

# CLASS ACTION



**An NYCI Policy on Lifelong/Lifewide Learning,  
Educational Disadvantage and Access to  
Higher and Further Education**

**FEBRUARY 2002**

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## National Youth Council of Ireland

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. Is é Comhairle Náisiúnta na nÓg an eagrais ionadaíochta an óige in Éirinn.

NYCI was established in 1967 through the coming together of the principal voluntary youth organisations. NYCI was set up to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations and continues to do this right up to the present day. NYCI's role is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act) and as a Social Partner.

NYCI promotes the development of services for all young people and promotes and safeguards their interests and concerns.

NYCI aims through its member organisations and its representative role to empower young people to participate in society as fulfilled confident individuals. NYCI's work is based on principals of equality, justice and equal participation for all. In achieving our aims we seek a society in which young people are valued citizens who can make a meaningful contribution to their community.

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# Introduction

Based on the most recent Census of population (1996), there are almost 1.5 million young people in Ireland (under 25 years of age) out of a total population of approximately 3.6 million. Young people represent 41% of the Irish population, compared to a European average of 25%. According to the most recent Department of Education & Science figures, the participation rate for students at upper secondary education is 81% and the percentage of full-time students in higher level education is 54%. In light of these statistics, education provision, participation, access and retention are some of the most relevant and pressing concerns for young people living in Ireland today.

Ireland's youth population is significantly higher than the European average and as a result, education providers at all levels are faced with the ambitious task of making the education system more flexible, challenging and relevant to all young people. Changes in the global economy reinforce the need for our education system to ensure that all young people participate fully and benefit from education. While the majority of young people in Ireland today have experienced the most protracted boom period in Irish history, changing economic circumstances have opened up the prospect of global recession resulting in higher levels of youth unemployment.

When Ireland's education participation rates are compared to other Westernised countries, a number of statistics stand out. With respect to retaining young people in upper second level education, the percentage of students who still leave without a Leaving Certificate Qualification remains stubbornly around 20% of the student cohort. When compared with other European countries, Ireland lies just above the OECD average of 79% but significantly below many Scandinavian countries that retain the majority of their student population until the end of the senior cycle at second level.

While Government policy has focused strongly on tackling educational disadvantage and early school leaving, the proportion of young people leaving upper second level without a qualification remains static. In light of this, significant changes need to be made at second level to retain young people in education that go beyond the plethora of initiatives that are currently on offer. Chapter 2 outlines a number of recommendations that need to be implemented in order to tackle the shortfall in educational attainment at second level.

Educational disadvantage starts early and instantaneously affects the opportunities of young people with respect to their economic, social and personal development. While there is a pressing need to tackle early school leaving and consequently educational disadvantage at all levels of the educational process, there is also a need to tackle the gap between Ireland and other European countries with respect to the transition from second level to third level education.

54% of full-time students are enrolled in public and private institutions at tertiary level. This shortfall has significant implications for the future success of the Irish economy and even more serious implications for the employment opportunities of many young people who are not progressing in education. While some young people are accessing alternative types of education, this serious shortfall needs to be addressed.

This policy document addresses some of these issues as they relate to access to education, educational disadvantage, early school leaving and Lifelong/Lifewide Learning. If Ireland is to tackle these policy issues in order to improve the education system on offer and to compete with more effective systems in other developed economies, it needs to be established within a practical and workable framework of Lifelong/Lifewide Learning.

NYCI's education policy document makes the case that Lifelong/Lifewide Learning must truly be regarded as a system that operates from the 'cradle to the grave'. Lifelong learning policies should not only target adult populations who need to avail of second chance educational opportunities, but should be formulated from the very start of the education cycle (cradle) to the very end (grave). That is, Lifelong/Lifewide Learning policies should capture the spirit of learning and the needs of the learner. Only when the needs of the individual learner at every stage of the education process are prioritised, do we begin to tackle some of the policy concerns that exist for young people at risk of early school leaving, early school leavers, Travellers, young people with learning difficulties and adults in search of second chance educational opportunities.

Furthermore, in this framework of Lifelong/Lifewide Learning that needs to be developed, policies must be formulated for young people who avail of lifelong learning through non-formal or informal methods. While there is growing support for non-formal learning at European level, there is much thinking that needs to be done at national level. Youth organisations play an essential role in combating educational disadvantage as a structured approach outside of formal education that acts as an alternative and compliment to formal education. It is expected that new systems for the accreditation of non-formal learning will be established and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) will promote and offer alternative forms of education and learning. While these developments are welcome, there is much that still needs to be done to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education and the providers in these respective sectors. Until this is achieved, 'lifewide' learning will never be realised.

To conclude, the reasons for publishing this educational policy document are threefold. First, while the issue of education is always timely, Ireland is at a turning point where there is real potential for formal and non-formal learning to simultaneously offer the best chances for all young people who want to avail of and benefit from education. Second, the potential exists to create a Lifelong/Lifewide Learning framework that aims to tackle an array of relevant educational issues such as the prioritisation of non-formal learning and workplace learning, educational disadvantage and early school leaving, and equality of access to higher and further education. We believe that there is much support for such shifts. Thirdly, until the learner is placed in the centre of the education system, the real potential of lifelong/lifewide learning will never be realised. Within this framework, NYCI offers a number of recommendations to progress thinking within these policy areas and across these policy sectors.

**Chapter 1** examines the legislative and policy background of Lifelong/Lifewide Learning and highlights the need to promote an educational framework that bridges the gap between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

**Chapter 2** examines the issues of early school leaving and educational disadvantage and how a multi-level approach can tackle the causes of educational disadvantage.

**Chapter 3** examines the legislative and policy background that informs and impacts on access to further and higher education in an era of Lifelong/Lifewide Learning.



# Chapter 1:

## Lifelong/Lifewide Learning

### Introduction

Lifelong Learning has been part of European and Irish educational policy since the 1990's. As thinking has developed around Lifelong Learning, the conceptual definition of what it is has changed too. The most current definition of Lifelong Learning can be described as the following:

*"Lifelong learning concepts and strategies encompass all purposeful learning activity from 'cradle to grave', including both formal and informal. They are holistic, person-centred and encompass all the intertwining areas of an individual's life. These include; education, society, culture, economics as well as physical and psychological concerns."*

Moreover, the concept of lifelong learning has been further developed into a concept of 'lifewide learning', where the learner can access education and training at different stages throughout his or her life through formal, non-formal and informal structures. The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) welcomes this development as it offers a greater opportunity to progress thinking on Lifelong Learning within the youth sector and within non-formal learning.

The following chapter sets out NYCI's views on lifelong learning at both national and European level. We examine the policy framework and offer recommendations for progressing a lifelong learning society, particularly within non-formal learning.

### Background

#### Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society

The European debate on lifelong learning began in 1995 with the publication of a White Paper by the European Commission: *'Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society'*. The impetus for such a debate centred on the changing economic conditions in many European countries where unemployment was growing and people's skills were falling short of what was required to stimulate economic growth. Long-term unemployment was increasing and the threat of social exclusion, particularly among young people was becoming an acute concern. While the teaching curriculum and the implementation of education and training policies remained exclusively the responsibility of Member States, the European Commission clearly marked out a pathway that Member States were to follow in order to progress lifelong learning.

The Learning Society envisioned in the White Paper noted quite clearly the potential of lifelong learning to create a divided society where social exclusion

would be widespread. As Europe attempted to move to a 'Knowledge-Based' society, the potential for people of all ages to be excluded grew, particularly younger people with fewer skills, lower educational attainment and less workplace experience. This remains a fundamental concern as thinking concerning lifelong/lifewide learning progresses. If a 'Learning Society' becomes solely concerned about the value of human capital, those young people who have been educationally disadvantaged in first chance education may become even more marginalised, even with increased accessibility to second chance education.

### Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

In line with the European-wide debate on lifelong/lifewide learning, Lifelong Learning as part of Irish educational policy has slowly developed in line with thinking around the Information Society and skill-needs due to rapid economic expansion towards the end of the 1990s. In 1998, a *Green Paper on Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning* was published. While Europe was promoting a more holistic sense of Lifelong Learning, Irish policy was highlighting 'second chance' and adult education as a way to progress towards a Learning Society. The Green Paper suggested that re-skilling and up-skilling the adult population would ultimately lead to a culture of lifelong learning in the following ways:

- By offering a better system of Adult Education and Training Provision
- By addressing Social and Economic needs
- By progressing Community Education
- By improving accreditation, certification and Guidance for adult learners
- By training adult educators
- By improving and setting-up new structures for Adult Education

The emphasis on Adult Education as the way to embrace Lifelong Learning has progressed somewhat. As the economy improved and the need for technical, transferable and language skills expanded, thinking about lifelong/lifewide learning has moved closer to a holistic approach that incorporates the idea of it being from the 'cradle to the grave'. In July 2000, the Government published its White Paper on Adult Education, entitled *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education*. It set out for the first time in policy the necessary structures to develop Adult Education, with particular emphasis on developing the appropriate conditions to improve the educational opportunities for people who are socio-economically disadvantaged. The White paper clearly outlines the importance of

offering 'appropriate' second chance or further education opportunities to people who may have left school early or who have performed poorly in formal educational settings.

