**

"If parents arrive with, or collect young people, take the time and opportunity to talk with them to build relationships of trust." [KDYS]

3 OUR PRACTICE SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 1.4 2.1 4.1 3 7 9 10 2.2 2.3 2.5	OUR SPACE IS VISIBLY WELCOMING TO YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MINORITY AND MARGINALISED GROUPS • We have visual imagery that portrays and promotes diversity (posters, rainbow flags, photographs, murals, project work, charters, etc.). • Young people from minority and marginalised groups contribute to how our space looks. • We have an accessible building for people with physical or sensory needs and disabilities. • Our membership, staff and volunteers reflect the diversity in the community. • Staff members and volunteers proactively engage with members and colleagues from diverse backgrounds (noted in staff and volunteer supervision).	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
B 2.1 3 10 2.3 2.4	ANTI-HATE INITIATIVES • We have anti-hate procedures which are made visible (for example on charters or group contracts that are displayed). • We have liaised with the Gardaí (police) to reduce the risk of racist, homophobic, transphobic, or disablist incidences in the wider community – especially when young people are travelling to or from our centre. • We are satisfied that the space we provide at our centre is a space of safety for young people who are at risk of racist, Islamophobic, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, classist or disablist incidences in the community. • Young people from minority and marginalised groups contribute to building and maintaining our safer space.	○ ○ ○ ○

● Core Principles ● Standards ● Objectives

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
C 4.1 2 9 10 2.5 2.6	**PUBLIC PROFILE** • Our public information is clear and fully explanatory to people who newly arrived and people unfamiliar with our organisation (dates, location, contact details, who can attend, costs, etc.). • Our public information and publications follow clear print guidelines – both in print and website versions (see Access All Areas, Chapter 5, pages 32–34). • We welcome minority groups and families into our space. • We use our outreach and street work presence to reach out to minority and marginalised young people, their families, and communities.	○ ○ ○ ○

● Core Principles ● Standards ■ Objectives

4

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

STEP 4 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The attitude, commitment and self-awareness of staff and volunteers is core to inclusive youth work. If a setting is inclusive it will be evident that staff and volunteers are open and friendly to all. Leadership and support from management is also critical.

Ideally staff and volunteers will come from diverse backgrounds and can relate directly to minority and marginalised young people's own life experiences. It is invaluable to link in, and work with, a trusted adult from a young person's identity group, especially when initial contact is being made.

Inclusive practice in an organisation can develop naturally as young people from minority and marginalised groups in the community become involved: expertise and understanding amongst staff and volunteers can grow, through experience and applying good youth work practice of listening, learning, responding, and empowering the young people. **Often, someone with an interest in equality and inclusion will lead out on the work and as a result the work can be largely person-driven rather than policy-driven.**

Therefore, supportive management and leadership is critical to ensure the work on inclusion is integrated across the whole organisation. All staff and volunteers need to have access to relevant training, support, and supervision. This work will also need to be brought into a policy framework to create an inclusive, diverse, responsive and sustainable service.

As part of ongoing reflective practice and supervision, it is important to listen to and address any fears and concerns that staff and volunteers hold. These can include resistance to change, prejudice, lack of knowledge leading to fear, etc., and it is important to make the right interventions if these are present. Our mission statements and core values can be used to bring up an issue of concern if attitudes of staff and volunteers don't seem to be in alignment with them.

"We have volunteers and staff from diverse backgrounds to help ease parents' concerns. A parent will often listen more if they hear something from a youth leader from their own background. It will also encourage greater participation of young people from minority and marginalised backgrounds and in turn be a positive role model to them. Hosting volunteers from abroad has introduced cultural diversity to our youth groups where it was absent (e.g. through the Solidarity Corps)." [NYP2]

Actually, on reflection, it hadn't entered my head to offer the caretakers, front of house staff, theatre manager and technician the training that we'd offer other staff on inclusive practice. I think actually it would be extremely beneficial from a whole organisation point of view". [Artistic Director, Friars' Gate]

Staff and volunteers are familiar with establishing clear boundaries with young people; this is even more important when working with young people who may be unfamiliar with youth work. It is important that we explain clearly what youth work is, what our organisations provide and about our own professional role in the relationship.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is key to inclusive youth work. The more we learn to listen, hear and understand, the more we open ourselves to diversity and inclusion in our practice. Key to self-awareness and developing our practice is recognising the journey we have already taken and the changes in ourselves we have made over time.

In building our self-awareness we will become more aware of the beliefs we carry. While **beliefs** are what we hold strongly to and see as true, they can, and do, evolve over time and inclusive youth work asks us to be open to having our beliefs challenged.

We will also be acutely aware of how we perceive things, to recognise that the way we see, understand, and interpret something will look different to everyone in the room and it is important to listen and hear these – to be aware of our own **perceptions** and how they are different to other's.

Similarly, we need to conscious of the **assumptions** we bring into our spaces and to understand that we often fill gaps of uncertainty with assumptions and these may not be true. Therefore, for inclusive, diverse and responsive practice to happen we need to be open to gaining new knowledge.

We also bring **expectations** with us into our youth work settings, manifesting as those things we both fear, and hope, will happen. To be inclusive we need to be aware of the expectations we place on young people from minority and marginalised identities and the burden our expectations could place on them. Many already face the weight of expectations from their families and communities.

"Attitudes toward inclusion – on LGBTQI+ issues, gender, as well as cultural awareness can vary amongst staff and sometimes we would struggle with different attitudes that we observe. I think it's important to say that dealing with attitudes on the team is alive and on the agenda. We are not avoiding the awkward or difficult bits".
[Swan YS]

"It's important to be able to challenge any bias amongst staff and volunteers so that you always put the safety of the young people first." [Base YC]

"We are national organisation and we communicate with our youth leaders on inclusion issues through our newsletters and website. We write informative articles covering particular areas of inclusion for each edition. For example, we did on one recently on working with young carers." [IGG]

As part of developing our self-awareness we will also become more aware of our **feelings** and we will notice when these may get in the way of connecting with a young person from a minority or marginalised identity. Feelings are our emotional barometer – a way to check in with what is happening for us at any time. When we are more aware of our feelings, we can respond better in any situation by not letting them disrupt our decision making. By recognising and acknowledging them we can stand back and not allow ourselves to become reactive.

As our self-awareness builds, and we calm thoughts we may have in our heads, we hear better what people are saying to us. As we deepen our understanding, we can respond with more empathy and work toward meeting the needs of the young people. To see more on how we tend to position ourselves when we are in unfamiliar situations and to consider the stages we go through to become more responsive turn to pages 84-85 in Annexe 1.

The more self-aware we become the more we also realise when we might be excluding or silencing people, rather than empowering them. When we hear a young person's personal experiences of inequality and oppression, we can begin to work as allies with them to challenge the individual, institutional, structural, and historic discrimination they face. Learn more on these four aspects of oppression in the Annexe 1 on pages 77-78. Also see page 93 to hear what young people say about inclusion. The poster presented there is a tool we can use with young people and our teams in youth spaces.

Young people asked us to say to the youth sector:

"In committing to standing up for us when we need it [you need to] challenge structural injustice and inequalities."

(See page 93 for more from this discussion)

SELF-REFLECTION

About our attitudes and self-awareness, knowledge and understanding; everything we bring with us into the space with young people.

Questions that young people from a minority identity may ask when they meet the staff and volunteers of your organisation:

> Can I connect with them - will they understand some of what I'm going through?

> Will they look like me or have similar life experiences to me?

> And if not, will they listen, hear and learn from me?

> Will they use language that makes me feel included?

> Will they be self-aware – aware of their bias, privilege, and assumptions?

> Will they support me? Will they advocate for me? Will they have my back and not judge my circumstances?

> Will they deal with any discrimination I experience?

Suggestions

> Review the organisation's recruitment process and identify what are the challenges that may prevent people from minority and marginalised identities from applying, being selected, and engaging fully in the organisation. Once those challenges are identified, develop possible responses.

> Consult sensitively, and as appropriate, with staff and volunteers in your organisation who are from minority or marginalised identities on what they think would facilitate and encourage others from their communities to engage with and apply for roles within the organisation.

> Create recruitment opportunities by partnering with minority-led groups and encouraging volunteer/staff exchanges, work placement and internship opportunities.

> Offer and share the resources, including the space, of your organisation with minority-led groups to build relationships (this could result in a proactive participation in your activities).

> Invest resources and time for the staff and volunteers' training and development in areas of equality, diversity, inclusion and supporting young people through specific issues they may face.

> Engage as staff and volunteers in practicing "brave spaces" on how to facilitate difficult, challenging, and uncomfortable discussions.

> Create critical reflective opportunities for staff and volunteers to unpack, discuss and dismantle some structural and institutional inequalities, and how they manifest within us and how this impacts our practice.

