



# There and Back Again

REPORT OF A

ZAMBIA / IRELAND EXCHANGE PROJECT



## Introduction

Values such as interdependence, justice, peace and human rights underpin good youth work. Exchange visits and follow-up linking with organisations and communities in developing countries help foster these values, particularly when placed in the context of a broader educational programme.

The National Youth Development Education Programme (NYDEP) is a partnership between the National Youth Council of Ireland and Irish Aid. NYDEP organised an exchange for youth workers in Ireland and Zambia in 2006, to share experiences of youth work in both countries and begin developing links. The exchange built on, and was supported by, work being carried out by 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World in Ireland and Zambia.

This report is aimed at youth workers, teachers and others working with young people who are interested in organising an exchange visit with a developing country and at policy makers in order to promote good practice in exchange programmes. The report outlines what happened during both legs of the exchange. It presents the significant outcomes for youth work in both Zambia and Ireland and outlines the key lessons learned from the exchange.

## Thinking behind the exchange programme

In planning the visits to Zambia and Ireland, NYDEP took account of the strategic needs for linking the youth work sectors in both countries, the needs and interests of individual youth organisations, the work of its development education partners in both countries, the priority areas of Irish Aid and the need to strike a balance between the work and social interaction. The visit to Ireland was timed to intersect with One World Week, which had a particular focus around health and HIV/AIDS in 2006. This is an issue in which Zambian youth organisations have developed a particular expertise.

### Our Objectives

- to share ideas and methodologies in youth work
- to link development issues more firmly into youth activities and programmes
- to share something of the local contexts of each others' work
- to begin to build an agenda for further developing the work together in the future

#### October 2006

- Five youth workers and one representative from the NYCI visit Zambia for 11 days
- Meetings and activities with some 11 organisations in Zambia – youth organisations, local community projects, development agencies and government structures
- Discussions on youth work, sport, HIV and AIDS, life in a compound (shanty town), women's rights, education policies, etc

#### November 2006

- Five youth workers from Zambia visit Ireland for 10 days
- Meetings and activities with 15 organisations in Ireland – youth organisations and projects, development education organisations, NGOs and government structures
- One World Week

### Who we met in Zambia

The Irish youth workers were based in the capital city of Lusaka, apart from a visit to Livingstone. Organisations and Projects visited included:

- Sport in Action - (their premises and their school project in the Chibolia Compound)
- Fountain of Hope Project for Street Children
- Lilanda Home Based Care
- Lilanda Compound National School
- The Scouting Association of Zambia Farm Project for Street Children
- Society for Family Health-Sex Education/HIV/AIDS awareness talk in a local third level college
- Facilitated session with young people from Arakan Barracks High School
- Toured government buildings and met staff from the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development
- Concern Worldwide in Zambia
- Irish Aid
- YMCA
- The Girl Guides Association of Zambia
- Youth Alive Zambia
- Operation Young Vote
- National Youth Development Council
- Plan Zambia

### Who we met in Ireland

The Zambian youth workers travelled around Ireland during One World Week visiting different youth and educational organisations and projects. These included:

- Ogra Chorcaí
- EIL Cork
- Swan Youth Project, Dublin 1
- Galway Youth Federation Westside
- Foroige Galway
- Lucan Youth Service – Ice-skating in Smithfield and teenage Battle of the Bands
- Scouting Ireland
- Ballyfermot Youth Service
- Irish Family Planning Association – Dance for Life
- Fishbowl Youth Club, Co Clare
- 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World
- Galway One World Centre
- Tour of Dail Eireann (Irish Parliament)
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Irish Aid
- UCC Centre for Sustainable Livelihood

## The social element 'How we let our hair down'

- Attend a lunch for Irish Missionaries in Zambia hosted by the Irish Ambassador
- Travelled to Livingstone – visited Victoria Falls, crossed into Zimbabwe, Zambezi river cruise, great evening dancing to traditional Zambian drums
- Hosted a 'Cultural Night', invited everyone from the organisations that we had met – traditional Irish dancing and music, along with Zambian dancing and music!
- 80:20 hosted a meeting including the five Zambian Youth Workers who would be travelling to Ireland
- Visited Kabwata Cultural Village
- Experienced the nightlife in Clare, Galway and Dublin city
- Shopped on O'Connell, Henry and Grafton Street in Dublin city centre
- Attended the annual NYCI conference dinner
- Experienced a traditional Irish family dinner in Dublin!
- Visited the Cliffs of Moher, the Burren and the beach



