



Annual Report 2008

NYCI Annual Report 2008

Edited by: Clodagh O'Brien

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Photography: Derek Speirs, Tommy Clancy, Eco-Unesco, Stop Climate Chaos, Foróige



Minister's Foreword



I welcome this opportunity to provide the foreword to the National Youth Council of Ireland's 2008 Annual Report. I have long been aware of the role of the youth work sector and of the positive contribution it makes to the lives of our young people. As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I am particularly pleased to be in a position to support the work of the Council and member organisations.

In May 2008, the Taoiseach announced that the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science is to be integrated into the new Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The objective of this new Office is to take a coherent, coordinated and cross-sectoral approach to the issues that affect children and young people. The role that youth work and the NYCI member organisations will play in achieving this objective is important and as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs I look forward to working closely with you in this regard.

2008 has been a busy year for the sector. It has seen the finalisation of the *'Report and Recommendations for an Intercultural Strategy for the youth work sector'*. The topics of interculturalism and integration of migrants are of great public interest and importance. In the last decade, there has been a remarkable increase in inward migration, including not only returning emigrants and those seeking asylum but significant numbers who have arrived in recent years from the new European Union member states in particular. Ireland now needs to respond effectively to the challenge of integration and inclusion at all levels. I believe that a multi-faceted approach to this issue is needed and in this context, I am considering the Report and its key recommendations to see how we can best further integrate interculturalism into mainstream youth work I am also looking forward to hearing the views of the National Youth Work Advisory Committee's Interculturalism and Equality working group in this regard.

This year we have also seen the piloting of the Quality Standards Framework Initiative (QSF) for the youth work sector. I acknowledge that a number of youth work organisations have developed and implemented effective standards frameworks within their individual organisations. Such innovative and pioneering work demonstrates a clear commitment to advancing a quality agenda, and this work has helped to inform the development of the QSF. The pilot implementation involves the introduction of a structured framework that will enable youth work organisations to assess the quality of the services they provide, identify areas for development and review progress regularly. My Office, along with youth work organisations and interests, anticipate that the effective application of these standards will consolidate existing good practice and enhance youth work service provision. Feedback to date on the pilot has been positive and I look forward to seeing the evaluation of the initiative which will inform the further development and direction of the QSF.

The safeguarding of our children and young people is also an important matter for my Office. The Child Protection Unit located in NYCI is a great resource and support for the youth work sector and the training it provides helps to ensure a safe environment for our young people and those working with them. My Office has recently completed a review of *Children First* and I welcome the review of the *Code of Good Practice - Child Protection Guidelines for the youth work sector* which is being carried out by the National Youth Work Advisory Committee. It is important that guidelines such as these are updated to reflect changes in practices and legislation and that they are clear and practicable.

Finally, I look forward to continuing the cooperative approach which previous Ministers adopted with all youth work organisations and interests in the development of appropriate and relevant policies for youth with the aim of making a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our young people. I congratulate the Council on its achievements to date and wish it every success in its future endeavours.

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

Director's Foreword



Externally it has been a year of huge change for youth work in Ireland. In May, the Taoiseach when announcing his cabinet advised that Youth Affairs was moving from the Department of Education to the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. This development took the entire sector by surprise and whilst we recognise that the OMC has a reputation for being innovative, strategic and forward thinking there are concerns that breaking the link with the Department of Education will undermine how youth work is perceived. The move whilst having the potential to be positive for youth work also presents us with many challenges as we strive to ensure that youth work is not lost in the broader children's agenda.

In mid 2008, it became clear that the economy was experiencing significant difficulties. As news of budget deficits and economic downturns filled the media, NYCI continued to lead the drive to increase the visibility, support and recognition of the voluntary youth sector. At our youth work showcase in October just ahead of the Budget, there was a very strong message that the youth sector could not absorb cuts. Despite this cuts of over 10% in youth work funding were announced. NYCI member organisations are shocked and angry that a sector that has been chronically underfunded for years has sustained such a massive reduction in funding. We will endeavour over the coming weeks to try to ensure that the impact of the cuts for the young people we work with is minimised.

2008 started so positively for NYCI, the sector and the country. We now face a period of great uncertainty as we struggle to come to terms with the implications of the recession. The current funding crisis will test both the cohesion of the sector and the partnerships we've built over recent years. Now more than ever we need to build solidarity and a united approach within the membership of NYCI and with our external stakeholders to ensure that the strategic progress we have made in recent years isn't lost.

This annual report sets out NYCI's achievements over the past year, and gives a flavour of the full range of our work as the membership led umbrella organisation that represents and supports voluntary youth organisations and acts on issues that impact on young people.

2008 is the first year of our new five year Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Last year's comprehensive strategic planning process has delivered a plan which is both challenging and realistic. Our key stakeholders both internally and externally have contributed their views, and have provided a clear direction for the organisation over the next five years. The consultations confirmed that NYCI is doing the right things and there is no need for a change in direction; however we needed to ensure that we are doing things in the right way and ensure that we are developing much better synergies across the organisation.

Therefore a key cross cutting theme in the plan is improving collaboration particularly between our advocacy work and our practice development work. We have also looked more holistically at our training function and for the first time NYCI produced an integrated training calendar covering all the areas of practice development support that we offer.

We have also developed a new internal planning system to ensure that the work of all areas of the Council contributes to the delivery of our strategic plan.

We continue to try to improve our communications with our member organisations and other stakeholders, and have invested in an integrated database project that once it is up and running will make our contact systems more effective and efficient.

We continue to invest in a programme of Board development to ensure that Board members are supported to take on their significant responsibilities. This programme has contributed considerably to enhancing internal processes and relationships between the Board and staff of the Council.

We continue to support the development of open, participative and constructive relationships with our member organisations through a variety of ways. 2008 saw the establishment of two new structures, the Policy and Advocacy Committee which will provide important advice and guidance to NYCI on policy matters and the Specialist Organisations Network, which has provided an important forum for NYCI specialist youth organisations to exchange views and share ideas. In all of these arenas we want to encourage dialogue, critical exchange of views and inclusion of the diversity of perspectives of our membership.

Despite the current crisis, 2008 has been a successful year for NYCI as we work towards achieving the objectives we set for ourselves. This would not be possible without the determined efforts of many people. Finally as Director I want to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues in NYCI, the Board and the members of the National Youth Council for their hard work, support and encouragement.

Thanks are also due to our funders, particularly the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science, whose financial support enables us to deliver on our strategic plan in the interests of young people and the youth sector.

Mary Cunningham
Director

President's Foreword



The past year has been an important and successful one for the National Youth Council of Ireland. It was the first year of implementation of our new strategic plan which emphasises our commitment to advocate on behalf of young people and the youth sector along with supporting the development of excellent youth work practice. In pursuit of this, our work during 2008 has sought to develop improved synergies and ensure that the voice of youth work practice better informs our advocacy work.

Partnership with our member organisations and external stakeholders has been a valuable feature of our work in 2008. The opportunity to work in partnership is key to the ongoing impact and success of the Council and our work. These partnerships enable us to pool knowledge, perspectives and expertise to best effect in seeking to promote youth work and youth issues. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to our work over the past year. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science for their important contribution to resourcing the work of the Council.

The extensive range of activities outlined in the report reflects the hard work, expertise and commitment of the staff of NYCI. The quality of the work provides clear evidence of the quality of the staff. Their commitment to meeting the needs of member organisations is clearly evident.

In my first year as President of NYCI, I want to thank the members of the Board who have brought their skills and expertise to the work of the Council over the past year. I want to thank each of them for their hard work and commitment and for their support to me in my role over the past twelve months.

However as an organisation and a sector our greatest challenge still lies ahead. As 2008 draws to a close the recent publication of the budget with the proposed 10% cut in youth work funding is the most significant cut in funding ever to the youth sector. It is reminiscent of darker days in the 80's and 90's when youth work was seriously under-funded. We have recognised for many years that youth work is seen as a 'cinderella service' but even we could not have predicted the scale of the cuts to Youth Affairs budgets.