"Involving volunteers from some minority and marginalised groups may require flexibility as references etc. may not be available. Procedures such as Garda vetting may cause fears; be supportive around this requirement. Similarly, youth work practice may not be familiar to them. Be clear, reassuring and pair volunteers with others who are experienced and supportive." **[The Base YC]**

"Things are changing quickly, terminology is changing; what's appropriate today might not necessarily be appropriate tomorrow. You have to try to keep up with that. We did LGBTQI+ training which showed how we could accidentally, just through ignorance, say the wrong thing. So it's being prepared to challenge ourselves and each other. We might say it in a kind of fun way but we're correcting and challenging each other, we're all learning together and we all want to be inclusive and we don't always get it right". [KDYS]

"Minority groups and close friends often use terms with each other that aren't appropriate for others to use. Decide with the young people what terms are okay to use at your youth centre." [YMCA]

"Together with the young people in your groups decide what terminology is okay and what is not." [NYP2]

4 OUR PRACTICE
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 4.1 4.3 8 9 2.4 2.6	SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS • Our staff members and volunteers are trained on inclusion, equity and supporting minority and marginalised young people and this is evident in their practice. • Our staff members and volunteers understand and feel confident to tackle inequalities, discrimination, and systemic injustice.	◯ ◯
B 4.3 2.1	DIVERSE TEAM • We have staff or volunteers from minority and marginalised groups (including Board members).	◯
C 3.5 4.1 8 9 2.6	LEADERSHIP TRAINING • We provide training for volunteers and young leaders from minority and marginalised identities on youth work.	◯

● Core Principles　　● Standards　　● Objectives

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
D 2.1 4.1 1 8 9 2.1 2.5 2.6	**REFLECTIVE PRACTICE** • We have structures in place to support reflective practice – for example, supervision where we address issues of inclusion, equality, and diversity; facilitated staff and volunteer days, etc. • We explore ways to support members of minority and marginalised communities to become part of our staff and volunteer team. • We reflect on any structural and institutional inequalities that may exist in our organisation and explore ways to tackle them.	◯ ◯ ◯
E 4.1 1 9 2.6	**RESPONSIBILITY AND TASKS** • Our role descriptions require staff and volunteers to have an awareness of equality and inclusion issues. • Tasks related to inclusive work are named and assigned in our organisation. They do not rest with one person but across the team. • The person/team with responsibility for inclusion have an action plan and resources.	◯ ◯ ◯
F 4.3 7 10 2.6 2.7	**SHARING PRACTICE** • We share our inclusive practice with other stakeholders, including other youth workers in our region and nationally.	◯

● Core Principles ● Standards ● Objectives

5

ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

STEP 5 ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Our direct engagement with young people, through the activities we do, and the way they are involved and participate on their own terms, is key to how we ensure that inclusion, diversity, belonging, and equity are prioritised.

Meeting young people 'where they are at' presents new considerations when talking about the inclusion of people from diverse identities as activities must be planned and adapted around their varying needs.

Activities need to be culturally and critically responsive. Factors such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, culture and language, abilities, special needs, literacy skills and age need to be considered. For example, this could equate to disability access or adaptability; relevance to different learning and reasoning styles; cultural and religious appropriateness; challenging heteronormativity; etc.

It is also important to be critically aware when looking for resources to plan our activities – to be wary of 'inclusion' activities that present an 'us and them' approach but assume we are only working with the majority. **We need to adapt activities to take account of the diversity that may be in the room (whether the extent of that diversity is known to us or not).**

Involving families in planning is important, parents from a minority or marginalised background are more likely to be concerned about their children's involvement in youth groups. For example, they may not be familiar with youth work, they may be concerned about identity bullying either in the centre or travelling to and from the centre, parents of disabled young people may worry about their child's need being met, etc. We need to build relationships of trust with them.

As we adopt a needs-based inclusive approach we will hear and respond more effectively to the concerns and fears that young people hold. For example, we will become acutely aware of what it may have taken for young people from minority and marginalised identities to become involved with a youth group in the first place, what

"Having a sense of personal integrity is critical for all young people. It gives them the inner confidence to be able to engage with 'others'. This means having a strong sense of who they are and how to manage dual/multiple identities and intergenerational conflict. We find that many young people will have to step out of a home identity and into a social identity that are very different from each other, sometimes several times a day. They need to have support in managing this as often they can feel torn in two and very lost in themselves. In our work every individual is encouraged to be proud of their own identities, background and life experiences even where they choose not to speak about them. Identity-based activities are critical." [BeLonG To]

"We use every opportunity to do identity work by incorporating it into our ongoing activities, both in group discussions and one-to-one work. We use icebreakers and games as opportunities for people to share. At our last residential one group shared games from their childhood. This took some planning and preparation, but it was an invaluable exercise for sharing, remembering and valuing their heritage." [VSI]

barriers and fears they may have had to surmount. We will understand that they will also be thinking about how they are going to keep themselves safe in this youth space.

It is important to look at the specific needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities in the context of our ongoing youth work provision and the approaches we take to support young people to reach their fullest potential. For many youth organisations, this will mean measuring the outcomes for young people under the Seven Personal and Social Development Outcomes model. This model has been adopted by many youth organisations, especially UBU funded projects, as an outcomes measurement framework. **It is important therefore to look at this model through an inclusion and diversity lens** (see extensive examples below).

Core to the seven personal and social development outcomes is a vision that prioritises inclusion and diversity – i.e. hearing from and respecting all young people, assuring rights for all, and supporting young people through the various stages of their lives. Furthermore, the DCEDIY's overarching values state that:

1. Young people are free to participate in a wide range of quality non-formal educational activities, **which address inequality, celebrate diversity, and promote inclusion.**

2. Provision is rights-based and young person-centred, building on the strengths of young people, while being flexible and attentive to their needs, and **encourages a sense of belonging** and ownership.

The Seven Personal and Social Development Outcomes cover the following key headings:

1. Communication skills
2. Confidence and agency
3. Planning and problem-solving
4. Relationships
5. Creativity and imagination
6. Resilience and determination
7. Emotional intelligence

"Decide whether an integrated or segregated approach will work best with the young people from minority and marginalised groups you are targeting. Base your decision on the needs and wants of the young people themselves. Some of our young people from minority and marginalised groups prefer to stick with people from the same background or that have similar life experiences. Others want to 'fit in' to the majority culture and join integrated groups (see Step 1)." [The Base YC]

"We find that if our programme of activities stresses the value of diversity and inclusion – even with our groups that are not diverse – there will be positive attitudinal shifts within each person's life; at home, in their community and at school." [IGG]

The Seven Personal and Social Development Outcomes through an inclusion and diversity lens

We outline below how you can start to look at measuring each of these outcomes through a more specific inclusion lens. In measuring outcomes from a **'distance travelled'** perspective, we need to be aware of different starting points for young people from minority and marginalised identities, due to inequalities that they face, and to have a greater understanding of what progression toward outcomes might look like for them. The following are examples rather than a comprehensive list. However, they should help you to think through possible outcomes for the minority and marginalised young people you work with from an inclusion and diversity lens.

1. Communication skills

› Young people have a capacity to navigate the various spaces they find themselves in and to negotiate multiple social codes, as well as verbal and non-verbal cues. However, young people may perceive this constant negotiation as a source of anxiety. Therefore, acknowledging this as a skill set and supporting them in articulating it could be very beneficial.

› Young people when supported can learn how to articulate the challenges they are facing, express their needs, and advocate for their rights. Communicating the injustice and discrimination they may face is an empowering experience for many young people.

› Young people whose first language isn't English may not feel confident speaking up. Equally young people for whom English is one of their mother tongues can be self-conscious of their accent or their particular way of speaking English; either way there can be fear of judgment, being made fun of, or feeling patronised when told they speak "good English". Acknowledging the talent of possessing more than one language, creatively exploring idioms and cultural specificities, and acknowledging the colonial past that resulted in them inheriting English as a language are some of the ways the young people's sense of pride and dignity can be reinforced.

› Certain speech disorders are considered disabling, therefore creating resourced opportunities for young people with speech disorders to express themselves and communicate without fear of judgement would empower the young people and grow their self-esteem.

› LGBTQI+ young people may dread how someone refers to them – especially for non-binary and transgender young people. They may not feel confident asking for what they need, especially if people get their preferred pronouns wrong. Modelling the use of pronouns on badges, email signatures or zoom names can indicate allyship to young people, while not putting pressure on any young person to disclose their preferred pronoun if not ready to do so.

› Young people whose first language isn't English will want and need to speak to others in their first/second languages – it is often the only way they can fully express themselves, or sometimes be able to understand fully the content of the activities they are involved in. Creating intentional opportunities for young people to speak their languages and introducing buddy systems, especially for younger people, can be a reassuring step, signalling how their whole self is welcomed.

› Young people who use sign language will want and need to communicate with others in integrated settings. Recognising the various ways that they communicate including through interpreters and creating opportunities of sharing and learning with their peers can contribute to their sense of belonging and reinforce the importance of their contribution and participation.

2. Confidence and agency

> Young people from minority identities are often asked to represent or speak for their identity group – within the youth space or sometimes publicly. They often find themselves balancing their need to not stand out and be "just like anyone else" and their need to speak up and ensure their experiences are heard. They may fear being pigeonholed or seen just as an identity and not a whole person. This balancing act is very hard and weighs heavily on their shoulders. Building the capacity of young people to identify when an opportunity is right and express with confidence how they feel about it and what they would need to engage with it reinforces their sense of agency and inner strength.

> Young people are often reluctant to engage with statutory services (health, education etc.) for fear of stigma, prejudice, and stereotyping. This is mainly because of negative lived experiences they have themselves, or from hearing/witnessing the negative experience of others who share their identities. Figuring out how to advocate for a young person and supporting them in building confidence to express their needs and access their rights can strengthen the young person's sense of self-worth.

> Young people often deal with the complexity of their identities within their family structures. The perception or anxiety they may have of 'embarrassing' their family or being responsible for conflict within the family/community can prevent them from confidently engaging. Demonstrating to the young people how non-judgement is one of the core values of youth work and supporting them in negotiating their difficult emotions can build their confidence to articulate confidently their feelings and needs, to both the youth service, and their family.

> Young people from minority and marginalised identities often develop resilience which means they can display signs of leadership and maturity with their peers. Nurturing these abilities and putting in place supports to manage their resilience can be a positive way of acknowledging the skills they have developed out of necessity.