In other words, the White paper developed a clearer understanding of lifelong/lifewide learning; as a structure that recognises learning in a continuum and one that needs to offer the most appropriate type of learning to fit in with the needs of the learner rather than the system. Nevertheless, the White paper on Adult Education fails to adequately recognise all types of learning that can be accessed, particularly non-formal learning in non-formal settings. NYCI believes that as long as non-formal learning is left out of the lifelong/lifewide learning equation, a true holistic 'Learning Society' will never be realised. It is therefore encouraging to note that the European debate on lifelong/lifewide learning clearly points to the validity of both non-formal and informal learning in the Learning Society, a perspective that needs to be followed-up at national level.

### The Task Force on Lifelong Learning

In the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF), a commitment was given to the development of lifelong learning through the formation of the Taskforce of Lifelong Learning. *The White Paper on Adult Education* (July 2000) was to inform such a development. The Taskforce on Lifelong Learning had the following remit:

- Identify existing lifelong/lifewide learning providers and programme provision.
- Map existing provision in terms of its adequacy/coverage.
- Identify, propose, and cost priority actions on lifelong/lifewide learning, based on expanding or modifying existing provision or the development of new initiatives, with particular reference to the achievement of the objectives set out above and to the identification and resolution of implementation issues arising.
- The development, as a matter of priority, of specific initiatives to upgrade the skills of workers in low paid sectors and those facing the challenge of rapid technological change. These initiatives will focus on promoting and enhancing access to training, the development of new skills, the acquisition of recognised qualifications and progression to higher level qualifications. Within the context of the National Development Plan, resources will be made available from the National Training Fund to finance these initiatives.

### Key issues to be addressed by the Task Force included:

- Supports, including information and advice, to assist people to identify learning opportunities appropriate to their needs and source suitable learning opportunities
- Enhancement of access to education and training with particular emphasis on financial issues, such as fees and educational leave, and on measures to support the reconciliation of learning and family life
- Increasing the diversity and flexibility of provision and promoting the responsiveness of education and training institutions to the needs of adults, with particular attention being given to those who are disadvantaged
- The further development of linkages between firms and training and education institutions
- Initiatives to significantly increase training, learning and progression opportunities for people faced with the challenge of rapid technological change, taking due account of the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
- Initiatives to help people currently outside the workforce to upgrade their skills and/or acquire new ones

### The Task Force separated work into two distinct groups:

- A sub-group on Access/Barriers to Lifelong Learning
- A sub-group on Workplace Learning

The work of these sub-groups and deliberations of the Task Force have not yet been published. It is expected, however, that the recommendations of the Task Force will recommend an approach for Government to take on lifelong/lifewide learning. The policy implications of these recommendations will be discussed in the next section.

### European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning

While the policy environment has been progressing at national level, the European debate has also taken on a new momentum. In 2001, the European Commission produced a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. The impetus for the memorandum was to kick-off the debate on Lifelong Learning at both national and European levels. The paper focuses on two essential elements:

- the need for European citizens to be able to access education and training throughout their lifespan in order to obtain appropriate 'skills' and improve their 'employability'
- the need for European citizens to be involved in Active Citizenship

The memorandum also focuses on six key messages to progress thinking and policy on lifelong/lifewide learning, as follows:

1. **New basic skills** - the gaining and renewing of skills for sustained partnership in the knowledge society that demands a guarantee of universal and continuous access to learning. New basic skills include IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills.
2. **Raising levels of investment in Human Resources**
3. **Innovation in teaching and learning** - effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for the continuum of lifelong and lifewide learning
4. **Valuing learning** - the need for understanding and appreciation of participation and outcomes, especially non-formal and informal learning
5. **Guidance and Information** - provision of easy access to good quality information and advice about learning opportunities for all ages
6. **Bringing learning closer to home** - providing lifelong learning opportunities as close to learners as possible

The European debate on lifelong/lifewide learning has clearly set out a challenge to the European Union to recognise all forms of learning and to create a 'Learning Society' that is adequately supported at all levels and by all social partners. Included in this challenge is to place non-formal and informal learning on an equal playing field with formal learning. The next section of this chapter will discuss some of the policy concerns out of the European debate on lifelong/lifewide learning and how a holistic 'Learning Society' from 'cradle to grave' can be progressed at national level.

## Policy Concerns

The National Youth Council of Ireland has keenly followed the debate on Lifelong Learning. As the debate has progressed at both national and European level, NYCI has been extremely aware that young people have the potential to be marginalised or disadvantaged from both education and training the second time over through an inequitable structure for lifelong/lifewide learning. As the national debate moves towards the need for skilled 'human capital' in a rapidly growing economy, the fear is that lifelong/lifewide learning will become market driven rather than learner

driven. If this occurs, young people may face similar problems of exclusion through second chance education as experienced through first chance education. NYCI believes that the lifelong/lifewide learning debate must be much wider, focusing much more strongly on less formal pathways to further education and offering young adults the chance of meaningful employment through accredited non-formal learning opportunities.

The Task Force on Lifelong Learning has yet to publish its findings on workplace learning and access and barriers to lifelong/lifewide learning. The concerns for the sub-group on Workplace Learning included:

- The labour market context
- The need for Lifelong Learning
- International best practice
- Benchmarking Ireland against international practice
- Key issues for workplace learning in Ireland

The highly focused attention on workplace skills and how to access them has direct implications for young people in low-skilled and low paid employment who may not have the awareness of, opportunity for or sufficient access to workplace learning. Unemployment has dropped dramatically, but many young people who left school early or failed to gain qualifications at second level are located in semi-skilled or manual employment that offers little opportunity for workplace learning. While the debate on paid educational leave for previously qualified and skilled employees continues, the debate on how to improve the learning opportunities for young people who are already educationally disadvantaged needs to be progressed.

Furthermore, the 'learner centred' approach to lifelong/lifewide learning falls short for young people who have had poor experiences of first chance education. The assumption that the individual is at the centre of the learning experience is more easily applied to people who have had good experiences of education and training. For those who have been disadvantaged by formal education, the motivation to access further education, however beneficial to the individual, may be non-existent. NYCI is concerned that many young people who do not fit into this model will be left behind and calls for appropriate programmes or high level supports for young people who want to access workplace learning in less formal settings.

Concerns also arise over appropriate workplace learning. If employers create a flexible workforce where employees can access training at any time, issues arise over whether training should be job-specific or learner-specific. In other words, if lifelong/lifewide learning policy claims to put the individual at the centre of learning, the learner

should be entitled to access any type of learning they deem appropriate. However, with the emphasis on technical and technological skills and the fear of company 'brain drain', employees are forced into formal education and training that may not suit their own learning needs. It is therefore essential that non-formal learning and informal learning are recognised and accredited as well as formal learning to achieve a more holistic and flexible learning society.

The Task Force sub-group on **Access & Barriers to Lifelong Learning** noted the following concerns about accessing Lifelong Learning:

- Guidance and information
- Funding and costs
- Situational, institutional and other barriers

The overarching emphasis in the work of the group is how to improve access to education and training for adult learners. While there is little doubt that new strategies and initiatives are necessary to improve the learning opportunities for adult learners, there is also a need to embrace a more holistic approach to what impedes learning for all age groups.

The policy objectives set out in the European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning attempts to widen the debate on Lifelong Learning and incorporate the conceptual understanding of 'Lifewide Learning'. As well as the need for skills-attainment, there is also the need to encourage active citizenship and participation by all members of society. This emphasis on active citizenship is welcomed, as it takes the lifelong/lifewide learning debate out of the employment arena. The Memorandum also allows an opportunity to progress thinking on other forms of Lifelong Learning in non-formal and informal settings and therefore validates the need for lifelong/lifewide learning to go that little bit further. Nevertheless, NYCI has noted some policy concerns arising out of the Memorandum that add to both the European and national debate on Lifelong/Lifewide Learning.

The European Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning offers us an opportunity to progress thinking even further on the advancement of a lifelong learning infrastructure that is accessible to all. The term Lifewide Learning comes closer to NYCI's own conceptual understanding, where formal, non-formal and informal sectors offer alternative but complementary recognisable forms of education and training to all citizens. The main focus should be to progress lifelong learning in non-formal learning or the out-of-school setting.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations focus attention on Lifelong Learning as it relates to the European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and non-formal learning and the youth sector. The recommendations are by no means exhaustive, but offer a useful contribution to the lifelong learning debate.

### Key Messages on the European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning

The structure of the Memorandum is set out in six key messages as highlighted in the first section of this chapter. Therefore, the policy concerns around the European debate are structured accordingly.

### New Basic Skills for All

NYCI recommends that:

- Lifelong/Lifewide Learning must not be about learning skills in isolation to create a 'knowledge-based economy and society', but about creating a 'social space' where communities and individuals can integrate, understand and learn from each other. Lifewide learning must not just be about acquiring skills for future employment opportunities but also about creating the appropriate environment to learn for learning's sake. While Active Citizenship is noted as an equal aim for lifelong learning, an inherent weakness of the memorandum is that it fails to explore how this can be achieved as much as it advocates the need for transferable and marketable labour skills.
- Recognition should be given to the role of the non-formal learning sector as 'educator' outside the formal education system, reducing the burden on formal education. Lifelong/Lifewide Learning is not just about the 'school' setting, it should also encompass a variety of institutions, such as community and youth organisations, and should recognise the work of youth programmes in out-of-school settings and strive to create a working structure that is accessible to all.
- Learning structures such as the Voluntary Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), Youthreach, FÁS schemes etc. should be adequately funded, resourced and supported in order to become lifelong learning structures in a fully integrated system. Furthermore, high level supports must be offered to young people in disadvantaged circumstances to avail of such opportunities.