It is clear that if organisations don't have enough money to run programmes, to pay staff, to support volunteers, they will have no choice but to close down essential activities, services and projects. The outcome is inevitable; it will be the young people of Ireland who will lose out.

We do not want to see the progress and development in the youth sector over the last few years undone in the space of few weeks. Therefore it is critical that we work together to identify how we can best minimise the impact of the cuts on the strategic development of the sector and particularly on the young people we work with. The year ahead will be a very difficult one for the youth sector in Ireland. It will test the cohesion within the voluntary youth sector and our partnerships with other stakeholders as we seek to secure a fair share of the decreasing resources. NYCI will have a key role to play in continuing to build solidarity amongst its member organisations during this challenging period and maintaining excellent working relationships with colleagues in the statutory sector and Government Departments.

Eddie D'Arcy
President

Role, Structures and Reports

Vision

NYCI's vision is one where all young persons are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society.

Values and Guiding Principles

NYCI endorses all the values and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the principles enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the principles underpinning the Children Act 2001 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

NYCI's work is based on the core values of equity, volunteerism, pro-activity, interdependence, quality, and representation. Its work is also young person-centred, whereby NYCI believes that all young people are citizens in their own right and are of equal value.



MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Member Organisations will decide the nature of their participation (to include young people, leaders, practitioners, volunteers, managers, heads of organisations) depending on the focus, issue and/or needs.

Mission Statement

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is a membership-led umbrella organisation that represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

Strategic Aims

In advocating for the sector, NYCI is committed to playing a leadership role in actively raising the profile of youth work, enhancing the status of youth work and young people, and increasing the resources available to youth work.

NYCI embraces the genuine challenge of being representative of voluntary youth work organisations, as defined in the Youth Work Act 2001, and will ensure that its Memorandum and Articles of Association reflects this commitment.

NYCI is also committed to ensuring that all its members have the opportunity to participate fully in the organisation and will promote and encourage interdependent relationships between member organisations and in how NYCI itself operates.

The relationship between NYCI and its member organisations is central to its role in developing good practice in youth work. NYCI will be responsive to the needs of its members and work in partnership with them to ensure that the considerable knowledge, expertise and experience of the collective is brought to the development of programmes.

Structures and Functions

NYCI's Annual Assembly is its highest decision-making body and takes place once a year. As well as addressing financial, organisational and constitutional matters, elections are held. The Board of NYCI is the governing body of the Council. It is elected at the Annual Assembly. The Board ensures that the work programme and policies of the Council are implemented. Member organisations then decide the nature of participation in NYCI (to include young people, leaders, practitioners, volunteers, managers, heads of organisations) depending on the focus, issue and/or needs by participation in thematic networks in 2007.

Board & Staff of NYCI

NYCI Board

President	
Eddie D'Arcy	(Catholic Youth Care)
Vice President	
Karen Hannify	(Foróige)
Treasurer	
Orla Ryng	(JCI Ireland)
David Brown	(Church of Ireland Youth Department)
John Cahill	(Foróige)
Sean Conway	(Young Fine Gael)
Finola Gallagher	(Irish Girl Guides)
Paul Galton	(Youth Work Ireland)
Orlaith McBride	(National Association for Youth Drama)
Brian Murtagh	(YMCA)
Elaine Nevin	(ECO-Unesco)
Kieran O'Dowd	(Macra)
David Owen	(An Óige)
Phil Stapleton	(Scouting Ireland)

International Advisory Committee Chairperson 2007:

Elaine Nevin (ECO-Unesco)

NYCI Staff

Director	Mary Cunningham
Assistant Directors	Deiniol Jones & James Doorley
Senior Research & Policy Officer	Marie-Claire McAleer
Research & Policy Officer	Anna Cunniffe
Finance Officer (Part-time)	Laura Geraty
National Child Protection Co-ordinator	Gearóid Ó'Maoilmhichíl*
Health Promotion Co-ordinator	Lynn Swinburne*
Health Promotion Project Officer	Maura Weir**
Senior Youth Arts Project Officer	Anne O'Gorman**
Youth Arts Project Officer	Emmet Sheerin**
International Officer	Jean-Marie Cullen
Development Education Co-ordinator	Johnny Sheehan
Development Education Project Officer	Lucy Hill**
Development Education Training Officer	Alan Hayes
Intercultural Project Officer	Anne Walsh**
Dáil na nÓg Project Co-ordinator	Meadhbh Hand
Dáil na nÓg Project Officer	Aurica Cozneac
Communications Officer	Clodagh O'Brien
Webmaster	Daniel Dunne
Administration Managers (Jobshare)	Lisa Hyland & Elaine Lowry
Administration Officers	Rosie Boyle, Geraldine Mahon
Office Maintenance	Florence Lynch

* Left during 2007

** Joined in 2008

Advocacy

In 2007 advocacy was identified by our member organisations as the unique contribution NYCI could make to benefit youth work and young people. Therefore through a new five year strategic plan 2008-2012 we have made advocacy the primary role of the organisation. The Board of NYCI play a crucial role in overseeing and contributing to the development and implementation of our advocacy work. In October the policy and advocacy goals were formally established in line with the recommendations of the Strategic Plan. As a result we are focusing on a key number of issues where the views of youth organisations and the perspective and needs of young people are highlighted.

We have sought to progress these issues through our participation in social partnership. In 2008 we participated and contributed to the review of the social partnership meeting *'Towards 2016'*. We took this opportunity to call for the implementation of the commitments in the agreement of importance to NYCI and the youth sector.

We also continue to advocate through the political system in meetings with Ministers, political parties and Oireachtas committees. This year we produced a pre-budget submission *'From Commitments to Action'* which was distributed to key decision and policy makers and produced a post budget analysis *'Hard Times Ahead'* outlining what was overall a very disappointing budget for youth organisations and young people. In addition, we have made a number of submissions and contributions to policy reviews and proposed legislation throughout 2008. Through our advocacy work we have raised and highlighted a number of issues through press releases and interviews with local and national print and broadcast media which resulted in significant coverage on our campaign issues.

At the end of 2008 the economic and political climate has changed significantly since we drafted and agreed the strategic plan in late 2007. That presents a greater challenge for us in trying to convince those in positions of authority to progress and implement our proposals. Despite this we remain committed to our goals and objectives as they will make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

In addition many of the issues and proposals we have identified are long term objectives which will require consistent and persistent work and attention over the next four years irrespective of other factors. We have made progress in a number of areas in 2008; however we are also concerned and disappointed at some of the decisions taken and the lack of progress in a number of areas.

Youth Work

Funding Campaign

NYCI and our member organisations have worked consistently over the past number of years to increase funding to the youth work sector. The Funding Campaign established in 2003 has been very successful in raising awareness of the value of youth work and the youth work sector and in working with the Minister for Youth Affairs to secure year on year increase which has resulted in a total increase of some €16.3m or 62% over the 4 years. At the end of 2007 we were disappointed with the increased allocation of just €1.2m (3%) to the Youth Affairs budget line for 2008. Whilst this was at least an increase in comparison to some other budget areas, it was nevertheless still a cut in real terms against the cost of inflation and cost of living.

Throughout 2008 we have consistently highlighted the value of youth work and the need for continued and consistent funding. The issue was raised in meetings with the new Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D. and through social partnership. We continued our campaign through the Annual Showcase of Youth Work on October 8th as part of our ongoing strategy for raising awareness of the work of youth organisations amongst politicians. The event, held in the Mansion House was again well supported with a cross-section of Deputies and Senators from all parties. The new Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D. opened the event. In addition the issue of funding for youth work was also raised in our pre-budget meeting with Brian Lenihan T.D., Minister for Finance.