3. Planning and problem-solving

> Young people experiencing exclusion, hate speech or hateful behaviour, identity bullying and discrimination are facing difficult, often violent challenges which, if not supported through it, they may think they need to resolve on their own. It is essential to acknowledge the experience of the young person and to support them with the impact of discrimination and exclusion. This includes supporting them to build healthy coping mechanisms, that encourage them to stay safe while figuring out things for themselves.

> Young people may struggle to plan out their education and career pathways due to various obstacles they may face, such as structural discrimination or expectations from family and community. Equipping your service with the relevant information regarding their rights and entitlements (educational, migration related etc.), as well as stepping into an advocacy role can build a sense of safety and trust while they are planning and imagining a future for themselves.

> Young people, out of necessity, often develop skills that help them manage discrimination and allow them to survive challenging circumstances; acknowledging and fostering their ingenuity in doing so can be a good way to present these as positive coping skills.

4. Relationships

> Young people who experience regular discrimination, micro aggressions and exclusion are often slow to trust people who do not "get it" or have never experienced the same things as them and their community. Acknowledging these experiences, while investing time in building relationships and trust with families and communities, would demonstrate a will to be a part of the young person's life. This could encourage a sense of belonging and of "being wanted" to develop within a young person.

> Young people who have experienced violent or harmful behaviour carry trauma, which sometimes can be generational trauma and trauma shared among a family and/or a community. Forming relationships can be a process that needs a lot of work and commitment, at the core of which is fostering a sense of safety. Consistency, commitment, and continual engagement can contribute to the sense of safety for the young people and encourage a relationship of trust with all involved.

> For young people who may not have grown up in the area they live in, or are from communities who face exclusion, building social capital can be a real challenge. Becoming part of their extended social network, and supporting them to grow their network further, can be vital for young people. This can be especially true for young people when they are looking for work placements, internships, education, or employment opportunities.

> Young people may need single identity spaces with their peers that allow them to be their whole self with each other. They also can benefit from mentors and other role models that share their identity, to hear stories of resilience and in turn to be supported in developing their own.

> Young people can significantly benefit from opportunities to explore belonging and connection, as well as exploring power dynamics and, in so doing, to articulate their right to healthy, equitable and dignified relationships.

Minority ethnic young people told us:

• "Trust us to lead in our various communities.

• Involve us in campaigning, advocacy and in other justice-based work

• Invest in us by training and mentoring us"[9]

[9]Canal Communities Regional Youth Service project with minority ethnic young people: The Story of My Extra Self (see page 93)

5. Creativity and imagination

> Young people need a range of media to be able to explore and express their identity. Investing in and resourcing creative opportunities would greatly benefit the young people. It would encourage them to develop their creativity and help them to discover and hone creative skills they might not have known they had.

> Celebrating young people's identities by actively involving the youth service in annually-celebrated national and international key dates (Pride, Traveller Pride, Anti-racism week, Language day etc.) sends a powerful signal to young people that their identity is part of what makes your service special. It shows that you are committed to celebrating their identity and demonstrates how proud you are of having them in your service. It gives space to the young people to imagine what is possible in all spheres of their life.

> Young people often use their imagination and creativity as tools to shield themselves from the harm caused by discrimination. It can be of great benefit to create opportunities for them to express safely their experiences and to acknowledge their resilience.

> Young people would benefit greatly from opportunities to see creative work produced by artists and creatives who share their identities, and who use creative outlets to articulate their experiences.

6. Resilience and determination

> Young people may tire from having to prevail against adversity - such as coping with stigma, misunderstandings, microaggressions, hate speech or behaviour, identity bullying, fighting for their rights, etc. Such constant struggle results in physical and mental stress, discomfort, pain, and emotional trauma. Sourcing relevant services and programmes that use an equity lens and understand the specifics of how discrimination and exclusion impacts young people would demonstrate to the young people that you acknowledge their lived experience and the discrimination, violence and harm they are facing. This would strengthen the protective factors in their lives.

> Young people will benefit from opportunities to be their whole self, with no expectations made of them, spaces where they are supported to articulate the emotional weight of their lived experience, and where they engage on their own terms.

> Young people are often determined to pursue a particular interest with the hope that it will be their "way out" or the place they can evade discrimination. There is a risk that these interests could be unhelpful. The young people would benefit from opportunities that reinforce and build on their self-esteem and self-worth to ensure that they make informed choices and reach their potential.

7. Emotional intelligence

> Young people who experience discrimination and exclusion, as well as young people who belong to communities who have been experiencing injustice for a long time have often developed emotional intelligence to manage these experiences. By creating supportive structures, sourcing and providing specialist supports, advocating for young people to receive the necessary care and access to the services they need would ensure that developing positive and healthy emotional responses become part of how young people cope.

> Young people need support to identify and articulate their emotions. However, when speaking about their experience of discrimination, they need this to be acknowledged on a personal level and situated in the larger, structural context to ensure it is not individualised. It is important for them not to think that it is their personal responsibility to deal with the consequences of discrimination, but rather to understand that it is a much larger issue with a number of people, institutions and structures needing to be accountable.

> Young people who have experienced challenging times have often developed their emotional intelligence to be responsive to others who may suffer. They often show an advanced sense of empathy and connection with others that they perceive to be vulnerable. Fostering these skills and encouraging their contributions and leadership through projects, activities, programmes, and other opportunities you can signpost them to, would be of great benefit. This also supports them to understand the balance between a sense of enjoyment and pride, and a sense of responsibility and duty.

Inclusive practice across all youth engagement

Key to inclusive practice is how we support all the young people we work with to understand prejudice and prevent discrimination. Where a youth group is relatively homogenous and diversity is low or absent, it is even more important to equip young people to be able to engage well with others from diverse backgrounds.

Activities that support inclusion will involve doing identity work. Building awareness and understanding of our own identities, including majority identities, is key for integration to happen. This includes doing work around privilege and how it impacts power dynamics within relationships.

In building competencies on inclusion and diversity, the terminology we use is important; youth workers often fear saying the wrong thing or of not being familiar with terminology. The best approach is to ask the young people directly what terminology and descriptors they prefer to be used. For example, young people will usually say that using correct pronouns is important, as is pronouncing people's names correctly, but individual young people can often differ on their preferred terminology and they should be the ultimate decider on what terms are used. Also consult with the Access All Areas Diversity Toolkit to gain a more extensive understanding on terminology related to different identity groups.

"Don't shirk the issues of racism, homophobia, transphobia, islamophobia, sexism, classism and disablism etc. You will need to tackle them each time they occur and also in a planned discussion or activity from time to time. Tackle myths when they arise so have your myth buster facts to hand – see Access All Areas Diversity Resource for their myth busting sections." [The Base YC]

See Transforming Hate
www.youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings/
on how to tackle hateful language and behaviour.

SELF–REFLECTION

About our engagement with young people - What we do and how we do it

Some thoughts that young people from minority and marginalised identities may have when they think of getting involved in your service:

> I don't want to feel different, isolated or attention drawn to me.

> I don't want to be asked to speak for others like me, to account for myself, I may not yet understand myself.

> But I don't want my difference to be ignored. It should be celebrated, difference should be the norm, difference should be a positive.

> I want to have someone around who I feel safe to talk with.

> I want to connect, I want to do things where I can be myself, I want to be me, and not conform to the way others want me to act. That way, I can more confidently represent myself.

> I want to be accepted on my own terms.

Suggestions

> Ensure that during planning for programmes and activities you develop and offer options that support the identities of young people, such as their ethnicity, religion, ability, mobility, socio-economic situation, gender identity or sexual orientation.

> Invest time and resources to upskill and train your staff and volunteer team on creative methodologies and ways of engaging with diversity.

> Consult with young people from minority groups and their families to identify their needs on participation and engagement.

"Single gender activities are often necessary to ensure engagement. Some minority ethnic, Traveller and LGBTQ+ groups may prefer to work in segregated groups based on gender." [BeLonG To]

"Intercultural events or festivals are often popular. They usually encourage participants to express their own culture and to experience others. However, such events only address the 'tip of the iceberg' when it comes to intercultural understanding; they need to be followed-up with other activities to have any impact. A well-planned event will make sure to include the majority culture and the best way to do this is to theme them as food fairs, open days, community or fun events." [Foróige]

"Flexibility on attendance may be critical. We do follow ups when people don't attend and reaffirm that they are welcome to return." [Tyrellstown Youth Initiative]

"We found that young people from minority and marginalised groups may look for support after they have left our service especially when services cease due to funding cuts or when they reach our age limits." [Tyrellstown Youth Initiative]

"Waiting list systems can inadvertently exclude young people from minority and marginalised groups as they are less likely to 'have their name down' – consider keeping some places available or operate a 'name out of the hat' or 'eldest first' system when places come available to give everyone an equal chance." [IGG]

"If your current group is quite 'mono-cultural', prepare them before introducing new members, and involve them in planning for this change. We set up a buddy system for new members – groups of 4's worked better than pairs." [IGG]

"Geographical dispersal of asylum seekers can disrupt a young person's continued engagement with you. Look at ways to offer continued support to them and link the young people to other opportunities." [VSI]

"International exchanges can be very effective in bringing an inclusive perspective into youth work". [NYP2]

5 OUR PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 1.3 1.4 3.3 4.1 1 2 3 7 2.2 2.4 2.5 2.7	**PROGRAMME PLANNING** • We have assessed whether separate/satellite or integrated groups are more appropriate based on what young people want.	○
	• We have assessed whether single gender activities are required.	○
	• We have assessed if our activities, including residentials, are fully open, accessible, and welcoming to all, and we have made adaptations where necessary.	○
	• We plan a range of activities, including: • activities free of/low charge, • activities not requiring proficiency in English or high levels of literacy, • activities which build the skills of the young people, • activities that promote inclusion.	○
	• We link young people from minority and marginalised groups with opportunities to take part in activities at national and international level e.g. NYCI's Young Voices, Council of Europe, European Youth Forum, Erasmus+, etc.	○
B 3.3 3.4 3.5 4.1 2 3 2.2 2.4	**PROGRAMME CONTENT** • We run activities which publicly celebrate minority groups, for example youth days with an inclusion focus, Pride events, etc.	○
	• We run activities that tackle discrimination and prejudice and promote inclusion, diversity, equality, human rights, global, social and climate justice, intercultural competencies, etc.	○
	• We do identity work and activities with our young people, including those from the majority.	○
	• We address social justice issues if, and when, they arise.	○
	• We develop initiatives to build positive relationships, such as timetabling groups of young people to meet.	○

● Core Principles ● Standards ● Objectives

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
C 2.1 4.1 1 2 3 2.5	SUPPORT PROCEDURES • We check-in on young people from minority and marginalised identities if they haven't attended for a few weeks, knowing they often face additional pressures in their life, and we keep places for them to return if needed.	