- The recommendations from the Commission on the Points System should be implemented immediately. There is an urgent need for non-formal learning to be recognised on an equal footing with formal learning.
- Resources should be allocated to ensure equal access to lifelong learning for all ages, including access to computers in libraries, Youth Information Centres and in the home. The 'Digital Divide' is an issue of some concern for NYC. Lifelong Learning clearly has the potential to increase levels of social exclusion by over-emphasising the need for IT skills and marginalising people of all ages who have not acquired them.
- Measures should be taken to make the completion of secondary education more attractive to students. Included in these measures must be appropriate implementation of the Education (Welfare) Act, closer policing of the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, grants/allowances to those young people who have completed the Leaving Certificate/Leaving Certificate Applied and curriculum reform to make the Leaving Certificate more flexible for less academic students. Lifelong Learning must always be seen in a holistic sense, an over-emphasis on second chance/adult education may make it easier for young people to leave school early and never return to further education.
- Indicators to assess the take-up of education and training must reflect the fact that lifelong learning does not begin when one is 25 years old and end when one is 64. Lifelong learning applies to all age groups.

#### New Investment in Human Resources

NYCI recommends that:

- The final recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Task Force in the area of Workplace Learning are published and implemented. A workplace culture needs to be developed where training is accessible to all employees, at all levels, with clear and apparent promotional structures in place. NYC believes that tax incentives and saving schemes are excellent ways of promoting learning in the workplace.

- Investment in up-to-date ICT equipment through the Structural Funds, and in particular the European Social Fund, needs to recognise the variety of learning providers. Non-formal learning providers, such as youth organisations and youth services, should be provided with up-to-date ICT equipment that can be accessed by all in appropriate settings, such as Youth Information Centres. Furthermore, families and individuals should be able to purchase ICT equipment through grant schemes under the European Social Fund in recognition of the fact that lifelong learning can be family-based as well as community-based or company based.

#### Innovation in Teaching and Learning

NYCI recommends that:

- Youth Work methodologies stand on their own two feet as a valid learning process but also as a way to offer good practice to formal education learning processes. Youth Work has created a whole set of learning skills and methodologies that offer a structured approach outside of formal education as an alternative and complement to formal education.
- Non-formal curricula and training should be developed. Resources are required for both research and development into non-formal curricula and training. The optimum outcome is the dissemination of good practice throughout Youth Work.
- The European Union should support the development of Youth Work infrastructures at national and EU levels through providing resources to the European Youth Forum to encourage greater interaction and learning from Youth Work policy, legislation and practice throughout the Union.
- Research should be carried out into the differing training priorities of those who work in the non-formal learning sector, taking into account the broad spectrum of people who are involved and work as non-formal educators – volunteers, professional staff, people on community employment schemes etc. There is a need to recognise their needs and previous experience and offer them opportunities, in line with their own development.

- An accreditation framework should be established immediately. The failure to recognise the 'validity' of non-formal learning through proper accreditation can act as a barrier to young people who may be hesitant to access formal second chance education. The sub-group on Access & Barriers for Lifelong Learning has clearly pointed out the need for such a system and NYCI welcomes future developments by the National Qualification Authority in this area.

- Courses available within the Youth Work sector should be professionally recognised. Under the Youthcert research, 23 courses were identified of real relevance to the sector that are not being formally recognised, even though they are seen to be essential and of benefit to those working within the sector.

### Valuing Learning

NYCI recommends that:

- Open dialogue between NYCI, the Department of Education & Science and the European Commission should be established in order to create workable structures to assess and recognise non-formal learning, particularly in Youth Work settings. Ireland is not at the forefront of innovative forms of assessment and skills-recognition in non-formal learning. Other member states have taken the lead in this area and NYCI would welcome support in implementing pilot programmes based on other European models in countries that are less developed.

- In relation to mobility, recognition should be given to the benefits young people experience by their participation in educational exchange programmes, voluntary service or work experience programmes. Such programmes foster the notions of tolerance, understanding, volunteerism, civic participation and solidarity. However, because of a lack of resources and recognition, participation in such mobility programmes is still very limited.

- Language skills should be promoted among young people. Teaching methods and practices that are effective and that appeal to young people should be developed. The European Commission needs to take a more realistic approach to language training if they want to achieve the full mobility of young people by providing adequate financial resources for language training. Youth organisations are willing to take up their responsibility in this area and organise language training under the YOUTH Programme. However, the European Commission needs to provide additional resources and better co-ordination in order for this to take place.

### Rethinking Guidance & Counselling

NYCI recommends that:

- A discussion on a 'Lifelong/Lifewide Guidance Counselling Service' is initiated within the Commission to assist in people's progression through employment, education and training at national, regional and local levels, due to the fact that the Guidance Counselling service is completely underdeveloped in Ireland.
- The recommendations concerning guidance in 'Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education' should be fully implemented.
- Youth Information Centres should be expanded and their role made more extensive. Their guidance role should be recognised by stakeholders, particularly the Department of Education & Science. Young people should be able to use the resource as an alternative and compliment to guidance counselling in a school setting.

### Bringing Learning Closer to Home

NYCI recommends that:

- A lifelong learning culture should be created that encompasses the socialisation of young people as individuals, as family members and as members of wider communities.
- Youth Information Centres, youth groups and community centres should be recognised as environments where learning can be achieved at a local level.
- Irish education structures should recognise the importance of greater co-operation and learning partnerships. The 'Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education' has proposed the establishment of Local Adult Education Boards, and the Youth Work Act provides for the establishment of Local Voluntary Youth Councils and Youth Work Committees, attached to the VECs. These structures will provide learning partnerships at a county/VEC level. There is a need for co-operation between these structures, and within the formal education sector.

## Lifelong Learning and non-formal learning

NYCI recommends that:

- Lifelong Learning should be defined as a civil right, not only in terms of economic benefits. This facilitates the inclusion of the arts and other cultural aspects of learning into the framework.
- Progression routes and accreditation should become more transparent in the youth sector. However, it is not just a question of creating the right conditions, issues relating to access are also critical. Opportunities need to be created but proactive outreach measures must also be taken to encourage non-traditional learners to engage in the process. The onus must be on the provider as well as the learner to create opportunities.
- The process of Lifelong Learning must take place from the outset of the young person's life, and not only relate to Adult Learners.
- Non-formal learning should be included in all efforts in the Lifelong Learning area. As long as non-formal learning is left out of the lifelong/lifewide learning equation, a true holistic 'Learning Society' will never be realised. It is therefore encouraging to note that the European debate on lifelong/lifewide learning clearly points to the validity of both non-formal and informal learning in the Learning Society, a perspective that needs to be followed-up at national level.
- The lifelong/lifewide learning debate must be much wider, focusing much more strongly on less formal pathways to further education and offering young adults the chance to access meaningful employment through accredited non-formal learning opportunities.
- Appropriate programmes or high level supports should be established for young people who want to access workplace learning in less formal settings, particularly for the many young people who do not fit into the current workplace-learning model.
- Employers should work in partnership with other social partners to recognise the value of all forms of learning and create a flexible workplace learning environment. Employers need to value non-formal learning as a way to engage young people in Lifelong Learning.

## Chapter 2: Early School Leaving and Educational Disadvantage

### Introduction

Even at a time when Ireland is experiencing the highest levels of economic prosperity for many years, Early School Leaving (ESL) is still a significant problem. Young people who leave school at primary level or before obtaining their Junior Certificate suffer lower economic prospects and the potential of falling into a poverty trap. The economic boom of the Celtic Tiger has also impacted on the qualifications of students who leave school before obtaining the Leaving Certificate and the lure of part-time work is having a serious impact on the educational outcomes of many students. Government policy to tackle ESL has occurred on a piecemeal basis. Legislation, such as the establishment of the National Education Welfare Board under the 1999 Education (Welfare) Act, has yet to be effectively implemented to tackle some of the more pertinent issues that could combat ESL.

Although more and more students are opting to stay in formal education, NYCI believes that ESL is still too prominent, reducing the educational, economic, social and cultural prospects of many young people in Irish society.

The following chapter examines the issue of Early School Leaving, how it is caused, the socio-economic consequences of those who suffer from it, which socio-economic groups are most affected by it, and what policies have been put in place to prevent it. Recommendations are offered on how to combat ESL in order to create a more cohesive approach to the issue.

### Background

Early School Leaving can be defined in many different ways. According to the 1999 Education (Welfare) Act, an Early School Leaver is someone who leaves formal education before the age of 16 or before the completion of three years post-primary education, whichever is the later. However, it must be pointed out that the mandatory school leaving age remains at 15 until a ministerial order changes it to 16, as legislated under the Education (Welfare) Act. An Early School Leaver is still at risk if he or she chooses to leave formal education after the Junior Certificate, especially if their examination performance is poor. This situation becomes even more acute for the disadvantaged socio-economic groups who are statistically more likely to become Early School Leavers.

