



MAKE MINORITY A PRIORITY

INSIGHTS FROM MINORITY ETHNIC
YOUNG PEOPLE GROWING UP IN
IRELAND AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR

COMPLETE REPORT



NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND

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

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MAKE MINORITY A PRIORITY

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND RESEARCH REPORT

In this research the voices of 50 minority ethnic young people present powerful insights into their experiences of growing up in Ireland

By Anne Walsh

November 2017

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“I think it’s kind of more like ushering people through the fear of identifying what they are, rather than actually helping them identify what they are.”

[Peer youth leader, Munster]

What we ask of a piece of research is that it shines a light on an issue and opens it up for further discussion. This research is shaped by conversations from 50 young people from minority ethnic backgrounds about belonging and engagement. The young people are seen to be negotiating fixed, fluid and shifting notions of identity. There is doubt in the process but there is also a striving for a way forward that would be impossible to imagine or to understand without hearing these voices directly.

One of the standout issues presenting through the interviews is the manifest and everyday experiences of racism experienced by the young people interviewed. Verbal abuse is part of a daily lived experience for our young people, presenting us with a red flag to an enduring Irish cultural story of welcome. This research clearly demonstrates the need for safe and

supported spaces where young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can share their experiences with others with dual or multiple identities to support them in their exploration and negotiation of a sense of identity and belonging. Supporting such conversations is key to delivering a quality youth work service and one from which we can all learn. In fact, the struggle identified in the voices here offers an essential catalyst in Ireland’s growth and development as a multi-ethnic country. If we are open to it, our young people can guide us in shaping a national conversation about identity by listening to who they say they are. In turn, this will help us to develop a new language to describe who we all are as a people, and to find ways to acknowledge and celebrate dual and multiple identities as a way of being Irish.

1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this research the voices of 50 minority ethnic young people present powerful insights into their experiences of growing up in Ireland. The findings highlight issues and challenges around belonging, engagement and shifting notions of identity. This report will provide direction to the youth sector, and prompt us to reflect on whether our current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

What the young people have shown us in this research is that, given access to safe and supported spaces to share experiences with others from minority ethnic backgrounds helps in the negotiation of a sense of belonging.

1.1 FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

This report documents the perspectives of minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland and the current and potential role of youth work in their lives. It is based on an exploratory, qualitative research design whose principal aims were:

- to identify some of the issues facing young people from minority ethnic communities and to explore how youth work can support them;
- to identify a range of different youth work approaches which engage with minority ethnic youth groups across Ireland;
- to analyse the lessons that might be learnt from minority ethnic young people's experiences of youth projects across Ireland.

1.1.2 WHY DO WE NEED THIS RESEARCH?

Increased migration into Ireland in the early 2000s precipitated a range of responses by youth organisations. In 2008 NYCI set up an Intercultural Programme to support the youth sector to embed interculturalism in their youth work provision and practice. Although the widely-held view within the youth sector initially was that minority ethnic young people should participate alongside young people from the majority community within integrated youth groups, growing anecdotal evidence suggested that alternative ways of engaging may be required to meet the young people's needs.

To support evidence based debate about integration and interculturalism in youth work, NYCI set out to provide up-to-date, nationally-focused research on the specific needs of minority ethnic young people. This research explores the value of minority ethnic-only

youth work spaces by hearing directly from the young people who have engaged with alternative approaches to youth work, as opposed to integrated mainstream youth groups.

1.1.3 WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGE?

A number of recommendations at both practice and policy levels emerge from this research and are detailed on pages 16-18 of this document. They highlight that the current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

1.1.4 KEY NUMBERS

The figures shown here indicate the levels of ethnic diversity in Ireland of young people aged 15-24 and provide background and context for the qualitative research outlined in this report. (Central Statistics Office 2017a:EYO29)

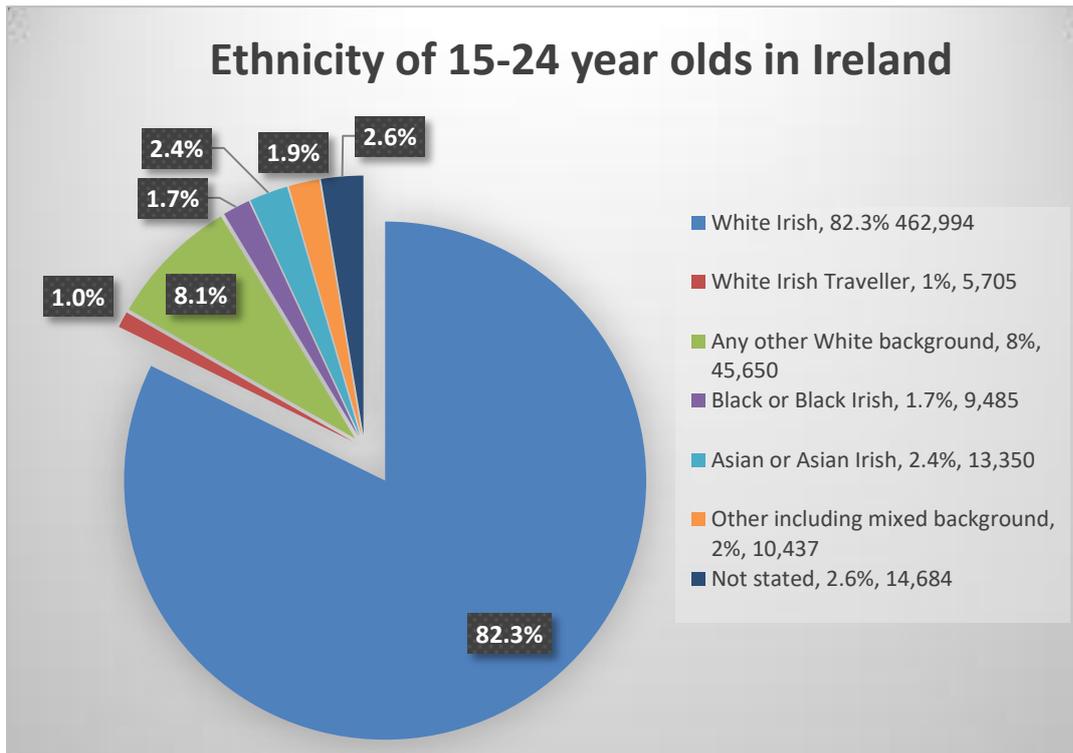
Almost 1 in 7 young people (15%) aged 15-24 living in Ireland are minority ethnic.

1.1.5 NATIONALITY

The largest minority nationality groups amongst the 15-24 age group are Polish, UK, Lithuanian, Romania, Irish-American, Brazilian, and Latvian.

1.1.6 ETHNICITY

Chart 1: Ethnicity of young people in Ireland aged 15 – 24 years



1.1.7 METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

Qualitative data from six semi-structured interviews exploring minority ethnic young people's experiences growing up in Ireland were gathered. Interviews were held in Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Dublin, with 50 young people from 20 different ethnic backgrounds. The five key themes and issues emerging are highlighted here. For more on the interviews and findings see the complete report in Sections 4-5.

1.2 THE MAIN FINDINGS

1.2.1 ON IDENTITY AND BELONGING

In negotiating a sense of belonging in Ireland young minority ethnic people are significantly impacted by the attitude of people around them alongside navigating their own journeys of self-understanding and discovery. It was apparent that the journey toward belonging and of forging their personal identity was complex, and the young people's experiences differed considerably from each other. One of the key findings was that the young people felt the need to have safe and supported places in which they could discuss these issues, where they could share, deliberate and debate with others who had similar experiences.

Issues for youth workers to be aware of on identity and belonging

- Be aware of the importance of dual-ethnicity¹ as an option of identity.
- Young minority ethnic people feel they are being constantly judged based on their accent, language, appearance and cultural background.
- Young people are made to feel that they do not belong, that they are not Irish.

You're scared to show people who you are because you're afraid that they're going to judge you from where you came from, and how you act. So you're just scared of really being yourself. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

1.2.2 ON PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:

One of the key findings was the impact on children who are growing up in Ireland and adopting Irish cultural norms but whose parents promote and expect different behaviour in line with their cultural heritage. The findings demonstrate the importance of supporting family relationships which can sometimes come under significant pressure as the young people negotiate a home culture and outside culture which are significantly different. Equally important to note is that in migrant-only youth groups or spaces the young people are quick to support each other around intergenerational conflict through sharing their common experiences.

Issues for youth workers to be aware of on parental and community relationships

- Young people have to negotiate being accepted by both their minority ethnic peers and their majority ethnic peers who all make differing demands and judgements on them.
- Intergenerational issues include:
 - Managing complex and often competing expectations.
 - The nature of acculturation and the fear for parents of their children losing their cultural and religious traditions.
 - Understanding different child rearing practices.
 - Managing differing value systems.

¹ Describing themselves by two or more ethnic influences because of 1) mixed heritage (parents from different ethnic backgrounds) or 2) a mix of heritage and residency (coming from a minority ethnic background but growing up in Ireland and identifying as part Irish) e.g. South Sudan-Ugandan, Nigerian-Irish, Polish-Irish etc.

Your parents might be hanging on “but you’re African and this is the way you should be”... [but] just because your background is African doesn’t mean that your culture can’t be both African and Irish. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

1.2.3. ON RACISM AND EXCLUSION:

A key issue to emerge was the degree to which racism had become a ‘normal’ feature of young people’s lives. Remarkably, the young people presented stories which spoke of considerable resilience. In deflecting the impact of racism they diminished it largely by shrugging it off. Nevertheless, the young people also expressed eagerness to find ways to challenge the endemic societal nature and tolerance of racism.

Issues for youth workers to be aware of on racism and exclusion

- Young people need their experiences of racism to be acknowledged and they need the tools to process, understand and challenge it safely.
- The impact of racism and comments on young people can result in them excluding themselves from opportunities due to lack of confidence in whether they are welcome to attend events or groups.

Just be realistic here, because this actually does happen, I’m seen as a nigger, [...] seen as a monkey. [...] we get called these names. That even if it’s not on a daily basis, at least once a week. I’m just saying this actually does go on and you’re not taking it seriously. [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

1.2.4. ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS:

Attaining and using leadership skills were key motivators for the young people’s ongoing engagement in their youth groups. In two organisations, the young people applied their leadership skills within the community as part of the youth organisation’s outreach work. This provided the organisations they were linked to a valid reason for supporting an age group that they might otherwise have discontinued engaging with. This is critically important as many of the young people we interviewed were only beginning to articulate the journeys of identity that they had been on. Up until the age of 18 they had been too caught up with trying to fit in than with exploring and understanding their own sense of self.

Issues for youth workers to be aware of on leadership skills

- Minority ethnic young people want to make a difference, to be leaders, but often miss out on opportunities to learn leadership skills, especially those that are self-organising youth groups.

Young [minority ethnic] people....definitely [need] to stand up more and be leaders and be facilitators because it does help motivate others [Black male, 18+, Ulster]

1.2.5. ON INTEGRATION:

A key theme on integration was the need to build cultural awareness and understanding within the wider Irish community. Critical was the call for an environment in which young people could be themselves and not be expected to assimilate. The value of trusted and culturally competent adults, who support the young people as they negotiate and balance different aspects of their identity and where they belong was also clear.

Issues for youth workers to be aware of on integration

- Understand how the concept of acting or being black, or white, manifests for young people.
- Understand the loss, pain, isolation and confusion that minority ethnic young people can face.
- Young people may feel uncomfortable being singled out on the basis of their migrant/minority ethnic status or which require them to be 'representative' of a particular country or culture while at the same time they need their cultural identity to be valued – it's a balance that must be negotiated with the young person and managed.
- A young person's visa/migration status impacts significantly on their employment and education options.

Sometimes people are surprised [by cultural practices]... even though you try and explain they don't understand... We should be taught more about other cultures so that you understand why people act differently. Like what you might think is weird is completely normal to another person. If you're not taught that then you don't really know that. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends that the current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

1.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR

In light of the findings of this report, we recommend the following for the youth work sector:

Ensure appropriate supports and spaces are available

1. Ensure that the specific needs and contributions of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are taken into account in the development of **organisational strategies, work plans and actions**.
2. **Safe and supported spaces** where young minority ethnic people can share their experiences with others from minority ethnic backgrounds to help them to explore and negotiate their sense of identity should be provided. Examples in the research included groups supported by youth workers and a self-organised group that is supported by a youth organisation to meet in their premises.
3. Youth work provision based on strict geographical limitations and age restrictions impacts on minority ethnic young people's opportunities to engage. More flexible or **alternate approaches** are required to take account of the numerous demands that young people aged 18+ face. Spaces may need to serve as drop-in or fluid spaces where project work can evolve based on the young people's interests. They will need to promote exploration and dialogue, where youth work methodologies and training are grounding principles.

Ensure appropriate training and education is delivered

4. Anti-racism and intercultural **training** should be included as core competencies of youth workers in order to ensure that organisations are better equipped to support minority ethnic young people.
 - a. Youth organisations must foster critical conversations on the theme of racism to help address racist attitudes.
5. Religious literacy **training**
 - a. Find opportunities to build understanding of minority faiths and beliefs with young people with the aim of reducing Islamophobia and other religious intolerances.
 - b. Support honest and open debate, and room for disagreement while grounding the work in the often difficult balance where everyone's rights are respected
6. **Cultural competency** should form part of the education of all young people:
 - a. To promote acceptance and embracing of cultural diversity as the norm.

- b. To deal with difficult or unfamiliar situations and differing values and beliefs.

Support advocacy and leadership with and for minority ethnic young people

7. Create a minority–ethnic led youth work forum as a **special interest group**.
8. Young people and adults from a minority ethnic backgrounds need opportunities and mentoring to move into **leadership roles** within mainstream youth work.
9. Youth work centres and community **facilities** need to be made available to self-organising minority-ethnic youth groups for free or minimum cost.
10. Youth work **leadership** training for minority ethnic peer leaders (aged 18+) needs to be provided that is religiously and culturally appropriate but based on current resources such as Starting Out.
11. Where minority ethnic people have significant **advocacy and support** needs in relation to visas/migration status, access to college, and isolation from members, it is important that youth workers engage in advocacy to address these issues.

Carry out research and mapping to address gaps in existing knowledge and practice

12. Further **research** should be undertaken to explore the **gaps within current youth work provision** in addressing any of the key issues raised by young people in this report:
 - a. Is integrated youth work provision sufficiently supporting young people to explore aspects of their identity and belonging?
 - b. Are minority ethnic young people attending mainstream youth work supported to address issues such as racism, intergenerational conflict, etc. in their lives?
13. A **mapping** exercise is necessary to determine the level and range of intercultural and minority ethnic-only youth work provision across Ireland, to include an audit of cultural diversity amongst staff and volunteers.
14. Norms and cultural practices within youth work organisations need to be examined and evaluated to **assess** whether these may present difficulties for young people from minority ethnic communities to find out about them, to join then and/or to participate fully.
15. NYCI should establish a forum facilitate a debate on a strategic direction for intercultural youth work in Ireland that **moves beyond an exclusive focus on integrated universal youth work** provision.

1.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS OF THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR

In the period 2008-2014, funding for youth work declined significantly. This led to ‘fire-fighting’ and reduced the capacity for inclusive practice. In the last two years investment

in youth work has been partially restored and that is welcome. However, given the increased number of young people from a minority ethnic background and the needs and supports identified in this report, we recommend the following:

1. Allocate resources at national, regional and local levels to strategically fund **dedicated youth workers** to support intercultural youth work.
2. Explore ways of **replicating or adapting the approaches** spearheaded by existing intercultural youth projects on a regional basis and in a manner which suits local needs.
3. The current review of the Youth Service Grant Scheme and the Value for Money and Policy Review of the other Youth Programmes should facilitate the provision and delivery of additional and enhanced youth work supports to young people from a minority ethnic background.
4. Any review of funding arrangements should facilitate minority ethnic-led organisations to apply for resources to deliver youth work services in their own right or in partnership with others.
5. Open up youth work funding opportunities to minority ethnic-led youth work organisations that aligns them with current youth work services.

2

INTRODUCTION

2. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the perspectives of minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland and considers the current and potential role of youth work in their lives. It is based on an exploratory, qualitative research whose principal aims were:

- to identify some of the issues facing young people from ethnic minority communities, in particular first and second generation migrant young people, and to explore how youth work can support them;
- to identify different youth work approaches which engage with minority ethnic only youth groups across Ireland;
- to analyse the lessons that might be learnt from minority ethnic young people's experience of intercultural youth projects across Ireland.

This report draws from and builds on research carried out by Canal Communities Regional Youth Service (CCRYS) in 2016 (see Mahon and McCrea, 2016). Our research had some comparable aims so we used similar methodologies with the intention of identifying any parallels between national and local recommendations.

This report proceeds as follows. We begin with an outline of the rationale for the research together with an account of ethical considerations. Section Two covers the methodology. Section Three sets out a short review of relevant literature before turning to Section Four where we provide an analysis of our main findings. Section Five describes the different approaches to intercultural youth work that the young people engaged with. Section Six presents a discussion and synopsis of the key findings together with recommendations.

2.1 RESEARCH RATIONALE

Increased migration into Ireland in the early 2000s precipitated a range of responses by youth organisations. A number of initiatives sought to identify the concerns of young people and families from migrant communities with regard to youth work and to explore how to overcome barriers which may exist to their accessing youth work opportunities (McCrea, 2003; Foróige, 2008; Mauro-Bracken, 2009; Lynam, 2009, NYCI 2012). NYCI, in collaboration with the then Office for Children and Youth Affairs, developed a Report and Recommendations for an Intercultural Youth Work Strategy which set out a national implementation plan for intercultural youth work for 2009 – 2015. Under that plan NYCI set up the Intercultural programme to provide direction and support to the youth work sector to embed interculturalism in their youth work provision and practice. The vision of intercultural youth work was that all youth organisations would engage with and involve the minority ethnic young people in their communities. NYCI suggested that they

look at it in relative terms (i.e. about 10% - 12% of each youth group/organisation would ideally be from minority ethnic communities to reflect national demographics and the voluntary nature of youth work. Localised demographics might change that figure up to as much as 50% and in a few areas it would be lower).

By 2016, NYCI noted growing evidence that young people from minority ethnic communities were participating in a variety of mainstream integrated youth work activities. A number of respondents to Gilligan et al's (2010) qualitative research on the experience of young migrants mentioned their participation in youth work (Gilligan, et al, 2010) while a 'diversity audit' of youth services in Monaghan in 2010 found that in a county where 8.5% of young people were born outside Ireland, 11% of participants in youth work across the county were of migrant background (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2011).² Similar trends have been identified by a number of youth work organisations³. In addition, an NYCI audit of youth services in Co Galway in 2012 showed that levels of engagement with minority ethnic young people across staffed youth services was 6% in a county where 9.5% of the youth population was from a migrant background (NYCI 2012: Unpublished Presentation).⁴ Moreover, youth organisations with improved data collection methods show engagement is relatively high although barriers to collecting and collating accurate data in many youth organisations still remains. It appeared therefore that our goal toward integrated youth groups with relatively high engagement of minority ethnic young people seemed to have been largely achieved. Why then were we hearing that all was not as well as we felt it should be at this stage, that there were still youth groups that did not have relatively significant numbers of minority ethnic young people, and/or that the work that happened in youth groups didn't always meet the needs of the minority ethnic young people and that there was a desire for something more or different?

A number of factors indicated that there was a need for up-to-date, nationally-focused research on the specific needs of minority ethnic young people that asked how - or if - youth work is meeting those needs. Firstly, through its ongoing engagement with youth work organisations and migrant support groups across the country, NYCI's Intercultural and Equality Officer had become aware of an increasing number of minority ethnic young people and parents who were self-organising with the aim of offering religious and culturally relevant opportunities to young people in their communities. Secondly, young people and adults from minority ethnic backgrounds were expressing the need for youth groups where young people could share their similar experiences of being

² This participation varied across cultural/ethnic group and across geographical location within the county.

³ Foróige collects ethnicity data from all of its members and volunteers. An unpublished research project by Scouting Ireland presents a figure of 8.5% minority ethnic membership amongst a 10% sample survey of its groups (2016).

⁴ NYCI presentation to Galway VEC and participating youth work organisations on key findings November 2012

from minority ethnic backgrounds in order to probe issues of identity, belonging, interculturalism, integration and life experiences including racism and intergenerational issues. This was echoed in research carried out in 2015 by CCRYS which highlighted a number of issues for minority ethnic young people and concrete ways in which youth work could respond to these (Mahon and McCrea, 2016). As this research was limited to Dublin we needed to explore this further. Thirdly, there were consistent reports that young people were facing significant barriers to inclusion in wider society, suggesting a viable role for youth work which is well placed to support young people in addressing these issues (Gilligan et al, 2010; Mahon and McCrea, 2016, Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015).

So although the widely-held view within the youth work sector correlated with a vision of integrated youth work it was becoming increasingly evident that alternative ways of engaging may be required to meet the young people's needs. The rationale for national research into the issues faced by young people from minority ethnic communities from their perspective, and how they viewed the role that youth work played - or could play - in their lives, was clear.

NYCI are keen to support ongoing debate and discussion about integration and interculturalism in youth work so we set out to explore the value of minority ethnic only youth work spaces by hearing directly from the young people who attend these groups.

In addition the following issues were explored:

- What are the experiences of minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland?
- In what ways can youth organisations, staff and volunteers adapt their current practice to meet the needs of minority ethnic young people?

The research focussed on talking to minority ethnic young people who have engaged with alternative approaches to integrated mainstream youth groups. We also interviewed a group of young people who do not attend youth services to see if there were correlations in their experiences and needs growing up in Ireland. The research is designed to direct us, as a sector, to consider whether our current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be rethought and adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

In undertaking this research, we do not assume that young people not currently accessing youth work services should do so or need to do so. However, we start from the premise that youth work has the potential to support all young people in responding to the personal and social pressures they may face and we are cognisant that minority ethnic young people can experience specific difficulties, many of which are demonstrated in the themes that emerged from the research.

3

METHODOLOGY

3. METHODOLOGY

By prioritising hearing from young people who attended minority-ethnic-only youth spaces we sought to analyse what worked well in these approaches to youth work, which are relatively few in number across the country and quite varied in their structures. Given the limited number of minority-ethnic-only youth groups and with locations spread across the country it meant that we could do focus group interviews with a significant sample of these groups. We chose the widest range of approaches with the principal thing in common being that they were predominantly minority ethnic and they usually met on a weekly basis. By also including one group that didn't necessarily attend youth services we could also assess whether the issues raised are common for a significant number of minority ethnic young people and whether they articulated similar needs to the other groups.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

We carried out five qualitative, semi-structured focus group interviews one each in Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and two in Dublin and a sixth interview with 2 young people in Dublin. See Table 1. We interviewed 50 young people in total (see Table 3 - 9 for a breakdown by gender, religion, age, origin of birth, citizenship and ethnicity).

Four interviews were with minority-ethnic youth groups attached to youth services. Three were integral to the youth services and were funded and established within their structures while the fourth was a self-organised group loosely attached to the youth service in that they used their premises and received some basic training and mentoring. A fifth interview was held in a school in Dublin to compare what was being said by young people who were not necessarily accessing a youth work group. The sixth interview in Dublin was with 2 young people who were involved in intercultural projects through their own youth organisations. See Table 1.

We held separate informal interviews with youth workers from the three minority-ethnic youth groups that were part of a wider youth service – one each in Ulster (recorded with 1 male youth leader), Dublin (recorded with 4 leaders, 2 male and 2 female) and Munster (informal interview with 1 leader) and we consulted by email with the youth leader from the youth service in Leinster who links in with the self-organised youth group. These interviews were not substantive to the findings but offered insight on how and why the youth groups had been set up and how they were sustained. See Table 2.

The interviews with the young people all followed the same format – we held an interactive discussion that first asked the young people to describe their idea of

community (using a range of photos that they could select from). We then asked the young people to describe – using a visual metaphor of a house – where they felt safest, felt supported, felt scared, most listened to, and how they felt they were perceived by others⁵. Questions were asked to clarify aspects that were raised during discussion or to deepen the discussion further. We transcribed the recorded interviews and organised the data into the most prominent themes that emerged. We used these themes as headings in our findings section.