● Core Principles　● Standards　■ Objectives

6

RESOURCES

STEP 6 RESOURCES

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Resources come in many forms: time, staff, space, management, money for activities, support for individual needs, training, and upskilling.

Key to inclusive and responsive practice is ensuring that resources are consistent for the young people from minority and marginalised identities that we work with. This is difficult if inclusion related activities rely on irregular project funding rather than core costs. Devising strategies to maintain a duty of care for young people from minority and marginalised identities after completion of a project is critical to sustain the relationship and keep their trust.

At its essence, inclusive youth work is about responding proactively to the specific needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities. We do this by recognising, understanding and acknowledging structural and systemic inequalities.

We describe this as responsive practice. When we apply this to decisions on how we allocate our resources we will consider a range of issues that we may not have looked at previously.

Responsive Practice

Responsive practice explores how equality, equity, power, oppression, and privilege impact members of the various identity groups that we are working with, including those with intersectional identities. It invites us to ask some key questions – especially in relation to allocating resources to the work:

- What inequalities does this group face and why?

- What structural, institutional, historical and personal discriminations do members of this group face?

- Who holds the power – in our relationship with them, and in the wider community toward this group?

- Do we have privilege compared to this group and how do we use it?

"Taking part in training or attending events has been an invaluable source of new information. It gives you a chance to meet other youth workers and discuss problems and solutions and to use one another as resources." [KDYS]

"When we divided out our existing resources amongst our various groups we then 'inclusion proofed' our decisions to ensure that our inclusion work is not left short or treated as an add-on rather than integral to our work." [Swan YS]

- How will our practice challenge discriminations, fight inequalities, create equities, and empower members of this group?

When we ask these questions, inclusion becomes not just about working with young people from minority and marginalised identities, it becomes about challenging a system at a deeper level. This means putting the resources in place that will make a real difference. In the first instance, it means responding to different engagement needs.

On a practical level this will mean ensuring resources are in place that support access: adaptations to our spaces, adaptable learning tools, transport, food, access to IT and equipment, specialist support such as mental health professionals, etc. It usually means going above and beyond and involves putting personnel in place.

Staff and volunteers who are committed to inclusive practice are our most valuable resource and they need to be supported. Being learning organisations means thinking about the resources we bring to this. What are we reading and sharing that supports our practice, builds our self-awareness, and expands our critical education approach? Do we search out material that is recommended from trusted sources and relevant to our national context – ideally from minority and marginalised activists?

Needs-based resources make a real difference, not just in a practical way but in the way they are used to consistently challenge systemic inequalities. The more we see the need for them the more we take on advocacy roles to ensure that resources are put in place and in so doing we are challenging the system and fighting discriminations. Power is often wielded through access to services. The more we advocate for resources the more we challenge the structures of oppression.

"

Young people asked us to say to the youth sector:

"In committing to standing up for us when we need it, [you need to] support [us] and get involved in justice-based campaigns that fight for our rights."

(See page 93 for more from this discussion)

"Our most valuable resource is our staff and volunteers, the welcome they give, the skills they bring and their creativity in working with groups on issues related to inclusion." [BeLonG To]

"Young people who come from diverse backgrounds may take on a consultative/advisory role and in so doing become a valuable resource to your organisation. They may support your anti-discrimination work or act as spokespersons in advocacy work or represent your organisation at national and international events. They can also youth 'proof' and equality proof your resources." [The Base YC]

"

A responsive practice approach which also pays attention to where funding comes from and whether it comes with demands that compromise your inclusive, diverse and equity-based approach. For example, some funders dictate that we can't work with particular groups, or they ask for information in reports that would be invasive of a person's privacy. Sometimes funder's values do not align with ours. We can look at ways that we can resist restrictions (for example, creating and filling in new categories on reporting templates to include inclusive categories, such as including non-binary gender identities etc.).

It is important to think about how we use our own resources to tackle inequalities in the access to resources within our wider communities. One excellent way is to make our spaces available to identity/affinity youth groups who want to self-organise and need a room to meet in (see Step 1). It also works well to invite minority adult groups in the community to use our space to build trust and relationships.

Resources are not always costly. Youth organisations can avail of a wide range of readily-available, activity-based resources to support equality and inclusion youth work. See **www.youth.ie/articles/equality-inclusion-and-intercultural-resources.**

However, many available resources need to be adapted to working with diverse groups and this is only possible when a responsive practice lens is applied, and we address any inequities and that may prevail. For example, there is a danger that imagery in the resources we use with young people may reinforce stereotypes or activities suggested may not be sensitive to an audience of diverse young people, etc. It is important that we always take an informed, critical, and needs-based approach.

Youth organisations can tap into wider initiatives at community level (supporting human rights campaigns, joining in Pride activities, etc.) which are all aspects of responsive practice. Tapping into opportunities provided by the Council of Europe and other European human rights initiatives can also advance our work.

> **Minority ethnic young people speaking about the value of having their own spaces:**
>
> **"You go in and you're like oh this place is run by people my age [and like me]; You just feel more comfortable; It encourages you to want to become a leader"[10]**

"We found that many anti-discrimination or inclusion based activity packs were written for a majority audience and designed to build empathy for 'others' who it was assumed were not in the room. These activities often use case studies of minority young people's experiences. However, in diverse youth spaces the case studies or topics discussed may be very close to the life story of a young person in the group so it is not appropriate to use them as part of the activities unless you have discussed it with the minority young person/people first and they are happy for you to use it. It is also possible that you won't know everyone's background so, as with all youth work, make sure you create safe spaces to discuss topics that may be sensitive for some." [VSI]

[10]Make Minority a Priority, NYCI 2017 www.youth.ie/articles/make-minority-a-priority-report/ pg. 83 Miscellaneous black young people talking about their youth organisation

SELF-REFLECTION

About allocating resources to inclusion - staff, time, space, materials, money...

Questions that young people from minority and marginalised identities may ask about how committed a youth organisation is to them:

> If I get involved will they put resources in place to stay on the journey with me?

>> Or is this going to be another one-off or short-term project where I don't know if I'll have any contact with the organisation when it's over, until maybe they have more money and want or need me again?

> There is a lot of uncertainty in my life, I need consistency, can I count on them?

Suggestions

> When sourcing funding for programmes and activities, ensure you include the additional support that young people from minority and marginalised groups may need to participate e.g. transport money, personal assistants (PA's), referrals, bursaries that would cover fees and trip expenses, phone credit.

> Look out for opportunities to make your organisation more accessible (software that supports neuro diverse young people; computers, tablets and smart phones that can be recycled to be used by young people who do not have access to IT; free transport; material in various languages, etc.)

> Share resources with local minority groups.

Young people asked us to say to the youth sector:

"In committing to standing up for us when we need it [you need to] lobby for more resources and funding dedicated to working with us."

(See page 93 for more from this discussion)

"Costs can be a barrier for many young people from minority and marginalised groups. We decided on a strategy to support their involvement such as keeping a few sponsored places and waiving fees whenever possible." [The Base YC]

6 OUR PRACTICE RESOURCES

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 4.1 5.4 7 8 9 2.5 2.6	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT • We can demonstrate that we have allocated resources to support our inclusion work and meet the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities (for example staff, volunteers, time, money, space, bursaries, PAs, equipment, software etc.). • We share resources where possible with minority and marginalised communities – for example, we make our youth space available.	○ ○
B 4.1 7 10 2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITIES • We have a file of resources and activities on inclusive youth work that all staff and volunteers have access to and that we apply a responsive practice lens to. • We have the equipment and practical support needed to include minority and marginalised young people – IT, software, transport costs, food etc. • We adapt activities to meet the needs, sensitivities, or abilities of our groups. • We take part in research projects and regional or national campaigns that support inclusion. • We share inclusion related resources and research that we develop with the wider youth sector.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○

● Core Principles   ● Standards   ■ Objectives

7

NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

STEP 7 NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The measure of our equality and inclusion practice pivots on how well we collaborate and network with others to ensure that the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities in our community are met. Inclusive youth work organisations will be open to working with, learning from, and sharing with other organisations. They will be part of the broader community, not perceived as insular or overly self-sufficient. Networking and building partnerships are strategic responses and they will be in line with our organisational review as they take time to build and develop.

Networking for inclusion also involves building relationships with service providers and advocating for the young people from minority and marginalised identities who use their services and often find they are not responsive to their particular needs. This could include services such as health (including mental health), education, employment, and Gardaí (police). Being an intermediary and ally who can ensure that the expressed needs of the young people are heard and responded to is critical, and in so doing we are advocating for equality-led, inclusive and non-discriminatory practice from service providers. In turn, we can then help build trust in the services that a young person may be reluctant to access.