While we acknowledge that the economic situation has changed we are very disappointed with the announcement of the budgetary allocation for 2009. The cut in funding for youth services of 8% represents a significant loss for the youth work sector. This will have dire consequences for front line service delivery, and the capacity of the sector to roll out essential youth work services that make a dramatic and positive difference in the lives of young people across Ireland.

Active Citizenship and Participation

Vote at 16 Campaign

NYCI believes that young people have a right to a say in decisions that affect them. Therefore we are firmly committed to campaigning for the extension of voting rights to young people aged 16 and 17. In 2008 we focused on extending that right in advance of the Local and European Elections in June 2009. We made a submission to the Green Paper on Local Government Reform calling on the Minister for the Environment and Local Government to bring forward this change. We also conducted a number of media interviews with local radio stations and papers throughout the year to highlight the issue. In October we established a consultation group of young people aged 16-17 to advise and assist us in the development and implementation of a campaign in late 2008 and early 2009.

Active Citizenship

We were represented on the Taskforce on Active Citizenship by our Director, Mary Cunningham in 2007, which we believe forms a very important framework. We have been disappointed with the rate of progress since then. During the year we met with Minister Pat Carey T.D. who assumed responsibility for that portfolio in May. Subsequently Ms. Cunningham was appointed to an implementation group which is being established to oversee progress of the recommendations of the report. We will continue to press for the roll out of measures to support and promote active citizenship among young people.

Child Protection

Garda Vetting

One of the key issues for us in 2008 was our recommendation for the the mandatory vetting of personnel, paid and unpaid, who seek to work with children and vulnerable adults in Ireland. We believe that progress in this regard would remove the discretionary option that some organisations, agencies and individuals exercise at present during their recruitment procedures.

NYCI also supports the enactment of legislation that would facilitate the availability of 'soft' information as part of an expanded vetting service. Such information is currently available in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain. The availability of 'soft' information would apply to those that seek to work with children and vulnerable adults some of whom may not have been prosecuted in relation to an offence against a child or children but who may, in the view of An Garda Síochána, pose a danger or a threat to children.

These proposals formed a key part of our submission and subsequent presentation to the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children in September. Our proposals on mandatory vetting were broadly welcomed. Within a number of days the Committee unanimously recommended that the Government proceed immediately and enact legislation on the issue of vetting and on the access to soft information and that a constitutional amendment was probably not necessary to enable this happen.

Children's Rights

We continue to call on the Government to implement their commitment to hold a referendum to enhance the rights of children in the Constitution. We publicly opposed at the National Forum on Europe the proposal to hold the referendum on the same day as the Lisbon Treaty. In light of our opposition and that of other organisations the Government decided against this. We made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Constitutional Amendment on Children in January making the case for the referendum on the basis that it would ensure that young people would have access to the supports and services they need. In September we met with the committee to express our views on the matter and voiced our concern about the proposed original wording, which in our view did little to enhance the rights of all children and young people under 18. We also addressed concerns that enhancing children's rights would in some way undermine parents' rights. We highlighted that many parents sought redress on behalf of their children and the amendment would not only be pro-children, but also pro-parent.

Dáil na nÓg

Dáil na nÓg is the annual national parliament for young people aged 12-18 years and gives young people the opportunity to discuss issues of concern to them and influence public policy. Delegates are elected to Dáil na nÓg through their local Comhairle na nÓg (Youth Council run by local authority). The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) is responsible for, and funds, Dáil na nÓg. The National Youth Council of Ireland in partnership with Foróige and Youth Work Ireland holds the contract to organise Dáil na nÓg on behalf of, and in co-operation with, the OMCYA.

Dáil na nÓg 2008 took place on the 15th February in Croke Park and was attended by 196 delegates. It was officially opened by the Minister for Children, Brendan Smith, T.D., and was chaired by Mary Stenson (Dáil na nÓg Council 2007, Mayo Comhairle na nÓg) and Jack Hassett (Tipperary North Comhairle na nÓg).

The topics for discussion were chosen by a popular vote by the 34 Comhairlí na nÓg in the previous year and were Education Reform & Emotional and Mental Health for Young People. Delegates had the opportunity to discuss the themes in small groups.

From these discussions the groups of young people developed statements which were voted on by all delegates. The statements were then prioritised by vote and will form the basis of the work of the Dáil na nÓg Council 2008.

The 3 statements voted as most important by the delegates were:

Education Reform:

- Language subjects should be more conversational and relevant to everyday life. Pre-examination years should take part in mandatory Gaeltacht and foreign trips that are paid for or subsidised.
- More focus on the oral aspect and culture in the teaching of all languages.
- All teachers must receive training in guidance counselling and communication skills.

Emotional and Mental Health for Young People:

- Access to youth cafés in all areas which are open when needed to provide a safe space to seek help on drug and alcohol issues and other problems.
- A positive advertising campaign that shows real-life experiences and the effects of suicide on family and friends
- More funding for mental health services for young people, including advertising and school programmes.

Dáil na nÓg Council 2008

Dáil na nÓg is not just a one-day event. The recommendations made by Delegates at Dáil na nÓg are followed up on by the Dáil na nÓg Council. The Council is made up of 34 Dáil na nÓg representatives who are elected to represent their own Comhairlí na nÓg. The Council are supported by five young people who were members of the previous year's Council. The group meet once a month and are divided into two working groups to work on the two topics of Education Reform and Emotional and Mental Health for Young People. The Council's term of office is one year – until the following year's Dáil na nÓg takes place.

Dáil na nÓg Steering Committee

Young people are consulted during the planning of each Dáil na nÓg. Members of the Council are elected to a Steering Committee to oversee aspects of the planning of Dáil na nÓg. Council members were also involved in interviewing and recruiting Facilitators for the discussion groups at Dáil na nÓg 2008. This process will be repeated for Dáil na nÓg 2009.

Independent Evaluation

Each Dáil na nÓg event and Council meeting is assessed by an Independent Evaluator to ensure that young people feel that their participation has been meaningful and to help improve the event in subsequent years. The evaluation of the Dáil na nÓg event is published in the Delegate Report.

To promote greater co-operation and enhance mutual learning between the youth sector in the two jurisdictions in Ireland and between Ireland the United Kingdom copies of the Delegate Report were distributed to youth parliaments in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. Staff of these Youth Parliaments has been invited to attend Dáil na nÓg 2009 as observers.

Dáil na nÓg 2009

Dáil na nÓg 2009 will be held on Friday 20th February in Croke Park Stadium. Copies of the Delegate Report 2008 are available from the NYCI office. Further information can be found on the website www.dailnanog.ie.



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Health

Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol misuse continues to be an issue of great concern for youth organisations. We are committed to the full implementation of the recommendations of the Strategic Taskforce on Alcohol.

In early 2008 the Government established an advisory group on the sale and consumption of alcohol. NYCI made a submission and subsequently our President and Director were invited to meet with the Chair of the committee, Mr. Gordon Holmes. We welcomed the establishment of the group and the report which followed. As a result of these measures the Government introduced favourable legislation to address the availability of alcohol. This legislation curtailed the times when alcohol could be sold in off-licences and other off trade premises such as petrol stations, shops and supermarkets. We also welcomed the provisions to put 'test purchasing' of alcohol by young people under eighteen on a statutory basis. However, we were disappointed that the Government backed off on recommendations to introduce legislation 'to structurally separate' alcohol products from other products and caved into demands from retailers for a voluntary code to cover this.

In 2008 we also focused on the issue of alcohol advertising and marketing by the drinks industry which contributes so much to alcohol misuse by young people under eighteen. In our contacts and submission to the relevant Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and through the media we have consistently stated that the voluntary codes for alcohol advertising are totally inadequate and meaningless.

In June we highlighted this in interviews on national radio and the need for the Government to move towards a statutory code which is strong and enforceable and protects young people from predatory marketing. In our submission to the review of the National Drugs Strategy we proposed that local and regional drugs taskforces should be given responsibility for the implementation of actions and plans to tackle alcohol misuse, but that additional funding must be provided for this purpose.