Table 1: Focus groups with young people

	Location	Profile of the youth group or school they attend	Number of participants	Profile of participants
Group 1	Ulster	Participants in a dedicated minority-ethnic group within a youth service that meet every Tuesday evening	13	A predominantly male group, mostly African descent, diverse religious backgrounds, all 18+, all taking part in a peer leadership programme
Group 2	Leinster	Participants in a self-organised minority-ethnic group that meet in a youth service. They have some limited support from the youth service such as basic leadership training. The group meets every Friday night.	14	A mixed gender group, very diverse ethnic backgrounds, some under 18, others over 18
Group 3	Munster	Participants in a dedicated predominantly minority-ethnic group within a youth service. The group can attend several times a week including Saturday morning. It usually works on a drop-in	6	Mostly male group, all 18+, all peer leaders in the group, mixed ethnic and religious backgrounds.

⁵ This methodology was drawn from the Mahon and McCrea 2016

		basis. Activities are run on the various times it is open.		
Group 4	Dublin	Participants in a minority-ethnic group attached to a youth service. They meet once a week on Saturdays	6	Mixed gender, Diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. All under 18
Group 5	Dublin	Young people attending a school in Dublin that is diverse in religion and ethnicity. Only 1 person attended a youth group	9	Very diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, mixed gender all under 18
Interview 6	Dublin	2 young people attending different youth organisations, with a keen interest in intercultural youth work	2	Female, diverse ethnicities and religious backgrounds

Table 2: Interviews with Youth Workers

Participant	Location	Profile of the youth group	Number of participants
Youth worker interview 1	Ulster	Youth worker with youth service providing dedicated support to minority-ethnic youth group	1 (male)
Youth worker interview 2	Munster	Youth worker with a youth service providing dedicated support to a predominantly minority-ethnic group. They work on the basis of a peer leadership approach with a number of volunteer and trainee leaders	1(male)
Youth workers interview 3	Dublin	Youth workers working in a youth service providing a dedicated minority-ethnic youth group. It is run by paid youth workers on a rotation basis	4 (2 male, 2 female)

Chart 2: Gender

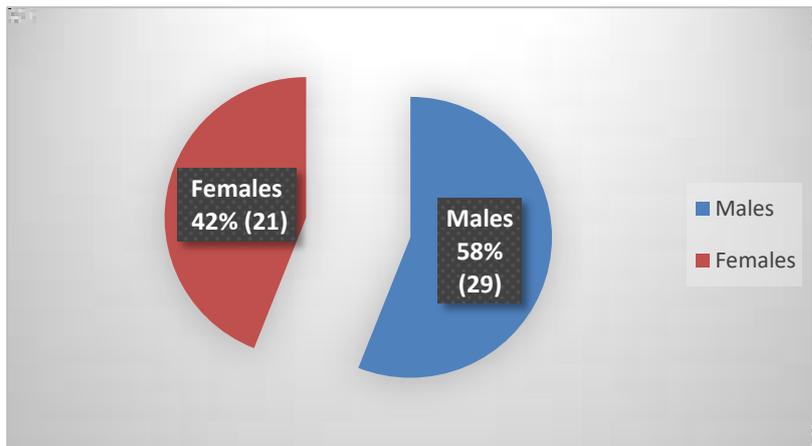
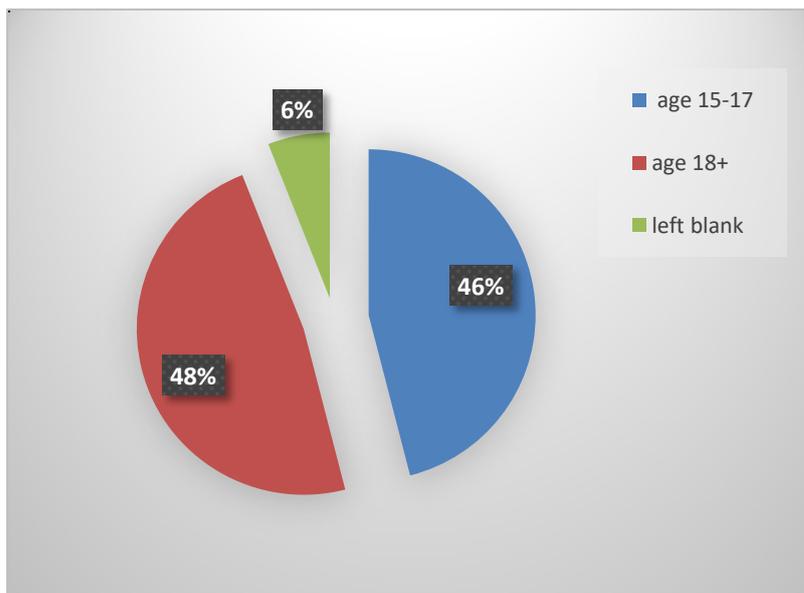
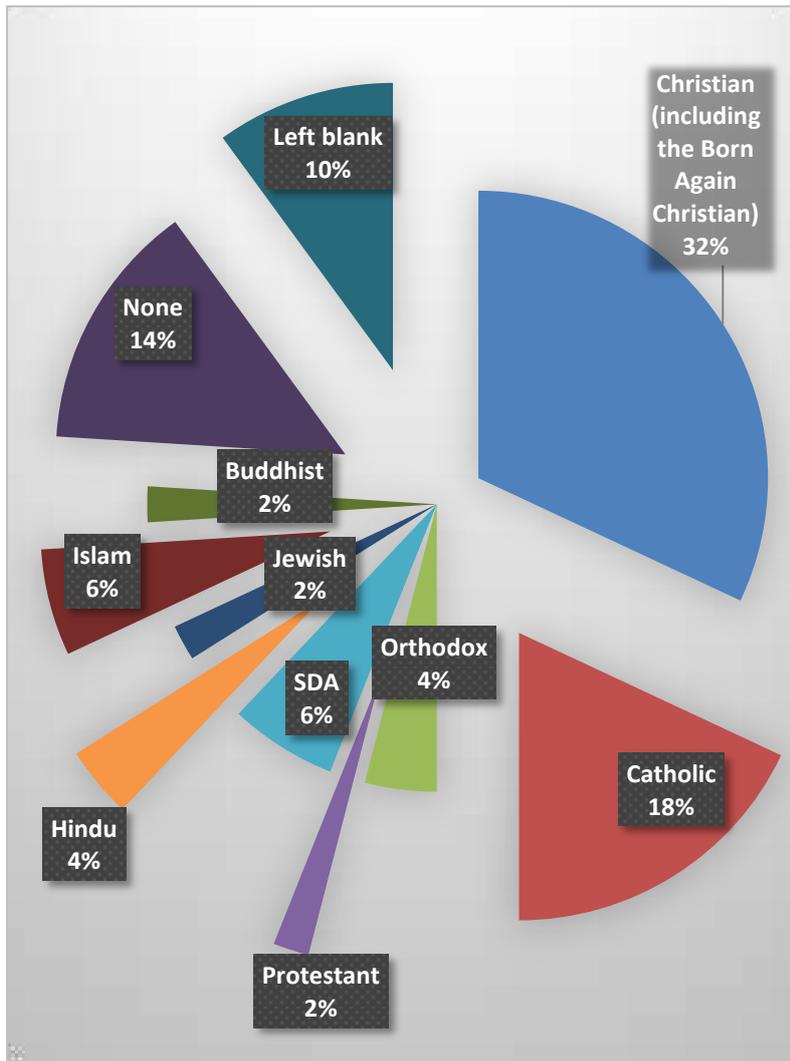


Table 3, Chart 3: Age



age 15-17	23
age 18+	24
left blank	3
Total	50

Table 4, Chart 4: Religion



Christian (including the Born Again Christian)	16
Catholic	9
Orthodox	2
Protestant	1
Seventh Day Adventist	3
Hindu	2
Jewish	1
Islam	3
Buddhist	1
No Religion	7
Left blank	5
Total	50

Charts 5 & 6: Origin of birth

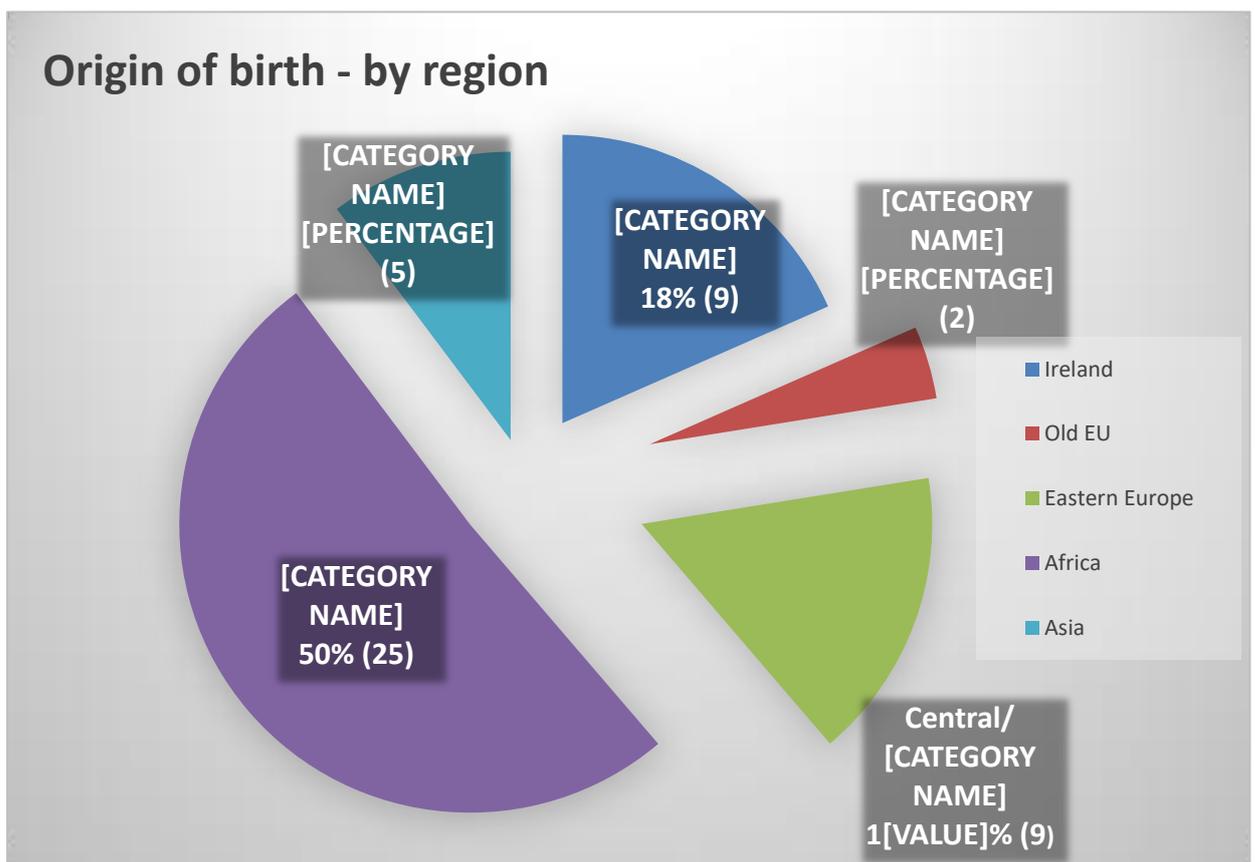
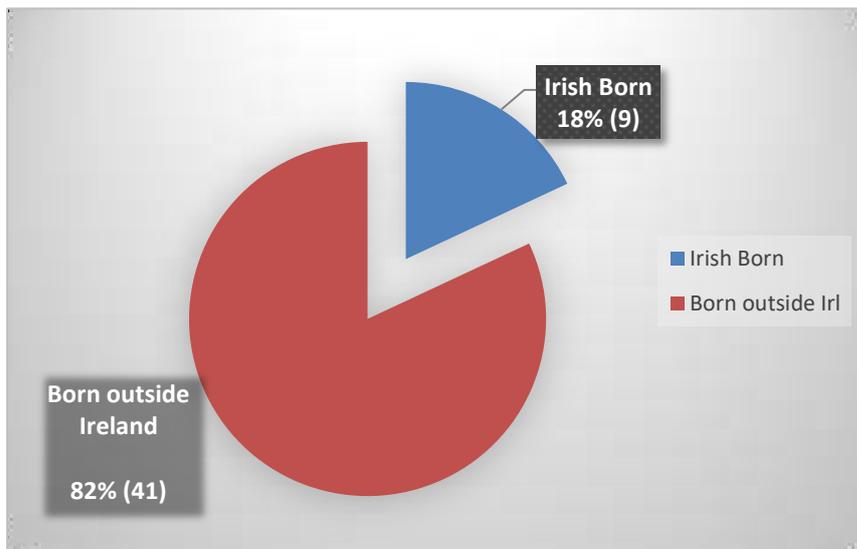
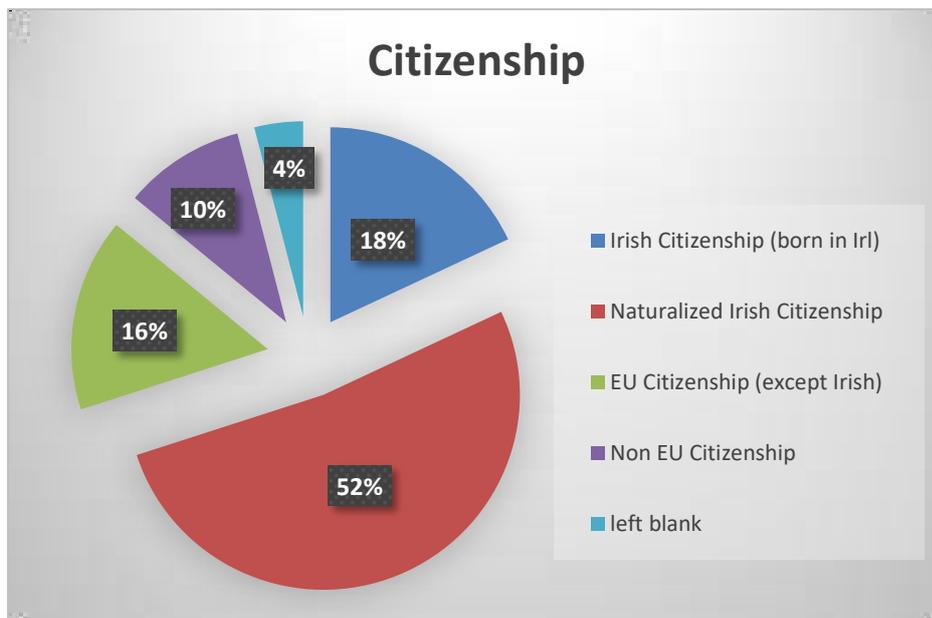


Table 5, Chart 7: Citizenship



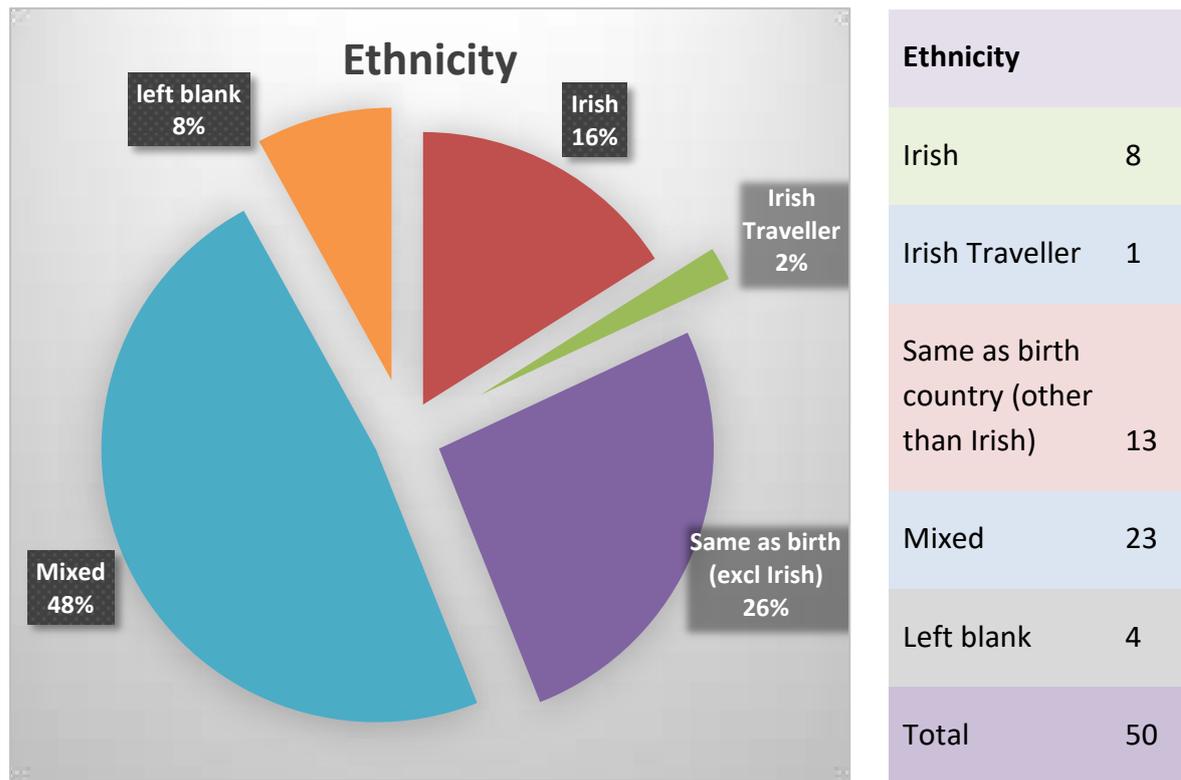
Citizenship	
Irish Citizenship (born in Irl)	9
Naturalized Irish Citizenship	26
EU Citizenship (except Irish)	8
Non EU Citizenship	5
Left blank	2
Total	50

The comparison between those who were born outside Ireland (82%) and who have since become naturalized Irish citizens is significant with 52% having become naturalized Irish citizens. A further 16% have EU citizenship leaving just 10% with non-EEA citizenship (i.e. third country nationals).

By comparison how the young people self-identified in terms of ethnicity tells a different story. 18% identified as Irish or Irish Traveller by ethnicity, corresponding to the statistics of those who are born in Ireland but 48% identify as mixed (i.e. Irish plus another ethnicity) demonstrating the fluidity in identifying ethnic identity over time as ethnicity is seen to embrace citizenship as well as genetic heritage. It also demonstrates a desire

to proclaim and own a dual identity. Meanwhile, 26% identified their ethnicity by their country of birth, corresponding to the sum of those who are European (16%) and those from outside Europe who have not yet got Irish citizenship (10%) which further suggests a critical link between citizenship and descriptions of ethnicity.

Table 6, Chart 8: Ethnicity



3.2 ETHICS

We assured participants of anonymity and we have done our best to achieve this. As a consequence we cannot identify the youth work services the young people are involved in. But this has allowed us to retain references to their country of origin which was critical in many of their accounts in explaining their particular experiences. Where a name was used in the quotes we have changed it as this would obviously identify the speaker. To acknowledge the different lived experience for young people of different skin colour and origin we note when someone comes from an African descent, Asian descent, mixed heritage, Eastern/Central European descent or Irish descent where we have this information. Where possible we also note if they are under or over 18 as their experiences differed depending on age. Everyone gave written permission to take part in the research and those under 18 also had written permission from a parent or guardian. Because we cannot identify the youth work services by name or give descriptors that

would easily identify them we very much regret not being able to do justice to their invaluable and distinctive work in this publication.

3.3 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Our study sought to foreground the voices of young people. In doing so, we wished to learn about and emphasise these young people's own agency in how they want to organise and be supported in their own journeys of integration and forming their identities. This is also in keeping with progressive youth work pedagogy. Ní Laoire et al (2009: 104) have written that 'listen[ing] to children's voices can reveal different and sometimes unexpected perspectives on migration and integration. There is an urgent need for children's own perspectives to be acknowledged in this area.' At the same time, we recognise that there are varying degrees of youth participation and that the design of the research and the analysis of the data remained adult-led. Despite these limitations, we are confident that the perspectives and direct experiences of young people were heard and we believe that the youth-centred methods deployed in the focus groups greatly facilitated this process.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

We do not claim that the groups interviewed represents the full breadth or variety of youth work taking place in Ireland with predominantly minority-ethnic groups. However, because of limitations of time and resources we could only carry out five focus group interviews plus the interview with the two young people and the corresponding three interviews with their youth workers. We concentrated on taking a sample of youth work projects spread across the country that using a variety of approaches to engagement.

In relying on the ethnicities that were present in the chosen groups our sample does not include participants from a number of geographical areas such as Latin and South America, Australia, New Zealand or North America. We excluded Irish Traveller youth groups from the study as a significant research project focusing on Traveller's engagement in mainstream youth work was taking place while this research was being carried out although in one group there was a Traveller involved. The research does not therefore claim to capture the full diversity of young people's experiences; nor, given its relatively small-scale nature, are its findings generalisable to all contexts in Ireland or to all young people from migrant backgrounds who have very diverse and complex experiences. Despite these limitations we proceeded with the assumption that the research would identify challenges, experiences and lessons that would resonate widely. It is our hope that this research can deepen awareness of the experiences of young

people from minority ethnic communities, provide the basis for further research and debate, and make some contribution to ongoing efforts by youth organisations, funders and policy-makers to develop intercultural youth work services in Ireland.

4

Review of the Literature

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

4.1 STATISTICAL OVERVIEW: YOUNG PEOPLE, MIGRATION AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Here we present a brief overview of some relevant data from Census 2016 with regard to immigration, ethnic identity and religious affiliation. We present the overall figures for the Republic of Ireland and have not provided a regional breakdown. The distribution of minority ethnic communities varies within and across different counties. Youth organisations seeking a more detailed breakdown of the number of migrants in their area as well as its ethnic and religious make-up can consult the relevant profiles and SAPS on the CSO website

(www.cso.ie/en/census/census2016reports/census2016smallareapopulationstatistics).

The 2016 Census indicates that 13.7% of the population in Ireland was made of up of people with non-Irish and dual Irish nationalities (535,475 ‘non-Irish’ representing over 200 different nationalities and 104,784 people who describe themselves as dual nationality with Irish being part of that dual identity (Central Statistics Office 2017: 50). Of those who describe themselves by dual nationality 34,761 are aged 0-14 years old and 14,384 are aged 15-24. The figure of dual-nationality residents has nearly doubled since 2011 in line with increased numbers becoming Irish citizens by naturalisation. Only 38,344 of this number were born in Ireland. Comparatively, of the participants in our study who were of migrant background, just 3 were born in Ireland.

The largest groups of non-Irish or dual-Irish young people aged 0-24 by nationality in Ireland was (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO24):

- Polish nationals (31,049) and Irish-Polish (6,921),
- UK nationals (15,641), and Irish-UK (4,406)
- Lithuanian (10,295) and Irish-Lithuanian (1,046)
- Irish-American (7,927) and American (3,413)
- Romanian (8,132) and Irish-Romanian (1,289)
- Latvian (5,813) and Irish-Latvian (713)
- Irish-Nigerian (3,385) and Irish-Nigerian (1,819)
- Brazilian (3,335) and Irish-Brazilian (559)
- French (2,970) and Irish-French (1,817)
- Chinese (2,941) and Irish-Chinese (289)
- Indian (2,764) and Irish-Indian (422)

Corresponding to the data above, 26 of our participants born outside of Ireland had naturalized Irish citizenship with 23 describing their ethnicity/identity using dual identity descriptors.