Engaging in inter-agency networks is important to address the needs of young people from minority and marginalised identities to ensure that, where necessary, a wraparound service is in place. An inter-agency approach can identify and fill gaps and determine if duplication of services is happening, for example, when a young person is accessing support from two or more support services. Where this happens one service can pull back if their services are needed elsewhere or they can coordinate their support and ensure the young person receives the same information from both. Moreover, it is critical that at the start of any short-term project, targeted at young people from minority and marginalised identities, that we have already planned how support could be provided from other local services on its completion.

"Give partnerships time to work. We spent two years visiting a Traveller site on a weekly basis before the young people trusted us enough to get involved in the Youth Centre. The two-year commitment was sustained through their partnership with the local Traveller Action Group."
[The Base YC]

"Adopting an advocacy approach to support your target group is important. We liaise with statutory bodies and politicians to affect change at policy level (e.g. Community Policing Forum, bringing young people from minority and marginalised groups together with policy makers etc.). But we've found that we have to be clear with the young people just how much we can support them and advocate with authorities on their behalf – we explain the limitations we have to work within, for example, legal considerations on issues such as immigration law, etc. It can be hard; we bend and fight for them as much as we can without breaking the law" [NYP2]

Partnerships

Partnerships involve working in a sustained way over time, often with the initial aim to carry out a specific piece of work together. Ideally partnerships will endure beyond shared projects to become sustained collaborations in building strong inclusive communities. Inclusive organisations will recognise the value and skills they can bring to community building processes and will reach out and connect with others.

Partnerships should be complimentary, built so that each partner can contribute something new and something that they are good at. This ensures that all partners can learn from each other and create successful collaborations as well as strengthen their own capacities. It is important to focus on building trust among partners, as this ensures that long term goals can be achieved. For partnerships to work there will be an alignment of values. It is important to be aware of our partner's core values, as well as making them aware of ours.

In partnerships – especially where one partner is a minority-led organisation – it is critical that it is based on equality, respect and dialogue. **It is important that we come as equals, ready to listen, hear and adapt and are mindful of any power relations between us.**

Networks and partners might include the following:

- Minority ethnic-led networks/associations including Traveller and Roma support groups, and local intercultural groups, and integration fora.

- Religious organisations (churches, chaplaincies, mosques, and other religious groups), including key female contacts in religious communities.

- Disability organisations and centres in your community, think of the various types: physical, sensory, learning, neurodiversity, and mental health.

- LGBTQI+ and Transgender support groups.

- Rights-based and advocacy organisations – such as anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and human rights organisations.

"If you are building partnerships, we found that it is helpful to run a small project first to see how you work together and build on the relationship over time." [The Base YC]

"Make time for parents. We explain what youth work is, the value of youth work for their child and what our organisation provides." [BeLonG To]

"We invite families to open days to help allay fears and concerns and tell them about what we offer. If possible we go to where the families already meet or we make links through schools where trust has already been established." [IGG]

"Local networking or partnership meetings often take place during business hours when our volunteer youth leaders and/or community representatives may not be available. We focus on building strategic relations with one or two key groups to support our work with young people from minority and marginalised groups." [IGG]

"We build links with our local media to maintain a public profile of our groups, explaining the range of activities we do, the advantages of getting involved, and we stress our inclusive ethos." [Foróige]

SELF–REFLECTION

About building partnerships and developing a network strategy

Questions that allow you to think about the relevance of connecting with and building relationships with other stakeholders:

> What/who are your current partners and collaborators?

> Are any specifically focusing on issues of diversity and equality?

> If not, what is their understanding and commitment to diversity and equality?

> What are the networks you are part of? Is there representation of diversity within those networks?

> When you are networking and building relationships, are you targeting those who are stakeholders in equality and diversity?

Suggestions

> Develop a directory of services and organisations to share among colleagues, that have a specific focus on the issues affecting young people from minority identities (review and update the directory regularly).

> Ensure you know what the referral procedures for those organisations are; as well as what services/follow ups they offer.

> Ensure the young people from minority identities and their parents/guardians are supported throughout a referral process and they are equipped to deal with possible discrimination they may face during the process.

> Advocate for and support young people from minority and marginalised identities with statutory bodies they may be engaging with (education institutions, health providers, social welfare, Gardaí; justice services, immigration, legal services etc.).

> Outreach and build relationships with minority-led organisations and offer opportunities of detached programmes and activities.

> Build the capacity of young people from minority identities to represent their voice on various platforms.

> Bring the diversity and equality agenda to the various inter-agency forums you find yourself in and champion the young people you work with.

"We developed networks and referral pathways for our young people with specific needs such as legal advice around their immigration status, accessing specialised medical services etc." [VSI]

7 OUR PRACTICE NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 4.3 7 10 2.4 2.6	**BUILDING SUPPORT** • We have met with a range of organisations that support young people from minority and marginalised groups. • We have developed partnerships with organisations to run inclusive youth work projects together. • We have developed robust referral pathways through an equity lens. • We have liaised with others in the community such as Community Gardaí, schools etc. to tackle racism, homophobic, transphobic, sexism, classism, disablism and other identity bullying and hate speech in the community.	○ ○ ○ ○
B 4.3 3 10 2.3 2.7	**ADVOCACY** • We liaise with others that have a role in lives of the minority and marginalised young people we work with (parents, guardians, social workers, key workers, other youth organisations, schools, places of worship, etc.) to provide the best possible support. • We have collated a list of services and resources we might need for referrals or advocacy work. • We advocate for, and share the needs of, minority and marginalised young people we work with (while maintaining confidentialities), to key stakeholders such as the HSE, education bodies, funders and policy decision makers and we support young people to represent themselves in these fora. • We use inter-agency, and networking opportunities to promote inclusion, equality, diversity and social justice principles and practice.	○ ○ ○ ○
C 4.3 10 2.5	**REPRESENTATION** • We have developed successful ways to communicate with key stakeholders such as the HSE, education bodies, funders, and policy decision makers to explain what our organisation can offer young people from minority and marginalised identities.	○

● Core Principles   ● Standards   ● Objectives

8

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

STEP 8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Monitoring and evaluation is a three-fold process; we monitor and evaluate:

1. How, as an organisation, we have created an inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice.

2. How our young people are experiencing and developing inclusive practice.

3. We do a self-awareness evaluation where we critically reflect on our own role, our growth and our influence in creating an inclusive youth space.

Evaluating our practice as an organisation

As practitioners we evaluate our practice using a variety of tools, from activity reports after each session with young people, to reports to funders and Boards of Management.

Whatever tools we use to evaluate our work, the key to assessing our inclusive youth work is to incorporate questions that put an equity, inclusion and responsive lens on it. These should be searching and thought provoking. In this way inclusive, diverse and responsive practice becomes a core principle and goal.

Even when we have no answers to the questions posed, reflecting on them will build our critical practice and keep our inclusion lens in place. The indicators and self-reflexive questions set out in this resource are designed to guide you through this process.

"You have to monitor from a base point. On our specialist programs we first establish the specific needs and issues with the young person when we start to engage with them although it can be difficult for the young person to articulate their needs. If you capture it yourself from your own observations, you're only going from what you see and maybe that is not what is happening, it's only your own opinion." [KDYS]

"Your monitoring and evaluation process will vary depending on the work you are evaluating. For some it will involve a formal process, for others we rely heavily on informal feedback loops. In all cases, how well these processes are carried out will determine their value. When feedback is given, we must be prepared to change our practice accordingly." [VSI]

"Evaluating how our organisation is responding to diversity allows us to reset our targets, look at what has been working and what challenges exist. Collecting organisational wide statistics is important to be able to do this effectively. This can be done through registration forms and a central database. We do it through regular surveys – usually every two years." [IGG]

Evaluating how our young people are experiencing and developing inclusive practice

Key to all our work is setting and measuring outcomes for the young people we work with. Logic models – or similar planning tools - are used to focus on the outcomes we are working toward. They also set out the indicators that will measure success along the way. By focusing on outcomes, we shift our evaluations beyond recording the outputs (activities, actions and quantitative data) to assessing the real changes we are seeking to make. This way of working keeps our focus on the young people and the changes that they want to make in their lives.

With an inclusion lens on, an outcomes framework will ensure that young people from minority and marginalised identities are fully represented in all our work and we will be monitoring how they are achieving and moving toward their full potential. One of the ways we can do this is by using the points raised in Step 5 under the Seven Personal and Social Development Outcomes (see pages 50–54). In our inclusive youth work practice, we will also be monitoring the attitudes and inclusion competencies of all our young people.

Evaluations are always cyclical, they offer feedback loops and opportunities to pick up on issues or concerns at an early stage, in time to take corrective action. However, the methods used for ongoing outcomes-based evaluation are critical. Young people from minority and marginalised groups can be reluctant to say when they are not happy with something, especially when they feel that you are reaching out and supporting them. It is important to give the evaluation process adequate time and to use a variety of methods.

"A key methodology we use is to ask young people to consider key relationships in their lives – with their family, community, institutions, and themselves and to identify where they want to see change. We help them to set out an individual plan to achieve the changes they want and check in regularly to see how they are doing. We also link with other agencies who work with the young people or their families and this gives us additional feedback on what is working – or not." [NYP2]

"Having a clear sense of the outcomes we want to achieve is important as it drives our work forward and keeps it on track. A simple logic model is relatively easy to fill out and National Youth Organisations and ETB Youth Officers are usually able to offer guidance (there are many different models to choose from - see two examples in Annexe 2)." [NYCI]

"Any requests or indications for change lead us back into an organisational review process and a period of preparation which may involve up-skilling and making adaptations to our current ways of working." [KDYS]

"External evaluations (by university students) are useful. They provided us with an objective assessment of our work." [YMCA]

Self-aware practice in monitoring and evaluations

In Step 4 – Staff and Volunteers, we discussed the importance of bringing self-awareness to our practice and throughout this resource we have spoken about the importance of responsive practice and challenging inequalities as critical educators. Part of monitoring and evaluating our inclusive practice is to use these self-awareness check-in tools - i.e. unpacking our beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, expectations and feelings, asking ourselves what role we are playing in responsive and inclusive practice, and how we are influencing the young people, the organisation and our wider communities. Self-awareness tools include exploring transformative practice such as non-violent communication (NVC) and adopting a needs-based approach
(see **www.youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings/**).