Mental Health

We used our participation in social partnership and the pre-budget meeting with the Minister for Finance to highlight the underfunding of the Reach Out Strategy on Suicide Prevention and the Vision for Change strategy for mental health services.

Throughout 2008 we raised concerns about the long waiting lists for assessments, the lack of child and young person friendly services and the lack of any service for 17-18 year olds. We also met the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) to share views and information. We had proposed in our Pre-Budget submission that an additional €2m should be provided to the NOSP to assist them implement their programme, while not enough we did welcome the additional €1m provided for NOSP in the Budget.

Health Inequalities

Health Inequality continues to permeate Irish society and affect the lives of young people. In 2008 we focused on the issue of medical cards for young people noting that many families were reluctant to take their children to the doctor for financial reasons, which is unacceptable and detrimental to the health of our most vulnerable citizens. In the Programme for Government there was a commitment to increase the income threshold limit for families with children below 6 years of age.

We made a submission calling for this commitment to be introduced immediately in the review of eligibility of medical cards being undertaken by the Department of Health and Children and we await the publication of the report which is due in early 2009.



Left to right – Lynn Swinburne, Former Health Promotion Coordinator at NYCI, Minister Seán Haughey T.D., Mary Cunningham, Director of NYCI & Eddie D'Arcy, NYCI's President.

Interculturalism

Intercultural Strategy for Youth Work

The development of an Intercultural Strategy for Youth Work published in 2008 was supported by Youth Affairs at the Department of Education and Science, the National Action Plan Against Racism and by a steering committee with representatives from the youth work sector, Government and NGOs. It builds on commitments in the National Action Plan Against Racism, the National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007 and the existing work of national and local youth work organisations. The primary focus of our advocacy work in this regard was to ensure funding was provided for the implementation of the strategy in the coming years.

Policy

Youth Arts

We engaged in an extensive consultation process with member organisations, arts organisations, artists and statutory bodies in 2008 in the development of a new NYCI position paper on Youth Arts which will be completed in early 2009. This new position paper will form the basis of our advocacy work for the next 4 years. We also campaigned for the publication of the report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education, which was released earlier this year.

International

European Youth Policy

We continued to engage actively in the development of European youth policy and the implementation of the EU White Paper on Youth. We also actively contribute to the work of the European Youth Forum and have attended a number of the meetings in this regard. In February a NYCI delegation visited Brussels to meet with Irish MEPs, the EU Commission Youth Unit, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Youth Forum. The trip was an opportunity for members of the Board and International Advisory Committee to find out firsthand the role and functions of the various bodies and the opportunities to influence policy and to share information. We have continued to work with the Irish MEPs, initiated on this trip, to lobby for the campaign to designate 2011 as the EU Year of Volunteering. In addition we were involved in the EYF campaign for a written declaration on devoting more attention to youth empowerment in EU policies.

Lisbon Treaty

The Board of NYCI decided in March to restrict our involvement in the Lisbon Treaty Referendum to calling for the Government to ensure young people had all the information required to make an informed choice and to encourage Irish youth to vote. In advance of the referendum we published an information leaflet for young people entitled *'Don't Stay Schtum, Have your Say on the Referendum'* which was launched by Minister Barry Andrews T.D on May 20th.

UN Youth Delegate Campaign

We are campaigning for the inclusion of a young person in the official Irish Delegation to the UN General Assembly which takes place every autumn at the UN Headquarters in New York. A growing number of countries, particularly many in Western Europe include a young person in their delegation. We met with the Department of Foreign Affairs in late 2007 and in 2008 we continued to liaise with them concerning the cost and logistical requirements involved. We were disappointed that they decided against a youth delegate in 2008, however they have not ruled out the possibility in future years. We will continue to work with the Department on this issue for 2009.



Graham Ó'Maonaigh, International Advisory Committee representative to European Youth Forum & Bill Clinton



ECO-UNESCO celebrates 10 years of the Young Environmentalist Awards

Research

Quantitative Research

For a number of years we have been working to undertake a comprehensive and national survey of young people to inform and enhance our policy and advocacy work. Finally in 2008 we were in a position to progress the work covering a number of key topics impacting on the lives of young people aged 18-25. The contract was awarded to SPSS Ireland and the data was collected during the summer. The results of the survey are currently being collated and analysed and we anticipate that the results will be released in 2009.

Qualitative Research

During 2008 NYCI also commissioned a broad range of qualitative research studies on issues of relevance to the organisation. Qualitative studies were undertaken in the areas of Youth Arts, Development Education and Health. These studies explored issues in great detail and were either commissioned or completed during the year.

A study entitled *'Young People, Creative Action and Social Change'* was undertaken. It provided an assessment of the value of young people's participation in the arts and demonstrated how participation in arts practice impacts on the individual and at a societal level.

In the area of health, a qualitative research study was undertaken to assess the exposure and impact of alcohol advertising on young people. The project entailed developing a protocol for the assessment of alcohol marketing practices, using the guidelines, experience and expertise of the EU ELSA project. It also provided a review on the impact of alcohol marketing on the use of alcohol and the harm done, based on published international research evidence.

During the project a team of young people from NYCI's member organisations were trained in the assessment of alcohol marketing practices. The young people who participated in the research were involved in collecting data on the different alcohol marketing practices that they were exposed to, using the four P's of Marketing – Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The data collected was then used to map the different alcohol marketing practices that young people are exposed to in Ireland. This data was subsequently analysed to assess the exposure of young people to alcohol marketing practices in Ireland, based on the mapping analysis.

In addition, we commissioned a qualitative research study on attitudes of young people and youth workers towards development and global justice issues. This study is currently underway and will be published and officially launched at the start of 2009.

Additional Research

NYCI has also participated in an advisory role on a number of external research projects affecting children and young people.

During 2008, the Senior Research & Policy Officer represented the organisation on the Research Advisory Committees of the following projects:

- A National Advisory Committee on Drugs on a study on drug use among early school leavers.
- A joint collaborative project between GLEN and Belong to Youth Project funded by the HSE and the National Office for Suicide Prevention identifying and providing responses to the issues of suicide among the LGBT population, with a special emphasis on young people.

Social Inclusion

Child Poverty

NYCI continues to play an active role in the End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC). We collaborated with the other members of the ECPC in relation to a range of social policy issues, particularly in relation to income. We were disappointed that the NESC study examining the concept of a second tier payment for families where children are at risk of poverty did not receive sufficient support to be published. In the later part of 2008, ECPC focused on developing priorities to address child poverty in the coming years. In our pre-budget submission we called for the child dependent allowance to be increased by €4 per week, the actual increase awarded was €2 per week.

Private Rental Sector

We focused primarily on the issue of improving standards and enforcement of standards in the private rental sector and additional rent relief for tenants in 2008. We are concerned that some young people are paying high rents for accommodation of low quality.

To tackle this we met with the Housing Section of the Department of Environment and Local Government as part of a community and voluntary sector delegation to highlight our concerns and the lack of resources for enforcement of standards. The Department are currently revising the standards and it is expected that new criteria will be in place soon. There was also an increased allocation to local authorities in 2008 for enforcement although it still falls below what is required. In our pre-budget submission we called for increased tax relief for tenants to assist them meet the high and growing costs of renting. We were disappointed that there was no progress on this in Budget 2009.