Of particular, and perhaps more accurate data to base comparative data on, are the statistics on ethnicity. Data on ethnicity can capture diversity that does not appear on

nationality or place of birth data sets (i.e. those children who are Irish by birth and nationality but who have a parent or parents from different ethnic backgrounds). National data on ethnicity shows that **Almost 1 in 7 young people (15%) aged 15-24 living in Ireland are minority ethnic with this rising to 16% for those aged 5-14.** For more detailed census data relating to ethnic identity see Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Ethnic Identity of Young People Age 15-24 (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO29)

15-24 years		Percentage of total population aged 15-24	Percentage of minority ethnic only
White-Irish	462,994	82.3%	
White-Irish Traveller	5,705	1%	1%
Any other White background	45,650	8.1%	8.1%
Black or Black-Irish	9,485	1.7%	1.7%
Asian or Asian-Irish	13,350	2.4%	2.4%
Other including mixed background	10,437	1.9%	1.9%
Not stated	14,684	2.6%	2.6%
TOTAL	562,305	100%	15%

Table 8: Ethnic Identity of Young People Aged 5-14 (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO29)

5 – 14 years		Percentage of total population aged 5-14	Percentage of minority ethnic only
White-Irish	548,636	81.6%	
White-Irish Traveller	7,996	1.2%	1.2%
Any other White background	49,108	7.3%	7.3%
Black or Black-Irish	19,313	2.9%	2.9%
Asian or Asian-Irish	17,488	2.6%	2.6%
Other including mixed background	14,129	2.1%	2.1%
Not stated	15,654	2.3%	
Total	672,324	100%	16.1%

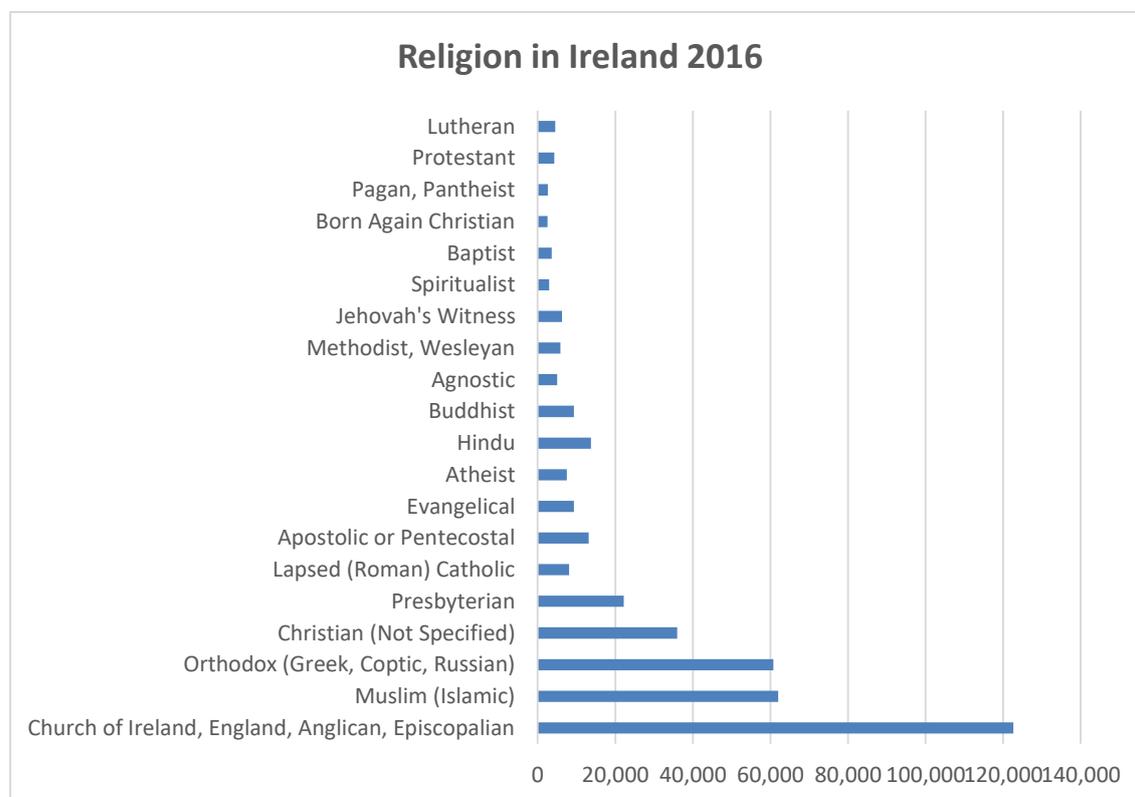
It is worth noting contrasts in the ethnic profile between those aged 15-24 and younger children of migrant background (see Tables 7 and 8). For example, the number of younger Black or Black-Irish children is nearly twice the number in the older cohort and corresponds to the rise of 1% in minority ethnic figures. A significant number of this younger cohort are of, or will soon be of, an age to engage in a range of youth groups. They clearly demonstrate the growing need to establish the best way to do intercultural youth work into the future.

Of note, it is also worth highlighting 2016 census data which shows that 19% of all 15-24 year olds in Ireland were born outside of Ireland with 7.5% of all 0-14 year olds being born abroad (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO20). This demonstrates that the vast majority of those represented in the ethnicity Table 11 were born in Ireland.

It is also worth noting Ireland’s increasing religious diversity. According to Census 2016, the proportion of the population who were Roman Catholics reached its lowest point at 78.3%. 7.5% of Roman Catholics are from minority ethnic backgrounds with Polish people accounting for the largest number of non-Irish Catholics at 2.8%. The largest group after Roman Catholics are people with no religion at 9.5% (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO36). There were 62,032 Muslim people in Ireland, which represented a rise of nearly 29% on the previous census. There were 13,193 members of Apostolic and Pentecostal churches of whom nearly 15% are Romanian and 11.5% are African. 24% of Africans are Muslim, 21% are Roman Catholic (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO38).

The following graph represents the relative numbers of minority religions in Ireland

Table 9: Religions in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2017a: EYO38)



4.1.1 'INTEGRATION', PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING

Literature exploring young migrants' lives demonstrates that young people's sense of belonging and their capacity to 'integrate' are shaped, both positively and negatively, by factors such as immigration status and policy, friendships, family, racism, religion, language competency, inter-generational dynamics, age, social class and gender (Fanning and Veale, 2004; Gilligan et al, 2010; ní Laoire et al, 2011; Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015). A growing body of research has also challenged dominant policy discourses which frame migrants in a passive way as in 'need of' integration by highlighting the active role that young people play in creating a sense of belonging (both nationally and transnationally) and in negotiating their own integration (Devine, 2009; Gilligan et al, 2010; ní Laoire, 2011). In this section, we draw selectively on literature on the experiences of young migrants to explore the themes which resonate most closely with our concerns in this research. We thus emphasise literature which addresses young migrants' participation and sense of belonging, in particular as influenced by ethnic identity, gender and class position. In the subsequent section, we turn more specifically to literature on the role of youth work with young migrants and other ethnic minority groups.

4.2 ETHNIC IDENTITY

There is, as ní Laoire et al (2009: 99) emphasise, ‘no one “migrant child” experience’. The different ways in which migrant young people articulate their sense of personal and social identity is just one indication of this. By ‘personal identity’, we mean those qualities, values or preferences which a young person regards as particular to herself as an individual; by ‘social identity’ we are referring to young people’s membership of or identification with broad social categories or groups such as age, religion, ethnicity, disability, nationality and so forth. For instance, ní Laoire et al (2011) found that many young people that had migrated from African countries to Ireland stressed their attachment to both an African country and to Ireland (see also Devine, 2009). Despite their identification with two cultures, however, these young people sought acceptance from their Irish peers by stressing their ‘sameness’ with them through their consumption of highly globalised and homogenised forms of fashion or music. While other young African participants did assert their difference, this was often in ways which were culturally intelligible and, hence, socially acceptable to their peers, a practice which ní Laoire et al link with these young people’s membership of a highly racialised⁶ social group.

By contrast, the same research found that a more exclusive sense of national belonging was expressed by young people who had migrated from countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The authors suggest this may relate to the young people’s uncertainty about their futures and to the comfort offered by being part of a collective at a time when they felt or were made to feel different to their peers.⁷

In relation to the impact of cultural difference on young people’s relationships with peers, there is clear evidence to show that many young migrants have developed friendships with Irish peers (Gilligan et al, 2010; Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015). However, some cultural barriers were noted in relation to this. The prevalence of drinking and smoking among Irish teenagers (Gilligan et al, 2010; Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015) and a perceived lack of respect for elders were highlighted by some young people, particularly those from Muslim or Pentecostal religious backgrounds (Gilligan et al, 2010).

4.3 RACISM

⁶ Racialisation refers to the process through which the characteristics, appearances or traditions of certain groups – or those attributed to certain groups – are viewed as ‘natural’ and unchangeable and are framed in negative terms (see Lentin, 2008).

⁷ Ní Laoire et al’s research was conducted with young people who had migrated less than two years previously. Thus, it is possible that a greater affiliation with their Irish peers could develop among this group over time.

Although, as noted, many migrant young people have formed friendships with Irish peers and while schools have proved to be important sites through which young migrants develop connections and experience solidarity (ní Laoire et al, 2011), all of the literature consulted regarding young migrant's sense of belonging to Irish society addressed the theme of racism (Devine, 2009; Gilligan et al, 2010; ní Laoire et al, 2011; McGrath and McGarry, 2014; Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015). Gilligan et al (2010: 69) found that the racism was a recurring feature of young migrants' daily lives. Such racism took two principal forms, 'virulent and overt racism' such as harassment and name-calling in public places or school and 'naïve stereotyping and misunderstanding' such as impressions and opinions of people's countries of origin.

Gilligan et al also noted that young migrants adopted various strategies to deal with their experiences of racism, ranging from minimising the incident in order to defuse its impact; avoidance; tackling it head-on through verbal or physical aggression; or preventing or reducing the effects of racism through the pursuit of personal achievement. Many of the young Black African/Irish participants in Ní Laoire et al's study (2011) disavowed the significance of racism in their lives and framed racist incidents as individual acts of ignorance or bigotry. Finally, the literature highlights institutionalised racism in the Direct Provision system as having a profound impact on young asylum seekers' sense of belonging and capacity to integrate (ní Laoire et al, 2011; McGarry, 2012). In particular, the social and geographical isolation which separates young people from non-asylum-seeking peers and the lack of play space for children within the system have been emphasised (ní Laoire et al, 2011). Despite this, ní Laoire et al (2011) caution against adult-centric research on Direct Provision which can obscure the fact that children do develop meaningful attachments to friends within the direct provision system and to the localities in which these centres have been placed.

4.4 GENDER

While ethnic identity is a key factor in structuring young people's sense of belonging, so too is the intersecting category of gender. For instance, in her research with migrant children in primary schools, Devine (2009: 527) noted that, for boys, being good on the sports field enabled 'an alignment with high-status masculinities' that eased the transition into a new social context, though this sense of belonging was tempered by racist jibes against young Black players.

An analysis of the lives of young Muslims from both new and established communities living in a town in the West of Ireland noted that young Muslim women were subject to greater parental regulation than their male counterparts, though respect for parents was an important social value for young Muslims from both sexes (McGrath and McGarry, 2014). Girls in this study were not typically allowed to socialise outside the

home in the evenings or during holidays. While tensions between the young people and their parents sometimes emerged because of this, the female participants did not resent this regulation. Rather they regarded it as part of their ethical responsibility to uphold their parents' wishes and some spoke warmly of time spent with families within the community network. Moreover, they demonstrated resourcefulness in using their time at home to develop valuable artistic or literary skills and used their agency to negotiate concessions from parents. A number of young women in this study did, however, object to the fact that there were more activities in the community available to boys than to girls. McGarry (2012: 261) notes 'a pressing need for the establishment of local initiatives to counter the social isolation experienced by many female members of the Ballyhaunis Muslim population.' Among the measures she recommends are female-only sporting activities that allow for the wearing of modest clothing and a public space such as a youth café where females can freely socialise out of school hours. The greater availability of sporting activities for boys was also noted in Gilligan et al's research (2010) with young migrants.

Finally, McGarry (2012) indicates that young male Muslims were more likely than females to experience hostility from or racialised conflicts with non-Muslim students, although again differences emerged between the experiences of young men from newer communities and those that were more established. The fact that young men from the latter group had attended the local primary school and were deeply involved in GAA sports acted as a sort of 'cushion' against racialised 'slagging'. Although the girls in McGarry's study experienced less racial hostility than boys, Allen and Neilson (2002, cited in Soni, 2011) suggested the reverse, noting that Muslim women were particularly vulnerable to racist attacks. They associated this with the fact that the hijab (head scarf) rendered women more easily identifiable as Muslims. This latter finding correlates with Carr's (2016) research on Islamophobia and the increased incidences of racism toward Muslim women, which again is connected to their visibility as Muslim in the wearing of the hijab.

4.5 SOCIAL CLASS

Migrants in Ireland are not a homogenous group; there are social class differences both within and between different migrant communities (Devine, 2009; Röder et al, 2014). By social class, we are referring not alone to income measures, but also to forms of social and cultural capital which are relevant to an individual's class positioning (see Devine, 2009). An analysis of the socio-economic background of the families of second generation migrant children illustrates that migrants from EU Accession States and from Africa are more likely than those from Asian or so-called 'EU 13 states' households — that is, those states that were members of the EU prior to 2004 — to be employed in

semi- or un-skilled occupations. They are also more likely to have lower incomes. Research further suggests that many migrants to Ireland undergo 'downward social mobility' (ní Laoire et al, 2011: 35) due to under-employment, de-skilling or, in the case of asylum seekers, because they do not have the right to paid work. Röder et al (2014) point to a particular mismatch between the educational levels and occupational status of migrants from EU Accession States. The child-specific forms of poverty experienced by children in direct provision have also been emphasised (ní Laoire, et al, 2009). Social class positioning is in part determined by the immigration system which separates people into categories which shape their access to, experience of and mobility within the labour market (ní Laoire et al, 2011).

What is significant for our purposes in this research is the degree to which access to economic capital, but also to social and cultural capital, can enable or inhibit young migrants' participation in Irish society and help shape their responses to and interactions with their Irish peers. For instance, Devine's (2009) research with migrant children in three Dublin primary schools found that children's participation in social and cultural activities outside of school was influenced by their families' capacity to pay for them (see also ní Laoire et al, 2011). Also relevant was migrant children's differentiated access to social networks through which they could learn about the existence of such activities and from which they could draw on lifts to activities and related forms of support (Devine, 2009).

Finally, research with young migrants in Ireland has consistently highlighted the very high value which they place on educational attainment (Devine, 2009; Gilligan et al, 2010; McGarry, 2012; Szlovák and Szewczyk, 2015), a value which some young migrants observed to be missing among their peers in school (Gilligan et al, 2010; McGarry, 2012). Such attitudinal differences have been attributed by Gilligan et al (2010) to the fact that the migrants concerned were attending schools in areas characterised by socio-economic deprivation.

While the overview of the research outlined in this section by necessity generalises young migrants' experiences, it nonetheless points to a number of concerns of relevance to youth work. While youth work is only briefly mentioned in one of the reports analysed (Gilligan et al, 2010), the benefits of engagement in sport and extra-curricular activities was more widely noted (ní Laoire et al, 2011; McGarry, 2012). Moreover, in keeping with youth work pedagogy, the literature highlights young people's own agency in pursuing their own 'integration'. However, it also raises the prospect that young migrants could benefit from support in navigating the 'delicate line between recognition versus rejection' (Devine, 2009: 526) with regard to matters of identity and racism and in overcoming class- and/or gender-based impediments to participation. Youth work has the potential to build on and draw out the commonalities between young people of all backgrounds. Equally, the differences within and between migrant communities and

between migrant young people and their 'Irish' peers which were identified in the literature, suggest that youth work with young migrants – as with youth work more generally – is unlikely to have a 'one-size-fits-all' character. We now turn to studies which have more specifically addressed the role of youth work in relation to young migrants and, where relevant, ethnic minority young people more generally.

4.6 YOUTH WORK WITH YOUNG MIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITY YOUNG PEOPLE

4.6.1 YOUTH WORK IN IRELAND

As mentioned above, youth organisations in Ireland have published a number of strategies in relation to intercultural youth work. These have been undertaken by national youth organisations such as Foróige (Foróige, 2008) and at a local level as evidenced in the Canal Communities Intercultural Strategy for Youth Work (Lynam, 2009). These followed the development of a strategy at national level by the NYCI in partnership with the Office for Minister of Children and Youth Affairs (now DCYA). It was completed but was never adopted by the Government Department (see National Youth Council of Ireland, 2008). However, it did become a blueprint for NYCI's intercultural programme and it informed the intercultural and integration strategies developed in the sector. Detailed resources to support the development of inclusive youth work with migrants and other young people from ethnic minority groups have also been developed (see National Youth Council of Ireland, 2012; National Youth Council of Ireland/Youthnet, 2012, National Youth Council of Ireland, 2016). Each of these publications stresses that an 'open-door' policy is not sufficient to ensure equality of access for migrant young people. Rather, they emphasise the importance of a multi-faceted approach to intercultural youth work in which inclusiveness is pro-actively addressed at all levels of the organisation. Among the measures advocated in such texts are:

- the establishment of systems to monitor uptake and outcomes of minority ethnic young people in youth work;
- ongoing needs analysis at local level;
- a range of outreach strategies to establish meaningful contact and engagement with children and young people from minority ethnic communities;
- anti-racist/intercultural/equality/inclusion organisational policies;
- the need for 'buy-in' from across the organisation, including management;
- anti-racism training and measures to ensure protection and redress against racism for children and young people;
- pre-development work with existing participants in youth services;

- collaborative working among relevant youth and community organisations;
- the appointment of staff and volunteers from minority ethnic communities;
- strategies to build the trust of parents;
- sensitivity to gender issues and to differing cultural and religious values;
- ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress towards inclusive youth work.

In an evaluation of the development and implementation of an intercultural strategy by youth organisation Foróige, it is noted:

“Foróige has learned that integration is a more complex process than originally envisaged. It is not just about the participation of minority children although it includes that, or about multicultural activities although it also includes that. Integration is also about how the organisation and its staff respond to the need of all children in a multicultural setting” (McKeown, 2009: 14-15).

The Foróige report does not elaborate on these complexities and until recently, there were no detailed Irish studies which provide detailed empirical analyses of the challenges and successes of everyday youth work with minority ethnic young people. Some insights have been highlighted in Mahon and McCrea (2016), a report commissioned by CCRYS. A key insight here includes the call by participants for youth work to ‘provide a space for young people to make sense of issues relating to their personal and social identity in order to strengthen their sense of belonging and wellbeing’. It notes the need to ‘walk a fine a line between offering support to young people and singling them out’ and that this may involve doing work in groups that are ‘gender or identity-specific’. It also notes that young people may ‘self-exclude’ due to fears of racism and that ‘alternate spaces for flexible, youth-centred support’ be ‘identified and resources’. It outlines the barriers to inclusion, such as geographical boundaries that can exclude young people who congregate in but do not reside in an area and the heavy focus in youth work on working with young people ‘deemed ‘at risk’ of involvement in crime or addiction’ which may not meet the needs of ethnic minority young people’ (Mahon and McCrea, 2016: 5). Further insights have also emerged from the National Youth Council of Ireland’s (NYCI) *Promoting quality in intercultural youth work* guides (NYCI, 2012; 2014), which showcase the work of 13 youth organisations that are engaging or have engaged with young people from migrant and/or minority ethnic groups. For instance, detail is provided on how youth workers implemented their outreach strategies which speaks to one of the key findings in the CCRYS report that youth services need to find non-traditional ways of doing outreach as traditional practices can ‘inadvertently exclude some young people from ethnic minority communities’ (Mahon and McCrea, 2016). One Foróige youth worker in Tyrrelstown in West Dublin, an area with a particularly high concentration of minority ethnic families, explains:

For the first 3-4 months I made a point of being active where young people were taking part in things in neighbouring areas; music, rap, footballs, computers. So basically showing my face around, speaking with them, asking them what their interests were. I built up a registry. And we also did focus groups locally with the young people in Tyrrelstown to see what their needs were (NYCI, 2012: 13).

At a certain point, Irish participants in the project were in a minority in the Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, so the youth worker also successfully undertook activities to include more Irish young people who came to account for about half of the young people involved.

On the matter of whether youth work initiatives with young migrants should be integrated or whether they should be targeted towards particular cultural/ethnic groups based on need, participants in the *12 Steps* guides generally regarded integrated groups as the ideal route forward. However, the importance of flexibility and of responding to the needs of particular young people was also emphasised. For example, SPARK, (the Support Project for Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Kids), a partnership between the HSE and Youth Work Ireland Galway which operated between 2002 and 2011, provided a dedicated space called 'Comfort Zone' in which young asylum seekers and refugees discussed issues relating to their particular experiences. However they also participated alongside Irish peers in the youth café and in other groups (NYCI, 2012).

Among the ongoing barriers noted by participants in the NYCI reports were a lack of confidence among youth workers relating to a fear of doing things 'wrong' and the appropriateness of mixed-gender groups for some cultural groups. Some organisations have managed to address the latter issue with single-sex groups being formed based on need, for example, a health project with young Irish and Eastern European women in Tyrrelstown (NYCI, 2012).

Crucially, what emerges from the case studies in *12 Steps* and in the strategies and resources referred to above is the sense that the skills, values and attitudes required to develop youth work with young people from minority ethnic groups are the very skills, values and attitudes that are required for good youth work practice generally. In particular, the importance of flexibility, openness and creativity; of being young-person centred and of recognising the young person as a unique individual whose actions, interests and perspectives are shaped, but not wholly determined, by their membership of particular social groups emerges. Finally, it is notable that those organisations that had succeeded in including young people from minority ethnic groups in their activities had deliberately and purposively adapted their practice in order to do so.

Further exploring the value of having migrant only youth spaces a recent research report *How Do I Get the Balance in My Head* noted that it was critical to have people in their lives that understand the parental and community pressures they face and that can

support them through it (Mahon and McCrea 2016). One of the participants in the study described some of the reasons for her participation in a young migrant women's group:

It's this thing of 'we have a common ground'. Because here [in Ireland] we are caught in two positions – we've come to this new society where they have their own way of going; our parents have their own way of going at home. Where does the balance step in? Do I have people who understand that balance in my head?

5.6.2 Youth Work in the UK

Unsurprisingly, the literature on youth work with young people from minority ethnic communities is more voluminous in the UK than in Ireland. British youth work has been significantly influenced by Britain's history of inward migration, by shifts in government policy with regard to the 'management' of cultural difference and by the broader politics of anti-racism and multiculturalism.⁸ Youth work has also been a site in which inequalities based on class and on 'race' intersect in complex ways (see Thomas and Henri, 2011). While it is impossible in this short space to capture the history or range of perspectives on youth work in multicultural Britain, what emerges from the literature is the sense that there is no one 'approach' or blueprint for supporting young people from minority ethnic groups, for challenging racism or for supporting cross-community 'cohesion'.⁹ Rather what is emphasised is an orientation in which youth workers learn to acknowledge the partiality of their own perspectives, to challenge the dominance of 'majority norms', to 'critically interpret' different social and cultural systems and to relate to diverse constituencies of people. For example, Imam and Bowler (2010) suggest that youth workers may have to support minority ethnic young people in moving between a dominant culture in which young people are encouraged and expected to have considerable autonomy in making decisions, on the one hand, and the culture of their parents or community where parental or community regulation of young people is more pronounced, on the other.

⁸ For critical accounts of such trends, see Chauhan, 1990; Phillips, 2006; Shukra, 2010; Imam and Bowler, 2010; Sanderson and Thomas, 2014.

⁹ 'Community cohesion' has become 'a watchword' in urban youth work in Britain in recent years (Shukra, 2010: 129). It refers to a social policy which emerged in the aftermath of the 2001 riots between young people from ethnically divided working class communities in a number of towns in northern England. In general, it advocates cross-community contact and associates the absence of community 'cohesion' with a lack of shared values and mutual understanding between such communities, with the ethnically 'segregated' nature of the towns in which such riots took place and with the putative 'failure' of multiculturalism. The policy has attracted widespread criticism within the literature for obscuring the significance of racism and of social class inequalities (see Back et al, 2012; Imam and Bowler, 2010). Significantly, according to Imam and Bowler (2010), the 'community cohesion' agenda has mitigated against dedicated work with specific minority ethnic groups. For a more sympathetic response to this policy shift, see Thomas, 2006.

Many writers on British youth work have stressed its role in purposively challenging racism. Imam and Bowler (2010: 142), for instance, argue that the development of ‘critical literacy’ among Black¹⁰ young people to enable them to make sense of and resist their subordination must be regarded as fundamental to professional youth work practice. The interpretation of anti-racist ideas within youth work has been critiqued by Thomas and Henri (2011) who argue that some anti-racist approaches have been pedagogically limited by creating ‘a moral code which young people can either subscribe to or be punished by’ (Thomas and Henri, 2011: 81). Significantly, Thomas (2002: 60) has argued that:

“on the particularly sensitive issue of racism, youth workers sometimes ‘stop’ being youth workers ... they stop drawing and acting on their ‘core’ skills of ‘informal education’ ... [that is] the ability to develop ‘conversation with a purpose’ through listening and questioning as part of an equal and positive relationship with young people.”