In assessing our role as responsive practitioners, it becomes not just about our work with young people from minority and marginalised identities, it becomes about challenging the system at a deeper level. It means looking at:

• Our values,

• How we apply a critical education lens,

• Understanding and creating safer spaces,

• Our self-awareness of attitudes and bias,

• Applying an inclusion and diversity lens to all our work and in all our policies,

• Developing content to respond to different engagement needs,

• Self-reflection in a learning organisation.

SELF-REFLECTION

About reviewing and reflecting on our work

Questions that allow you to think about how you review and reflect on your work:

> Do you assess your work with an equity lens to ensure young people from minority and marginalised identities are represented in your work?

> Have you allocated time to review and assess your equality and diversity work?

> Have you thought of how you could monitor access to, and the safety of, your service for young people from the various minority and marginalised identities?

> Have you identified individuals on your Board of Management who have responsibility over equality and diversity from both a governance and practice perspective?

Suggestions

> Identify individuals (in-house or externally) who can support the organisation to carry out an equality and diversity audit.

> Ensure all monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms include an equity, inclusion, and responsive lens.

> Explore various ways of collecting relevant data from the young people that can support your responses to their needs.

> Explore various evaluation methodologies that are youth-friendly and cognisant of diverse identities.

> Create opportunities to reflect on your individual practice, the collective practice of the team, and the culture of the organisation.

> Use the poster on page 93 as a way to assess your inclusive practice. You can use it with your team or as an opportunity to start a conversation with your young people on their needs.

8 OUR PRACTICE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

	ASSESSING OUR ORGANISATIONS	
A 4.3 4 2.8	**MONITORING TOOLS** • We have specific and consistent processes that are effective in monitoring and evaluating how young people from minority and marginalised groups are doing and how we are contributing to them reaching their potential (meeting outcomes). • We gather data, where possible, on our membership that covers ethnicity, gender (including transgender), disability etc., that we can compare with local and national statistics.	○ ○
B 4 2.5	**MEASURING IMPACT** • We have developed a logic model (which includes inclusion goals) that sets out the outcomes we are working toward and that names the indicators for measuring success along the way.	○
C 4.1 4.3 1 4 2.4 2.5	**REFLECTIVE PRACTICE** • We have completed a self-assessment process to identify inclusion gaps in our organisation (e.g. NYCI 'Access All Areas' Diversity Toolkit checklists, plus this resource) which we revisit at regular intervals. • As a team we have reflected on the progress we have made toward building inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice and undertaken an honest and brave appraisal of where gaps and obstacles still exist.	○ ○
D 4.1 4 2.5	**FEEDBACK LOOPS** • We can demonstrate adaptations we have made to meet the needs of young people from minority and marginalised groups as a result of feedback.	○

● Core Principles   ● Standards   ● Objectives

CONCLUSION

To summarise, what we have presented in this resource is a framework to develop and report on our inclusive, diverse, and responsive youth work practice. Key to this work is that we connect with values of inclusion and social justice, we reflect on our practice as youth workers, and we explore diverse engagement strategies.

The key elements to creating such a practice are:

1. Understanding the Context:

We need to understand the context in which both we, and our young people, are functioning, and the impact it has on access and participation. In other words, we expand our awareness beyond the day to day needs of our young people to become aware of their social and political needs; and we expand our understanding of equality, equity and, most importantly, power structures.

2. Our self-reflection:

We understand our own attitudes, biases and the critical reflection needed to engage in inclusive, diverse, and responsive youth work. We know how we can share our own learning and growth with our young people. We deconstruct the idea of the young people and their communities on one side and us 'who know better' on the other. We create a learning space, with a sense of community, collaboration, and solidarity.

3. Our practice:

We understand how we can create an environment that will facilitate rich and meaningful opportunities for learning and growth with our young people. We celebrate their lived experience, and we explore strategies and methodologies making each time we are with our young people a further step toward a better inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice.

The following Annexes explain a number of these elements in more detail than we were able to go into in the main document.

Thank you for sharing this journey with us. We look forward to working with you in person to further support your work. Please do not hesitate to ask us for more information, explanations, or training, and we would love to hear your feedback on using this resource.

Yours in Equality & Solidarity

Anne Walsh and Amel Yacef

ANNEXE 1

USEFUL DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice:

One of the core principles of youth work is that to achieve social inclusion and cohesion, there must be a realisation of social justice.

Social justice is a political and philosophical concept which holds that **all people should have equal access to wealth, health, wellbeing, justice, and opportunity.**

The principles of social justice are:

- **Access:** Greater equality of access to goods and services,

- **Equity:** Overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power,

- **Rights:** Equal effective legal, industrial, and political rights,

- **Participation:** Expanded opportunities for real participation in the decisions which govern our lives,

- **Diversity:** Recognition and respect of differences.

When social justice is not realised, we are living with social injustice. The young people from minority and marginalised identities who we work with may face multiple issues connected to social injustice and social exclusion.

Oppression:

Often social injustice is referred to as an oppressive experience; to explain that experience more coherently, it is useful to think of social injustice within the framework of "systems of oppression".

A system is oppressive when:

- A group (or groups) systematically (in an organised manner) exploit, mistreat and abuse another group (or groups).

- A group (or groups) holds power over another in society, through the control of social institutions, along with society's laws, customs, and norms.

- Groups in society are sorted into different positions within the social hierarchies of 'race'[11], class, gender, sexuality, and ability.

- A group (or groups) becomes dominant and benefit from the oppression of other groups, through heightened privileges relative to others, greater access to rights and resources, a better quality of life, and overall greater life chances.

- A group (or groups) has fewer rights, less access to resources, less political power, lower economic potential, worse health and higher mortality rates, and lower overall life chances.

- **The people in dominant groups, even if they do not actively participate in sustaining oppression, ultimately benefit from it as members of society (i.e. privilege).**

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[11]We use the term 'race' in parentheses to demonstrate that it is a socially constructed notion that places people into a hierarchy of superiority based on skin colour and physical features. Even though it does not have any biological, scientific, or physical basis we use it to acknowledge, and directly address, the original ideology of 'race' on which racism is built.

Dimensions of social injustice:

It is important to highlight that discrimination and social exclusion are some of the manifestations of social injustice. However, to better understand how social injustice operates let us look at its four overlapping dimensions:

Historical, Structural, Institutional, Individual:

Historical:

The historical dimension of discrimination is the foundation of the three other dimensions of discrimination, and yet is the most overlooked in contemporary discourses of discrimination and social inequality.

This dimension represents the historical roots and legacy of ideologies, past systems and events which continue to shape contemporary attitudes, events, media representations, social inequalities and hierarchies.

Example: Black people are represented in school textbooks and discourse as poor people, deserving of charity, and not celebrated for their contributions and portrayed in their diversity.

Structural:

Refers to rules, norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behaviour in institutions and other societal structures that represent obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities that are available to the majority of the population.

Example: Disabled people are excluded from a range of social, cultural and employment opportunities because the necessary adaptations have not been provided.

Institutional:

Refers to forms of social injustice expressed in the practice of social and political institutions. It describes the way institutions discriminate against certain groups, whether intentionally or not, and to their failure to have in place policies that prevent discrimination or discriminatory behaviour.

Example: Travellers are not allocated housing by County Councils despite commitments.

Individual:

This term covers the most visible forms of injustice and discrimination which we more commonly think of and understand. It covers all interactions or behaviours between individuals that are discriminatory or exclusionary, like name calling, and bullying, harassment or assault based on someone's perceived belonging to a certain group.

However, this interpersonal experience happens because of the wider context of the historical, institutional, and structural injustice of society.

Example: A young person experiencing identity bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist comments etc.

Systems of oppression:

A system of oppression is the result of:

Ideology: The sum-total of values, beliefs, assumptions, worldviews, and goals that organise the way of life of a group.	+	**Prejudice:** A preconceived opinion based on stereotypical judgement.	+	**Power over:** The possession of control, authority, resources, and influence over others. Dominance, coercion, and fear are used before other alternatives are sought.	=	**Systems of oppression** Examples of systems of oppression: Racism, Sexism, Hetero-sexism, Classism, Disablism, Homophobia, Transphobia, Islamophobia.

Stereotyping:

A stereotype is a generalised judgement of a group, community, or minority identity. It is a belief that all members of a given group share the same fixed personality traits or characteristics. It is a limited view of a person or group that has the impact of limiting the person or group.

Prejudice:

A preconceived opinion about a person belonging to a group, community or minority identity that is not based on reason or actual experience. It is an emotional evaluation that one person may feel about another, usually based on a stereotypical judgement.

Discrimination:

Discrimination is treating someone differently, compared to other people, because of the person's perceived belonging to a group, community, or minority.

Hate Crime:

Hate crimes are criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people. To be considered a hate crime, the offence must meet two criteria: first, the act must constitute an offence under criminal law; second, the act must have been motivated by bias.

Racism:

Any action, practice, policy, law, speech, or incident which has the effect (whether intentional or not) of undermining anyone's enjoyment of their human rights, based on their actual or perceived ethnic or national origin or background, where that background is that of a marginalised or historically subordinated group. Racism is an ideology that originates from our colonial past, and it carries connotations of violence because the dehumanisation of ethnic groups has been historically enforced through violence.