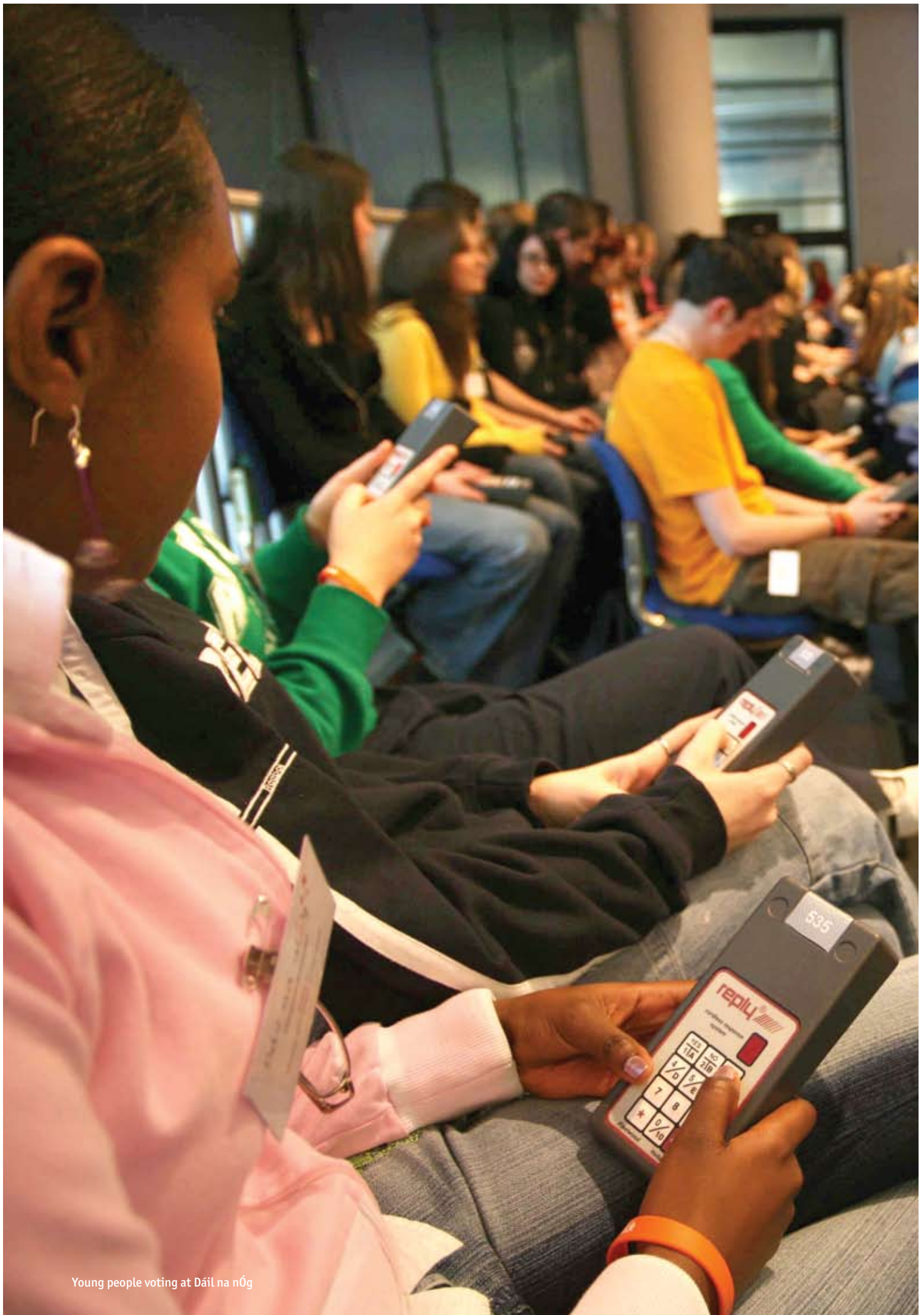
Pensions

NYCI made a submission to the Green Paper on Pensions highlighting the need for Government to rebalance the pension system to increase financial assistance to those who need help sustaining a pension and to reduce help and tax relief to those who do not. We are disappointed that although the Government reduced tax relief to the wealthy in the Budget, they did not use the savings to assist younger people to take up and sustain pensions.

Indebtedness

In 2007 we highlighted our concerns about the high levels of indebtedness which young people were accumulating on credit cards with our '*Can You Credit It: The Real and Growing Cost of Credit Cards for Young People*' campaign. We called on the Financial Regulator to introduce reforms to protect young people from credit card debt.

We welcome the fact that the Regulator has indicated to us this year that in their review of the Consumer Protection Code for Financial Services they plan to introduce changes in the manner in which credit card bills are presented, so that people understand the full costs and consequences of accumulating debt.



Young people voting at Dáil na nÓg



Participant at NYCI's Making the Connection seminar

Developing effective and inclusive youth work practice

NYCI moved forward with the implementation of its new five year Strategic Plan by developing new structures that would support the process. Following the key objectives of the strategy it was agreed that all work areas would develop plans that would both support the overall corporate implementation plan, and also illustrate how each area was contributing to this work.

On this basis the work of NYCI was categorised into the 3 key areas of Advocacy, Practice Development and Organisational Effectiveness, with each work area focusing on the key objectives in the strategy. As such the focus for practice development is to ensure that the resources committed to practice work within the organisation is relevant, coordinated and also supports and informs the organisation's advocacy agenda and work plan.

As a result we carried out a review of the organisation's training provision with the production of an integrated training calendar for 2008. The work on this element continued throughout this year with a specialised staff group working towards the production of a completely reviewed and coordinated NYCI Training Brochure for 2009.

During this year key work areas such as Youth Health, Youth Arts and Development Education developed 5 year plans that would complement and support NYCI's Strategic Plan. These plans will ensure synergy between the organisations key objectives and the actions of the various programmes. This will also ensure that all work contributes towards NYCI's overall strategy and are not viewed as separate entities, contributing to a coordinated and integrated approach and delivery of all practice initiatives.

Whilst a number of elements of existing work will still remain, some key priorities need highlighting. In the area of participation, 2008 saw the start of a process of identifying the current level of participation policy development within our member organisations. A similar process was identified in the area of extending provision in terms of the participation of young people, youth workers and volunteers with disabilities.

This work also linked into our new objectives on intercultural integration. We identified Interculturalism, not just as an area of work but also as a guiding principle that would underpin all of NYCI's work. This process commenced in 2008 with the hiring of two new members of staff to lead the work and organise a conference entitled '*Shaping Interculturalism in Youth Work*' in Dublin on November 28th.

Training

Throughout the year a number of training events took place across the country. In the area of development education training took place during the day and evening to accommodate volunteers and staff of youth organisations and took place in a variety of regional locations to make the training as accessible as possible. We also provided organisational-specific training which is tailored to organisations' specific needs.

In partnership with YMCA, we successfully developed a locally-developed module, *'Social Justice Issues and Principles'* at FETAC Level 5. A course, *'Global Justice in Youth Work'* was also developed. One course was delivered in Autumn 2008.

In the area of health NYCI continues to deliver training on either a 'calendar dated' or 'on demand' basis. Trainings in the areas of anti-bullying, sexual health, identity issues, behavioural issues and mental health were all carried out during the year. In addition NYCI maintained its status as a deliverer of ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) with a further training scheduled for December this year.

A training menu in Youth Arts practice was also developed and will be integrated into the NYCI Training Brochure for 2009.

The Child Protection Unit continues to provide direct training provision to youth and community groups directly and through contracted trainers. The Unit also provides advisory and information services to a number of child protection designated persons, assists organisations as they research and prepare their policies and codes of good practice, provides a regular update of information via e-mail to a broad range of contacts and continues to organise a number of theme related seminars as appropriate.

International Child Protection Training

The success of the Child Protection Awareness Programme has been recognised at International level through the work of the EU Commission sponsored Risk and Young Person Protection Committee. Following on the successful delivery of an adapted version of the training programme in Portugal in 2007, which was attended by 20 youth workers from 10 countries, youth agencies in Italy, Finland and in Portugal have now adapted sections of the programme for use in their own countries.