Thomas and Henri (2011) advocate an approach characterised by openness in which young people can express their views without fear of punishment in order to facilitate a deeper exploration of their prejudice and their anxieties. They further argue that racism can be challenged by facilitating ‘direct meaningful contact ... within carefully planned and controlled programmes of work’ amongst young people from different ethnic and social backgrounds (2011: 87).

¹⁰ Here Imam and Bowler are using ‘Black’ in its political sense to refer to those people who share common experiences of racism and colonisation in Britain. Phillips (2006: 57) questions this tendency on the basis that the term was ‘not employed by the majority of those it was supposed to represent’.

5

FINDINGS

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the substantive findings from our research. Five key themes were highlighted that concern the young minority ethnic people we interviewed:

1. Identity and belonging – exploring ethnicity, acceptance, difference
2. Parental and community regulation - dealing with competing expectations
3. Racism and exclusion – experiences, impact and coping strategies
4. Leadership – taking on leadership roles
5. Integration – what would it look like and what needs to happen

5.1 IDENTITY AND BELONGING

The research indicated challenges that minority ethnic young people often face in navigating and expressing the different aspects of their ethnic and cultural identities. Some were based on other people's attitudes toward them and others on their own journeys of self-understanding and discovery.

How the majority Irish community judged and perceived the young people was a critical factor in how the young people saw their own diversity and sense of belonging. Ongoing commentary usually centred on things that could not be changed such as skin colour, accent and the language the young people speak. Especially powerful were discussions about what it meant to be Black, and by contrast what it means to be White and how negotiating this is an integral part of the journey toward belonging.

The nature of their migration status impacted strongly on the young people's sense of belonging and identity, especially in relation to their citizenship status. One of the key signifiers of belonging is how young people describe their identity. Our research found that young people often felt an affinity with more than one national or cultural identity. This was particularly the case for those who were born in Ireland or who arrived here as children and for those that had become naturalized Irish citizens.

It was apparent that the journey toward belonging and of forging their personal identity was complex, and the young people's experiences differed considerably from each other. A principal factor in this was how other people's perceptions and judgements impacted on them. A number of players were involved – from their immediate peer group in school and college, to people from their own cultural background and also the wider Irish community.

The young people also spoke about the need to have safe and supported places in which they could share, discuss and debate with others who had similar experiences. One of the debates that is frequently raised in such minority ethnic-only youth spaces relates to the effort the young people need to make in order to integrate. It was clear through the

discussions that the young people found their relationship with the Irish majority to be an ongoing process of negotiation. This raised a question of whether Ireland is a country that can embrace the challenge of interculturalism where diversity is celebrated and welcomed or whether people are expected to assimilate, to become Irish rather than to be themselves. While not described in terms of interculturalism or assimilation, these policy and societal related questions played out in all of the focus groups. We look at all of these themes in the following sections.

5.1.1 INTEGRATION AS A CONTESTED CONCEPT

Pervading the interviews was a contested idea about what belonging meant and where responsibility lay for integration. Some of the young people argued that a country should shelter and embrace all its residents and adopt intercultural values where mutual effort needs to be made. Others felt that more onus lay with migrants, arguing that indigenous Irish had the greater degree of entitlement. One participant presented the notion that a country is 'owned' by its native population and migrants need to do more to integrate:

Because we're in someone else's country all Black people we love to be among each other. I'm not saying it shouldn't really happen like, but it shouldn't be the case that we're all being among each other. We should actually associate with all the people that are actually in the country. We can't all be like doing all our stuff together and then not expect people to, you know go "look at them, it shouldn't be that way"... If you actually don't associate yourself with people in the country you're going to get abused... You're actually better off actually making friends...with people that are actually here, that know the place, they're actually going to show you... I've got loads of White friends, I do and I don't think you guys like that. [Black male, 18+ Ulster]

Others disagreed with this, particularly for what it said about their identity as Black-Irish and their right to belong in their vision of Ireland as a pluralist state. One black girl responded with anger:

You said this is their country, well what makes it their country? It's as much my country. Excuse me I have a red¹¹ passport, why isn't it my country, I'm Irish?... My sister was born in this country, why isn't it her country? [Black female, 18+ Ulster]

This exchange demonstrates the need for ongoing discussions of what Irishness means in 2017 and beyond. While descriptors such as Black-Irish and Asian-Irish are firmly established in our census this does not appear to be filtering into everyday acceptance

¹¹ Red passport refers to the burgundy coloured EU passport

of Ireland as a truly diverse country. These quotes imply that a dual (or multiple) Irish identity is seen as less authentic than a White-Irish identity. This has significant implications for both policy makers and youth leaders on developing strategies to promote and support integration so that those that see Ireland as home, especially those for whom it is their only home are fully embraced.

This same participant questioned her friend on how much she had to change her behaviour to be accepted as Irish. Alluding to what we know to be an assimilationist approach to integration, she asked:

You're telling me...I need to compromise, I need to 'act white' for me to be accepted? [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

Others felt that Irish people put restrictions in place that prevented them from mixing outside of migrant only circles. They described how they were put into 'foreign cliques' in school even where they didn't want to be in them.

In my experience of school if you were a migrant or not 100% Irish we were already such a clique, already sitting together and in groups together. I found it difficult because I didn't really relate with everyone in the [migrant] group but I couldn't really sit with the Irish cliques either. [Central European female, 18+, Dublin]

Others had experienced these forced divisions in work settings.

Half of our staff at work are foreign. I've noticed that the Irish don't know how to approach the foreign staff. The Irish all talk amongst themselves but at handover time there's awkward silence. Why? How can they not interact with the foreign staff? [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

The idea of 'being oneself' in terms of how the young people act came up in many conversations. 'Being themselves' related to the expression of their own cultural norms, and their own way of behaving against the pressure they felt in everyday life to fit in to, or navigate around, Irish expectations.

You're like scared to like show people who you are because you're afraid that they're going to like judge you from where you came from, and how you act. So you're just like scared of really being yourself. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

They really appreciated having access to minority-ethnic youth groups where they knew there would be less judgement on their behaviour. They equally saw the youth group as a space where they could build self-confidence and develop as individuals where they could 'be their own person'. Speaking of her minority-ethnic youth group one young person said:

[We learn to] not try to be like others as well, try to be your own person. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

5.1.2 BELONGING AND EXCLUSION BASED ON APPEARANCE

Moving beyond the discussion on behaviour the young people described how their facial features, dress and skin colour were used to initiate a consistent barrage of questioning about their identity. For many, this curiosity, which consistently alluded to their being 'different' annoyed or upset many of the young people. Some noted how they experienced the questions as a persistent denial of their Irish identity as it was always assumed that they had to be from elsewhere.

Even if you say you are Irish they will not accept you as Irish. When someone comes to you and asks you from which country are you ... they still see you as from a black country [Black male, 18+, Munster]

If they'd asked me where I'm from and I say "I'm Irish", they'd be like "no you're not Irish". "Where are you really from?" [Black female, under 18, Dublin]

For some it denied them their connection to where they lived and their identification with their home place, denying them what their indigenous Irish peers would have.

When I first came they would say like "where are you from?" and I'm like "from Phibsboro" and then they'd be like "No. Where are you originally from?" [Asian background, under 18, Dublin]

Many experienced questions that they knew were referring to their skin colour but they weren't being asked directly about. Deflecting the implication that they were different or that they didn't fully belong they found themselves defending their Irishness.

People would come up to me and like they would make reference to my skin colour but it would be around it, they wouldn't actually say it. They'd say like "oh where are you from" or whatever. I was born in Ireland, so yeah I'd say "like I'm Irish...I was born [here]" [Black female, under 18, Dublin]

Skirting a topic was experienced by others as a way in which people confronted them about their ethnicity. One participant described how people often raise the subject of his ethnicity with him; how after some months of meeting him, people would say:

"Your tan, I think your tan doesn't really go away" [mixed ethnicity, male, under 18, Dublin]

The impact of this cannot be understated. In this participant's description we can hear how the frequent questions can appear to be probing too deeply and accusatory in tone:

If someone is curious [okay] but if someone is like, kind of going “oh how long have you lived here”, “do you like it here better than wherever”, then they’re kind of like, I don’t know, it’s kind of more than being curious. [mixed ethnicity female, under 18, Dublin]

Others experienced direct questioning about why they had come to Ireland with the clear implication that it was hard to believe why they would do so. This questioning can send a message that they do not belong by right in Ireland.

Most of my friends would be like “why did you move, like [your country] is such a nice country, like why would you move”. [Asian male, under 18, Dublin]

If they ask me too much “why did you move, like was that necessary?” I think then I might get upset, being hurt by it. [Asian male, under 18, Dublin]

Irish people also tended to attribute identities to the young people and to see countries (and their people) only in relation to what they are familiar with, denying the young people’s personal complexities and identities.

People hear me and they’re like “oh you’re from Russia” and I’m like “no”. And they’ll be like “oh you’re Spanish” or whatever. ...It gets on my nerves ...after being asked like multiple times...It just kind of makes you feel like “Stop!” [Eastern European, female, under 18, Dublin]

They ask me “where are you from?” and [I say] “I’m from South Africa”, [and they say] “no you look Asian!” [Black male, 18+, Munster]

I think when people see you they already categorise you in their minds already. Before you even maybe speak. Like you need to look a certain way to be from a certain country. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

These fixed perceptions of people, especially those from mixed backgrounds, can impact heavily over a sustained period of time. It demonstrates a lack of interest in them as individuals and denies them their individual identity which makes them doubt themselves. It was described very well by this participant:

Where you’re from is part of your identity... [but] they just kind of try to guess where I’m from, they don’t try to get to know me or anything. They don’t know anything about me, just say “oh yeah you look like you’re from here”. I don’t know what the feeling is ... “why is he saying I look like this? Is there something about me?” You kind of question yourself a little bit, like what is it about me? [Black male, 18+, Munster]

For many, their skin colour or facial features were something they knew others saw first and they felt that this presented an initial barrier to being accepted. They felt that people needed to get to know them and to understand them.

When I came here [to college]...it took them a while to accept me. I'm not saying that ...it's racism in particular but like it did take a while. Just because you know they don't know you, they're not used to you and stuff like that, you know. They won't understand you, ... [Black male, 18+ Ulster]

For one person it was her hijab that brought on judgements and a complete change of attitude from her peers.

I only wore my headscarf from 1st year. I was just like any other person, same accent, same everything etc. But from 1st year on I was immediately put in with the foreigners. It was really weird. I'd been out all the time with my Irish friends from primary school, on the street, playing around, but when I went to secondary school and was wearing my headscarf straightway I was in the 'foreign category'. My relationships were not the same at all after. When I started covering it was like they didn't know how to act around me... they even thought I was bald and that's why I wore the headscarf. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Judgments made on this girl because of the hijab continued into her college and work life.

Even now people don't expect me to be in college or doing the organisational stuff I do. Or even know English. Before they hear my voice they are like speaking to me in a really slow way. They don't expect [my] accent. They expect me to be at home or married. It hurts ... because my physical appearance has nothing to do with who I am. Even in work, when I started most of the people were shocked to see me. "You're wearing a head scarf and you're in a job like this". [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Even after the young person's sense of belonging is established, it can remain fragile and is easily threatened by a stranger's attitudes.

My parents have more of a South African accent and ... if we get a taxi somewhere, they'd keep on going on like... "so when are you going back?" ... They think we're on holiday here.... But I can see my Dad, we've been here like my whole life and ... we've just got our citizenship, like an Irish passport ... my Dad was... "if you're not really White then you know, ... you really can't be perceived as Irish". [Mixed ethnicity male, under 18, Dublin]

Others have learnt to ignore the questioning as a way of coping.

*Yeah like all days, “where are you from?” “Where are you from?” I just ignore them.
[Asian male, under 18, Dublin]*

*It’s an incredibly sensitive subject – it’s very personal. I don’t like to get into it with people too much. I’m not going to get in to a 2 hour conversation with someone who makes a comment. I just brush over it and I don’t let it affect me that much.
[Central European female, 18+, Dublin]*

Others find other ways of getting used to and tolerating these comments:

*I just myself believe that they’re jealous ... because of our beautiful skin colour.
[Asian female, under 18, Dublin]*

5.1.3 PERCEPTIONS AND JUDGEMENTS BASED ON CULTURAL BACKGROUND

In essence, being accepted into the wider Irish community was heavily reliant on other people’s perceptions. The young people seemed to weigh these perceptions on a scale that ran from openness and acceptance from some to negativity toward them from others. They saw some people in the wider community being naturally interested in them while others feared them. Nevertheless, the persistent message was how they were always seen as ‘different’, the descriptions varied from at worst “alien” and at best “exotic”. They also described younger Irish people as being more accepting than older Irish people. But of most concern was when their specific cultural identity was negatively perceived as this hit directly at the young person’s personal identity.

People have different opinions... people might think that “oh it’s cool because we’re exotic”... but people might not like that we’re different and might not like our cultures. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

For some, despite not appearing or sounding in any way different to any other Irish person, they experienced hostility from their peers based solely on their cultural origin:

I literally came here when I was 4 so I was from here. But a group of girls in my school right now that are Irish...they’re just scared of different people, like of different cultures and different people coming from the different, like different places... I experienced bad comments from them. [Central European origin female, under 18, Dublin]

Amongst those interviewed there were a number that embraced the questioning as it gave them an opportunity to tell people how proud they are of their origins

I feel proud saying that I’m from Romania [Eastern European male, under 18, Dublin]

Nevertheless, having pride in one's country was also tied closely to Irish people's perceptions of that country. Where there are negative impressions of a country or negative media portrayals it makes it much harder for young people to acknowledge their heritage culture. Many of the people cited the damage of television programmes such as *The Gypsies are Coming*. Educators played a significant role in counteracting this.

About two weeks ago I heard a presentation [at school] from a journalist about [my country]. ... And at the end of the presentation everyone like was "that's a beautiful country and interesting". [Eastern European, male, under 18, Dublin]

Others battled with the attitudes of fellow migrants who describe their country of origin in very negative ways. Understandably, many migrants cite the push factors that led to their leaving and their reasons to stay away but this can be hard on others from their country of origin who want to maintain pride in their country and ethnic identity.

I have a friend in my school, he doesn't really know about the history of Romania and he feels uncomfortable to be Romanian. I don't like when he is saying that Romania is a shit country and everything. Like if you're from Romania that's your own country. [Eastern European male, under 18, Dublin]

5.1.4 ON ACCENTS AND LANGUAGE

A strong signifier of identity was the young people's accent. For many, their accent was linked to how they described their ethnic identity.

For me I describe myself as an African... I still consider myself as a real African, you can hear my accent [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

This theme, where black people linked accent to an authentic identity came up a number of times. This participant described how a person's accent is viewed by his peers as integral to how they 'perform' their identity. The behavioural terms used related to being 'black' or 'white', denoting skin colour as a major signifier of identity but not necessarily having anything to do with actual skin colour. It puts behaviour ahead of ethnic origin as to how someone will be accepted by their peers. This relates back to the discussion on assimilation and how peers can judge others who are seen to behave like the majority culture:

[Behaving] too white is accent, like when I speak in an English accent. [Black male brought up in the UK, 18+, Munster]

For someone else who has lived in Ireland since he was seven, his Irish accent was a marker of his identity as Irish, which he saw as being a privilege that other people with African accents did not have:

We're pure like Irish. Some do, some don't [see me as Irish]. The majority do I think, because of the way I speak or act. But you know some Africans who have strong African accent, who dress differently, I think it's harder for Irish people to accept them. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

However, there were also scenarios in which the young people were critiqued by Irish peers for their accent, especially those who had a strong Irish accent. So while many described how they were more likely to be accepted as Irish if they had an Irish or neutral accent, there were some with the coveted Irish accent that were frequently told that their accent didn't fit with expectations. This again demonstrates how Irish people tended to judge them, in effect, disallowing the young people their Irish identity, leaving them feeling unaccepted. These observations came from black and Asian participants:

I'd be on the phone ... talking to someone who hasn't seen me, for a job interview or something... And they'd think I'm White... or I'm Irish. Then I'd go to the job interview and they're like "Eh hi!" [in a very shocked voice] [Black male, 18+, Munster]

[They] find out you're [Asian] and expect you to be like a little bit more slow on English and they might be like "How do you have ... an Irish accent?" and "I don't get how you're so fluent in it". That might put you down a little. [Asian male, under 18, Dublin]

Another key signifier of acceptance within the wider Irish community was whether or not people spoke predominantly English or their heritage language. If the young people chose to speak their heritage language they were less likely to be fully accepted. One young participant described how people react to him when he speaks his heritage language:

If you speak your own language, the people that you are hanging out with, they don't hang out anymore with you because you are different.... They might misunderstand you, like [think] you're saying something about them. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

It would appear that Irish people resist the use of heritage languages, again portraying a tendency toward assimilation rather than interculturalism. This reaction is in stark contrast to best practice advice on the value of supporting heritage language, both as the best way of transferring cultural heritage, of increasing the skill set of the population and in supporting the young person's education (Berry 1997: 5-34).

Another participant explained how speaking their first language is easier, reflecting that it can be hard for people to constantly have to think and speak in their second – or third - language:

*If I speak [my language] I'd be more comfortable because like it's what I speak at home.... some people may feel more comfortable speaking their own language.
[Asian male, under 18, Dublin]*

5.1.5 MORE ON THE NATURE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLACK

Skin colour was a critical signifier in many of the young people's accounts about self-identity. Some of the quotes above clearly question whether young black people are fully accepted as Black-Irish in their own right and on their own terms, and in particular in how they 'act'. It became apparent throughout the discussions that there are different ways of behaving that were described as black or white. The young people said this was closely linked to who they spent most time with. Moreover, the idea that 'blackness' and 'whiteness' can be chosen is demonstrated in the following quote:

I like telling people I'm black. I constantly have this fight with people, because my father is white like, my mother is black but... I grew up with my mother so.... I am black. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Commentary from peers has a particular potency with young people moderating each other's behaviour as a norm; it is part of growing up and finding acceptance within a peer group. Commenting on behaviour occurs within the migrant community just as it does for the indigenous Irish. As such, young minority ethnic people find themselves pulled in a number of different directions, from their Irish peers on the one hand and peers from the migrant community on the other. For example, as we've seen above, criticism often came from black people commenting on other black people's behaviour. This participant described how black people commenting negatively on other black people's behaviour who they see as 'acting too white' use a reference to colour in their criticism. This accusation – literally accusing someone of being black on the outside but 'acting white' on the inside - demonstrates the pressure young people are put under to moderate their behaviour to their peer's expectations:

When I was younger they used to call me Oreo. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

This constructed nature of blackness and whiteness which has less to do with actual skin colour and more to do with the meaning attributed to certain behaviours came up for white people too. There were descriptions of how white young people who spend a lot of time with black young people were seen as black by their peers. This participant referred to a friend:

She is called black.... Because she hangs around with black people [White male, 18+, Ulster]

However, white young people who spend a lot of time with black people, can equally be put under peer pressure to behave in certain ways. One girl came under critique by her black friends for lapsing back into what they saw as white behaviour having been accepted into the black community.

Like I was going to an African church... it like changed my perspective about everything... Like how respectful I was. People were calling me Aunty... I got so accepted, it was great... It's kind of nice when you like integrate and you understand that they accept you.... Everybody accepted me for a really long time and then there was a day where somebody called me a typical white girl and it was actually the worst day of my life. I was so upset, I was like "I thought you accepted me". And she was like "yeah but it's just like the way you were acting" and I was like "what do you mean? I was just acting like me". And then she was like "I don't know Jennifer, where did the black Jennifer go?" and I was like "but I've never been black. I've always been white". [White female, 18+, Munster]

However, for others, skin colour is something that they want to diminish in importance, to focus instead on shared experiences and achieve acceptance based on 'who' they are.

I actually got to talk to this guy and we talked about so many things. He could have had the same conversation with an Irish guy, so he completely overlooked my skin colour into who I actually was in there [Black male, 18+ Ulster]

White people can feel equally energised about wanting to diminish the weight put on skin colour:

It's like I wish people [would] just look at people and not really be like so hung up on like their skin colour and stuff. And I know a lot of people get offended when I say that because they're like "I'm proud of my skin colour and my skin colour is really a big part of me". And I understand that, that's important. But ... I wish it wasn't an issue. [White male, 18+, Munster]

Nevertheless, as we have seen in previous quotes, many felt that being black was something that would always mean they would never be fully accepted as Irish. This raises the topic of other ways people defined themselves.

5.1.6 CITIZENSHIP AND IRISH/DUAL IDENTITY

Adopting an Irish or dual identity (or not) was key for the young people in how they saw themselves and their future in Ireland. This was part of a personal journey for everyone we interviewed. For example, 48% of the young people described themselves in hyphenated terms such as 'African-Irish', Polish-Irish and so on. For most this hyphenated description was linked to their citizenship whereby they felt they would add 'Irish' to their ethnicity only when they got what was described as the 'red passport' in

reference to the burgundy coloured EU passport they would get after becoming naturalized Irish citizens. For those who were European and therefore holders of an EU passport adopting a hyphenated description such as Polish-Irish etc. depended largely on the length of time they had lived in Ireland and their sense of how much they had 'absorbed' Irish culture.

If you get an Irish passport you're an Irish person. Then I will be like African-Irish. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

Yeah. Once you get your Irish passport you will become Irish. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

It would be wrong, however, to say that everyone wants to become Irish. 26% of those we interviewed born outside of Ireland identified their ethnicity by their country of origin. See Table 9].

It is important to say that ethnic identity is defined and understood in Irish policy as grounded in shared cultural understandings and a sense of belonging and is not fixed only to genetic heritage (NCCRI 2007: 6). This is the understanding that we applied to our interviews and this research. Nevertheless, descriptors of ethnicity were also areas of contention for some of the young people especially when their ethnicity was prescribed by others. For example, while most Irish would see their use of double barrelled ethnicity in referring to minority ethnic people in Ireland as inclusive and intercultural, it was not always welcomed by the young people interviewed. One of the participants, who was born in the UK, raised issues about being described as African-Irish. He did not see this as an inclusive term but more as a term that denied black people born in Ireland their legitimate right to describe themselves simply as Irish.

Afro-Irish, so that kind of for me is, that's really a discriminative thing. It's like we are still in the old thing, where you see the white race dominant. Because when they [white people] are born in Togo they be Togolese. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

And there are others for whom citizenship has no relevance to how they describe their ethnic identity:

When they get their citizenship, a lot of them don't want to be Irish though, even if they have their citizenship. They're still like "no I'm African, I'm not African-Irish, I'm not Irish, I'm African". [White male, 18+, Munster]

Adopting Irishness for Europeans was a different journey as there is less advantage or need to have Irish citizenship so Irishness becomes more of a state of mind. One participant who has lived in Ireland for five years and has never returned to her country of origin but keeps "in touch with most of them" described her thoughts on it:

I wouldn't turn Irish... because like I'm Romanian so like I'm proud of it. I wouldn't change it... like accent and looking wise it's just like that's me. [Romanian female, under 18, Dublin]

However, time plays a big part in the adoption of Irishness along with other people's attitudes. For one participant, being described as Polish-Irish by a person of influence in her life came as a shock as she had never considered herself to be Irish. She described how the description sent her on a journey of self-discovery which resulted in her slowly accepting that she had definitely become part Irish over her many years in the country and the best descriptor of her identity was now in fact Polish-Irish. However, she argued that the term is not instantly adopted, but rather is part of a journey of self-identity and belonging, and is inevitable for most minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland.