Principle common forms of racism in Ireland: Anti-Traveller racism; Anti-Black racism; Anti-Muslim racism (Islamophobia); Anti-Roma racism (Anti-gipsyism or Romaphobia); Anti-Migrant racism (Xenophobia); Anti-Jewish racism (Anti-Semitism)

Disablism:

A system that creates a hierarchy among people based on their physical, sensory, mental, or emotional abilities or neurodiversity. It manifests as prejudice, stereotyping and abusive behaviour against disabled persons, arising from the belief that disabled persons are inferior – or less able - than others. It can manifest in social exclusion, being undervalued, poverty and discrimination in employment.

As a systemic and institutional discrimination, it leads to limitations for a disabled person by not providing the necessary resources to support their full participation within society. In this social model approach, society actually disables people in the way it is structured, and by the barriers that exist in terms of attitudes, policy development, access or lack of supports that prevent people from participating in society as equals, with choice and control over their own lives.

Classism:

Class discrimination or classism is prejudice based on a person or group's social class; it is held in place by a system of beliefs and cultural attitudes that ranks people according to economic status, family lineage, job status, level of education, where people live, and other divisions.

It is the systematic assignment of characteristics of 'worth' and 'ability' based on social class. Middle-class and owning- or ruling-class people (dominant group members) are seen as 'smarter' and 'more articulate' than working-class and poor people (subordinated groups). In this way, dominant group members (middle-class and wealthy people) define for everyone else what is "normal" or "acceptable" in the class hierarchy.

Classism at a structural and institutional level manifests in not receiving the same access to education, healthcare, housing, employment.

Patriarchy:

Historically, patriarchy is understood to be a form of social organisation in which cultural and institutional beliefs and patterns accept, support, and reproduce the domination of women and younger men by older or more powerful men. Literally "the rule of the fathers".

Today sociologists view any system as patriarchal if it contributes to the social, cultural, and economic superiority or control of men; where males hold the principal leadership roles (political, economic, social) and control a much larger share of power in society than women.

Patriarchy is a system of social organisation that recognises, encourages, and reproduces the seemingly natural and necessary domination of men over women; it is important to understand that not all men equally benefit from patriarchy and not all women equally suffer from it. For example, patriarchy can intersect with a racialised system of white supremacy, a hetero-normative system of sexual orientation, or the class system of privilege and oppression.

Despite the legal and social changes fought for and achieved over the last 150 years, patriarchy is persistent. This is due to how patriarchy has become deeply ingrained in every aspect of every societal institution, and in how individuals learn to gender (in a society that has classified the things we do as either feminine or masculine).

Gender based discrimination:

Refers to actions or attitudes that discriminate against persons based solely on their gender; it manifests as violence against women, sexism, misogyny, trans-misogyny, violence against transgender, non-binary, and intersex people.

Gender refers to the characteristics that are socially determined, or learned in society, which include the cultural, psychological, and behavioural characteristics associated with a person's perceived sex. There are many ways in which gender is formed. This includes gender identity, gender expression and gender assigned at birth. Gender identity is how a person sees themselves and the gender they are.

For women, the history of gender-based oppression is apparent in how legislation, norms, beliefs, policies define their role, worth and duties in society such as reproductive role, domestic responsibilities, access to health, education or labour market.

Homophobia, Bi-phobia, and Transphobia:

The LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, plus) community includes all who do not identify as heterosexual and/or cisgender (people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth).

LGBTQI+ individuals, as well as groups, regardless whether they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, non-binary, queer, another sexuality/identity or as simply "not straight" are affected by hetero-sexism and cis-sexism. Hetero-sexism and cis-sexism are societal and institutional structures that afford a range of economic, social, and legal advantages to people who are heterosexual, and/or cisgender, at the expense of others.

This can affect everyone and happens on a variety of levels from: subtle to overt; interpersonal and institutional; intentional to unintentional. Speech and actions based on heterosexist and/or cis-sexist prejudice manifest as homophobia, bi-phobia and/or Transphobia.

Faith and belief-based discrimination:

Religiously based discrimination is usually specific to the group being targeted, and shaped by stereotypes, myths and perceptions about certain faith and belief groups. Those who target hate toward religious groups often use references designed to deepen people's pain (for example, references to Nazis and the Holocaust are commonly associated with attacks on Jews).

Some of the forms of faith and religious based hate include: Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Christian, sectarianism, anti-atheist.

Intersectionality:

The concept of Intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, 'race', ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects.

Intersectional justice is the fair and equal distribution of wealth, opportunities, rights, and political power within society. It rests on the concepts of equality, and legal and social rights.

Intersectional justice focuses on the mutual workings of structural privilege and disadvantage, i.e. that someone's disadvantage is someone else's privilege. For this reason, actions tend to be centred on people and groups of people who face the highest structural barriers in society – based

on the idea that if we reach the people at the greatest structural disadvantage, then we can reach everybody.

Intersectional justice understands discrimination and inequality not as the outcome of individual intentions, but rather as systemic, institutional, and structural. Therefore, intersectional justice can be achieved through the institutions that directly and indirectly allocate opportunities and resources, including the school system, the labour market, the health and social insurance system, taxation, the housing market, the media, and the bank and loan system.

Interculturalism:

Interculturalism recognises that ethnic and cultural diversity can enrich our society. This approach implies the development of policies and proactive practice that promote communication, understanding and integration between different cultures and ethnic groups. In multiculturalism, difference is accepted, and respected, but there is little emphasis on the need to interact with others. Assimilation promotes the absorption of all into the dominant culture, seeing difference as a source of conflict and making minority cultures as invisible as possible. Interculturalism forefronts dialogue and change on all sides.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty:

It is public bodies' statutory duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights of staff and service users. All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. This is a legal obligation, called the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and it originated in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.

To meet the core requirements of the Duty, bodies must assess, address and report:

Assess - A public body is required to set out in its strategic/corporate plan an assessment of the equality and human rights issues relevant to its purpose and functions, in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Address - A public body is required to set out in its strategic/corporate plan the policies, plans and actions to address issues raised in the equality and human rights assessment, in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Report - A public body is required to report annually on developments and achievements in regard to the equality and human rights issues and actions, in a manner accessible to the public, in its annual report.

Publicly funded youth organisations would fall into the definition of public bodies. In practice PSD requirements will impact very large publicly funded youth organisations first. However, all youth organisations support and advocate for minority and marginalised young people to public bodies and being aware of the onus of Public Sector Duty is an important lever in that work.

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Note: The concepts defined in this Annexe are sociological, philosophical, and political theories which evolve all the time, through the birth of new theories or being constantly challenged.

Reflection on social justice and systems of oppression in a youth work context:

It is now accepted that the level of systemic injustice and violence (from micro-aggressions to more blatant violence) lived by minority and marginalised groups, and often experienced intergenerationally, can result in deep trauma which can manifest itself through poor health, complex mental health issues, low self-esteem and self-worth, risk-taking and violent behaviours, fatalistic attitudes and hopelessness.

To engage with young people from minority and marginalised identities it is essential that we expand our awareness of how they are affected by social exclusion and injustice and understand how this may manifest in our youth spaces.

Youth work does not exist in a vacuum. To respond to the needs of the young people, it is important to be aware of, and acknowledge, any existing privileges and power structures within the settings we are working in.

When young people come into the space we are creating, they are bringing a lived experience of interconnectedness, and multiple needs and realities.

These are some important questions we need to keep in mind:

How easy or difficult is it for the young people to access:

> Services such as education, employment, health, supports, housing, transport.

....

> Goods such as food, essentials for hygiene and health, books, adequate clothing for activities we run in the service.

....

> Rights such as access to legal support, political participation, representation.

....

How would these factors impact the participation of individuals or groups of young people?

In youth work settings we have the power to shape the culture of the environment the young people will attend:

> Have we taken the time to reflect on what social justice and equality means to us?

....

> What do we bring with us to the work?

....

> Are the values of youth work resonating with our personal values?

DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING:

When faced with new and different ways of being, or doing things, to our own ways of being and doing we react in varied ways according to our beliefs, values, knowledge and lived experience. The stages we go through and reactions we experience can bring up strong emotions; it is therefore important to acknowledge the discomfort we may experience and be willing to sit in it long enough to identify what is really going on for us. Adjusting and adapting to difference is a process that involves working through six stages. It takes commitment to do so, as we often find ourselves stuck in one stage, often as a coping mechanism.

The following are some of the stages and reactions we can experience. The stages do not have to be linear; we may not experience all of the stages and we may experience many of stages all at the same time depending on the range of 'differences' we might be trying to understand and 'get our heads around'.

OUR POSSIBLE REACTION	EXAMPLE
DISCONNECTED: • Little or no knowledge of the community or group. • Seeing people in stereotypical ways. • Assuming no connections or commonality with the group. • Fear connected to past experience.	"People would be better off living in their own countries." "I don't want to know about poverty – I've enough to be thinking about." "Intersex…never heard of that, must be some new trend."
DEFENSIVE: • Thinking in terms of "them" and "us". • The idea that 'us' is 'better'. • Actively looking for what makes us different.	"We need to hold on to our own culture." "They should work harder if they want to get somewhere." "It is important to teach them how we do things here."
DIMINISH/DECREASE: • When we play down difference. • We see it, but we don't acknowledge it. • We want the "other" to be absorbed into the "us".	"I just see a person and treat them as an individual, what has their sexuality got to do with that – aren't we all the same on the inside". "I do enjoy the food and music and the clothes, and I think we just have to get on with it." "All lives matter".