Much of this initiative has been promoted by the CPU in close collaboration with Léargas – the Exchange Bureau. The CPU has also agreed to support a similarly adapted programme to be hosted by the Turkish Exchange Bureau in March 2009 following which national exchange agencies at European level will examine the potential of re-designing the Child Protection Awareness Programme as part of an international child protection and safety training module. Such an agreed training programme would be most welcome as it will ensure a greater understanding as to the welfare and safety needs for those participating and promoting youth exchanges at a European level and has the potential to lead to a more common and co-ordinated approach to a most valued area of youth work and intercultural learning.

Advisory and Participation structures

NYCI's development education work is supported by an advisory group comprised of youth workers, representatives of non-governmental development organisations and Irish Aid. In addition a Youth Advisory Group is in operation made up of 15 young people involved in youth work with a global justice dimension. Both of these groups meet approximately 3 to 4 times a year.

However, NYCI has found it difficult to maintain significant ongoing participation in its advisory structures with some notable exceptions. As a result, it is intended to fully review all advisory and participation structures in the light of the Strategic Plan and Business Planning processes to inform the development of effective structures in 2009.

We wish to acknowledge and thank those supportive participants who maintained their attendance during the last few years.

Arts

Artist in Youth Work Residency Scheme

NYCI continued to manage this scheme, currently jointly funded by both the Arts Council and the Youth Affairs section. As in 2007, the scheme this year constituted two awards – The Artist in Residency Scheme and the Youth Arts Development Award.

Funding to the scheme for 2008 totalled €170K and awards were made to Donegal Teen Parents Support Programme; The Jobstown C.D.P.; Cobh Youth Service; Cork Travellers Women's Network; CMS Learning Centre in Dublin 8 Community; Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project; Loughraney Youth Club; Louisburgh Community Project; Kerry Diocesan Youth Services; Carlingford Community Development; Na Cálai C.D.P.; Friars' Gate Theatre and Arts Centre; Youthreach Kiltimagh; An Grianán Youth Theatre; and Youth Work Ireland Roscommon, N.E Galway.

Arts & Culture Consultations

In line with the other national programmes in Youth Health Promotion and Development Education, 2008 saw the delivery of a comprehensive consultation and planning process for Youth Arts within the organisation to ensure synergy between NYCI's core and programme work and support the integration and collaboration between work areas.

Consultations were carried out in Tullamore, Cork, Sligo and Dublin on a variety of issues that included the core work plan, development of a policy on youth arts and a review of the role of training within NYCI. The final report was received at the end of August and this informed the development of 5 year Business Plan 2008-2012 for Youth Arts. This is currently being integrated with the existing 2008 work plan to provide the implementation plan for 2009.

Certificate in Youth Arts

2008 saw the completion of the fifth delivery of the Certificate in Youth Arts with 15 people completing the course in August. Unfortunately, due to a shortage of suitable applications, it was decided not to run the course for the 2008-09 academic year. As a result NYCI will take the opportunity to completely review the certificate course in early 2009. Since its inception in 2003 the course has developed significantly mainly due to response to feedback from participants and tutors. As a result we feel that it is the optimum time to complete a comprehensive review of the course including its direction, content and audience. This review will inform the development of an appropriate Certificate course for 2009-2010.

Youth Arts Development Award

This scheme is offered to further sustainable development of youth arts practice at a local level in association with the Arts Council. In 2008 the fund of €43,600 was granted to Tallaght Traveller's Youth Service, West Cork Arts Centre Youth Advisory Committee, Axis Arts and Community Resource, Cavan County Council Arts Office, County Carlow Youth Theatre, Pobal le Cheile C.D.P & Soundation, Lucan Youth Services.

Making the Connection seminar

In January this year NYCI's Youth Arts and Development Education programmes collaborated to host 'Making the Connection; Creative Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work' seminar. The aim of the event was to look at the use of youth arts in an intercultural context and explore artistic and creative approaches to intercultural dialogue in youth work as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The event was very well attended and involved over 90 delegates from youth work and arts backgrounds.



Attendees at the Making the Connection seminar

Child Protection

Garda vetting

The issues of repeated vetting of individuals and the retrospective vetting of existing volunteers were debated at a mid-year review of vetting in the youth work sector hosted by the CPU. A consensus emerged indicating that most youth organisations would be willing to share vetting applications with another organisation in the youth work sector on an individual basis with the expressed permission of the applicant. Issues of confidentiality and data protection were clarified and the CPU was requested to explore the manner in which this could be implemented. It was clarified at the outset that to enable this all organisations wishing to benefit from this proposal would be required to join a 'consortium' of participating members. The CPU has outlined a proposal to the Garda Vetting Unit on how this may proceed and it is anticipated that such a service could commence on January 1st 2009.

In addition in line with NYCI, support for the vetting of all persons working with children (as part of an overall recruitment and selection process) we agreed to assist FÁS with the vetting of CE workers in 2008. This assistance resulted in the processing of almost 1,000 vetting applications by the NYCI on behalf of FÁS CE Schemes who are in some capacity working with children. The CPU also advised FÁS on establishing their own vetting structures and services which have recently commenced.

Retrospective Garda vetting

The issue of retrospective vetting is one that has caused much trepidation amongst both statutory and voluntary organisations with legal requirements and contractual arrangements often cited as obstacles. While it is acknowledged that a repeat vetting procedure, i.e. re-vetting personnel every 3-5 years will eventually cover all persons both paid and unpaid, the practice of vetting current personnel not previously vetted is gathering pace.

Most youth work organisations now wish to proceed to retrospective vetting of their paid and unpaid personnel. The CPU has requested legal counsel on retrospective vetting procedures and requirements and this opinion will be made available to all NYCI member organisations.

Review of the Code of Good Practice for the Youth Work Sector

The review of the Child Protection Code of Good Practice has now been completed as has the drafting and re-writing of materials for inclusion in the revised code. The draft will be considered by the National Youth Work Advisory Committee following which publication of the revised code should follow.

Youth Work Garda Vetting Consortium

The manner in which youth organisations have integrated Garda vetting of volunteers and paid staff into current recruitment and selection procedures has proven to be most successful and is being replicated by other groups that may also be embarking on the introduction of a similar service to its members or clients.

All member organisations of NYCI are availing of the vetting service of the Garda Central Vetting Unit in Thurles with a high degree of satisfaction expressed. So as to facilitate all organisations the Child Protection Unit in NYCI established a vetting consortium consisting of 28 organisations.

Development Education

Intercultural and Anti-Racism Week

Intercultural and Anti-Racism Week took place in April 2008 in North and South Ireland. To mark the week and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, NYCI held a seminar called '*Taking the Initiative on Intercultural Youth Work*'. The aim of the seminar was to highlight the report and recommendations for an intercultural strategy for youth work and to bring together mainstream youth organisations and minority-led organisations working with young people. The seminar aimed to provide a space for them to share their experiences, the challenges for the future, their fears and to identify the supports needed to engage in good intercultural youth work.

More than 60 people, from mainstream youth organisations, minority ethnic-led youth groups, intercultural organisations and statutory bodies, gathered in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle for the seminar. The opening address was made by Chinedu Onyejelem, National Ambassador for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

One World Week

One World Week (OWW) is a week of youth-led awareness raising, education and action that takes place throughout Ireland every November and enables young people to learn about local and global justice issues and take action to bring about change. This year One World Week took place from 15th – 22nd November and focused on young people's rights.

The educational resource '*Setting Our Sights on Rights*' was published by NYCI and disseminated to youth organisations. Training on the theme, use of the pack and getting involved in OWW actions and activities took place from mid-September to mid-November. All participants received a free copy of the education resource.

Zambia Exchange 2008

Following a successful exchange between youth workers from Zambia and Ireland in 2007, NYCI organised another visit for youth workers from Zambia to Ireland in November 2008 and from our member organisations to Zambia in southern Africa in December 2008. The theme for the exchange is young people's rights and was organised with the support of 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World.

While in Ireland the Zambian youth workers will travel around the country to visit youth groups, sharing their experiences and bringing a Southern perspective to One World Week activities throughout the country. The Irish youth workers will meet with youth organisations, development agencies and Ireland's official aid programme in Zambia to shared experiences of youth work and learn about issues facing young people in Zambia.