I get a lot people telling me I'm Irish... I have people saying "no, you're Irish-Polish or Polish-Irish... People maybe take a little bit more control of my identity because I look and sound the part. I don't agree with that. Deep down underneath I am Polish. I eat Bigos! I go back to Poland and that's where it feels like home. I have a difficult relationship with it. I struggle when I go back and I find it all confusing. But if you ask me where I'm from, I'm from Poland. I'm Polish-Irish identity wise. It's an incredibly sensitive subject – it's very personal. [Polish-Irish female, 18+, Dublin]

Other participants described the dual aspect of their identity in the following ways:

I'd say Ireland is my home and stuff like that but I don't consider myself Irish. I like to describe myself as Mauritian more. ... I'd love to stay here, study here, work here, contribute and all that But I wouldn't say I'm Irish. ...The way I would describe it is ...I'm Mauritian slash Irish. [Mauritian/Irish male, under 18, Dublin]

I think when I'm in Poland I feel more Irish because then I say I live in Ireland and my family is in Ireland. So like I wouldn't consider myself Polish as much but I still am Polish. And I have the Polish culture at my home and everything. So like I think I'm just half and half. [Polish/Irish female, under 18, Dublin]

Other participants described how ethnic identity is often negotiated through ongoing conversations with friends and acquaintances, thereby showing the influence that peers and others can make in young people's sense of belonging. The willingness and enthusiasm of this participant's friend to see him as Irish is hugely significant and a strong counterfoil to all of the othering that he otherwise experiences:

Yesterday we were doing a quiz in school and we had to write down our nationalities. I was going to write Mauritian and one of my friends was like "you're not Mauritian, you're Irish, you came here like at 9 years old and like you spend all your time here, you're practically Irish". ... And like that's true...because like I grew up here and Dublin is all I know. [Mauritian/Irish male, under 18, Dublin]

I was born here and raised here, then they're like "oh you're just as Irish as a white person". Which is true... [but] like where I come from I do still take pride in that as well, so... I don't forget like the culture and stuff from there. So I like kind of both. [Asian female, under 18, Dublin]

But no matter what someone's citizenship is, or how others see them, for most it is an ongoing journey and they need to be allowed to vacillate and to be accepted at all times by whatever descriptors they use.

Well I don't know what I am like. My parents come from the Philippines and I was born there but I wasn't raised in the Philippines, I lived here all my life. So I would say like yeah I'm an Irish citizen because I was raised here and I grew up here. But then another part of me will say no you're from the Philippines, you're Filipino. So it's a story like oh what are you really. There is no right or wrong in what you say you are. [Female Filipino background, under 18, Dublin]

And for others it's important not to push the topic of identity as it can lead to confusion and instead to keep attention fixed on the value and practice of acceptance and belonging.

I just don't think about it because it's just going to be even more confusing. As long as you're accepted within your community and that you feel happy, like that's all that matters. [Asian female, under 18, Dublin]

Those with dual and mixed ethnicities often feel disconnected from their cultural heritages due to other people's judgements. It is important to ensure that any sense of alienation is counterbalanced by recognising the multiple ways and places where the young people need to belong.

But I feel sometimes I come here and everyone is like calling me Asian and then I go to Asia and everybody calls me white. It's just annoying because it's like I'm trying to tell everyone here like I'm white...and trying to tell them [in Asia] that I'm not white. [Asian-Irish female, under 18, Dublin]

I do like joke about it sometimes that I don't have a country because like, I wouldn't look like any other countries. [Mixed ethnicity female, under 18, Dublin]

5.1.7 PERSONAL JOURNEYS OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING – LOSS, PAIN, CONFUSION AND ADAPTATIONS

Experiencing their cultural heritage is hugely important to many in being able to understand aspects of their identity and to feel content in their country of residence. One participant had returned, with his family, to Sierra Leone after many years in Ireland

but he did not settle and chose to return to Ireland on his own to live with friends. Others described how they were very comfortable in Ireland but that their siblings weren't and had moved back to their birth country. This demonstrates the complexity and diversity in experiences of migration. Many accounts are filled with stories of loss and family separation. A loss for 2nd generation young people can be a greater disconnect with their culture of origin. Many can grow up without an in-depth knowledge of their heritage culture and always feel its absence in their life.

You grow up so confused. And then you just get older and have to kind of decide for yourself. I went back to my home country, my mother's country, for the first time last year and that's when things started. It opened up my eyes to see my culture and kind of relate more to who I actually am. And get to know myself more because I went back. Yeah I was very insecure about where I was from because I've never been there. I was born in the UK... I'd prefer to tell people I was from London and I'd put on an accent and everything just so, let them leave me alone. Then when I went back home and I seen the country myself, I was deep in, I went around the place, I was like "this is beautiful". I felt, for some reason, I felt at home. It was really strange, really you connected with your country. And then I came back and I let everybody know. I went on social media, yeah I'm from Togo, there was flags everywhere. I was proud of my country for the first time ever. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Others agreed that not having knowledge of your heritage culture made it more difficult.

What is home usually? Home is just down the street. How is home a completely different continent?...So the younger ones, they're lost in the middle. [It's easier for me] because I've had both experiences of being back home and here. [Black female, 18+. Dublin]

For many, straddling two cultures and adopting dual-ethnicity is challenging. In the journey toward deciding where they belong it can mean rejecting one country in favour of another.

[I was in] Africa for like 4 years, I went back [there] and realised I hated the place so much ... put that as far away as possible. I don't feel connected to it in any way. ...people, my cousin and stuff, they act differently than me. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

For others, ethnic identity is tied into political histories that leave a legacy in their personal lives. For someone of mixed parentage who had experienced apartheid the idea of adopting dual ethnicity was compromised.

I don't want to be called mixed race, I'm black... I don't even know why they are making that option, telling me that I'm mixed race. In America ... they call us half

caste... half caste means actually out cast, because you don't kind of fit with the black, nor do you fit with the white people. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

In discussing the journey of belonging and identity it became clear that young people go through different phases in their own journeys. These phases can involve denial, defensiveness, minimisation, acceptance, and adaptation before reaching a level of integration (Bennet 2004)¹². In this ongoing cycle it is important that support is present. These phases represent the journey of acculturation and are key for leaders to understand. One participant, who has become a peer youth leader, explained this very well:

So your accent is going to change after a while, the type of food you like will change, the clothes you wear, everything changes automatically. You don't do it by choice, it just kind of naturally happens. So the thing is, the good thing about it though is you begin to accept people more because you're from two different backgrounds and you accept people from all different types of culture. If an African uncle came you to me I'd know how to talk to him and then if an Irish person came up to me I'd know how to talk to him, I'd know how to deal with people of different cultures differently and accept them for who they are. So there's good in it... it's not even that there's Irish culture, that it's something separate to you. It is your culture because you grew up here, you know what I mean, it's what you know...Something that's being overlooked a lot is the fact that... just because your background is African, doesn't mean that your culture can't be both African and Irish. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

For one young person the signifier of how she had adapted to two cultural heritages rested on how she responded to joking and whether she treated joking from Irish friends in the same way as she took it from other minority ethnic friends.

[When] someone from my own community or another international person [slags] me, it wouldn't be that offensive..... [And now] I'm not offended by it like if someone, if an Irish person ... may joke around like Like I understand it because they're joking around. But once my parents got annoyed by that. But I was like "you know it's just the same thing like when some of my Mauritian friends call me that... Like I'm not bothered by it". [female, Mauritian background, under 18, Dublin]

¹² These phases correspond to the cycle of cultural competency which includes denial, defensiveness, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation and eventually integration. Integration is defined as a point where people from minority ethnicities can exist in both, or all, of their cultural heritages easily. These phases aren't fixed phases but will be experienced continuously and to lesser and greater degrees depending on various life experiences throwing people back into periods of struggle while going through some or all of these phases again.

The journey toward belonging and integration is seldom easy or straightforward. The participants described how there can be stages in that journey. This raises the question as to how young people can best be supported as they explore their sense of identity and belonging when they are rejecting and embracing different social groups based principally on ethnicity. The stages were explained well by this participant:

I feel there's like three different type of groups. ... especially in teenagers, there's black people that would only hang around with other black people. They wouldn't mix with the other people. And then there's the black guys that would only hang around with White people, and be ashamed to hang out with his own people. And then there's the people that they don't mind to mix with both cultures. I went through all three stages. When I first came I'd only hang out with White people because in my mind black people were strange or I didn't like their accent or the way they dressed or something. And like I'd come into town and I could see a group of black people and they'd be like "what's up, what's up" and I'd be like, I wouldn't greet them. ... I remember when I was in McDonalds and they were like "so you think you're white now". ... that made it worse for me. That made me hate them even more. And then I actually came to [this youth space] and I seen everybody like mix and I was like "ok this is interesting, black people aren't that weird". In my mind I wasn't black (laughter). And then I started mixing with [black] people and after a while I got into it. I became close to my parents and their close friend's children and they went to an all African church. Then I just hung out with black people because I started to understand their humour and I love the humour. Then I was in a group with just black people. And now I'm at a stage where I just mix with anybody again. [Black male, 18+, born in UK, Munster]

Another spoke poignantly about the personal sense of loss that comes with the story of migration, of missing the relationship she would have had with her extended family, and a big question of 'What If' had her parents not chosen to emigrate.

The most difficult topic for me is talking about my [extended] family and the things I've missed out on. 12 birthdays and Christmases and so many funerals. I don't know if things would have been easier if I'd stayed in Poland... It's a disconnect, I cannot talk about it. Like it wasn't my choice that I came here, and therefore it's not my fault that I'm not in touch. But you still question... It is a grieving process, you get angry and then you get upset... It's a personal journey I have to make myself. [Polish-Irish female, 18+, Dublin]

Another person also lived with 'What If' questions.

I often wonder if life would have been different if I came here when I was older...Even though I try to keep the connection it's not as strong as I'd want it to

be. It often scares me that I don't know my roots or my people as much I should. Or if I would have been different. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

The journey of self-identity also involves deciding how to think about one's country of origin and Ireland and finding ways to delineate them in terms of connectedness and belonging. This description sums this up well:

Mauritius is like my home, my family, everyone is there. Like to go there you feel like more comfortable, like it is your home, it is where you are originally from. But like I can't stay there because like I grew up [here]. I already adapted in Ireland and I feel like for me that Ireland is where I belong. [Mauritian/Irish male, under 18, Dublin]

5.1.8 CONCLUSION

The evidence above shows how important it is for youth leaders to understand the very varied, nuanced and complex journey of acculturation, belonging and acceptance that young people experience. This is key to supporting young minority ethnic people's sense of connection and belonging. Also apparent is that for many, the migration experience is something that strongly connected them to others from migrant backgrounds. Despite wide cultural differences, they felt that having time together in groups gave them a space where they could share aspects of their cultural backgrounds and could express their migration related experiences which they were reluctant to do in integrated spaces.

The only way to get through it is through youth organisations and clubs, to do specific activities that reflect these things. Like at our [minority ethnic] youth organisation last year there was a speaker just talking about his story and his family. That changed all of the participants and from that we were able to create this year's theme which is identity. We had our first one recently and that was just so different from doing a training on inclusion or entrepreneurship. It resonated with so many people and it's something that is so long overdue. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

However, there was a clear age divide in this with a greater desire for shared spaces coming from the older participants who had reached a stage where they were ready and keen to share and articulate their feelings. One participant described how younger people are not ready for the conversations but as you get older you need to find ways to deal with what has become bottled up:

When you are younger you can ignore things, be naïve about it. When I was younger I would block things out and make them as if they are not real. But I feel as I've got older things have got more bottled up and more explosive. I think it gets

more confusing as you get older. Even if it was discussed at school when I was younger I wouldn't have really understood it as much as I do now. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

We will discuss how the youth work sector can respond in more detail in Section 7.

5.2 PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY REGULATION

The complex acculturation and forging of a sense of identity and belonging for minority ethnic young people involves negotiating differing expectations. Chief amongst these is the intergenerational impact on young people as they grow up in Ireland and adopt Irish cultural norms but whose parents promote and expect different behaviour in line with their cultural heritage. Significant areas of conflict included expectations around respect and adherence to cultural and religious practices; heightened levels of fear among parents for their children; as well as different attitudes to discipline, and personal autonomy, especially in relation to career choice. The findings demonstrate the importance of working with families in the context of intercultural youth work. In supporting the young people, it is critical to support their family relationships which can sometimes come under significant pressure as the young people negotiate a home culture and social culture which are significantly different. The findings also show that in migrant-only youth groups or spaces the young people are quick to support each other around intergenerational conflict through sharing their common experiences.

The young people in our research discussed a range of expectations their parents placed on them. A common expectation was in relation to maintaining their heritage language which parents see as the direct link their children have to access their culture of origin.

My parents are scared of losing tradition. Every time we do something like she'd bring up [that] I have cousins in France and like they grew up in France and they don't speak [our heritage language] at all, they speak only French. And my mum would be "I don't want you to become like them" Because like our grandparents don't speak English ... my mum would think... like us being all Irish ...when you go back home to visit...people won't understand you. It's a bad thing ... So that's why they want to keep traditional. [Asian heritage male, under 18, Dublin]

However, maintaining a second language can be a difficult process and is frequently a point of conflict.

Because I was speaking English to my sister and they are like "you have to speak Romanian" I'm like "no", "yeah you do". They don't want us to forget our own language [Eastern European male, under 18, Dublin]

Yeah they make me read so I don't lose my own language, my own culture. ... if there's a thing on from Romania ...they just say "go there, don't lose your tradition, don't lose, just go there" [Eastern European male, under 18, Dublin]

Another expectation is in relation to religion and its link to cultural traditions.

Like we used to pray every day but now ... I always have something to do, like projects and something like that. Because I don't have time to do it they're scared that I might leave the traditions and just you know, become like Irish,...forget about my culture... And just be a totally different person. [Asian heritage male, under 18, Dublin]

One of the key expectations of parents is in relation to the young people achieving and doing well. The migrant experience plays a big part in this with additional pressures when it is linked to the sacrifices that have been made by parents to give their children new opportunities.

I think people of different [cultural] backgrounds, you know the number one aim is always to please your parents. Like whatever they say, they always say "We brought you here ..., we suffered" and this and that. So then your goal is like "ok my parents did this, I have to train to do this, I have to try and get my degree, I have to try and become a lawyer, a doctor". They always want you to have some type of [qualification]. They give you a high standard and you try to achieve that. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Another participant expressed the levels of confusion they feel and the discord it can create in the home. It can be very difficult to articulate and instil cultural norms as it is mostly passed on unconsciously by being immersed in the culture as a whole. When that prominent culture is the Irish culture and the young person needs to find ways to fit in they are forced to make choices in how they behave.

I came here when I was seven, but you kind of lose your cultural side and you just focus so much on being part of the Irish culture that you throw everything out the window. You even get into disagreements with your parents because your parents still have the cultural background and there's so many differences in the house and then you're trying to please your parents so there's a lot of confusion, you grow up so confused. Parents will say this is your culture, this is how you have to be like and it's hard. You can ... never please your parents no matter how much you try ...And then you just get older and have to kind of decide for yourself. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Another spoke about how she would have to turn to friends to talk with about personal matters because of the differences between her mother's cultural upbringing and her own.

I'm listened to in my own networks outside of the family Because my family culture is very conservative and very strict and my family, they are very much set in their ways. It can be hard to explain things to them.... With family your mentalities are totally different because you are brought up differently - if you're brought up in Africa versus being brought up here. Like with me and my Mum, our thoughts are completely different. She's saying it's this way and I'm saying no. We have completely different views. I have my own strict views. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

One young person described the struggle from their parent's perspective. They spoke about the difficult choice parents have to make in supporting their children as they often have to decide which 'culture' they should encourage their children to align with:

Christmas is different and everything else is different in Mauritius. But like my Mam understands that I live here and she has to accept the culture that's here. [Asian heritage female, under 18, Dublin]

But other parents will hang on to their heritage culture, a position that the young people felt was difficult for them to follow as they are growing up in Irish culture.

Your parents might be hanging on, [saying] "but you're African and this is the way you should be" [but] just because your background is African doesn't mean that your culture can't be both African and Irish. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

The matter of parental discipline was discussed. The young people were very conscious that their parents tended to be much stricter than their Irish peers' parents. One participant described it:

Especially when you get into the teenage years you start to retaliate against your parents a lot and ... because African parents ... have these strict rules ... if you disobey wow! [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Another participant noted how they shared this experience with others in the minority-ethnic youth group and that they were aware that in many of their parents' cultures corporal discipline is the norm and this was not consistent with Irish culture:

It's a tough upbringing... we all share the same here like, we get slapped around for being silly, for doing stupid things. ... Here you know you slap an Irish kid they're probably going to go "wow, what happened?", you know what I mean. [Black male, 18+, Ulster]

Another participant spoke about the additional practical pressures on families due to the migration experience itself and how this led to difficulties in supporting their children in what they were going through.

I think parents are so distracted, so busy trying to settle down here. Our parents have a whole load of concerns – like getting us into schools, putting food in the fridge. Moving to another country can be a very difficult decision to make and there are going to be negative sides to it. I can understand why it is difficult for them to talk to us about that. [Central European female, 18+, Dublin]

The value of having the youth group to share experiences of intergenerational conflict with others who understood was critical. The young people knew that they were not alone, they could deal with experiences that they might feel they could not talk to Irish about in case they would think less of their parents or their cultural heritage:

People from this group can also relate to one another ... like maybe like if you're fighting with your parents or something like that, you can talk to somebody here. It's just a place where like people can kind of be themselves... [We discuss] how our parents discipline us in different ways. Because parents are kind of, like most of them are kind of strict because they are from different ethnic backgrounds. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

Conflict often arose in relation to different cultural understandings on young people's personal autonomy, in their freedom to choose what they want to get involved in or where they want to spend their time. While limitations on young people's autonomy appear to stem principally from different cultural norms, they were also partly attributable to parental fears for their children's safety. The young people spoke about how their parents' overprotection impacted on their confidence and their opportunities to take part in activities.

My mum kept me in. So like I wasn't allowed go to the cinema because she was scared that I might get like raped or something in the city....She's really over protective, so even to like walk outside my house she wouldn't let me, even to like answer the door for like anyone who was white So like ... a few months ago I went to Dublin by myself and I was so scared because like there was a lot of people around me who knew what they were doing and I didn't know what I was doing and I just felt like, I felt so lost. [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

This was not limited to the young women. Male participants described similar experiences:

Like I'm at the age now and my friends would like go on nights out or we have projects to do, I have to meet in the library or at the school. And my parents they don't quite accept the fact of me going out after 6 or like coming home late from the library or something, although they know I'm in school ... They are really afraid that something might happen. So they prevent me from going out at night. [Asian heritage male, under 18, Dublin]

5.3 RACISM AND EXCLUSION

A key issue to emerge across all the interviews and focus groups was the degree to which racism had become a 'normal' feature of young people's lives. The research also found that, while friendships with indigenous Irish people had been formed, young people also experienced significant levels of exclusion among their peers.

While racism was experienced by the majority, it was evident that racism toward black, Muslim and Roma participants, and those who might be perceived as Muslim or Roma was more pronounced. Of note also in the young people's accounts about racism was the range of responses from denial to frustration, to expressions of deep hurt. Those that initially denied being the victims of racism usually backtracked later and recounted racist incidents they had experienced.

Remarkably, the young people also presented stories which spoke of considerable resilience. In deflecting the impact of racism they diminished it largely by shrugging it off. Another coping strategy was being able to talk about it with others who had similar experiences, again demonstrating the value of minority ethnic only spaces.

The young people expressed eagerness to find ways to challenge racism usually in relation to fighting structural racism and the endemic societal nature and tolerance of racism, especially when it was perpetrated by people in authority.

5.3.1 EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

When asked whether they had experienced racism it was not uncommon to hear comments that downplayed its existence or its impact on them. Typical comments included:

"Not so much"... "I [experienced racism] in the past... But like it's a few years ago like... when I was growing up, it's kind of stopped".... "Not reallyjust jokes about people, I don't really care....In my old school most of the people were kind of racist towards black people in general. But like I didn't really care, it was just a thing that happened, I wouldn't really like get offended by it but it happened." [Young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, under 18, Dublin]

A frequent comment was about the racism occurring in their past, when they were younger, especially in primary school, and perhaps more hurtful for being at a time when they had not developed the emotional maturity to deflect it. Another motif was

where racism in Ireland was compared with other countries with Ireland being “not as bad” resulting in a tolerance for what did exist.

When I was in the UK it was a lot worse, when I came here it was minor... When I was in primary school yeah but through secondary school not really. Maybe on nights out now and again you'd hear somebody say a comment but you'd kind of just, it wasn't serious and it didn't really get to you. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

However, a number of comments demonstrated that they were keenly aware of the endemic presence of racism both within their communities and in wider society.

“There's racism in football, there's racism in those kind of things”.... “In a pub in the town here they don't allow blacks”.... “Loads of racism, especially at rally weekend. Like in the town”.... “Nobody from the settled Irish wanted to stay next door to a Sudanese doctor”... “[We were looking to rent] a house. [On the internet] it says only Irish allowed, black people are not allowed”. [Assorted comments from across the focus groups]

The groups also talked about a pervasive level of racism evidenced by everyday language connected to the term ‘black’:

It's a term actually that's used in the Irish culture a lot, like let's say someone walks into the room and there's three of us here and we're all white and you walk into the room, you greet these two and you forget to greet me and then I turn around and say “hello am I black or something?” [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

They also talked about how the Irish are quick to use the defence of joking when they have said something hurtful.

It's like they say something really, really deep to you and then they see you beginning to generate anger or start to feel it and then they are like “oh I was just joking”, but the comment still remains, is the thing... They can't take it back. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

By the same token, they often dismissed potentially racist remarks as people just joking. The endemic nature of casual racism and throwaway comments that exist in Ireland is clearly shown to be very damaging but it has been subsumed as an Irish cultural norm where slagging and being able to accept ‘a joke’ is a marker of acceptance into the group. Similarly, it is common to find black people casually call each other names that would be seen as racist had they been said by someone else. They talked about how they use the term ‘nigger’ amongst themselves. They questioned whether this was evidence of internalised racism, whereby they are deflecting it back on themselves in order to take the sting out of it by making light of it and also take ownership of the term. But they also wondered whether it was okay to do it as it feeds further into the culture of

casual racist slugging. This shows there is a role that youth work can play in challenging, critically exploring and teasing out issues around racism.

Another aspect of racism that was experienced was a corollary of the “I’m not racist but...” comment. This was where black people were announced to be someone’s token “you’re alright, I don’t like those other.....”. They were expected to accept the racism that it inferred because it was presented as a compliment to themselves.

We busk during the night and there was a homeless guy that sat down and said “can I have a drink and watch you guys? I like your music,” and he’s sitting there and watching us for ages and it was like two hours later and then he came up to me and said “you know you’re really talented, I like ye” and I was like “alright thanks”. And he was like “I really don’t like black people but you’re different”. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

One participant spoke angrily about experiences of racism combined with sexism. She was upset with others in the group who were denying and minimising the level of racism they experienced:

Just be realistic here, because this actually does happen, I’m seen as a nigger, negro, seen as the woman who can’t do anything because she’s a woman, seen as not Irish, seen as trouble, up to no good, seen as uneducated, seen as the outsider, seen as loud, seen as being alone, seen as a monkey. I don’t even know why you guys are laughing because you know racism is real, you know that we get called these names. That even if it’s not on a daily basis, at least once a week. I’m just saying like this thing actually does go on and you’re not taking it seriously. [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

In response to this girl’s comment, the young men admitted to experiencing significant levels of racism. Their accounts were very much in keeping with the other interviews during which numerous incidences of racism were described. The most common, and occurring nationwide, was the experience of being called “monkey”.

Five of us, we were walking just down here and there was this one woman, and like because there’s a group of us walking, like we took up the path. She was trying to get past from behind us but we couldn’t see. [Then] she just comes running the whole way around us and goes “bunch of monkeys” and runs off. [Black male, 18+, Ulster]

Someone standing outside the pub was like “ah black bastard!” I was like wow, because it hasn’t happened in some time so I was just shocked [Black male, 18+, Ulster]

Two weeks ago..., as we were walking, this guy was walking between us, and then he just turns like “niggers”... and we were like “what the hell”. And then he repeated that and some of the girls got really mad, like why would you say that? [Black female, 18+, Leinster]

An Irish girl described a frightening incident that happened to her and her black boyfriend

One day I was sitting on a bench with [my friend who is black] and this guy came over and he like called me over and he was like “what are you doing with that guy” and I was like “what do you mean?” And he started just slating [my friend]... and then they literally like threatened to stab him... They were saying like horrible things and they were like whispering in his ear and stuff. [White female peer leader, 18+, Munster]

Another spoke about racist attacks made in their homes:

They used to kick football at the windows, and when I’d go out like they all ran away. They did it so many times ... and one day they called us monkey so that really annoyed me. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

When the harassment started to escalate to offensive and racist name calling they reported it to the Gardaí and it was sorted out. However, not all incidents of racism were addressed by the Gardaí and in some cases Gardaí and professionals were seen unable or unwilling to take action and at worst are seen themselves as perpetrators of racism and discrimination. The following quotations typified the view among the black males that they were racially profiled and unfairly judged by professionals:

If we walk into the shops down the street, immediately the security guy or whoever they have there...start following me. So because you’re black [they] think immediately that we are up to something dodgy there. They start following, they judge me basically. Sometimes it’s funny and you want to play hide and seek [with them]. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

In some cases this results in feeling excluded from services due to the way they are made to feel.