Significant factors influencing ESL include:

- Poor school attendance and poor school achievement
- Age variance where a student is older than the rest of his/her classmates
- Poor self-image
- Low motivation and limited family support
- Father's employment record
- The cost of education, especially for those suffering from multiple disadvantage and the impact of the Social Welfare System

Over the years, many reports have outlined the reasons as to why Early School Leaving occurs. A report commissioned by the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in 1997 clearly outlines the socio-economic consequences of ESL; one being the tendency towards of ESL to impact on youth unemployment trends. Hannan et al, in their evaluation of the ESRI's *Annual School Leaver's Survey*, found that it is not just those with no qualifications who experience high rates of unemployment but also those who failed to obtain five or more passes in their Junior Certificate (or equivalent). Therefore, the earlier an individual drops out of formal education, the greater the chances of low-level employment and economic prospects, which may eventually lead to poverty and increased social exclusion. ESL also has the potential to marginalise different social groupings within society, for example:

- young Travellers
- young unskilled men
- lone parents
- young people in disadvantaged areas
- young people in rural settings

NYCI believes that a blanket approach to ESL is not effective and that recommendations must be targeted to different social groups in different social settings as well as recognising the cumulative effects of disadvantage within these social groups. In other words, steps need to be taken to both combat ESL within and outside schools as a first principle, but also to make provisions for young people who have already left school early, within the labour market.



The Joint Committee on Education and Science on Early School Leaving (1999) regards the issue of ESL as a very significant problem in Ireland. The committee estimated that 3,200 young people leave school without any qualification and almost 1,000 of these are at primary level. It is important to note that ESL statistics are only estimates because there is no official census conducted to establish the rate of ESL in the Irish school system. In the latter stages of this report, NYCI will reinforce the necessity for a nationwide tracking system to systematically monitor the pathways of potential Early School Leavers.

The following findings from the Joint Committee on Education and Science's report highlight the socio-economic groupings most at-risk from ESL:

- Almost half of the children who leave school with no qualification are drawn from households whose father is either unemployed or in an unskilled manual occupation. About 33% of children from such backgrounds do not proceed beyond the Junior Certificate.
- ESL is acute among the Traveller community and it is estimated that as many as 75% of Traveller children leave school with no qualification. Estimates from Traveller organisations would claim that this figure is even higher.
- ESL is also heavily concentrated among boys. Two boys leave school early for every one girl.

These statistics clearly highlight some interesting characteristics of an Early School Leaver. The literature on ESL shows that it is an intergenerational phenomenon that affects young people with disadvantaged backgrounds, that it affects a higher proportion of young men than young women, and that it is widespread in the Traveller community. It is clear that any initiative employed to tackle ESL must concentrate on ways to both 'break the cycle' of intergenerational poverty but to also be aware of the cultural sensitivities that may lead to ESL.

As noted in the body of this chapter, the problem of ESL among the Traveller community is particularly acute. Even within the primary system, about 16% of Traveller children have dropped out. By the time they reach 15 years of age, 80% have dropped out. Overall only 44% of Traveller children aged 12-15 participate in any education. The annual dropout among the Traveller community of children with no qualifications is approximately 500. This small community with no more than 10,000 children of school-going age, representing only little more than 1% of the school-going population, account for 1 in

6 of all unqualified early school leavers. Even with the establishment of high level supports through government funding for the Traveller community, the problem of ESL persists. Specific recommendations to combat ESL within the Traveller community are therefore included in this chapter.

It is also important to highlight at this point that ESL and poor literacy go hand in hand. Ireland was noted in the OECD's Education at a Glance (2000), as having one of the poorest records on adult literacy; a quarter of all the adult population have limited literacy skills. To this end, the government has increased the Adult Literacy budget from €1.08 million prior to 1997 to €16.46 million in 2002. Nevertheless, this 'second chance' approach to adult literacy must also be matched at both primary and secondary levels. Poor literacy skills have the ability to stigmatise students and therefore impacts on their chances of completing second level education. Remedial education needs to be resourced much more effectively, and at the earliest stages of formal education.

### **Initiatives to Tackle Early School Leaving**

According to the Report of the Joint Committee on Education & Science on Early School Leaving, there is a persistent and continuing lack of effectiveness in the initiatives targeted to combat ESL at both primary and secondary levels. This section describes initiatives in this area and how effective they have been to date.

#### **PRIMARY LEVEL**

In 1997, the overall scheme targeting disadvantage in one shape or another at primary level cost €59 million or 7% of the primary budget. The evidence suggests that the impact of those schemes is falling far short of evening out educational opportunities for children at risk of ESL. The impact of these schemes have not been formally evaluated more recently, adding weight to the fact that formal tracking, evaluation, and monitoring structures need to be established immediately.

#### **Remedial education**

At primary level, the main early intervention has been the remedial education service. This has a budget of approximately €38.5 million and employs over 1,300 teachers. About 55,000 pupils receive some remedial support, close to 12% of all primary level pupils. Although this is considered to be an effective measure, the scheme is under-resourced, under-staffed, under-supported and fails to really tackle disadvantage effectively.

## Early Start & Breaking the Cycle

Early Start is a pre-school programme that is available in 40 schools and reaches about 1,600 pupils. Breaking the Cycle is a programme that guarantees a pupil-teacher ratio of 15:1 in junior classes in 33 urban schools with just over 3,300 pupils benefiting. A similar number of pupils are reached by the rural Breaking the Cycle scheme spread over 123 schools.

In contrast to their predecessors, detailed monitoring and evaluation systems are being put in place for both of these programmes. Although the programmes are reaching very few pupils, they do involve significant resources costing close to €7.6 million between them and deploying almost 180 teachers. The cost per pupil of Early Start is €1,666, while Breaking the Cycle costs €897 per pupil in urban schools, €359 in rural schools. The main concern of the Department of Education & Science is whether these costly schemes should be mainstreamed so that they reach all of the significantly deprived areas. The spending on these programmes would have to be increased at least €38.5 million before they could be said to be reaching even the priority areas and far more if made available in all designated schools.

## Home School Community Liaison programme & Teacher Counsellor Programme

Both of these interventions are aimed at supporting the children and families in designated disadvantaged schools rather than providing teaching instruction. Teacher Counsellors assist pupils to deal with the many problems that they encounter, while the Home School Community Liaison Teachers work with the parents explaining what the school is doing and encouraging involvement and offering parents personal development programmes as foundation for helping the pupil to stay on in school. It seeks to build a stronger home environment to support the pupil and also encourage the school to take a broader approach that is more welcoming to pupils from disadvantaged areas and to their parents.

## Designated Disadvantaged Schools

318 schools, containing about 17% of 'disadvantaged' primary schools, have been designated. The designation scheme costs about €12.8 million in teaching and non-teaching expenditure to operate and involves almost 300 teachers. This scheme has yet to be evaluated and is considered to be too under-resourced to be effective.

## SECOND LEVEL

There have been fewer innovations from the Department of Education & Science to develop new approaches to targeting pupils with particular disadvantage at second level. There is clearly a need for the development of well-resourced programmes to assist the transition of pupils from primary to second level. Described below are some measures to tackle ESL: in the formal education sector, at a local level, at an interagency level and at 'second chance' level.

## Leaving Certified Applied Programme (LCAP)

A programme intended to meet the needs of students who are not adequately catered for by the Traditional Leaving Certificate programme or choose to opt-out from such programmes.

There are three main elements in the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme:

- Vocational preparation which is allocated approximately 25% of the overall time allocation and includes modules of vocational preparation and guidance, English and Communication
- Vocational Education which is allocated 30% of the time and consists of modules of vocational specialist and mathematical applications
- General education having a time allocation of 30% and incorporating modules such as Social Education, Languages, including two modules in Gaeilge Chumarsáideach and two modules in modern European languages

The remainder 15% is discretionary time and thus is intended for schools to adapt the programme to meet the particular need and strengths of the student.

Overall just under 6% of pupils take the LCA. However, in the schools offering the programme, it is quite popular with one and five pupils opting for it. The programme has also received good backing from employers who express satisfaction with the performance of its participants in the workplace. They have pressed strongly for its expansion. However, if it is to expand, the Department of Education & Science will have to give greater attention to the physical infrastructure in schools and the teaching time available to plan and implement the programme in schools.

## 8-15 Initiative & Stay in School Retention Scheme Initiative

Both programmes are supported by support teams to facilitate training and help develop individual school plans to meet the needs of the individual targeted children – curricular, learning, social and personal needs. Individual school plans or contracts provide for additional resources and ongoing reporting and review mechanisms. Fundamental to the schemes is the direct link between the continuation of resources and the achievement of agreed targets. Schools participating in the Stay in School Retention Scheme are required therefore to devise focused and targeted integration plans that involve local agencies in collaborative actions in support of the young people at risk.

### Local Partnership Companies

The establishment of the 38 Partnership Companies has given a significant boost to local development. Education programmes have been a significant pillar of this approach. For the five-year programme up to 1999, a total of €13.4 million was earmarked for educational interventions aimed at disadvantaged groups. It is expected that by the time the programmes are completed, over 40,000 school going children and just under 20,000 adults will have participated in partnership education projects. In budgetary terms, roughly half of the budget will be spent on support to pupils still at school, and the balance to young school leavers or adults after they have left school.