Communications

2008 was a busy year for the communications department. Following the identification of five relevant youth related issues in line with the five year strategic plan we developed campaigns to highlight the issues in the media. The five issues we highlighted in the media this year include children's rights, part-time fees, voting age, interculturalism & alcohol and young people.

Up to November 2008 we had released 40 press releases to all forms of national and local media. As a result we received 148 mentions across print, broadcast and TV media on a local and national level highlighting a range of issues.

In autumn 2008 we set up a consultation group of young people to get involved with a multi-faceted campaign to reduce the voting age to 16 in local and European elections. The campaign consists of a web-site www.voteat16.ie, social networking sites Bebo and Facebook, poster and leaflet promotion and a central action launch in January 2009.

In addition a huge amount of work was put into promoting and highlighting the annual conference 'Shaping Interculturalism in Youth Work.' Promotional material created included a conference brochure, folders, A4 and A2 posters to be used before and at the event.

The monthly e-zine Clár na nÓg continues to be circulated to a substantial mailing list of youth workers, journalists, policy makers and the public.

Website

The main focus for the webmaster was to fulfill NYCI's role in developing www.teenospace.ie on behalf of the Office of Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The site covers events and facilities for young people between the ages of 10 and 18. Hundreds of service providers were signed up to the site as service providers, and hundreds of events and facilities were added on an ongoing basis. The site had a successful public launch on June 16th, led by the new Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D.

Two websites were developed in 2008 to support advocacy and effective and inclusive work practice. In autumn 2008 www.voteat16.ie was developed as a once off-website to provide information and enable young people to have their voice heard on this issue. In addition www.intercultural.ie was developed as a hub for our special conference 'Shaping Interculturalism in Youth Work' on November 28th and will act as a portal for our future work on interculturalism.

After investment in a new platform in 2007, www.youth.ie was populated with news and resources on an ongoing basis. The site typically receives over 12,000 page views a month. A plan for a new integrated platform for all NYCI sites is currently being developed. The first phase of this process will involve the redevelopment of www.youtharts.ie, which began in Autumn 2008.

Health

Healthy Eating and Active Living

The Healthy Eating and Active Living initiative with the Irish Heart Foundation continued and the resource was due to be completed in late November. Negotiations will then look at how this resource is then disseminated and supported.

Health Quality Mark

NYCI's National Youth Health Programme continued work on the Health Quality Mark in 2008. Four youth organisations took part in the Health Quality Mark by either entering, progressing or being re-monitored for the award with successful candidates being presented with their packs at the AGM in November. Additionally the preparation work continues for 2009 with some 15 organisations involved. In total there are now some 37 organisations in the process.

Specialist Certificate in Youth Health Promotion

The Specialist Certificate for 2007-08 was completed as expected and the participants graduated at a ceremony in Galway in October. The certificate currently takes place on a bi-annual basis, but work has already commenced on preparation for the 2009-2010 delivery.

Spiritual Health

Work is continuing on this new initiative. A group of member organisations came together in March and November of 2008 and support staff is currently working on the outcomes of these seminars to establish a work programme.



Interculturalism

Annual Conference

The 'Shaping Interculturalism in Youth Work' conference was held on November 28th within the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This one day conference was devised to showcase the many successful intercultural youth projects that take place nationally and to promote debate on the barriers and challenges that face the youth sector as it embraces interculturalism. The key note speaker was Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, an inspirational journalist, author and broadcaster who consistently critiques the multicultural model familiar in Britain and challenges her audience to find new ways to include cultural diversity in their communities.

The conference attracted a large audience that included heads of organisations, policy makers, decision makers, youth workers, volunteers and others who work with young people from diverse cultures. The delegates took part in three roundtable discussions that covered the topics: the youth sector's contribution toward interculturalism in Ireland; the issues, challenges and barriers that the sector continues to face in intercultural youth work; and the supports needed to do sustainable intercultural youth work into the future.



International

Representation and advisory

The International Advisory Committee's membership continues to grow and in 2008 the IAC organised a trip to Brussels to explore the European side to youth policy, visiting the EU Commission, the EU Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee.

In addition NYCI's International section is represented on the Leargas Youth work service advisory committee and youth work grants committee and has worked with Leargas on consultations with young people and European Youth Week 2008.

Throughout 2008 young people and youth workers from NYCI's member organisations represented us at various International conferences, seminars and training opportunities. We also hosted an international meeting of young people from European National Youth Councils to discuss European Youth Forum policy and positions and share best practice.

Edgar Otto Thedens bequest

The Edgar Otto Thedens bequest was 'for the purpose of strengthening of education, travel and friendship between young people of Ireland and the European Union'. The Department of Youth Affairs approached NYCI and Leargas to work on a project to disseminate this bequest fund and a call was sent out for appropriate international projects.

Successful organisations included:

- Alternative Person's Association
- 18th Kildare Scouts
- Neighbourhood Youth Project 2
- The Irish Girl Guides – Howth Unit
- MARDI
- Dime Project
- Blanchardstown Youth Service – Foróige
- Tallaght Youth Service – Foróige
- Eco-Unesco
- Pavee Point Travellers Centre
- Ógras
- Milford Community Project

Publications

In 2008 a number of publications were created and disseminated by the National Youth Council of Ireland. *'Setting Our Sights on Rights: A Global Youth Work Resource on Young People's Rights'* was published in September 2008 which explores the concept of human rights and how rights relate specifically to the lives of young people both in Ireland and all over the world. A Trainer Manual and Learner Handbook were also published in September 2008 to support the delivery of the FETAC *'Global Justice in Youth Work'* course.

The Youth Arts programme produced the annual magazine *In2* in November which focused on Intercultural Arts Practice and showcased a range of exciting projects across the country.

In addition earlier this year NYCI and the Equality Authority published *'Stereotyping of Young People Resource Pack'* which will aid young people and organisations supporting young people to recognise stereotyping and to challenge and eliminate stereotyping.

Representation

Under NYCI's new Strategic Plan, a complete review was carried out of all of our external representations to ensure that they both strategically supported the work of NYCI; and that the organisation was represented at the appropriate level by the appropriate person. As a result of this process, some changes have occurred in the way some alliances and representations are maintained.



Permanent tsb Foróige Youth Citizenship Awards 2008

Organisational Effectiveness

Governance and Management

Since Assembly 2007 the Board have met seven times. As part of our commitment to ensure best practice in governance the Board have been involved in a development process that examines both their roles and responsibilities. We have developed a Board manual to assist new members develop their knowledge of NYCI. In 2008 the Board commenced a risk assessment review on NYCI and this work continues.

Secure and Manage the Optimal Budget

In 2008 NYCI developed a single corporate budget covering all aspects of the organisation's activity. During 2008 work has begun on developing a comprehensive financial procedures manual and we continue to develop a high level of financial awareness amongst budget holders. As the year ends we are facing the same budgetary challenge as the rest of the sector.

Implement and Monitor Business Plans

NYCI developed and implemented a new integrated business planning model in 2008. For the first time plans were outcome focused and all plans included specific objectives on internal integration to facilitate the more collaborative working model we want to achieve. The new model has begun to deliver the 'better joined up thinking and working' we are trying to achieve. We are continuing to work with external funders to ensure a single reporting system is in place that meets the needs of all the relevant stakeholders.

Membership

NYCI is first and foremost a membership organisation and it is committed to meeting the needs of its members. The Assembly 2007 was the setting for presenting the membership of NYCI with the new strategic plan 2008-2012. After extensive consultation the Strategic Plan was drafted in line with the membership's views. The membership had the opportunity to comment on and adopt the final document which is based on three themes of advocacy, practice development and organisational effectiveness. Using the framework of the Strategic Plan 2008–2012 a number of new structures were initiated to meet the needs of members.