One day I went into Super Macs to get something and then like this guy, like the security guards start following me and all ... I was like so scared, so I just walked right out. [Black male, under 18, Leinster]

Racial profiling by the Gardaí also came up with a white participant describing how he is frequently stopped when he is with his black friend.

I've been pulled over so many bloody times. And they just start searching you. I can't count the number of times me and [my mate who is black] have been pulled over by the guards for no bloody reason whatsoever. [White male, 18+, Ulster]

Many also felt that racism incidents were largely ignored by the Gardaí.

To be honest, like if you go and report they won't do anything. Like a few times you would report but they don't do anything, they're like "yeah we'll be on it" but they actually don't do anything on it. [Black female, 18+, Leinster]

Some of the most difficult accounts of racism to hear were when it had come from teachers. This person's account was particularly alarming and all the more so for the lack of adequate response from the school:

I actually had a bad experience with a teacher from secondary school ... From 1st year to 3rd year I had great teachers, so I moved into transition year. And we had to change into [wearing] white t-shirts. And there was my geography teacher who said "we shouldn't have been given a white t-shirt at all because it will get stained". And I was like "what do you mean by that?" and then he was like "you know exactly what I mean". I actually left the school, I moved to a different school for the last two years. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

How racism was talked about definitely changed depending on the socio-economic area the young people lived in. Young people living in the inner city of Dublin were more conscious of a pervasive nature of racism, in contrast to young people from a more privileged socio-economic area in Dublin. The young people from inner city Dublin spoke about being overtly and aggressively isolated because of their ethnic background

"Some people might not like you because of your nationality... racism, it's a hard thing to...get rid of"... "many people like they are racist, they just don't make friends with someone because you're a different nationality" ... "If they hear something about a nationality they say in their head then, 'don't make friends with them because they're like that'..." .., "they make stereotypes". [Assorted voices of culturally diverse young people, under 18, inner city Dublin]

Another participant stressed that racism was something she experienced more in an area that is more socially disadvantaged.

There is racism here but not by everyone, just a small faction. Like in parts of Tallaght I get a lot but in the city walking down the street it isn't as much. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Peer pressure was very much part of the stories about racist incidents, they described how young people who are racist needed to feel 'cool' and be part of the group.

Yeah like in school they're with a group so like they have a group to support them so they feel more power to say comments and say mean things to you. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

There was more racism directed toward different groups. Roma, and Romanians by association, were especially vulnerable. Romanians we interviewed spoke about how they were ignored and isolated when people discovered they were Romanian based entirely on the images portrayed of Roma

Like us Romanians, some of them think that we're robbers and all of that. Yeah gypsies, but we're not like that, even the gypsies, some of the gypsies are very good. I have friends, I have gypsy friends and they are better than the Irish. Like they are friendly and they don't steal, they don't do anything. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

I experienced racism, like most of the time they call us gypsies, robbers... they call names and all of that [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

Media was seen as largely responsible for these stereotypes

They do lots of documentaries around Romanians and like they feed the people like with the stereotypes that [we] are bad and you shouldn't trust us. [East European, male, under 18, Dublin]

Similarly, anyone who looked like they could be Muslim experienced racism as a result of media portrayals:

Yeah the media pour just negative information in peoples' head. And like even me as Indian descent, some people may mistake you for being a bad guy or what they see on the news, like what happened in Paris or Brussels, they will mistake you. And walking down the street, some of them, not all them, but some of the lads... will shout like "go back to your own country" or "you should go to hell" or something like that. [Asian heritage male, under 18, Dublin]

Anti-Muslim racism was seen as being clearly on the increase. One participant noted that levels of anti-Muslim racism had increased with the onset of the Syrian war and the role of the media.

It's getting worse and worse. Years back it really wasn't as bad but now it's getting bad. A friend randomly on a bus was told "oh are you going to bomb us"? Who does that? And even now at airports I really don't like travelling anymore. They check you a 1000 times. They are extra cautious when you're there and they're looking at your luggage all the time. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

5.3.2 REACTIONS TO AND IMPACTS OF RACISM

Some said that racist incidents impacted on them a very immediate ways, they would start to cry and they'd seek solace from friends but they also saw it impacting seriously on friends:

Some people cope with it like [through] self-harm and stuff like that, by getting into depression and [they] don't know how to get out of it. They start doing like things that they shouldn't be doing. [Asian heritage female, under 18, Dublin]

Yeah I know a friend that he took it that far that he killed himself, he committed suicide because of what [racism] happened to him. [Asian heritage female, under 18, Dublin]

The impact of being isolated by Irish peers (which may have its roots in racism) also had long-term effects. There were accounts of young people returning to their country of origin when they cannot settle:

I had a friend, like he came here only two years ago and he was a few months in Ireland and at the end of the school year he went back home because he couldn't get any friends here. Because of the racist [attitude], he felt bad and everything and went back home. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

Racism and exclusionary experiences had other long-term impact. It often resulted in people doubting themselves; questioning whether a service or group was something they could access or join, whether they would be welcome.

People just automatically assume that because I'm black I'm not Irish, you just get this kind of like distasteful vibe that like "why are you here? Like this is a service that's not for you." [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

However, changes in Irish demographics have presented some unexpected advantages. Because of the increased numbers coming from the different countries it is making it easier for many young migrants as they are less likely to be the only person from their ethnic background in a school or community. One person spoke about how he had been badly bullied when he first arrived in Ireland and his mother had sent him to his home country. He finally came back to Ireland to be with his parents but was very scared about going to school and facing a new cohort of young people. Everything changed for him when he met someone from his own cultural background.

Then I found this Romanian guy in the school and I just talked to him and then I was like so excited, just [because of] him and then I got used to school. [Now] I'm like, this is my home, if I go back to Romania I'm like yeah holiday ...I just feel Ireland is like home. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

Some teachers were also seen as being very supportive and effective:

I have a teacher in my school, he is from Australia. If he hears anything of racism or anything he takes care of it. It doesn't matter if... anyone says that they didn't say it, he takes care of it. He says "don't mind them" and everything. Like he helped me the most. He said that "if something happens, come to me and speak with me because I'm going to get rid of what happens". And he really did and now like less people are bullying me. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

5.3.3 COPING MECHANISMS AND RESILIENCE

These accounts demonstrate the value of having the youth group and the safe and supportive space it offers where experiences can be shared and worked through:

[In the group] we had a chat before about the fact of racism... [We tell each other] "You are doing the right thing, ... you never steal ...you won't be lifting anything, so like you just have to just know yourself, that you're not doing the wrong thing. You are doing the right thing. You go in there for a reason, you're going to buy something and you're going to pay for it and you're going to walk out". [Black female, 18+, Leinster]

If it happens I don't react to it straight away, I just keep on walking and ignore them. If I ever have to talk to someone I always tell my brother or my family, even my friends. [Asian heritage female, under 18, Dublin]

Without exception, the groups named racism as the principal thing they wanted rid of in their communities. They were quite positive that it was an achievable goal and that racism was becoming less as they grew up.

I also feel like racism and discrimination is like kind of, like [in] the older groups, they discriminate more, like judge more But now ... the teenagers, they don't discriminate as much because they're ... kind of used to having lots of like cultures within their friends. So I feel like it's really the older population that are kind of discriminatory to other cultures. [Asian female, under 18, Leinster]

What was very striking was the young people's resilience and how they sought to understand where the racist mindset was coming from.

Sometimes you kind of shrug it off because you kind of question... "where did they learn it from, why are they like this?" And then if they get it from their parents...you kind of can't blame them in a sense because it's how they grew up as well. So you kind of just let it go because you have to kind of understand okay. I know if my

parents were racist I'd kind of naturally grow up like that. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

You're like, ok it could be his environment, the way he grew up so you just kind of leave it and as long as they're not hurting you physically you're just like ok. But if they continuously do it then I'd definitely report it. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

For some it's about keeping their energies and spirits in a positive frame.

Stick with the positive, if you concentrate too much on the negative, you will end up negative. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

One person was affected strongly by a friend's suicide which she believed to be a result of racism. She took the lesson from it that she needed to have people she could talk with:

I was like terrified and from that day I like, I don't let things get like bad, I talk with someone when something happens. [Asian heritage female, under 18, Dublin]

Another participant took comfort in his religious faith and the idea that anyone who does harm will be judged by God

What I think, [is] they all die and they have their own... punishment because of what they did. [East European male, under 18, Dublin]

Others felt it important to put racism into its correct context, not to look for it where it might not be.

Sometimes people might be a bit too protective of their race and stuff, like sometimes I feel that people say something is racist when it's not racist. Like somebody could just have a problem with me and then somebody would say that is racist but it's not really racist, it's just a problem towards me. It has nothing to do with my skin. If it was racist I would have said it was racist. And some people would come to defend me before I'd even defend myself, which I find silly. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

The Irish participants were far less accommodating of racism and a lot less sure that things were improving.

I've had to like stop being friends with so many people in the past year though because of the fact that they were so racist. Like and there's no excuse for it like, it's not like they're like, they were raised like that or anything.They purposely do it because they'd know that I was there and that most of my friends aren't like white.... I just had to like cut them off. So like in the past year like I have literally stopped being friends with probably like at least 12 people... and they're all like similar ages to me, they've all kind of grown up and kind of, you know like the

generation where it's more like integrated and stuff like that. [White-Irish female, 18+, Munster]

Another White-Irish participant was more introspective. He described how he had once been the person who would have been a racist bully but that he grew up and changed:

I gave him some abuse just because I wanted to be popular, I wanted to be one of the cool dudes. And then I got into secondary school and realised what it was like to be bullied and I was like "oh my god, what was I doing?" Like reality hits you when you get to a certain age and you realise that not everyone is the same like. [White-Irish male, 18+, Munster]

5.4 LEADERSHIP

Some of the participants in our study demonstrated significant skills or potential for youth leadership and it was a key theme in the interviews. Attaining and using their leadership skills were key motivators for the young people's ongoing engagement in their youth groups. Moreover, in two organisations, the young people used their leadership skills within the community as part of the youth organisation's outreach work. This was cited as the justification for the youth organisations ongoing work with an age cohort (18 -25) that they might otherwise have discontinued working with. This is critically important as many of the young people we interviewed were only beginning to understand, reflect back and articulate their journeys around identity and belonging. In their early and mid-teens they had been largely caught up with trying to fit in and were still exploring their own sense of self.

One of the groups we interviewed was self-organised, relying heavily on the natural leadership skills within the group. Others we interviewed had taken on a variety of leadership roles from representation on Boards of Management to being spokespersons on advocacy campaigns on social justice.

A critical aspect of supporting leadership skills is having positive role models. One group spoke about the value of the youth workers who supported them.

They are like watching over us and making sure you're on the right path [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

It was from having these experiences that they wanted to be leaders, especially to support others with fewer opportunities. One group ran a Being Well programme with local Travellers and information sessions on accessing grants in college

Young people in groups definitely [need] to stand up more and be leaders and be facilitators because it does help motivate others [Black male, 18+, Ulster]

One of the constraints for self-organising groups is juggling the demands that are placed on them as leaders while still being young themselves. While their skill set as leaders was praised, from their ability to listen, to explain things, to their honesty and good advice the leaders found themselves compromised by demands from their university courses with many leaders having to move away from their youth group location to study elsewhere.

In another youth service they saw that peer leaders were much better at spotting and identifying issues for younger members and this was seen as the critical factor in the youth service staff being able to “step in and rectify problems” as they arose. One peer leader described the relevance of their role in supporting young people as they adjust to life in Ireland. Critical in the following description is how it demonstrates the young people’s ease within the youth group to express themselves freely and the leaders’ ability to encourage honesty and openness about their experiences.

If they’re struggling, like if they’ve only come here recently or whatever and if they’re struggling with adapting to Irish culture, if they disagree with Irish people’s ways and stuff like that, you just need to be understanding and listen to them and just find out how they’re, like getting on and stuff. [White female, 18+, Munster]

Also apparent in the interviews was how the youth groups fostered a leadership culture.

A lot of the participants that have been here a while that haven’t done the leadership course, they still act like leaders, like they really care for the place and they care for each other. And they make sure everyone is like doing well and stuff. And they kind of initiate things themselves, even if they haven’t done the course. It’s just like a natural thing that everyone here after about like 10 months kind of becomes a leader without even doing any [training]. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

What was apparent in the interviews was how the initiative to develop minority-ethnic-only youth groups usually came directly from young people themselves.

The music class had a definite [finish date] but they didn’t really want it to end... that’s why a bigger idea kind of came out of it... The music and homework group they were like the first group of people that started it and they decided “okay let’s have a youth group, let youths take over” so it was those lads who decided yeah let’s use [the youth centre] as our space but we’ll be in charge and we’ll take control of everything. They were like 17, 16, 18 back then and they were the leaders back then and that’s how we got started, through them you know. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

The peer leadership approach encourages others to get involved.

You go in and you're like oh this place is run by people my age; You just feel more comfortable; It encourages you to also want to become a leader; [miscellaneous Black voices, 18+, Munster]

Parents also valued their children's involvement in youth work when it was connected to developing skills, especially leadership skills.

The fact I became [a youth] leader was, it's kind of a step, it's like okay. My mum is like "okay he's doing something ... he's not just, you know messing around. So from there he'll go to college and stuff." They become more confident in you and if you could give them that confidence in you, it takes the pressure off a bit. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

For some parents it's integral to the new opportunities that migration offers that their children become leaders and examples in their communities.

My mums a single parent and she's illiterate, but she is a very strong powerful woman, she always raised me to: "you do everything that I never could". My father always pushed us to do more, he was the first in our tribe to go to university. So that pushed me a lot, to go further, to create a different future for my mum and family as well. My faith pushes me forward. It keeps me rooted and grounded and able to try things. And it comes back to the idea of community – when we do something we are doing it for our community. In my community Somalis feel what I'm doing; I'm doing it for them too. I have a responsibility to do more because I have the chance to be here. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Good leadership results in tangible outcomes – chief amongst the ones mentioned was the encouragement to pick oneself up after failure, to build confidence in themselves, to complete courses and achieve goals.

I dropped out of my [course], it was too much pressure, I just couldn't take it and I felt like really low ... like a failure.... [But] like a place like this that's relaxed...and takes time out to... remind you of the person you are, reminds you of the qualities you have. Just because there was like one academic blip doesn't mean that you as a person fail. It was brilliant that this place can help you get perspective on how to achieve in life. [White male, 18+, Munster]

I was super shy, I couldn't even look somebody in the eye, I couldn't speak to anybody, I'd be in the corner on my own. But I love music and I love rapping and stuff... If I was among my peers I'd rap because you're not really shy around your friends. So the leaders had heard me rap and they went "why don't you come to the studio?" and I'm like "no, no, no, no". But they keep pushing you ...until you become so confident in yourself that you think you can own the world. And it's the same with school, like I wasn't like an average student, but like I'd talk to the leader

about all my struggles in school and stuff and he'd push you and push you... to say "I can do this even though its hard" ... to push yourself till you finish it. [White male, 18+, Munster]

Going the extra mile to support the young people was evident in other accounts:

I remember they used to call me on my way in to make sure that I'd make it to the building and like stay on the phone with me the whole time so that I'd literally walk into the building. And like everybody [here] is willing to do so many things for people, the minute they say that they want to achieve something, it's like straight away everyone is there like supporting people and like pushing people, like in a good way though [Black male, 18+, Munster]

What was also apparent was how the leadership skills learnt in the youth group permeated into their engagement in the wider community and how they were subsequently perceived by others.

Among our peers, like most of them they see us as leaders. Because all the things I'm doing actually outside of [the youth centre], I am also taking a leadership role outside, like we just started an organisation where we go to places and perform... I see people perceive me as a leader. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

5.5 INTEGRATION

Many of the young people talked about what was needed for integration to happen and the role of youth work and formal education in this. They spoke about what integration would look like, the skill sets needed to realise integration and the value of having intercultural spaces to support integration.

5.5.1 WHAT DO WE NEED FOR INTEGRATION TO HAPPEN?

The participants spoke about cultural competencies as being an important skill and explained that minority ethnic people learn these skills through experience by virtue of inhabiting two cultural worlds. They felt that indigenous Irish people may need more exposure to different cultural norms to develop the same skill set.

It's always good to know how to deal with people differently in the space of who they are and where they came from. So we as Africans, we actually get exposed to the situation because you have your own African way but now you're in a different country in which you need to know how to, if the next Irish person comes to you, you need to know how to deal with them. Some of the Irish people won't have the

benefit of knowing how to speak with the African person... It's not that they don't know, it's because they are not exposed to how to deal with this type of situation. But for us it's kind of actually a benefit and actually its self-development in a way. [Black male, 18+, Munster]

However, other participants explained that without proactive education and actions to promote integration, young people won't choose to mix with others because they see it as too hard or scary to get past what they see as insurmountable barriers. In such situations, a space may be culturally diverse but if there is no real communication between all the young people then it isn't an intercultural space and attitudes and stereotypes could actually become more entrenched rather than broken down.

You're like this, they're like that so they won't get involved with you because they just think it's like, it's hard or it's a challenge for them to get to know you. [Black female, under 18, Dublin]

I don't think schools do it well. In my school there was the cliques of migrants and Irish cliques but there was nothing really to address it – it was a touchy subject to approach. If the teachers don't approach or address it, the children don't. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Some people could just like not be used to something, like be used to the diversity or the change and then like they're like kind of like ignorant to it, like not in a bad way, just the fact that they don't know about it, it can be kind of scary. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

Moreover, familiarity with another culture does not necessarily translate into a culturally competent skill set without a measure of reflection whereby the person is able to translate their experiences to knowing how to engage positively with less familiar cultural groups and norms. An Irish peer youth leader demonstrated his own reflective journey:

I started to make friends with people from different countries. And like it really kind of changed who I am, it made me like more accepting and understanding and it made me like more respectful. So I think it's really important for ... every culture no matter what culture it is, to be integrated and to understand different things. Because if you don't understand them, if you don't know them then, like in a couple of years, it will be really difficult... It's really good for I think young people today to spend time with a lot of different cultures because they'll learn different types of respect and the different, you know the different ways that people approach things and stuff. [White male, 18+, peer leader, Munster]

It was also felt that educators and leaders need to focus on building real understanding amongst young people, especially in relation to cultural practices that are very different

so that the young people themselves don't have to shoulder explanations about their culture alone. When cultural practices create controversy, educators and leaders need to be able to handle difficult conversations and maintain the young people's safety and respect:

Sometimes people are like surprised [by cultural practices]... even though you try and explain they don't understand.... We should be taught more about other cultures so that you understand why people act differently. Like what you might think is weird is completely normal to another person. If you're not taught that then you don't really know that. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

In the absence of the cultural and religious competencies needed for these more complex understandings to be developed there is still a lot that can be done. One of the most consistent findings of the research was the need for basic education on different religious and cultural groups. They felt that schools did not address these subjects with any degree of depth or breadth. Most wanted was an education that was more globally inclusive. The young people spoke about the value of hearing about their own countries and religions in an education setting and in a way in which they could feel pride in their country of origin. Far too often they battled with negative images of their country of origin or religion that permeated classroom teaching such as negative images of Africa. They also stressed that this topic should not draw unwanted attention to individuals in the classroom or youth group or put the onus on them to represent their own country. One participant valued the way it had been done in his school where students explored other countries, but he didn't have to represent his own country. This good practice example could be replicated in youth work settings:

When I was in 4th class ... we had to do an assignment based on somebody else from the class and his country... I never knew anything about Botswana but I had to learn about Botswana and it kind of opened up your mind a bit and I learned [Black male, 18+, Munster]

Another participant said that he would hate to be asked to represent his culture or religion at the mainstream youth group he attends as "it would single him out". Others felt that they could represent their own country if the setting is right and if it is entirely their choice and usually when others are also doing it.

5.5.2 FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLE OF YOUTH WORK

As demonstrated above, formal education is integral to the young people's lived experiences. Youth work, in being complementary to formal education, needs to be cognisant of the challenges that can arise for minority ethnic young people in school and how it can fill any gaps.

One Irish participant spoke with regret about missed opportunities to bring cultural and religious topics into the curriculum. He spoke about his school taking an assimilationist approach that ignored the diversity in the classroom by treating everyone as if they were the same:

It was the only class in the school that had like different cultures and stuff. But like it really frustrated me because I was in this class for like two years and a lot of the guys were in our class but I never got to learn anything about them, you know about where they were from ... So we could have at least did that.... The school ... were just like ignoring them and acting as if they were like, you know Irish and stuff. And then they were struggling with that because they were like thinking well I'm not Irish, but I need to fit in with all these Irish people because everything about this school is Irish and everything we're talking about is like Irish history or English history and everything is based on what Irish people, you know want. ... They struggled a lot more in secondary school than the average Irish person... Because nobody in the class saw them as Irish but all the teachers saw them as Irish. And they didn't see themselves as Irish. So I think they need to bring it into schools where like we study history of loads of different cultures. [White male, peer youth leader, 18+, Munster]

The young people noted that the competence of the educators is critical. Many spoke about the potential value of CSPE and SPHE classes but were upset that the teachers who taught them the subjects were often the least skilled at dealing with the topics. For many, this involved being able to address mental wellbeing especially for young people from cultures where mental health is not spoken about. One participant felt that youth work plays a critical role here:

It's all about mental health. And with African communities it's really important because there's no such thing as mental health. You are either crazy or possessed. And creating that space; I think it's more effective outside of school. If it's in school it would be associated with school, like with another class. It would be more formalized in a way. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Youth groups were seen as places where cultural and religious understanding could happen in the absence of it being provided adequately in schools but this raised a key consideration. Many argued that cultural literacy education needed to start at a young age but the minority ethnic young people who accessed youth work opportunities tended to be older (in two of the groups interviewed it was 16+ and often much older) and at that stage much damage had been done, in particular if the young people had already lost the connection or access to their cultural heritage.

It needs to begin at schools. Yeah because when the young people came here [to the youth group] they were already exposed to all this Irish thinking....They've lost

their own identity and claiming to be something and you can see it's so fake... Sometimes we try to talk to them but they are like no, this is what they are, this is what they have learned in school and this is what they have to act like. And it's a really hard. [White male, peer leader, 18+, Munster]

Others also saw the school space as critical.

You learn from hearing different experiences. There needs to be sharing. I think one on one conversations could be good as a start out place. But school is important as a space to discuss these things because everyone goes to school. [Central European female, 18+, Dublin]

However, the young people warned about being sensitive to divergent feelings and experiences and balancing having migrant only spaces with integrated spaces.

So I'd be nervous about the effect of separating one group out. It has to move on to doing things all together. It can start out there because it's such a sensitive topic to work out how to deal with it. But even in that group it's such a sensitive topic. There's things I still wouldn't feel comfortable about with a migrant group – like what if someone else is from your own country? I'd prefer if it started individually and then moved out. [Central European female, 18+, Dublin]

However, many of the young people appreciated the opportunity to talk about their cultural heritage which they could do openly and safely in their minority ethnic youth groups.

We talk about our backgrounds, how like sometimes we have similarities in our backgrounds and then sometimes there's like things that some of us don't know so we fill them in about it... Like for example she's from the Philippines right, so ... her culture might be different to mine ... we just like tell each other how our culture is. [Black female, under 18, Leinster]

I think it's really nice to have other people being interested in where you're from, the culture, because it's obviously very different. Like making a presentation for your own country they might get the knowledge of where you're really from, what your background is and what the country is like where you're from. [East European female, under 18, Dublin]

Ultimately, the value of the personal relationship was seen as critical. One young person demonstrated the need to have someone they can trust as against a person to whom you might be expected to go to. This reiterates the youth work maxim of the importance of one good trusted adult in a young person's life, whether that is in school or outside of school.