These programmes have spawned a great deal of innovation. They have built local networks between schools and with communities that have traditionally been almost entirely absent from Ireland's centralised educational structure.

### Comprehensive Pathway Approach

The Pathways Model is based on two assumptions, firstly, that the best place for a young person is in school, and secondly, that no one agency has the resources or the ability to respond to early school leaving completely. Therefore any response to ESL needs to be an interagency one, pooling the variety of networks, information and skills within the various organisations to form one coherent integrated service. The model is person-centred and based on Youth Work principles.

The purpose of the model is to identify, track and assess ESLs through an inter-agency and multi-strand approach resulting in the establishment of a proactive database, identify appropriate progression routes and enable ESLs to make informed career choices through the most effective and co-ordinated use of the resources in the area.

The four key stages in each young person's comprehensive pathway can be identified:

- Engagement- making contact, outreach, induction, acclimatisation
- Empowerment- assessment, confidence building, mentoring and setting goals and plans, tasting options
- Learning- skills, learning, work experience
- Integration and follow-up-placement and after-care

### Youthreach

Youthreach targets the early school leaver. Administration of the scheme is divided between the VECs and FÁS (through Community Training Workshops), although policy has now been consolidated in the Department of Education & Science. Almost 70% of participants have no qualifications whatsoever and the balance no more than a Junior Certificate. Participants in the programme are made up of about one third who left before Junior Cert. The programme targets the 15-18 age group.

A recent ESF evaluation of Youthreach was critical, highlighting the lack of counselling, certification, literacy programmes and progression. Nevertheless, Youthreach is generally well regarded by participants who feel they are treated with greater respect than at school. Over 70% of participants are now believed to progress to employment, further education or training. Over 90% receive some accredited certification.

The cost of Youthreach is currently running at €41 million, close to €8,974 per year per participant. One major difference is that Youthreach pays participants a training allowance starting at €36.85 at age 15 and rising to €90.38 at age 18. About 40% of the costs go on such allowances. Even allowing for this, the budget is sizeable at over €5,128 per person and in marked contrast to the poorly resourced schemes available to assist these pupils before they left school. It is perverse that a person has to leave school to be able to draw down income support and well-resourced suitable programmes. This contradiction in policy needs to be addressed.

## Policy Concerns

Educational Disadvantage has been on the policy agenda for many years. In Budget 2001, some preventative measures to tackle ESL and educational disadvantage were set out. These measures included an additional €6.41 million to intensify efforts to ensure that pupils complete their schooling and an additional €0.96 million to give extra grants to address disadvantage in primary schools. While these measures go some way to tackle the problem of ESL, with special attention to early-schooling preventative measures, clarification on the nature and scope of the measures is required. The allocations are an indication of some resolve to tackle educational disadvantage, but the government needs to go much further if real equity is brought to the Irish education system.

Furthermore, Budget 2002 failed to provide any significant additional funding to tackle educational disadvantage. The Government Estimates provided for substantial increases in the education area, but it is not clear what the allocations to tackle educational disadvantage will be. Furthermore, the increase in the Back to School Clothing Allowance that was included in Budget 2002 will still not provide for the real cost incurred by hard-pressed families with young people in second level education.

Fundamental to the success of any initiatives or schemes tackling ESL and educational disadvantage, is resource allocation. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy has set out the national targets for reducing ESL and these must clearly be backed up by sufficient investment at both primary and secondary level. There is an acceptance that achieving the overall targets have been problematic as the retention of pupils to upper second level has remained static at 81% for a number of years, compounded more recently by the draw into low paid employment. Serious literacy problems at primary level also remain stubbornly static for 10% of children with little change since 1980. The National Development Plan, which has an overall budget of €51.28 billion, has allocated €6.85 billion of the total budget to tackling ESL and educational disadvantage. Also included in the National Development Plan is a School Completion Initiative. This initiative, which takes up €96.7 million of the budget, will have four strands:

- **Research & Evaluation:** To evaluate models of best practice and research on the early identification of potential school leavers
- **Tracking:** The development of an integrated database for primary and post-primary pupils to identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- **Whole School Support:** To target schools with retention rates 10% below the national average that will be required to agree to a programme of action tailored to their particular needs
- **Student Support:** To target pupils at risk of leaving school early, who do not attend that are below the national average

Other initiatives such as the Early Education Initiative, the Early Literacy Initiative, Traveller Education and the School Guidance Service, are included in the plan. It is imperative that these resources are distributed effectively in the lifespan of the Development Plan. The Department of Education & Science will distribute funds but the approach to eliminating educational disadvantage and ESL must be a co-ordinated one, especially at the local level.

The National Development Plan has also allocated €212.56 million funding for Youth Services. Included in this allocation is a scheme to allocate grants to special out-of-school projects for disadvantaged young people, facilitating the personal development and social education of youth at risk of drug abuse, juvenile crime, ESL, social exclusion, unemployment, welfare dependence, homelessness and marginalisation. At a policy level, it is important to note that a collaborative approach between the formal education sector and the Youth Work sector is essential. Without adequately funding the Youth Work sector, there is a risk that young people, who poorly attend school or have problematic relationships with teachers, can slip through the net. If an inter-agency approach is to be achieved, the youth sector must have an equal and formalised part to play in combating ESL.

Government thinking on Early School Leaving and educational disadvantage continues to evolve. The Department of Education's most recent strategy emphasises its enduring centralised approach to education. This strategy has three main platforms:

- A new, statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee
- A Forum to address Educational Disadvantage
- The appointment of an acting Director of Programmes to tackle disadvantage in the country's 3,200 primary schools



In December 2001, the formation of the Education Disadvantage Committee was announced. The NYCII welcomes the announcement and looks forward to being involved in the future direction of this committee.

In 1999, the government launched a €248 million plan to tackle educational disadvantage. The plan, called *'The New Deal: A Plan for Educational Opportunity'* involved every level of the education system, including pre-school and adult literacy and also provided the funding for a complete revision of targeted disadvantage funding for schools.

Included in the plan is funding for the National Education Welfare Board. Under the 1999 Education (Welfare) Bill, the National Education Welfare Board was established, among others, to:

- Ensure the provision of a prescribed minimum education to each child
- Assist in the formulation and implementation of government policy and objectives concerning the education of children
- Promote and foster in society an appreciation of the benefits to be derived from education
- Promote and foster in schools an environment that encourages children to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school
- Conduct and commission research into the reasons for truancy on the part of students and into strategies and programmes designed to prevent or discourage truancy
- Advise and assist parents of children with school attendance problems
- Assess the adequacy of the training and guidance provided to teachers relating to school attendance matters

Moreover, provisions are made in the Act to address the situation where young people leave school early with inadequate qualifications in order to enter the workforce. It provides a framework that will ensure that all such young people under 18 years are identified. Once identified, the National Education Welfare Board will assist them to access continuing education and training. Employers will have a role to play in the identification of the young people concerned by employing only young people who have a certificate to show that they are registered with the Board and by informing the Board when they employ a young person. It is essential that this element is enacted as soon as possible and NYCII has also called for more careful monitoring of the Young Persons Employment Act to achieve this goal.

While the National Education Welfare Board will attempt to tackle some of the pertinent causes of ESL from a top-down approach, other approaches target the issue of ESL at a micro level. In other words, shifting the focus of education from the provider to the recipient. To encourage potential ESLs to stay at school over the age of 15, an Education Youth Wage of between €35.89 and €46 per week has been proposed in its education policy by Fine Gael. It is proposed that this should be means-tested and targeted at low-income families where the greatest financial pressure to leave school early and go to work exists. A school leaver can get a paid job or can get unemployment assistance, someone who stays at school can lose out. Moreover, to encourage those who have already left school prematurely to return to school, an Education Credit Voucher scheme with an initial €2.56 million has also been proposed. The holder will be entitled to present the credit to either an employer or a training provider in order to avail of suitable training. The voucher scheme will be piloted in a particular geographic area with a high concentration of early school leavers. Third, a new initiative known as Liferforce will be developed within selected disadvantaged areas to promote adult education and develop support systems to help participants succeed.

This approach to Early School Leaving and disadvantaged education has been criticised as being idealistic and short-sighted in its approach to retaining potential early school leavers in the system. Nevertheless, the 'bottom-up' approach to tackling ESL makes sense. More attention and resources need to be given to efforts of community initiatives to address the problems of early school leaving, truancy, absenteeism, and literacy problems at a local level. Government-led pilot programmes and initiatives must be matched in funding and resources with local and organic initiatives that personally recognise the issues that may lead young people in their community to drop out of school. Again, youth organisations have a very important part to play in recognising the issues facing young people at a local level and working in partnership with parents, teachers, social workers and home school liaison officers to offer the most effective way to ensure young people's involvement and benefit from schooling.

## Recommendations

Below are a number of measures and recommendations that NYCI believe are effective in tackling the issues of ESL and educational disadvantage. This list is not exhaustive but highlights priority issues that need to be addressed.