The Policy and Advocacy Committee was established and is reported on in this report. The Specialist Organisation Network was established under the chairmanship of James O' Leary from the National Association for Travellers Centres. This new network allows specialist youth work organisations to come together to network, share information and begin to develop a stronger voice for specialist youth work within the youth sector and NYCI. The network will meet four times each year.

The Board of NYCI examined the recommendations of the independent report on membership participation at the Board residential meeting in June 2008. The recommendations will be integrated into work-plans for 2009.

Culture and Work Practices

2008 saw some changes in the staff team with the departure of a number of key staff and the recruitment of new staff. The staff team worked together in the first quarter of the year to develop work-plans for the year and reviewed those plans in November. NYCI continues to invest in the development of the staff team through internal and external training as well as through a system of professional supervision.

Improve management information systems

In the last quarter NYCI began a major review of its management information systems and with the help of an external consultancy has commenced a major database project that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our communications with all our key stakeholders. Following the completion of this project a comprehensive Customer Relationship Management System will be implemented in 2009 across all databases and websites.

Communications

The new strategic plan crystallised the primary role of communications as supporting our advocacy work and during this year the communication function moved to the advocacy team.

Corporate identity

We began in 2008 to develop a single corporate identity for all of the work of the NYCI and work is continuing in this area.



Left to right – Finola Gallagher, Member of NYCI's Board; Minister Barry Andrews T.D. & Mary Cunningham, Director of NYCI at the launch of the Council's leaflet on the Lisbon Treaty.



Financial Report 2007

2007 was another busy year for NYCI with activity increasing right across all our areas of work.

This activity is reflected in the finances of the Council with both income and expenditure rising over the previous year, income by some 11% to €2,437,700 and expenditure by 10% to €2,420,507. The most significant increases were seen in our programme areas of Youth Work and Youth Arts. New activities for the Council included the appointment of a part-time Webmaster, the development of an Intercultural Strategy, research on the impact of alcohol advertising on young people, our 40th birthday celebrations and also the development of a new Strategic Plan.

Overall, for 2007 we recorded a surplus of €17,193 compared to €9,549 in the previous year. This represents less than 1% of our total income and is an indication of the very tight financial constraints within which the NYCI operates, an issue the Council shares with the entire youth sector.

The small surplus is also indicative of sound financial management by the Council, balancing income and expenditure at a time of rapidly increasing activity is difficult but essential. Resources do remain an issue, but our management of those resources has been thoroughly professionally and efficiently handled. I would like to record my appreciation to our previous Treasurer David Owens, he was exceptional in the financial skills and expertise he generously brought to the work of the NYCI.

The funding environment will remain difficult going forward and I feel that the next few years will be challenging for us all. NYCI will need to continue to exercise excellent stewardship over its finances to ensure best value and effective use of its resources in supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Finally, the NYCI and its work could not continue without extensive funding from external sources. I would like to record the Board's thanks for the continued support of our funders, especially the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science for their particular contribution to resourcing the work of the National Youth Council. We look forward to working with them next year and into the future.

Órla Ryng
Honorary Treasurer

Income and expenditure account – Year ended 31st December 2007

	2007	2006
	€	€
Income – Continuing Operations	2,437,700	2,199,354
Expenditure – Continuing Operations	(2,420,507)	(2,189,805)
Surplus for Year	17,193	9,549
Accumulated Fund at 1 January	156,198	146,649
Accumulated Fund at 31 December	173,391	156,198

There are no other gains or losses other than those included in the income and expenditure account and thus a separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2007

	2007	2006
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	338,935	349,473
Current Assets		
Stocks	0	1,671
Debtors	20,516	146,296
Cash at bank and in hand	725,195	512,680
	745,711	660,647
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(713,039)	(647,174)
Net Current Assets	32,672	13,473
Total Assets less current liabilities	371,607	362,946
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(119,747)	(128,279)
Net Assets	251,860	234,667
Represented by:		
Accumulated Funds	173,391	156,198
Revaluation reserve	78,469	78,469
	251,860	234,667

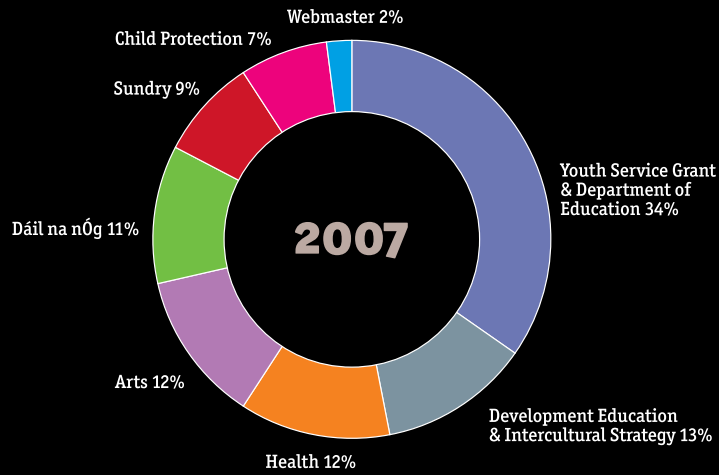
These financial statements were formally approved by the Board on the 6th November 2008.

These accounts have been extracted from the statutory financial statements of the National Youth Council of Ireland.

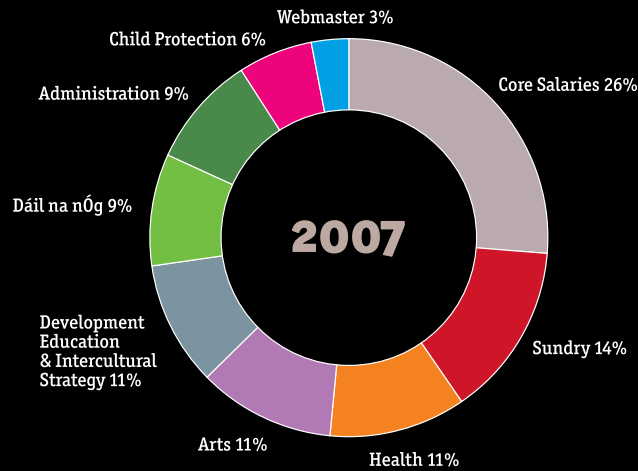
The auditors KPMG expressed an unqualified audit opinion on these accounts.

A copy of these accounts will be filed with the Registrar of Companies.

Income



Expenditure



Members

An Óige – The Irish Youth Hostel Association
BeLonG To
Boys Brigade
Catholic Guides of Ireland
Catholic Youth Care
Church of Ireland Youth Department
Club4U
Confederation of Peace Corps
DYCW – Methodist Church of Ireland
ECO-UNESCO
EIL Intercultural Learning
Exchange House
Feachtas
Foróige
Girls' Brigade Ireland
Girls' Friendly Society
HSE Community Games
Irish Congress of Trade Unions Youth Committee
Irish Girl Guides
Irish Red Cross Youth
Junior Chamber Ireland
Labour Youth
Macra na Feirme
National Association for Travellers Centres
National Association for Youth Drama
National Committee for Diocesan Youth Directors
National Forum for Local Voluntary Youth Councils
No Name Clubs
Ógra Chorcaí
Ógra Fianna Fáil
Ógra Shinn Féin
Ógras
Order of Malta Cadets
Pavee Point Travellers Centre
Peace Corps Localise
Presbyterian Youth and Children's Ministry
Scouting Ireland
Union of Secondary Students
Union of Students in Ireland
Voluntary Service International
Young Christian Workers Movement
Young Fine Gael
Young Irish Film Makers
Young Men's Christian Association
Youth Work Ireland

Affiliates

Amnesty International
Blakestown and Mountainview Youth Initiative
Enable Ireland
Glencree Youth Group
IntroArt
Irish Family Planning Association
Irish Wheelchair Association
Young Greens
Young Women's Christian Association
Youth 2000

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