Like there's a guidance counsellor in my school as well but... I think it's more comfortable in school if you have a favourite teacher or a teacher that you feel comfortable with. I think it would be more appropriate to talk to them, you feel more open. [Female Asian heritage, under 18, Dublin]

5.5.3 WHAT DOES INTEGRATION LOOK LIKE?

In order to explore participants' understanding of 'integration', we asked them what their ideal integrated community would look like. A number of participants described an integrated community as one in which migrants can share and teach their skills to the Irish. It was clear from their descriptions that it is critical that the unique and diverse skills of minority ethnic people are fully valued.

One participant spoke about the importance of visibility and how diversity needed to be reflected in the workforce.

It goes back to the Europe versus Irish thing. In every airport there are people in headscarves and long covering clothes but in Ireland no. It's really shocking to me. As soon as you walk into an airport you get a taste of that country. So when I see a lot of different people working in an airport I know the country is diverse. Everywhere else [in Europe] is always mixed. Like in parts of Europe they are more racist but they don't think anything of people working in the headscarf and they don't think any less of them. Even in UK airports there were loads of people in headscarves and long clothes and no one thinks anything of that. How come in Ireland you don't see that. Irish people see me as different [because I wear the hijab] and they don't expect me to be working [in a public setting]. [Black female, 18+, Dublin].

If we project these sentiments on to youth work settings it would mean that minority ethnic staff and volunteers should be seen in a range of roles within the youth work sector.

Others spoke of integration as a personal journey for minority ethnic young people that involved the merging of two or more cultures. One participant described how the youth activities (predominantly music) provided an avenue through which young people embrace different aspects of their cultural identity. He spoke about a youth member he observed balancing Irish and heritage cultures. His description shows that despite the desire to minimise their ethnic or cultural differences, paradoxically, young people also need to find a 'voice' and a space to discuss and/or process those very factors which render them different:

She'll come in and do music and she'll be trying.... to get in touch with her background and her culture but at the same time being really kind of very much enjoying immersing herself in Irish culture as well which I think is good. Because I think that's what it is about. It's about people mixing each other's cultures together to be one big huge culture. Because when you make these divisions, like this is your culture, this is your culture, this is your culture, then that's dangerous I think. Whereas ... people can have their culture and you know enjoy each other's cultures and take bits from them. [White male, peer youth leader, 18+, Munster]

5.5.4 YOUTH WORK SPACES AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION

The need to have spaces where people can meet and share was palpable throughout the interviews. The enthusiasm the minority ethnic youth groups had in coming together was apparent. The principal reasons for coming together differed between the groups. Music and sport often provided the initial impetus for joining the group, but participants quickly came to value them as a way of being with others with similar experiences and they drew comfort from sharing a space with people who knew what it is like to grow up as a minority ethnic young person in Ireland.

Other [minority ethnic] kids have an idea of what we experience growing up and like what did we like, what we didn't like about it. [Female, Asian heritage, under 18, Dublin]

On the corollary being with people without that common experience shuts down any sharing.

I wouldn't feel comfortable to talk and share in a group of Irish people who have no experience. [Black female, 18+, Dublin]

Others need to talk about the impact of their migrant experience in safe and supported ways.

There are personal topics that we [migrants] need to talk about. There must be some way of bringing up this dialogue. You need to feel safe and comfortable talking about it, someone who sits down with you so you can say, "I miss my family, I feel disconnected from my culture". [Central European, 18+, Dublin]

Youth work spaces were importantly seen as spaces to discuss common issues and experiences that had no other outlet:

That's what this group is about, like giving us a voice, bringing everyone together,... getting different perspectives... just like a community feeling and just like voicing things you wouldn't voice like on the kitchen table... Because we don't talk about

this in college, like address stuff we wouldn't normally want to talk about. [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

The sharing of cultural traditions, that had become the norm in some groups we spoke to, also reached much deeper levels for the young people who had become disconnected from their culture of origin. It initiated thinking about their sense of connectedness and identity. This young man would have called himself Irish until he joined the minority-ethnic youth group and for the first time spent time with Black people:

When I first met them, [my Black] friends here, the style of living was completely different like to mine, I was more used to the Irish kind of living...The atmosphere was completely different, I had never been to anything like that before. And they really were welcoming, they shake your hand... It's different to Irish culture... I felt I was welcome when I first came to these guys, and they treat me like one of their own, you know. To be honest I'm an African Irish [now], that's what I call myself. [Black male, 18+, Leinster]

One Irish peer leader frequently sees the young people struggle to integrate different aspects of culture and she puts a significant value on the need for leaders to be there in the longer term to support young people in their journeys of self-discovery.

I think it's kind of like something that gets chipped away at bit by bit and eventually the person kind of settles on what they're happy with and I think it's just more about like facilitating that, to like say it's ok to have doubts and like it's ok to like question yourself. I think it's kind of more like ushering people through the fear of identifying what they are, rather than actually helping them identify what they are. [White-Irish female, peer leader, 18+, Munster]

The role of youth workers is critical. Many described the very positive experiences they had in youth work settings of having a youth worker they could talk to, of helping them with practical things such as form filling to more serious advocacy issues related to their status and in giving them advice. One participant described how she was never sure what groups or events she could join and be welcomed into and her youth worker would advise her on that.

Importantly, where youth work organisations provide integrated spaces with understanding and skilled youth workers, there is still the task of involving minority ethnic young people whose trust has been broken by previous experiences in the wider Irish community, as we've seen in some of the accounts related above. This participant demonstrates reluctance to get involved in activities outside of the minority ethnic youth group because her trust has been broken:

What you're trying to say is there are some actually genuine people here... that are not like the rest. [Black female, 18+, Ulster]

For this young lady, and many others, the solution is having minority-ethnic only youth groups. Others, especially those we interviewed that didn't attend minority ethnic youth groups, spoke about the need to fit into the wider community and not have attention drawn to their difference. Balancing the need for young people to express their cultural diversity against their need to feel like they totally belong within the wider community is a consistent challenge for the youth work sector.

It was clear from the interviews that the participants saw the process of connecting and belonging as a journey. And in this context the peer youth leaders stressed the need to be with the young people as they go through the journey and to support them along the way. This necessitates both a skillset and time commitment.

You just need to be like understanding and you need to be able to listen to them. [White female, peer youth leader, 18+, Munster]

Another consideration for the youth work sector is to adapt to the changing landscape in which young people engage. Support can legitimately involve online spaces. Two of the participants who don't attend youth services described the positive influence of an on-line blogger who posts messages everyday:

[He's] an inspirational person, just gives kids a feeling of belonging, makes you feel smart and he makes you feel loyal and he appreciates you and that's part of, he's just a real nice dude. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

You see the snap [chat] story, click on it and [then] I basically power through the day knowing that he's got my back, yeah. [Black male, under 18, Dublin]

This demonstrates that many young people connect beyond their geographical communities into the wider youth culture. The connections they build online are critically important to them, especially where they connect with role models and others who support them through positive messages. The youth work sector increasingly works in online spaces and we need to look at how we can reach out and play a role in those spaces that minority ethnic young people engage in.

In conclusion, it is important to look at the breadth and quality of engagement that the youth work sector can bring to ensuring inclusion and building integration for young people. If being integrated means to have integrity – i.e. to be able to live with the genuineness that comes from being true to yourself – which for minority ethnic young people is usually to be true to their heritage or home culture while also being true to their Irish culture, then room for this journey and exploration needs to be made

available to them. This also raises the question of age and access to youth services which we will discuss in more detail in Section 7.

6

Synopsis of Key Issues

6. SYNOPSIS OF KEY ISSUES

This research has raised a number of questions about integration of minority ethnic young people and the role of youth work in their lives. These questions are informed both by what the young people say about integration and by our observations of the formation and structures of the various youth groups we interviewed. A key topic to be addressed is the nature of the engagement with youth services that best suits this group of young people – what is the role of integrated youth work versus segregated minority ethnic only youth groups?

6.1 MAINSTREAM YOUTH WORK VERSUS SEGREGATED YOUTH WORK

The vast majority of youth work engagement with minority ethnic young people in Ireland takes place in mainstream youth groups. Minority-ethnic-only groups are rare. However, these were the focus of the groups we interviewed because of increased requests for such groups. That raises the question as to whether mainstream youth services are not meeting the needs of this cohort of young people. We didn't address this question overtly in our research, seeking instead to see if it emerged from the young people who had experience of both approaches to youth groups. No direct evidence emerged suggesting that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds cannot be fully supported in their personal cultural identity journeys in the context of mainstream youth groups. In fact there was one young man who explained that his mainstream youth service offered him the opportunity to be 'the same as everyone else' and this was what he needed from them. Another leader described how the young people who attend the mainstream youth groups stress or play out their commonality in those groups while openly expressing their difference in the minority-ethnic only group they attend in the same youth service. Moreover, the research suggests that younger teenagers are in a significant state of flux with regard to their identity and are less likely to articulate what they are going through and the need for minority-ethnic only youth groups is less pronounced. In this scenario the environments in which the young people spend time need to be ones where they are accepted fully in whatever guise they wish to identify, whether that is Irish, their heritage cultural, mixed or fluctuating from one to the other. Mainstream youth services can meet these needs where there is a degree of cultural competency amongst staff and volunteers and the young person doesn't experience the same degree of 'otherness' or misunderstanding that they can often experience elsewhere. Research would need to be done to explore to what extent mainstream youth services are actually meeting minority ethnic young people's needs or where they fail to do so. This is a key recommendation following from this research.

Our research, however, described how as the young people got older, there was a stronger need to be able to articulate some of what they were experiencing growing up

and to share this with others who also understood and shared similar experiences. At this point in their journey most were too old for the majority of youth work provision as most youth groups go up to the age of 18 with initial engagement and establishment of a core group happening at a much younger age. Many were also outside of geographical spaces where services were available with many travelling some distance to attend the groups we interviewed. There is therefore a strong argument for creating opportunities for older minority ethnic young people to have a space and support to come together as a group on their terms.

Critical to the discussion is identifying the level of support that needs to be put in place to support minority-ethnic young people. Turning to the findings of this research we see a range of specific needs of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We will look them in turn before returning to this topic.

6.2 SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

6.2.1 IDENTITY AND BELONGING

In the previous section we saw how perceptions, judgements and comments from others were a critical factor for the young people in terms of belonging and identity. We also observed how their migration status, and in particular their citizenship status, impacted. Being able to self-identify their ethnicity, and to change this description as they wanted, is critical in forging a sense of belonging in Ireland. However, we heard illuminating insights about being and acting black, and by contrast white, and how negotiating this is an integral part of the journey toward belonging and identity. It was evident that some young people felt that they were not accepted for who they are, and are expected to mould into an 'Irish' way of being. This raises the question of Ireland's commitment to interculturalism and whether we truly celebrate and embrace diversity. Moreover, it raises the question of who gets to define belonging. It was clear from the myriad hurdles that young minority ethnic people experience that developing cultural competencies and gaining a real understanding of the issues the young people face is a critical skill set for youth workers to develop.

It became clear that young people each go through a personal journey, and that these can differ largely from one another. However, it was evident that the young people need to be allowed to vacillate and to be accepted at all times. It is critical that those around them forefront the value and practice of acceptance and belonging and understand that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can experience disconnection from both their country/culture of origin and Ireland. It is important to ensure that any sense of alienation is counterbalanced by meeting the young peoples' need to belong, in

multiple ways and places, and most especially in their own community. Youth organisations can offer this anchor and sense of belonging.

In addition a key finding was that young people want to have space to articulate, share and process these issues. Youth work organisations, being community based and having qualified staff and volunteers are best placed to offer these spaces.

Key issues on identity and belonging

- The impact of migration status for young people
- The importance of dual-ethnicity (or multiple-ethnicity) as an option of identity
- The need to explore and rethink the understanding of Irish citizenship
- The ongoing judgements based on accent, language, appearance and cultural background that minority ethnic young people face
- The incessant nature of othering and its impact on young people
- Understanding the process of negotiating acceptance by peers – both Irish and minority ethnic peers
- Being aware of the concepts in ‘acting’ or ‘being’ black, or white, and how this manifests for young people
- Understanding the loss, pain and confusion that minority ethnic young people can face
- Embracing the need for cultural competency training for all to promote acceptance and celebration of cultural diversity as the norm
- Understanding the value of providing spaces for minority ethnic young people to meet and share their experiences. Youth organisations are well placed to provide these spaces
- Providing opportunities for young people to talk about the negative things they hear so that they do not internalise comments and they develop the skills to critically reflect on their experiences.

6.2.2 INTERGENERATIONAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

It was clear from the interviews that the young people see their relationships with their parents as being different to those of their Irish peers. They are deeply conscious of having to negotiate the differences between their home culture and their social culture. The findings reiterate the importance of working with families in the context of intercultural youth work. To fully support young minority ethnic people it is critical to understand that their family and community relationships can sometimes come under significant pressure. In addition, youth workers and educators can be seen as allies by supporting heritage languages and religious faiths in providing opportunities to learn and share.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate the need to be able to share experiences with peers that understand and don't judge, setting out yet again the importance of minority-ethnic youth spaces.

Key issues on supporting intergenerational and community relationships

- Being aware of the differences in expectations between minority ethnic parents and young people
- Understanding the nature of acculturation and the fear involved of losing cultural and religious traditions
- The impact of different child rearing practices (including possible child protection issues such as excessive discipline, FGM, and forced/underage marriage)
- The need for cultural and religious competency training in dealing with unfamiliar situations and working with different beliefs and values
- The value of having spaces for minority ethnic young people to meet and share their common experiences of intergenerational relationships in the family and community

6.2.3 RACISM AND EXCLUSION

The discussion on racism highlighted the degree to which racism is a normalised experience for the young people. Remarkably, the young people demonstrated considerable resilience, often diminishing the impact of racist incidents, and sometimes reluctant initially to admit to experiences of racism. However, as soon as it was voiced the pervasiveness of racism in the young people's lives was evident. Racism toward black, Muslim and Roma participants was shown to be more pronounced.

There were also mixed experiences in relation to reporting, especially when the authorities to whom they tend to report – Gardaí and teachers – were sometimes seen as the perpetrators rather than the people they can turn to and trust.

Key issues on supporting young people experiencing racism and exclusion

- The value for young people to have opportunities to talk about the things they hear so that it is not internalised – from comments that make them feel different, or that they don't belong, or that insult them. They need to have opportunities to critically reflect on the nature of racism and exclusion, to name it where appropriate and identify their coping strategies. Some felt it was important to help young people understand when something is racism and when it is not and the need to build appropriate responses.

- While some diminished their own personal experiences of racism, they were very keen to do anti-racism work that would challenge it on a societal and structural level. Young people should be supported to do anti-racism work.
- The impact of racism and negative comments especially in how they often lead young people to exclude themselves from opportunities due to not having confidence to know whether they are genuinely welcome to attend events or join youth groups.
- The value of racist reporting processes to ensure that people who experience and observe racism feel that they have been heard, and that their experience is being used to affect policy. Examples include I-Report. Awareness of the gap in Garda reports on incidents of racism and the need for effective hate crime legislation.
- The importance of building understanding of minority faiths and beliefs with the aim of reducing Islamophobia and other religious intolerance.

6.2.4 LEADERSHIP

A key finding was the value placed on developing leadership skills and having the opportunity to make a difference in the community. It seems that minority-ethnic young people and their parents are less likely to aspire to youth and community 3rd level qualifications and careers and as such are more likely to be involved in youth work in a voluntary capacity. This presents a clear need for youth work training that is culturally and religiously appropriate to encourage increased participation of minority ethnic leaders in the youth work sector. The importance of minority ethnic role models is clear both in minority-ethnic youth groups and in mainstream youth groups.

One of the principal observations was that the minority ethnic only youth groups were often reliant on their existence because of the minority ethnic young people's own organising and requests for support. Also their sustainability within a youth service relied on them giving back as leaders on behalf of the youth service. This demonstrates that if there is no such request, or no positive responses from youth organisations to such requests, then these services are unlikely to exist. However, the value of supporting minority ethnic-only youth groups, especially for older age groups is clearly evident in this research.

Key issues on supporting young people to be leaders

- Finding opportunities for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to upskill in youth leadership.

- Involving young people from minority ethnic backgrounds as volunteers in youth organisations and ensuring this takes place in culturally and religiously appropriate environments
- Understanding the sensitivity needed when working with young people from minority faiths on issues of equality and inclusion where values between the young people's faith and those promoted in the youth service clash. There needs to be space for honest and open debate, and room for disagreement while grounding the work in the often difficult balance where everyone's rights are respected
- The importance of supporting youth leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds that are seeking to self-organise by providing training such as child protection, health and safety etc. with further upskilling being offered as opportunities arise.
- The value of working with older minority ethnic youth
- The importance of exploring the need and potential for setting up or supporting self-organised minority ethnic youth groups

6.2.5 INTEGRATION

The participants spoke about the need to build cultural competencies as a critical skill. They stressed that diversity in groups does not necessarily lead to cultural competencies – this needs to be addressed as a topic in its own right and with sensitivity to the young people. They described cultural norms as something that could shock others just by being different and therefore 'strange'.

Another key finding was that the age in which intercultural awareness and cultural competency education happens is critical – the participants felt it needed to start from a young age and the classroom setting and school subjects of SPHE and CSPE could be very valuable. However, many felt that it was not always taught by teachers skilled in the subject.

It was clear that most of the young people we interviewed had not accessed youth work opportunities until they were 16 and often older. However, fewer youth work groups are open to this age cohort with most youth organisations catering to younger age groups. Moreover, it was clear that it wasn't until they were older again – i.e. 18+ for the most part - that they felt they could reflect on and speak about those aspects of their life that relate to their ethnicity or migrant experience and their own sense of identity and belonging. This raises the need for youth work opportunities to be made available to older young people which could be provided on the basis of self-organised youth spaces or as a group supported to take leadership roles alongside having their own dedicated

space. Both of these approaches were represented in our groups and both were effective in meeting the young people's needs.

Many described integration as being able to spend time with people in the wider community, to be seen and accepted as just another young person, and to take part in groups and activities where they had a common interest with others. In integrated youth settings they did not like being singled out as different or asked to represent their cultural group. At the same time they welcomed when their cultural group was presented in a positive light and when others were taught or informed about their religion or country of origin.

Nevertheless, consistently throughout the discussions was the desire to share aspects of their own culture and this is where having minority ethnic spaces had significant value. For some, speaking about their culture and comparing it with others kept it present and relevant. For others who had become disconnected from their culture of origin, it became a rediscovery. One of the few places that the young people can do this is when they are with others who are similarly motivated to think about their own culture and to assert their sense of connectedness and identity.

Most clearly saw their experiences as a journey of internal negotiation that involves the merging and balancing of two or more cultures. A desire to minimise ethnic or cultural difference from Irish culture, was paradoxically, met with the need to find a 'voice' to discuss and/or process those aspects which make them different. Critical to this process was reaching the point where their cultural and ethnic identities were recognised, embodied and shared. Some found this in activities such as music, while for others it remained an ideal. This resonates with our earlier discussion on the need for many to be recognised as black *and* Irish where this means being fully accepted as Irish when also 'acting' black. They saw integration as something that can emerge out of or despite adversity, seeing the value in engaging with others with differing viewpoints and putting value on respect, and building trust and relationships.

However, when trust is broken, so too is the confidence to reach out to meet the other, and with this any chances of integration are diminished. Nevertheless, it also emerged that confidence and trust can be built in ways that involve on-line engagement, the advantage being that it isn't reliant on geographical boundaries. Some young people tapped into bloggers and vloggers who post positive messages online. In youth work today safe and supported spaces can involve online spaces where integration and identity work could be explored in greater detail.

Integral to the need for shared spaces was the recognition and appreciation of good youth work leaders, and other trusted adults that could guide and advise. For some, their trust had been broken over the years with numerous slights or let downs, others noted that they turned more to their own cultural identity groups within Ireland which

were easier spaces to be in. One of the key changes since 2008, when the intercultural youth work programme at NYCI began, is the change in demographics. We are now working in a context in which there are significantly larger communities of single identity cultural groups. This has led inevitably to those communities looking to develop youth activities themselves and often turning to who and what they know to develop these. However, this can isolate them further as these cultural-identity groups are not part of, or affiliated to the youth work sector.

Key issues on supporting integration

- Mechanisms are necessary to support self-organising minority-led youth groups to affiliate, to have youth work training, and to access support to ensure integration happens at all levels – both at personal and structural levels.
- Online youth spaces have potential to be used to explore integration and identity work.
- The importance of providing youth spaces for young people to join as older teens and in their early twenties which take account of the numerous demands that young people of this age face. They may need to serve as drop-in or fluid spaces where project work can evolve based on the young people's range of interests. They need to serve as spaces of exploration and dialogue, where youth work methodologies are grounding principles of engagement.
- Integration for minority ethnic people is defined as a point where they can exist in both, or all, of their cultural heritages with relative ease. It is a difficult balance to achieve and maintain. In discussing the journey of belonging and identity it became clear that young people go through different phases in their own journeys which correspond to the cycle of cultural competency which includes denial, defensiveness, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation and eventually integration. These phases aren't fixed phases but will be experienced continuously and to lesser and greater degrees along their life journeys, often being thrown 'out of balance' when they least expect it. In this ongoing cycle it is important that support is present and the young people don't go through it alone.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The issues set out above clearly demonstrate the need for safe and supportive spaces, the value of youth work leadership, and the significant impact that youth work can have not only on individuals but society as a whole can benefit from greater focus on integration at individual and structural levels. Section 6 looks at different approaches to intercultural youth work and explores the mainstream versus minority-ethnic led debate.

7

Varying Approaches to
Intercultural

Youth Work – What
Lessons can we Learn?

7. VARYING APPROACHES TO INTERCULTURAL YOUTH WORK: WHAT LESSONS CAN WE LEARN?

While this research focussed on the experience of minority ethnic young people's experience growing up in Ireland our aim was to outline how youth work can best support these young people. To this end we interviewed young people who had experience of minority ethnic only youth work settings so that we could assess the need for, and value of, these particular youth work settings. We also interviewed a control group from a mainstream school with no stipulation as to whether they attended youth groups or not. Six different approaches to intercultural youth work were represented by our participants. Because we promised anonymity we cannot identify the youth work organisations by name or give descriptors that would easily identify them. The focus however is on the way they have approached intercultural youth work and to look at the advantages and challenges of each. It is important to understand how these minority ethnic youth groups have emerged within the youth work sector in recent years.

7.1 EMERGING TRENDS IN MINORITY-ETHNIC SEGREGATED YOUTH WORK

In 2008, when intercultural youth work was emerging and being mainstreamed in Ireland, a small number of minority ethnic youth groups existed, most led by Irish youth leaders and occurring either in existing youth centres or as outreach projects operated by the youth service. Just one minority ethnic-led youth group was in existence and it was affiliated to what was then Catholic Youth Care (CYC), a large youth service in the Greater Dublin Area. CYC had other affiliate members of minority ethnic youth groups up to 2013. The existence of youth groups with a majority of minority ethnic members is therefore not new. Meanwhile, evidence from various youth organisations shows that their youth groups are increasingly becoming more culturally diverse. These groups will be meeting many of the young people's needs especially in relation to fitting in and 'just being young people' with shared interests that bring and keep them together. However, despite ethnic diversity being more of a norm in youth groups across the country, a growing number of new minority ethnic-led youth groups are in existence or seeking to establish themselves.

Does this new trend reflect the growing capacity of minority ethnic community groups and their desire to offer something that is culturally specific to their youth population? Does it suggest that a significant number of minority ethnic young people, or their parents, are not keen to join Irish youth groups? This latter argument has always had validity for a number of reasons, some of which relate to the target group that youth work is traditionally funded to engage with. Minority ethnic parents can have negative assumptions about youth centres, believing that they are for 'problem' young people. There can also be perceived barriers in joining predominantly white youth spaces when

the young people feel they may not be welcome or there may be stereotypes and negative attitudes toward them.

There is, moreover, a need for training and upskilling in intercultural youth work and cultural competences amongst youth work leaders and volunteers. Due to the downturn in the economy intercultural awareness and cultural competency training has been in abeyance for some years but is now picking up in response to perceived gaps in these important skill sets.