NYCI recommends that:

- All initiatives targeted to marginalised groups most affected by early school leaving and educational disadvantage should be reviewed. We need to be aware of the changing nature of educational disadvantage. The children of refugees and asylum seekers may, for example, be experiencing educational disadvantage.
- A national tracking system should be established without delay. The 1999 Education (Welfare) Act provided for a National Education Welfare Board to monitor and track young people who are in danger of dropping out of formal education. The Welfare Board has been established but there have been few further moves to implement the monitoring and tracking infrastructure. Traveller organisations have also called for a tracking system to monitor and track the transition of young Travellers from primary to secondary level that has yet to be established.
- The Irish education system should rectify its poor literacy record. Poor literacy abilities impact on the life-chances of people and lend to future child poverty. The education system is under-resourced across the board, but the lack of resources at pre-primary and primary level is unacceptable. Increased resources must be coupled with increased funding of remedial education and an increased number of remedial teachers.
- Tackling educational disadvantage through Youth Work should be extended as an essential element to an interagency approach. The Youth Work sector has a clear and defined role in enabling young people and children to learn skills, acquire knowledge, and interact with their peers in an informal manner. Such an environment can support young people from all different socio-economic backgrounds who are in danger of dropping out of school. The sector is currently inadequately resourced to effectively carry out this role.
- There should be much greater flexibility at all levels of the education system. Not all children are academically minded and this needs to be recognised at the earliest stages of education.
- The use of breakfast clubs, homework clubs, school lunch programmes should be extended, as they have proved successful as a method to combat educational disadvantage. In the long-term, if these schemes prove to be an effective measure in combating ESL and educational disadvantage, they must be mainstreamed. In the short-term, wherever possible, provision should be made on a local and community basis. A formal review of the nutritional value of the food offered in these initiatives should also be carried out. Furthermore, free school meals and milk should be reinstated in primary and post-primary schools, particularly in disadvantaged communities.
- The Department of Education & Science should review their understanding of 'free education'. The cost of sending children to school has been spiralling in recent times and more incentives are required to reducing these costs amongst families on lower incomes so that they can afford to retain their children in formal education.
- Additional funding should be provided through local area partnerships for educational purposes. The over-centralised approach to education is insufficient to tackle the issues surrounding ESL and educational disadvantage. Partnerships have been quite successful in addressing problems and concerns at the local level and increased funding must be maintained to address ESL from the bottom up.
- Greater supports should be provided to schools to combat factors that cause educational disadvantage. An Addiction Counsellor should be shared amongst schools in areas where there is a known drug problem. In areas of high economic and social deprivation, drug use can impact on the educational opportunities of many young people and their siblings. In an interagency approach to combating ESL, social workers, Home School Liaison officers, addiction counsellors, and guidance counsellors must be made available to all schools as and when they are needed. Increased resources must also be made available to schools to follow-up all cases of drug use by children in order to get them the necessary support.

- Special-needs training should be reviewed. If necessary, teachers should be given in-school training or extra teachers with special-needs training should be supplied to schools.
- Positive discrimination should be reviewed. In order to achieve an equitable education system, extra rewards need to be distributed to those who are most disadvantaged and marginalised within the system. To this end, a comprehensive and nationwide review of the level of social exclusion in all schools is essential.
- Child Benefit should be doubled. Special attention must be given to targeting people on lower incomes and their specific needs.
- The Back to School Allowance should be increased. The Community Employment scheme also needs to be adjusted in order to ensure lone parents do not miss out on this allowance. Early School Leaving for lone parents is predominantly a young women's issue. All steps need to be taken to ensure that adequate childcare allowances and facilities are offered to lone parents so that they can stay in the education system.
- Paying teachers for the supervision of after-school activities should be considered. Many teachers graciously give up their free time after school to supervise an array of extra-curricular activities. It is time that their goodwill is financially recognised and that an incentive scheme is implemented to attract more teachers into giving time to children they believe might be at risk. There is also the potential here to bring teachers, parents and children together after hours to tackle issues of concern that might not be addressed within school hours.
- Resources should be allocated to provide for greater number of playgrounds, facilities and activities for young people, especially from the ages of 10 to 18 years, to reduce the dependence on health-demoting activities such as underage drinking and 'hanging around'. On a wider level, this can lead to the improvement of community spirit and cohesion among the young people of that community.
- Young people remain in education and training until they are 16 allowing for increased flexibility in the types of education and training that they receive. For example:  
*School (LC/LCA)*  
*NCVA-accredited courses (e.g. PLC's)*  
*Third-Level education*  
*Apprenticeship schemes*  
*FÁS, CERT and other government-supported training opportunities*
- There should be much closer policing of the Young Persons Employment legislation, including the appointment of more inspectors. As before, the work of the National Education Welfare Board is essential to assist in this measure.
- There should be an award of a grant/allowance for those young people who have completed the Leaving Cert./Leaving Cert. Applied programmes. This should be a sizeable amount, perhaps €700 - €1300.
- Every secondary school (or those with at least 200 students) should receive an additional teaching post. Evidence suggests that increased classroom numbers lends itself to truancy, absenteeism, and poor school performance. There is a definite need to reduce the student to teacher ratios throughout the education system.
- Students should have greater flexibility in choosing which subjects to take at Senior Cycle, as these decisions can have an important bearing on their future careers. This can be achieved by reducing the number of subjects that students have to take in the Leaving Certificate and further take-up of the Leaving Certificate Applied.
- In areas of particular educational and socio-economic disadvantage, it may be appropriate to provide additional support in the form of financial incentives for young people to remain in school. However, this should only take place in limited areas and as a direct response to local needs. No national scheme of support should be created.

- Greater encouragement should be given to homework clubs in schools throughout the country, utilising them as a means of supporting students who are finding it difficult to learn. In addition, the government should provide support for these by:
  - *Providing funding for schools to pay teachers to stay behind after normal school hours and work with Homework clubs. If schools are unable to accommodate the clubs, then arrangements should be made for them to use local community centres.*
  - *Providing funding to cover the cost of insurance for school/community centres to host homework clubs.*
  - *Involving parents and others in the community in the running of homework clubs. For example, youth workers and youth clubs could link in closely with homework clubs and provide additional support. There could be a role for the Youth Service in supporting these.*
  - *Encouraging third level students to act as tutors in homework clubs. Credit could be given to third level students involved in this way.*

- The Department of Education & Science should review the issue of rolling suspensions, particularly in areas of high economic and social disadvantage. There may be a need for a nationwide tracking system of suspension to monitor the underlying reasons as to why disruptive students continue to be suspended and how their specific needs can be addressed.

- A review should be undertaken of why low-ability girls who complete second level schooling participate less frequently in the labour market than low ability boys who leave school early.

- A review should be undertaken of bullying at school and how it impacts on the educational opportunities of students who are considered to be marginalised in the system. The introduction of the CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) at primary level would help to counter discriminatory attitudes and opinions formed at this stage.

- Bonus payments should be paid to teachers with the relevant qualifications to teach in designated disadvantaged schools, in light of the fact that these schools are finding it difficult to recruit experienced teachers. All teachers should be offered training in how to deal with diversity, racism, and difference amongst school students.

- Students who are in danger of dropping out of the formal education system should be consulted with and listened to. All initiatives implemented to combat educational disadvantage and Early School Leaving must learn from the student voice. NYCI welcomes the establishment of student councils in a majority of second-level schools and supports the establishment of the Union of Secondary Students (USS) as an essential partner in the education system. All efforts need to be made by the Department of Education & Science and individual schools to create an environment where the student voice is considered.

#### Recommendations for young Travellers experiencing ESL and Educational Disadvantage

The educational profile of Travellers in Ireland is very poor. Evidence that does exist points to poor levels of access, participation and outcomes at all levels of the education service, including primary school. Changing the culture of Irish education will not solely benefit members of minority communities but all communities. Bringing about the changes necessary to create equality of outcomes for Travellers from the education system would signal a significant opening of the education system, which would enrich all society.

NYCI recommends that:

- The Traveller Education Service should be immediately established, as recommended by the Task Force on the Traveller Community 1995.
- The Traveller Education Strategy should be developed and implemented. This would contribute to the accomplishment of equality of outcomes for Travellers from education. It would mark out the challenges for the future and clearly identify ways to approach those challenges.



- A tracking system should be established to see how Traveller children and young people are progressing through the education system. Care is needed in how this system is established. Ethnic quality monitoring should be based on principles of self-identification and universal question, i.e. all students should identify their ethnic background.
- There should be an independent review of how resources are being used for Travellers in the education system. There is a need for extra resources and supports to be used in line with best international practice.
- Enrolment and integration of Travellers into schools need to be tackled. These are still extremely important issues for Travellers. At local level, a multi-faceted approach to early school leaving is necessary with all local players involved: young people, parents, schools, youth services, home-school liaison, local Traveller groups etc. Schools need to be equality-proofed to combat prejudice and racism from parents, teachers, students, etc.
- Educational disadvantage that leads to ESL should to be tackled at all levels. This needs to include an intercultural approach to education from 'early-years' to third level education and training, with an emphasis on equality and anti-racism.
- It is essential that equality is a core value in evaluating schools and that subsequent and elaborated policies ensure equality is required of schools throughout the school planning systems.
- There should be specific research into best international practice regarding education of minorities.
- Empowerment of Traveller parents to engage with and influence the education system needs to be addressed. There is a need for a Traveller branch of the National Parent's Council.
- Initiatives to promote education of children who are nomadic need to be developed. Recommendations in the Task Force report relating to this issue need to be implemented, for example, the use of a 'school record card'.