OUR POSSIBLE REACTION	EXAMPLE
DISTINGUISH, RECOGNISE, ACKNOWLEDGE: • Recognising difference. • Happy to know more. • Knowing there is no right or wrong way but often finding it difficult to accept those differences.	"These women are being discriminated against because of what they wear, I don't agree with that even if I don't agree with them wearing it". "I don't know what to think about X, should I be okay to accept something as their way of doing things even if it's not my way?"
ADAPT/ ADJUST: • When we can shift our way of thinking to look at something from another person's perspective or point of view. • We are aware of ourselves and can use this to understand others.	"I can see how it makes sense to look at things in that way." "I will take a step back and look at the full picture before making up my mind."
INTEGRATION, RECONCILING, CONSOLIDATING: • When we look at things from several different perspectives. • We may no longer have one frame of reference. • It can be overwhelming.	"The whole person is important, there's no one quick easy answer." "We all have various identities, and I can't expect people to represent an entire community because of one aspect of their identity."

Some helpful reflective questions:

› Am I making generalisations?

› What kind of freedom, opportunities, and access do I have and is that grant me power?

› How ready am I to experience some discomfort in discussions, particularly if my position is being challenged?

› Am I willing to ask myself uncomfortable questions about injustice and how opportunities, access, freedom is distributed around me?

› Can I broaden my view and extend what I perceive to be the individual experience of a young person to how it connects to the bigger picture?

ANNEXE 2

TEMPLATES AND TOOLS

Policy template

1 MISSION STATEMENT	**Your organisations Mission Statement** If it doesn't include wording that speaks to equality/inclusion, welcoming all young people etc., then it is advisable to revisit it. Don't underestimate how long this process can take.
2 CORE VALUES	**State the core values of your organisation** If this doesn't include wording that speaks to equality/ inclusion, welcoming all young people etc., then it is advisable to revisit it. Don't underestimate how long this process can take.
3 POLICY STATEMENT	This is a clear statement on your inclusive practice and ethos and what you aim to achieve. It is usually 1-2 sentences long and explains the purpose of the policy. For example: Our organisation is committed to inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice. This Equality, Diversity Inclusion Policy sets out our organisation's guiding principles to support this work. Naming what you understand by inclusion, equality and diversity is good practice here. Feel free to copy and paste from this resource. Keep it as brief as possible though.
4 WHO	This is where you name the groups covered in the legislation and any other groups you are targeting under an inclusion focus. For example: As an organisation, our aim is to meet the needs of people from the following minority and marginalised identities with inclusive, diverse, and responsive practice: 1. LGB, (sexual orientation ground) 2. Travellers, (membership of the Traveller community ground) 3. Women and transgender people, (gender ground) 4. Black and minority ethnic people (race ground) 5. Disabled people, (disability ground)

4
CONTD.

6. People of faith and none, (religious ground)

7. Lone parents and young carers, (family status ground)

8. Married, single, divorced, separated and cohabiting people, (civil status ground)

9. The age ground, (people over 65 as leaders, volunteers)

10. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds, (Class ground),

11. Young people involved in juvenile justice,

12. People out of education or employment,

13. Homeless people,

14. People with an addiction.

5
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This is the engine of your policy where you set out the day to day guidelines, and proposed actions in relation to your inclusion and diversity work. Some organisations use this space to set out their action plans with timelines and stating who is leading each action. This can then be monitored under your management and reporting structures. Other organisations use this space to state their guiding principles and statements of practice – for example, on their understanding and approach on integration, stating their support for self-organising identity groups, their ethos on ensuring safer spaces, use of pronouns, having gender neutral toilets etc. Ideally, both these approaches will be included in this section.

6
RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

State what is expected of staff and volunteers. Consider: attitude, training, roles. Name, if you have, or intend to set up, an inclusion and diversity committee and outline its structures and decision-making powers. Also state here if you are, or intend to become, members of an equality and inclusion network (such as NYCI's Equality and Inclusion Support Network that is open to NYCI members; BeLonG To's National Network; local or regional integration groups etc.).

7 ACCOUNTABILITY	Decide what process you will use – that ensures safety and dignity - for someone to bring a concern, complaint, or query to you as an organisation should they experience exclusion or discrimination, or have a suggestion on how you could create a more inclusive environment.
	State your commitment to being a learning organisation, keen to improve your practice and meet challenges with an open mind.
	State what procedures you will use should a staff, volunteer, or youth member act in a discriminating or harmful way. You will most likely refer to your established disciplinary procedures.
8 UNDERPINNING LEGISLATION	List the national policies, strategies and definitions that underpin this policy and your approach to equality and inclusive youth work: Equality Act 2004, Equal Status Act 2000, National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS), National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work, Young Ireland: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, Public Sector Duty (if relevant), etc. Include a definition of human rights, inclusion, integration, equity and interculturalism.
9 DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY	State how you will disseminate the policy to staff, volunteers, young people and parents/guardians – for example, on your website, posted up in your youth space, a copy given to parents/guardians on registration etc.
10 MONITORING AND REVIEW	State how and when you will monitor, review and update the policy. This would usually happen every 2-3 years and the Board of Management would often be involved in signing off on any review.

8 Steps: Diamond of Priority – Planning Tool

Use this model as a team to decide what actions (steps) need to be prioritised. Take each 'action' and place it in the position of priority that works best for your organisation at the current time. Decide who will take the lead on the various actions. People with different roles in the organisations may choose different priorities. You may decide that your priorities don't fit into this diamond pattern, but may form a completely different pattern with many actions happening simultaneously or others being deferred. It is a thinking and planning tool. Use it to have the conversation and develop an action plan.

Providing activities that resonate and allow exploring of issues that are important to them in their own terms

Reviewing what we need to do as an organisation – hearing the needs and assessing our capacity to act

Creating a welcoming, safer and respectful space, and reaching out to the community

Staff and Volunteers: Training, non-judgemental attitudes and increased understanding

Reflecting on the work we do, the changes we make and evaluating the impact

Building relationships and partnerships with key organisations and relevant communities

Putting resources in place to ensure we act on our plans for Inclusion

Policies and procedures documenting good practice are written and shared

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

Action Plan Template – Continuous Improvement Planning

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE
SHORT TERM (DURING THE NEXT MONTH)		
MEDIUM TERM (IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS)		
LONG TERM (OVER THE NEXT YEAR)		

Developing Your Logic Model – The Common Elements

Goals derive from organisational purpose

Aim, mission, vision, values, ideology

Analysis informs goals

- Populations and target groups
- Problems and causes, situations and issues
- Current provision: strengths, weaknesses, gaps

Socio–economic factors inform objectives and affect outcomes

- Policy, legislation, funding, politics, local conditions

Strategies distil and give focus to goals

Outline of main ways to achieve outcomes

Monitoring and evaluation

- Collecting and interpreting information about implementation and results
- And reporting findings
- These processes take external factors into account and inform analysis, planning and implementation
- Targets and indicators that can provide signs of progress or achievement may derive from standards or benchmarks

Implementation			Results		
Resources		Activities	Short	Medium	Long term

Inputs enable outputs

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Funding
- Buildings
- Technology
- Partners

Inputs need to be matched to strategies

Outputs are key areas of work that enable desired outcomes

- Who will we reach
- What will we do
- Where, when, and how will it happen
- Targets for numbers to be reached
- Frequency of activities

Outcomes are cumulative changes in the short, medium and long term

- Gains in knowledge and skills
- Changes in attitude
- Changes in behaviour
- Organisational development
- Change in local situation and circumstances
- Social change – policy, practice, decision making

Evidence informs all aspects of the logic model

Taking ideas from social science research, literature, practice–wisdom, practice and consultation processes, to inform understanding of problems, situations and issues, as well as ideas about work that can enable desired outcomes, and ways of monitoring and evaluating the work.

A Basic Tool That Links Your Logic Model to Your Indicators of Change

Title of project/programme/group:

OUTPUTS (YOUR ACTIVITIES)	HOW THEY ARE COUNTED / MEASURED

SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES	HOW WILL WE INDICATE AND RECORD CHANGE

MEDIUM TERM TO LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	HOW WILL WE INDICATE AND RECORD CHANGE

What young people say about the way they would like to be engaged with[12]

1 CREATE SAFE, RESPECTFUL AND FLUID SPACES ON OUR OWN TERMS

Support us to run our own programmes and groups

Facilitate single identity spaces

Figure things out with us

2 PROVIDE SUPPORTS APPROPRIATE TO OUR NEEDS

Understand how to be a culturally competent service

Sign post and refer us to the relevant service that can help us with specific issues.

Be there for us when we are facing issues such as racism, intergenerational conflict, immigration or struggle with identity

3 YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Trust us to lead in our various communities

Involve us in campaigning, advocacy and any other justice-based work

Invest in us by training and mentoring us

5 COMMIT TO STANDING UP FOR US WHEN WE NEED IT

Lobby for more resources and funding dedicated to working with us

Commission research

Support and get involved in justice-based campaigns that fight for our rights

Challenge structural injustice and inequalities

4 COMMIT TO AN ANTI-RACIST YOUTH WORK

Systematically challenge and report racism

Provide training to all workers and volunteers on understanding racism

Support us with the consequences of racism on our well-being, safety and mental health

[12]Produced during a project carried out with minority ethnic young people by Canal Communities Regional Youth Service called The Story of My Extra Self. (Posters available from NYCI's Equality and Intercultural Programme)

List of Acronyms

IGG	Irish Girl Guides
KDYS	Kerry Diocesan Youth Service
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and other groups relating to sexual orientation and gender identity including Non-Binary, Queer, Asexual, and many more
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NYP2	Neighbourhood Youth Project 2
Swan YS	Swan Youth Service
The Base YC	The Base Youth Centre
VSI	Voluntary Services International

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