Given the descriptions in this research of the journey toward integration and negotiating a personal sense of belonging it is critical that youth workers and educators working with integrated youth groups do not assume that skin colour, accent and facial features don't matter anymore because they are never mentioned in their youth group and the young people seem to be mixing easily. This may be because the opportunity to speak about aspects of diversity are not given, and the young people are busy 'fitting in'. In those situations we are at risk of falling back inadvertently to assimilation approaches. This research shows that there is a clear need to have alternative approaches that overtly support minority ethnic young people's complex journeys toward a sense of identity and belonging. This need was named as a grounding reason behind the establishment of the minority ethnic youth groups that we interviewed.

However, minority-ethnic led groups find it difficult to get funding from established youth work funding sources (other than small voluntary club grants that covers little more than insurance). Instead, many are turning to European funding opportunities such as Erasmus+ and linking in to their Diasporas across Europe, further distancing them from making connections and links with the youth work sector in Ireland.

In any discussion about the value of integrated versus minority ethnic-only youth work it is important to be cognisant that integrated youth work does not come as a wholly benign concept. The integration of minority ethnic young people (through youth work or other means) was often framed in terms of 'managing' migration and staving off perceived risks associated with 'the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos' (Office of the Minister for Integration, 2008). In 2017 we hear similar concerns in relation to engaging with Muslim youth in the prevention of 'radicalisation'. While youth work has the potential to facilitate a sense of belonging and to enable inter-community interaction and understanding, youth work should not be regarded as a mechanism to allay what ní Laoire et al (2011: 6) have termed 'public anxieties around the future integration of populations that are perceived to be different and to not belong.' In this context we need to reflect on our own motivations in providing integrated youth spaces versus minority ethnic youth work spaces.

As a sector it is important to reflect on why there is an emergence of minority ethnic youth groups and to support this new reality by bringing minority-ethnic led youth

groups into the wider youth work sector through a series of actions. This does not in any way diminish the growing and successful inclusion of minority ethnic young people in mainstream youth services but serves to augment it and to better meet the needs of minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland. The following approaches are those encountered in this research. They serve as examples both of the need for, and the variety of ways, that minority ethnic young people can have the safe and supported spaces they need.

7.2 INTERCULTURAL YOUTH WORK APPROACHES INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

The following approaches to intercultural youth work were observed as part of the research:

Approach 1. Minority-ethnic only group run as a partnership between two city-based youth work services

Key Features include:

- The youth group was set up in 2008 after management heard young minority ethnic people from local schools talk about their needs and they were motivated to respond. The group was set up as a minority ethnic only group designed to introduce members to the youth service with the hope that they would attend the services integrated services in time. However, the need for a segregated group has remained with new young people joining every year and the young people asking for it to continue.
- Weekly meetings are led by paid youth work staff on a rotational basis. In this way cultural competency skills are built up across the youth work team and no one person is seen as being the person responsible for the intercultural work in the youth service
- A significant number of this group also attend mainstream, integrated youth groups in the same youth service. The youth workers have observed that they behave differently in the two different spaces.
- They target students in the local schools to increase membership annually.
- The age group tends to be under 18
- Members come from all around the city – some travelling some distance to attend.
- It is funded by youth services grants and small grants.
- A number of the group have specific needs such as visa issues which the youth workers support them with

- The group has a separate Board of Management and its own Strategic Plan

Approach 2. Minority-ethnic only group run under a regional youth service

Key Features include:

- The youth group grew from one youth worker's engagement with minority ethnic young people while running the Youth Information Service which has since closed. The group was established in response to the ongoing need for information and advocacy for the minority ethnic young people in the community.
- Most of the group are over 18. The majority of the advocacy issues related to access to 3rd level and related visa issues.
- The group meet once a week. They run projects that include music, arts, sports and leadership training. They develop and utilise these leadership skills within the wider Youth Service such as running a well-being project with the local Traveller community.
- Two paid Youth Leaders from the Youth Service support them.
- A number of the group are resident in the area in term time only as they are students attending the local Institute of Technology.
- The project is not included in the latest Strategic Plan of the organisation as it has no designated funding to guarantee it into the long-term. It has been running for several years.

Approach 3. Predominantly minority-ethnic group run as part of a city based youth service

Key Features include:

- The group grew out of an earlier project that offered homework support and youth work opportunities to minority ethnic school students. Some members of that group wanted to stay involved in the youth service after the project closed. When a street level room became available they set up a drop-in service focussing on music which attracted a predominantly minority ethnic membership. However, the youth service provide it as a health programme using the youth engagement to tackle issues such as substance abuse etc.
- It has been running for several years
- Most members are over 16 with many being over 18
- The youth service runs a volunteer youth work leadership programme each year and the group is run with these peer leaders taking a key role.

- One paid staff member manages the group with the support of the volunteers, and a senior manager.
- The group meet three days per week on a drop-in basis.
- It is funded through SPY funding

Approach 4. Minority-ethnic only group that is self-organised and youth led. They meet at a Youth Centre who provide a no-cost space for them to use once a week.

Key Features include:

- The group emerged after coming together to take part in a local intercultural festival and they wanted to continue to meet up. Some regularly played sport together and many had attended the local youth service when they were younger and some still attended a drop-in at the Youth Centre. A number had come to the town as programme refugees many years earlier and had engaged with the youth service.
- They meet in the local youth service building once a week or on request. The youth service gave the youth leaders basic youth leadership training - child protection, manual handling and they cover insurance etc. One of the youth workers kept a friendly eye on them. The Youth Service were keen to see it become more established but were also honouring the organic and youth-led nature of the group
- When the youth leaders moved away to attend university its sustainability was more difficult to maintain. Its long-term viability is challenging without dedicated support which they have sought by engaging in Erasmus+ projects and NYCI projects.
- The age group was 16 - 25
- They have no funding.

Approach 5. Engagement in mainstream and church based youth groups by school students

- Of the nine people we interviewed in a school setting just one person was a member of a mainstream youth service. He expressed that he wanted to be seen as an ordinary member in this predominantly white Irish youth group and for no attention to be brought to his minority identity. A few others were involved in youth groups attached to their church, which, for some, involved supporting younger children at Sunday Schools.
- The minority-ethnic students do not come together as group in the school. When they came together for the focus group one of their

classmates commented about them going off with the ‘foreigners’. They said they don’t welcome being seen as the ‘foreigners’ or their difference being alluded to in front of classmates so they would be reluctant to be seen to come together as a group again.

Approach 6. Other minority-ethnic only groups

- We interviewed one young person who is involved in a European-wide group for African Diaspora youth aged over 18. This group focuses on skills development such as business, entrepreneurship, leadership skills etc. In this, and other youth groups we have come across, the emphasis is not on weekly or even regular meetings but more on engaging on specific issues, campaigns or events.

7.3 INTERCULTURAL YOUTH PROJECTS: WHAT WORKS WELL?

7.3.1 AGE CONSIDERATIONS

Having a flexible approach in terms of young people’s age is a critical consideration. Many of the young people interviewed were over 18 and this cohort was very strong in expressing their need to have safe and supportive spaces to come together. Many described how when they were younger they just wanted to fit in and they didn’t really know how to talk about what they were going through and they weren’t ready to articulate the confusion they may have been experiencing. Nevertheless they expressed the need to have those spaces where the exploration could safely happen and to maintain those spaces as they got older so that they could tease it out and articulate it with others.

7.3.2 GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Another critical factor is being open to working with young people from a wide geographical base as minority ethnic young people tend to organise by school or college, or by ethnic or religious group or by special interest. As such friends will be spread across a wide area but they tend to want to come together to attend a youth group. If living in a strict geographical boundary was the criteria for membership of a youth group most of the groups we interviewed would not be in existence. Furthermore, it is unlikely that there would be a demand for every youth service to have a minority ethnic only group such as those we interviewed. Working in partnership across several services or within one regional youth organisation is more viable.

7.3.3 YOUTH WORKERS VERSUS MINORITY ETHNIC PEER LEADERS

When it came to fulfilling the needs of young people in relation to exploring issues such as identity and belonging there was no apparent difference whether the groups we interviewed were led by minority ethnic peer-leaders or led by a majority-ethnic youth worker. It was clear that being in culturally diverse groupings was the deciding factor in how young people expressed themselves and their differences. However, it was evident that these conversations were well supported by the leaders in both situations.

7.3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a significant concern for those doing intercultural youth work. Receiving support from established youth organisations has been critical for all of the groups interviewed. Without it sustainability is almost impossible. Where support included dedicated youth workers the highest level of sustainability was achieved.

Some groups we interviewed have been in existence for up to eight years while one was quite new. Some groups became largely minority ethnic by default due to local demographics being culturally diverse and because of the positive influence of good leaders. Minority ethnic leaders also attract minority ethnic members. Other groups have established themselves as culturally diverse youth groups and deliberately reach out to target young minority ethnic members.

There are a range of similar approaches to intercultural youth work that exist in Ireland. These include Saturday clubs that focus on supporting heritage cultures. Single cultural youth groups also exist and they usually come together on an occasional basis when funding or opportunity allows. Many groups are reliant on small grant or one-off funding opportunities for project work such as Erasmus+ funding and Community Foundation grants. Mainstream youth organisations have also tapped into one-off grants to run short term projects with minority ethnic groups. Some youth organisations run projects for target groups such as Roma, asylum seekers or refugees. Other youth groups come together as campaign and advocacy groups usually under minority ethnic support organisations.

With the exception of the established groups described as Approaches 1-3 above, which are all supported by paid youth workers, all of the other groups are struggling to be sustainable into the long term. Sustainability can only be maintained by having structures in place – often to allow for constant renewal of members and leaders. There is a serious question to be asked of groups that set up for projects or campaigns that cannot maintain their engagement when a young person needs continued support and it is no longer available. The nature of the short term project work needs to be clear to the young people and the depth of engagement needs to be offered accordingly. Young people feel let down by not having the support they need.

While lack of funding seriously impacts the sustainability of the groups this research argues that dedicated provision may not need to be too costly if it relies on the motivation of young minority ethnic people to lead their own groups and youth service commit to ongoing training alongside their own staff and volunteer training. Other necessary support includes the provision of premises, covering insurance costs and overseeing and running a mentoring system to include planning and group facilitation skills.

8

Recommendations

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends that the current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. A full list of recommendations is outlined below.

8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR

In light of the findings of this report, we recommend the following for the youth work sector:

Ensure appropriate supports and spaces are available

1. Ensure that the specific needs and contributions of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are taken into account in the development of **organisational strategies, work plans and actions**.
2. **Safe and supported spaces** where young minority ethnic people can share their experiences with others from minority ethnic backgrounds to help them to explore and negotiate their sense of identity should be provided. Examples in the research included groups supported by youth workers and a self-organised group that is supported by a youth organisation to meet in their premises.
3. Youth work provision based on strict geographical limitations and age restrictions impacts on minority ethnic young people's opportunities to engage. More flexible or **alternate approaches** are required to take account of the numerous demands that young people aged 18+ face. Spaces may need to serve as drop-in or fluid spaces where project work can evolve based on the young people's interests. They will need to promote exploration and dialogue, where youth work methodologies and training are grounding principles.

Ensure appropriate training and education is delivered

4. Anti-racism and intercultural **training** should be included as core competencies of youth workers in order to ensure that organisations are better equipped to support minority ethnic young people.
 - a. Youth organisations must foster critical conversations on the theme of racism to help address racist attitudes.
5. Religious literacy **training**
 - a. Find opportunities to build understanding of minority faiths and beliefs with young people with the aim of reducing Islamophobia and other religious intolerances.

- b. Support honest and open debate, and room for disagreement while grounding the work in the often difficult balance where everyone's rights are respected
6. **Cultural competency** should form part of the education of all young people:
- a. To promote acceptance and embracing of cultural diversity as the norm.
 - b. To deal with difficult or unfamiliar situations and differing values and beliefs.

Support advocacy and leadership with and for minority ethnic young people

- 7. Create a minority–ethnic led youth work forum as a **special interest group**.
- 8. Young people and adults from a minority ethnic backgrounds need opportunities and mentoring to move into **leadership roles** within mainstream youth work.
- 9. Youth work centres and community **facilities** need to be made available to self-organising minority-ethnic youth groups for free or minimum cost.
- 10. Youth work **leadership** training for minority ethnic peer leaders (aged 18+) needs to be provided that is religiously and culturally appropriate but based on current resources such as Starting Out.
- 11. Where minority ethnic people have significant **advocacy and support** needs in relation to visas/migration status, access to college, and isolation from members, it is important that youth workers engage in advocacy to address these issues.

Carry out research and mapping to address gaps in existing knowledge and practice

- 12. Further **research** should be undertaken to explore the **gaps within current youth work provision** in addressing any of the key issues raised by young people in this report:
 - a. Is integrated youth work provision sufficiently supporting young people to explore aspects of their identity and belonging?
 - b. Are minority ethnic young people attending mainstream youth work supported to address issues such as racism, intergenerational conflict, etc. in their lives?
- 13. A **mapping** exercise is necessary to determine the level and range of intercultural and minority ethnic-only youth work provision across Ireland, to include an audit of cultural diversity amongst staff and volunteers.
- 14. Norms and cultural practices within youth work organisations need to be examined and evaluated to **assess** whether these may present difficulties for young people from minority ethnic communities to find out about them, to join then and/or to participate fully.
- 15. NYCI should establish a forum facilitate a debate on a strategic direction for intercultural youth work in Ireland that **moves beyond an exclusive focus on integrated universal youth work** provision.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS OF THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR

16. In the period 2008-2014, funding for youth work declined significantly. This led to 'fire-fighting' and reduced the capacity for inclusive practice. In the last two years investment in youth work has been partially restored and that is welcome. However, given the increased number of young people from a minority ethnic background and the needs and supports identified in this report, we recommend the following:
17. Allocate resources at national, regional and local levels to strategically fund **dedicated youth workers** to support intercultural youth work.
 18. Explore ways of **replicating or adapting the approaches** spearheaded by existing intercultural youth projects on a regional basis and in a manner which suits local needs.
 19. The current review of the Youth Service Grant Scheme and the Value for Money and Policy Review of the other Youth Programmes should facilitate the provision and delivery of additional and enhanced youth work supports to young people from a minority ethnic background.
 20. Any review of funding arrangements should facilitate minority ethnic-led organisations to apply for resources to deliver youth work services in their own right or in partnership with others.
 21. Open up youth work funding opportunities to minority ethnic-led youth work organisations that aligns them with current youth work services.

9

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10

Appendices

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Welcome and brief introductions of who is in the room – 5mins

2. Brief outline ‘reminder’ of NYCI research process – 5mins

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations. The NYCI aims through its member organisations and its representative role to empower all young people to participate in society as fulfilled confident individuals. The work of the NYCI is based on principles of equality, social justice and equal participation for all. In achieving these aims the NYCI seeks the emergence of a society in which young people are valued citizens who can make a meaningful contribution to their community.

Research Rationale

NYCI is undertaking research on “identifying **issues of identity and belonging** facing minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland, and exploring the current and potential role of youth work in their lives.”

The aim of the research is to develop a better understanding of the needs of minority ethnic young people (aged 14-24) growing up in Ireland and to develop a set of recommendations on how they can best be supported by youth work organisations. It is envisaged that the research will help to inform NYCI’s advocacy and policy work on issues relating to working with minority ethnic young people, and its professional development and capacity building work with youth workers and youth work organisations. One aim of the research will be to identify examples of youth work and out of school activities that minority ethnic young people currently with. The research also seeks to explore any challenges that may exist in this regard.

3. Assurances given of confidentiality/anonymity, how data will be recorded, and the process for the focus group discussion

Check that permissions from parents of under 18 year olds has been received, hand out permission forms to over 18s to sign

4. Guidelines and expectations

State the need for respect, that the session is being recorded so no talking over each other, what is said in the room stays in the room (confidentiality), etc., and invite group to participate as much as possible.

5. The focus groups with young people will use the following activities to structure the discussion.

Setting up the group

20 mins	1. get to know the group and introduce the topic	Explain my interest in area, break the ice and get started in a relaxed way. Introduce idea of culture/identity using photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photos: choose a photo that defines something important about identity/community for you
Facilitator Notes	Take a note of names, descriptions and place in circle to aid memory after	<p>Teenage and early adult years are a time of transition, wondering who you are, where you fit in, what you want to do with your life, who you want to spend time with etc. Everyone’s journey is different – some fly through it, others can struggle. There is no one story. However, being from a minority ethnic or religious group can be a significant factor in this journey for a range of reasons – often because of other people’s perceptions and attitudes; sometimes because of family expectations, sometimes because of cultural or religious differences, the reasons are many and individuals approach the same issues in very different ways. All your stories and journeys are different; I’d like hear the range of these stories and also the commonalities that exist.</p>	<p>I have an activity where I’d like to look at the idea of cultural identity and community and what this means to you. There are heaps of photos here and I’d like you to choose one that you can use to say something about yourself and your cultural or ethnic identity (or the community you identify with)</p> <p>In the round introduce yourself and show your photo and say how it says something about you.</p>

Main part of discussion

<p>30 mins Flipchart art Markers</p>	<p>2A. Discover the lived realities of young people by focusing on their internal personal Environments</p> <p>Expand discussion into issues related to identity/ belonging</p> <p>Structured activity with semi-structured feedback session</p>	<p>Mapping - Building (in small groups or one big one). Small groups work on the activity themselves and feed back to each other a 'room' at a time and the discussion compares and contrasts and draws out any interesting points further. Group is first shown an example of a house on a flipchart</p> <p>Fill in spaces with how you feel/what you do/who is with you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations: what supports me/gives me inner strength? • Facade: how others see me? How do you project yourself? • Kitchen: where (in my life) do I feel safe/accepted • Living room: where do I feel relaxed and 'at home' • Chimney: what would I like to stop/get rid of in my life? • Attic: where I feel at risk – in the dark? Scared? 	<p>Probing questions as necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of country of origin/religion, family and parents • What role do your communities/leaders/migrant orgs play in your lives? <p>Façade: do others label you?, single you out? What is the impact of this – do you feel the need for space/support to deal with this and other issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do people's perceptions of you stereotype – not merit you with the diversity of your ethnic/religious group <p>Supplementary questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you live/ hang out? (same area or different) • What do you do in these places? When do you go and how often? • Are there facilities/others (e.g. adults) in the space? • Do you ever change your personality (identity) in different places? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so What is going on for you on these occasions • What challenges do you/friends face in their lives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel these are different to native Irish friends? <p>Chimney: if racism comes up – name types of racism, and/or types of comments, discrimination, behaviours. From who? Implications of</p>
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			<p>racism – e.g. places you won't go,(including youth/community groups)</p> <p>Current media attention in refugees – does it have an impact?</p> <p>Coping mechanisms?</p> <p>Resilience – where does it come from?</p>
30 mins Flipchart Markers	<p>2B. Discover the lived realities of young people by focusing on their external Environments</p> <p>Expand discussion into issues related to engagement in youth work</p> <p>Structured activity with semi-structured feedback session</p>	<p>Using original images and methodology add these elements to the picture. (NB these topics may have already been brought up in discussing supports in my life, etc. if so keep this shorter – it will serve to supplement and verify previous discussion) Feedback as before.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sky: What would be the ideal space for you to participate in your community? What are you most interested in? • Clouds: What is missing to make this a reality? • Next door: who is [currently] your neighbour/community – the person/people you go to for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures/orgs that the you/YP have access to – including religious groups • Awareness/familiarity with youth work orgs • Barriers (facilities available locally for young people, language, gender segregation?) <p>Sky: Are there ways in which you want to make a difference, to be involved in changing the world around you, if so in what ways, and if so does this desire have anything to do with the your ethnic/minority identity?</p>

6 Demographics/ profiles survey

5 mins	Survey/ Questionnaire	Survey requesting personal information (no names) including age, gender, country of birth, ethnicity, religion, status in Ireland, activities they like doing, whether they have opportunities to address issues of racism, identity etc.	Each person completes the survey individually but may have questions about what different questions mean – support from facilitators may be required
10 mins	Closing	Any other issues that you would like to mention...	Thank everyone for their participation

7. Survey form for all young people participating to fill in

We believe in **equality, diversity and inclusion**. We want all young people to feel **included**.

To have a better understanding of those we are engaging with in our research we ask you to complete the form below.

This form is ANONYMOUS. However, only reveal what you are happy for us to know

Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Age 	Languages you speak at home/ with family: 1..... 2 3.....
Which country were you born in? Which other countries have you lived in? What citizenship(s) do you have?		If you were born outside of Ireland what age were you when you first moved to Ireland? Where do you live/have you lived in Ireland? Now..... Before
How do you describe your Ethnic / Cultural / National Identity? (Give your answer as you would to your friends to describe the group to which you feel you belong to and most identify with. Answers that others have given include Irish, British, Brazilian, Irish-Brazilian, Polish, Polish-Irish, Nigerian, Nigerian-Irish, Indian, Indian-Irish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Chinese, Filipino, Roma, Iranian-Thai etc – the list is endless) Your Parents'/Guardians' or ethnic / cultural / national identities: (this is to identify the cultural influences that may have played a part in your life)		
Your active (practising) religion: or None <input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>Name of youth groups and community groups you are involved in</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>Not involved <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>How did you hear about the Youth Group(s)/ Community Group(s) you are involved in?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(e.g. friends, school, from youth worker, local newspaper, Facebook, referred by someone, etc)</p>
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Individual needs:

Do you have a disability or medical condition or dietary requirement? Yes No

If yes, does it affect your participation in a youth group in any way Yes No

If yes, please describe how it affects your participation

.....

Have you taken part in activities in your youth group, community group or school where you discussed racism or tackled stereotyping and prejudice If yes please explain and comment on its value

.....

Have you taken part in activities in your youth group, community group, or school where you discussed identity and belonging? If yes please explain and comment on its value

.....

If you were to sum up your experience of being involved in your youth/ community group what would you say?

.....

What activities are you most interested in?

 Team building <input type="checkbox"/>	 Sport <input type="checkbox"/>	 Personal Development <input type="checkbox"/>
 Computers <input type="checkbox"/>	 Adventure sports & outdoor activities <input type="checkbox"/>	 Building Self-Confidence <input type="checkbox"/>
 Video & photography <input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership skills <input type="checkbox"/>	Development education <input type="checkbox"/>
 Music/ Singing <input type="checkbox"/>	 Spirituality <input type="checkbox"/>	Health promotion <input type="checkbox"/>
Community action <input type="checkbox"/>	 Craft <input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual health education <input type="checkbox"/>
International exchanges <input type="checkbox"/>	 Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health promotion <input type="checkbox"/>
Exchanges with others in Ireland <input type="checkbox"/>		 Drama <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other  _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUTH WORKERS in 3 projects who work with MINORITY ETHNIC YOUNG PEOPLE 60 minutes

Key question - What do youth workers (who work directly with minority ethnic young people) see as the issues relating to the current and potential engagement of minority ethnic young people in youth work?

Method - Semi-structured interview with the youth workers who work with the young people who have been interviewed. Only completed after the interviews with young people.

Rationale - While the research concentrates on the voice of the young people the youth workers they are supported by will have inputs that are youth work related that the young people may not be aware of – for example, a perspective on barriers concerning age groups or geographical restrictions, staff and volunteer training needs, funding criteria and restrictions, partnerships etc.

General:

- Your role in the organisation?
- Type of activities carried out by organisation?

Specific:

- In working with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds – what has your contact been, how did it take place?
 - What has been your experience of intercultural projects – i.e. projects taking place within a mainstream integrated space or satellite project or self-organised projects or other/s?
 - What challenges have arisen? What opportunities or positives have arisen?
 - In working with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds what have you observed
 - What issues do they raise or present with?
 - What issues do you feel are there but are not addressed?
- In working with minority ethnic community leaders– what has your contact been? And what have you observed? (any gaps that youth work can fill?)
 - Are any of the young people you work with acting as community leaders in their communities? And what have you observed? (any gaps that youth work can fill? I.e. youth leadership skills, funding/affiliation advice etc.)
- What challenges have you faced in working with minority ethnic young people (if any)?

- As a worker?
 - As an organisation?
-
- What role do you think youth work can play in engaging with, and supporting integration and contact between diverse young people?
 - In your opinion how successful has youth work been in facilitating access of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, either in your geographical area or more generally across your organisation or in other youth work organisations that you are familiar with? What challenges have you observed? What do you feel needs to change?
 - What can youth work bring to the lives of minority ethnic young people (including the different and various backgrounds they may come from?)



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