## Chapter 3: Access to Further & Higher Education

### Introduction

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) believes that if Lifelong/Lifewide Learning is to become a reality, then every person, of any age, should be able to access suitable, appropriate and accredited education and training. Young people, in particular, are calling for a flexible education and training system where both full-time and part-time education options are available. Furthermore, further education should offer appropriate education and training routes to young people in all circumstances, be it young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, members of the Traveller community, young people with physical or mental disabilities, young people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation, young people with literacy difficulties, or young people from cultural/ethnic minorities.

The following chapter examines issues of access and progression from second level education to further and higher education. As post-secondary education becomes more prevalent, many young people are availing of high quality further education as a stepping-stone to third level education. Alternative access routes to higher education will be examined as well as government policy that has led to the streamlining of qualification and accreditation structures in Ireland. Furthermore, access issues will be examined in relation to particular groups of young people who require special conditions in order to avail of higher education. Recommendations will be offered at the end of the chapter to highlight what improvements are necessary to create the most effective access framework that can be utilised by all young people.

### Background

In recent years there has been a plethora of legislation and policy development, mainly in relation to third level education, that has informed the access agenda. These developments have focused on several main issues including improving access to third level education for disadvantaged people, protection for students enrolled in private colleges and streamlining of the accreditation process for those accessing third level and further education. Outlined below are the salient matters regarding access in recently enacted legislation and policy development in education.

**The Universities Act, 1997** – The act provides that academic councils shall make recommendations to governing authorities on the admission of students.

Moreover, under Section 12 of the Universities Act 1997, universities are required *“to promote gender balance and equality of opportunity among students and employees of the university”* as well as *“to facilitate lifelong learning through the provision of adult and continuing education”*.

Section 18 of the Universities Act 1997, states that a governing authority, or a committee where appropriate, shall, inter alia, *“have regard to the attainment of gender balance and equality of opportunity among the students and employees of the university and shall, in particular, promote access in the university and to university education by economically or socially disadvantaged people and by people from sections of society significantly under-represented in the student body”*.

### The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act

**1999** - The Act sets out that a National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is to be established with three principal objectives:

- The establishment and maintenance of a framework of qualifications for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners
- The establishment and promotion of the maintenance and improvement of the standards of awards of the further and higher education and training sector, other than in the existing universities
- The promotion and facilitation of access, transfer and progression throughout the span of education and training provision

While it is apparent that the Qualifications Authority will not be an equality agent by setting quotas etc., the Authority is to set out the procedures for access, transfer and progression which must be implemented by most State providers of further and higher education and training, including the Institutes of Technology, the PLC providers, FÁS, CERT and Teagasc. The existing universities will be required to demonstrate how they are facilitating access, transfer and progression arrangements for holders of NQAI awards.

**National Development Plan** - The NDP notes that participation in further education, particularly at third level, remains skewed by social class, with the lower socio-economic groupings continuing to be under-represented. While the factors underlying this phenomenon go beyond the educational system, there is need for targeted interventions at the transition from second to third level itself. Building on the existing arrangements, the NDP states that the development of third level access is necessary to promote the participation of students with disabilities, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and mature "second chance" students.

The NDP provides for a Third Level Access Fund of €121.79 million over the period 2000-06. The stated objective of this measure is to facilitate and improve access to the labour market for the beneficiaries whilst improving their long-term employability, it is intended by the NDP to:

- Meet the specific needs of the students with disabilities in terms of equipment and support services
- Provide financial support to disadvantaged students by way of additional support to the existing maintenance grants scheme
- Develop outreach initiatives currently undertaken by a number of third-level institutions which involve links with second level schools and community groups and are designed to both assist students to meet the points requirements for the standard CAO entry procedures and to provide complementary special arrangements
- Expand the provision of particular services, such as counselling and mentoring services, to meet the needs of non-traditional students

There have also been numerous reports that have informed the access agenda to date. **The Commission on the Points System** that was published in December 1999 outlines the need to create sustainable conditions at second level in order to have greater access opportunities for specific target groups at third level. For example:

- **Socio-economically disadvantaged students:** The Commission recommended that there should be a quota for disadvantaged students in third-level education set at 5% of the intake into third-level education. As the first step towards extending the access schemes, the Commission recommended that a National Access Officer for Disadvantage be appointed to support and co-ordinate the current initiatives at third level. The role of such an officer would be to help third-level institutions to develop co-ordinated approaches to supporting disadvantaged students both before and after entry to third-level institutions. A further role would be to advise the HEA and the Department of Education & Science on appropriate criteria for defining disadvantaged students and on related policy issues.
- **Mature Students:** The Commission recommended that by the year 2005, each third-level institution should set aside a quota of at least 15% of places for students entering at age 23 or above. The Commission also stressed the need for greater opportunities for students to return to third-level education on a part-time basis.
- **Students with disabilities:** The Commission recommended that each third level institution should set aside a number of places for students with physical and learning disabilities and that institutions should consult each other in relation to ensuring the consistent consideration of applications by such students. The Commission supported the existing system of entry whereby students with a disability are categorised by the CAO as 'special category applicants' and are invited to specify on their application form any special health or special needs requirements.

To date, the recommendations of The Commission on the Points System have yet to be implemented. Unless action is taken to implement the report, issues around equity of access to education and creating the necessary conditions for a Lifelong learning society will not be realised.

As well as creating the necessary legislative and policy environment, the Department of Education & Science currently provides financial assistance to a small number of special initiatives which support links between second level schools and local communities in disadvantaged areas and third level institutions. Partial funding was allocated in 2000 to support the following programmes:

- Accessing College Education (ACE), Tallaght
- Ballymun Initiative for Third Level Education (BITE)
- Blanchardstown Third Level Access Programme
- Clondalkin Higher Education Access Programme (CHEAP)
- Limerick Community based Education Initiative (LCBEI)
- Trinity Access Project (TAP)

NYCI recognises the importance and impact such initiatives are having on local communities. Nevertheless, there is a concern that unless the funding for such initiatives are extended and mainstreamed, the majority of good work and good practice will be lost. New initiatives such as RAPID and CLÁR offer an excellent opportunity for such programmes to be extended in many other socio-economically disadvantaged areas and promote the best opportunity for good practice to be shared and beneficial outcomes evaluated.

### Action Group on Access to Third Level Education

The Action Group on Access to Third Level Education was established in September 2000, fulfilling an important commitment in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. Its purpose was to:

*"advise the Minister for Education and Science on the development of a co-ordinated framework to promote access by mature and disadvantaged students and students with disabilities to third-level education, building on the experience of current initiatives, and to make findings and recommendations accordingly"*

The report of the Action Group includes 77 recommendations, covering a range of strategies to achieve much greater equality for students accessing Third level education. Some of the key recommendations are:

- The introduction of a new '**special rate**' of **maintenance grants** for Third level students who qualify under a new income limit.
- The establishment of a **National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education** to drive the implementation of many of the recommendations in the report, including the allocation of funding for initiatives to promote equity in access and monitoring and evaluation of progress in existing and new initiatives.

- The transfer of **responsibility for financial supports** for students to the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs.

- Further development of initiatives at **primary and second level** to encourage progression to further and third level education by disadvantaged students.

- Greater efforts to include more **students with disabilities** in Third level, with a target of 1.8% by 2006.

- The setting aside of 15% of full-time places in all Third level institutions **for mature students** by 2006.

At the launch of the Report of the Action Group on 9th July 2001, the Minister for Education & Science committed himself to the implementation of the report: *"action will be taken on foot of these recommendations and I have already taken steps concerning the implementation of certain key proposals"*. The Minister did take action in enabling the payment of the special rate of maintenance grant for some students, where eligibility is broadly linked to receipt of long-term social welfare payment. The Minister also announced the creation of a new €1.269m Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage.

Despite this progress, the Report still stands largely unimplemented. If a new framework for access to third level education is to be realised, there needs to be much greater urgency by Government in implementing the report.

### Policy Concerns

Welcome advances have been made to progress thinking on the access agenda as it relates to third level higher education. However, NYCI is concerned that as the education system strides to become more flexible in an era of lifelong learning, young people who choose to access alternative paths to further education are not offered the same security as in third level education. As the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland develops the accreditation and certification environment, many changes, in particular, will occur in the further education arena. Young people need assurance that progression routes to further education per se or progression to further education as a stepping-stone to third level education remain flexible and accessible to all young people in all circumstances.



The following section outlines educational progression routes that are taken as an alternative to third level education. As the demand for education has exploded, so has the number of providers throughout the country. Developments in the area of access to further education and higher education are now under the remit of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, as outlined below:

#### **The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland -**

The National Qualifications Authority is charged with being the overall guarantor of the quality of further and higher education and to promote access, transfer and progression into and within education and training. The Authority will be the crucial element in helping students to move between courses and colleges and developing the national framework of qualifications.

A new body called the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) will incorporate the current further education and training certification functions of FÁS, National Tourism Certification Board, Teagasc and the National Council for Vocational Awards.

Another body called the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) incorporates the higher education and training certification functions of the National Council for Educational Awards and other relevant bodies. Legislation also provides for the first time for Institutes of Technology to have delegated authority to make awards.

**Post-Leaving Certificate Courses** - Post-Leaving Cert. (PLCs) courses are full-time one and two year programmes of integrated education, training and work experience provided in schools and colleges outside the third level sector. PLCs are for people who have completed senior cycle second level education (e.g. Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme or Leaving Cert. Applied) or a Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPT-1) or equivalent, and who need further education and training to enhance their chances of gaining employment.

Post-Leaving Cert. courses also provide an alternative route to higher education in the Institute of Technology colleges, for those who have completed the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, or who were unable to enter third level education after leaving school.

Means tested maintenance grants along the lines of the third level schemes were introduced with effect from September 1998. With respect to accessing third level courses from PLCs, a scheme has been introduced under which places on selected courses in the Institutes of Technology are allocated on the basis of attainment achieved in the NCVA Level 2 Awards by candidates on PLC courses. While this is a welcome development, there are still some

concerns that progression paths from PLC courses to third level are not transparent enough and need further extension to create a more equal playing field for all.

**FÁS** - The Training and Employment Authority provides a wide range of services to the labour market in Ireland. Its functions are laid down in the Labour Services Act 1987 and include:

- training and re-training
- employment schemes
- placement and guidance services
- assistance to community groups and workers' co-operatives towards the creation of jobs
- assistance to people seeking employment elsewhere in the European Union
- consultancy and human resource related services, on a commercial basis, outside the State

In 2000 about 95,200 unemployed job-seekers or other individuals completed FÁS programmes, and, at the end of the year, 52,000 persons were on FÁS programmes.

FÁS provides a range of services to help people find work. These services are available to all individuals including the unemployed, persons wishing to return to work after a break, persons who have completed school or college and job-changers. All FÁS services are open to men and women equally and to all citizens of the European Union. The most important step to availing of FÁS services is registration at the local FÁS office. FÁS Employment Services Offices provide career advice and guidance including information on job and training opportunities as well as temporary employment options.

Young people seeking training, re-skilling and work have been served well by the array of courses offered by FÁS. Early School Leavers can access second chance educational opportunities through FÁS Community Training Workshops or its counterpart, Youthreach, through the VEC's. Young people can access apprenticeships and further training and experience through the Community Employment scheme as well as other traineeships and training courses. In an era of lifelong learning, FÁS offers an invaluable range of opportunities for young people, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who need a stepping-stone into the world of skills, training and employment.

Nevertheless, NYCI is concerned that the FÁS Community Employment (CE) scheme will be so downgraded that it will impact on the importance of vocational training as a means of progressing into the labour market or simply as a way to develop

improved social and personal skills. NYCI believes that vocational training is an essential element in any training strategy and that the CE scheme should be supported and promoted as it provides an integral staffing element to many organisations and institutions. For many people who do not have the skills or confidence to access the labour market, CE provides an excellent opportunity for many as a stepping-stone to the labour market or as a way to participate in the world of work.

#### **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme**

**(VTOS)** - VTOS is a special range of courses designed to meet the educational needs of unemployed people. The aims of the scheme are to give unemployed people education and training opportunities that will develop their employability and to prepare people to go to paid employment or to further opportunities leading to paid employment. People who are aged 21 or over, getting unemployment payments or signing for credits for at least six months, are eligible for the scheme. A limited number of places are available to recipients of the Lone Parents or Disability Allowances, and to dependent spouses of all categories of people eligible to join VTOS.

One of the main benefits of VTOS is that the courses are provided free of charge, travel and meal allowances are provided, books and materials are provided and childcare is also available. VTOS offers certification at a range of levels including the Junior Certificate, the Leaving Certificate and the Foundation Level 1 and Level 2 certificates of the National Council for Vocational Awards.

VTOS covers the range of provision from basic education and training to advanced vocational preparation and training. It has a strong emphasis on raising the general education levels of participants, facilitating personal development and preparing and/or re-orienting participants for paid work, self-employment, employment schemes, enterprise activities, and/or further education and training in a range of transferable and specific occupational skills.

VTOS has nevertheless been criticised as a scheme that fails to reach the most disadvantaged in society. The Work Research Centre, who carried out an extensive evaluation of VTOS in 1994 noted that the programme was not reaching the most disadvantaged. A further report in 1999 also noted that participation in VTOS is on the decline. The three major influences on participation among those hardest to reach were:

- A financial incentive to participate
- Job guarantee or clear evidence of improved job prospects resulting from participation
- The availability of suitable courses

In order for VTOS to become more inclusive, there is a need to lower the age requirement so that young people under the age of 21 can access the scheme, particularly if they have failed to complete courses such as Youthreach. In order to attract the most disadvantaged people on to VTOS, particularly those people in rural areas, an outreach element needs to be considered and implemented.

**CERT** - The National Body responsible for co-ordinating the Education, Recruitment and Training of personnel for the Tourism & Catering Industry. CERT services are provided through a network of regional offices, hotel and catering colleges, and training centres for the unemployed and hotel schools. CERT established the National Tourism Certification Board to develop a national system of assessment and certification for the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Industry, in partnership with the Department of Education and Industry Bodies.

**Distance Learning** - As a model of distance learning, OSCAIL - the National Distance Education Centre - was established in 1982 to provide adults throughout Ireland with access to higher education qualifications regardless of location or previous education. It came as a response to the prevailing conditions that saw higher education restricted to relatively few individuals, quite a low proportion of adults with degrees or other third level qualifications and an under-developed provision for access to degree level qualifications through part-time or adult education.

**OSCAIL** has a dedicated budget provided by the Higher Education Authority. It adopts a co-operative approach to course development and teaching within a single integrated national programme. This unique strategy enables OSCAIL to draw on the support of other universities and third level colleges for the development and presentation of its programmes. OSCAIL also has faculty status in its host institution, Dublin City University.

**The Open University** - The Open University (OU) is Britain's largest university with more than 200,000 people studying its courses. OU courses are designed for students studying in their homes or workplaces, in their own time, anywhere in the UK, Ireland, and throughout Europe. Courses use a range of teaching media specifically-produced textbooks, TV and radio programmes, audio and videotapes, computer software and home experiment kits.

Undergraduate courses are open to all regardless of educational qualifications. The OU takes special responsibility for making higher education accessible to people with disabilities; currently some 7,653 of its students belong to this category. The largest number of students fall into the 22-45 range.

While Open University is a UK based institution, it is open to people living in Ireland. However, people who avail of and access Open University courses are not entitled to a tax rebate and/or fee exemptions that are open to people accessing Irish-based distance learning programmes. Young people at work or those who living in remote rural areas who use distance learning should have parity and equality as exists with other distance learning courses or other full-time higher or further education courses.

## Recommendations

NYCI recommends that:

- Students in part-time higher education should be means-tested in order to receive adequate funding from the State in line with a more realistic policy of Lifelong Learning.
- A realistic framework, funding and support for workplace learning should be developed and implemented by the relevant stakeholders in order to make an 'earn and learn' education system a reality.
- Provisions should be made for the full implementation of the report of the Action Group on Third Level Access.
- Increases should be made to the maintenance grant for Third level students so that it is in line with basic social welfare payments.
- Progression routes for students enrolled in PLC courses should be made more transparent. Currently, only some institutes of higher education recognise the qualifications of PLC students while others, such as the DITs, do not. The newly formed Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education Authority must work together in order to improve the current progression routes for PLC students.
- The recommendations of the Commission on the Points System should be fully implemented.
- Funding for Access programmes should be extended and mainstreamed through core funding by the Department of Education & Science. Access programmes can be extended under RAPID and CLÁR and good practice can be disseminated, evaluated and monitored under its new structures.
- In order for VTOS to become more inclusive, the age requirement should be lowered so that young people under the age of 21 can access the scheme, particularly if they have failed to complete courses such as Youthreach. In order to attract the most disadvantaged people on to VTOS, particularly those people in rural areas, an outreach element needs to be considered and implemented.
- Vocational training should be promoted as an essential element in any training strategy and the CE scheme be supported and promoted as it provides an integral-staffing element to many organisations and institutions.
- Young people at work or otherwise who use the Open University as a method of distance learning should be exempt from fee payment and/or entitled to tax rebates, as exists with other distance learning courses or other full-time higher or further education courses.

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### Department of Education & Science:

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### Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment:

[www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie)

### European Commission:

[www.europa.eu.int/comm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm)

### FÁS:

[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)

### National Adult Literacy Association (NALA):

[www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

### National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA):

[www.ncva.ie](http://www.ncva.ie)

### National Distance Education Centre (OSCAIL):

[www.dcu.ie/oscail/about.html](http://www.dcu.ie/oscail/about.html)

### National Youth Council of Ireland:

[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

### Open University:

[www.open.ac.uk/frames.html](http://www.open.ac.uk/frames.html)

### Union of Students of Ireland:

[www.usi.ie](http://www.usi.ie)

### Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS):

[www.iol.ie/~hkvtos/oview.html](http://www.iol.ie/~hkvtos/oview.html)



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