## Statistics

	IRELAND	ZAMBIA
<b>Capital</b>	Dublin	Lusaka
<b>Language</b>	English, Irish	English, Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvala, Nyanja, Tonga and 70 others!
<b>Independence</b>	December 1921 (from UK)	October 1964 (from UK)
<b>Provinces</b>	26 counties	9 provinces
<b>Human Development Index</b>	4th	165 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Life expectancy at birth</b>	77.7	37.4
<b>Students enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary level of education</b>	99	54
<b>GDP per capita</b>	\$38,827	\$943
<b>Population</b>	4,080,000	11,479,000
<b>% HIV Prevalence (15-49)</b>	0.2	17
<b>Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)</b>	6	730
<b>% People living on less than \$1 per day</b>	-	75.8
<b>Doctors per 100,000</b>	279	12
<b>% Seats in parliament held by women</b>	14.2	12.7
<b>Refugees by country of asylum (thousands)</b>	7	156
<b>Telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people)</b>	496	8
<b>Cellular Subscribers (per 1,000 people)</b>	929	26



## Some personal comments and memories

→ 'As a young person volunteering for a long period of time in development education, even though I loved doing it, sometimes I couldn't really understand it. Since I have come back, my passion has grown and I want to learn more and more'

'Seeing a country which has a lot of difficulties with health and development, etc but which has so much faith and belief that I could only ever dream about. Being there was so up lifting'

→ 'The exchange expanded my horizons; it enabled me to experience a completely different country, culture and environment. It gave me an insight into a way of life and existence completely alien to me. I had the opportunity to leave my day to day life, people that I know, problems that I have, things that I enjoy doing, and instead witnessed and to a small degree experienced how people in Zambia live, what their day to day problems are, what they enjoy doing etc. I got to know and spend time with people who come from a very different background to me...'

→ 'My experience in Ireland has taught me to understand, believe and appreciate diversity and its power once united'

→ 'A lot of new ideas that be implemented in Zambia were developed through visiting different youth organisations and actively getting involved in some of their activities. Equally, our skills and capacities to implement certain activities were enhanced'

→ 'Before arriving in Ireland, the only knowledge I had of the country was that which I acquired from the five Irish youth who came to Zambia, prior to that was from a friend. To this effect, I deliberately decided to travel with an open mind so that I could later on pass my own personal judgment based on first hand experience than that from a third party'

→ 'It was only when the five Irish youth representatives came to Zambia and spent time here to learn about us did I start believing the reality of it being reciprocated'

→ 'HIV and AIDS are not being addressed sufficiently. This has consequently contributed to the high levels of stigma, discrimination, myths and misconceptions surrounding the issue'

→ 'There was fairly good interaction which led to creating links with other groups and friends. Unfortunately this was not very solid as time was short. Therefore, there has hardly been continuity'

→ 'The energy and enthusiasm was re-energizing, though the only sad part was that we could not get into a deep discussion on HIV and AIDS due to the short time we had. I noticed that the interest to learn and understand was there in a good number of youth but we couldn't provide adequate information'





→ 'The reciprocity of the visit added value for the young people I work with in Ireland ... when I came back from Zambia I had workshops with them to tell them everything I had learnt myself ..., however, this information was much more tangible and real once they met the Zambian youth workers ... the interpersonal interaction not only adds value in terms of exchange of information but also helps to demystify people from developing countries'

→ 'There needs to be equal participation and responsibility for each country for these projects to be fully beneficial, and though many of the groups understood that we were not there as donors but to establish links, there were a few that did not. This must be fully outlined to the groups so that the participants can be comfortable working with each other and not feel like more is expected from one side ...'

→ 'Learning about methodologies used in Zambia in the areas of sexual health education, especially the integration of sexual health education into games ...'

→ 'I see the reciprocal phase to be very important as people must view it as a project with equal opportunity on either side and especially from a P.R. point of view to have them return gives a different perspective and demonstrates the equality. We are then not viewed as volunteers or donors but as groups working together putting an equal effort in to improve our work both in Ireland and Zambia'

→ 'Also a major hurdle for groups to overcome is with the fact that Zambia is not a place that is 'on the map' for them to have as a destination for exchanges. So getting grants and funding for programmes and exchanges would be very difficult. Especially when taking into consideration the reciprocal element thus you would need to find funding for both phases as the Zambian groups it would be nearly impossible for them to get funding for themselves'

→ 'The reciprocity of the visit added value for the young people I work with in Ireland ... when I came back from Zambia I had workshops with them to tell them everything I had learnt myself ..., however, this information was much more tangible and real once they met the Zambian youth workers ... the interpersonal interaction not only adds value in terms of exchange of information but also helps to demystify people from developing countries'

→ 'I also learned to be more confident working with and speaking in front of groups. Though I've given a lot of presentations and workshops I've always had a problem with stage fright and get very nervous in front of groups. However while in Zambia we had to speak to many different groups and my confidence has been boosted and my ability to work with groups I don't know has drastically strengthened ...'

→ 'I find that very often in Ireland the warm up games etc. that you come across are the same and even when travelling inside Europe they are all very similar (though you do pick up a new one every now and again). In Zambia however I managed to pick up a number of new games and though they have some things in common with games that would be familiar to us I had never seen them used in youth work before ...'

→ 'Even though we are two different countries with different situations, we are not very different. We both have big youth populations and they all have the same basic needs and I think the young people I work need to realise that ...'

## Exchange Visit Outcomes

- Opportunity to see examples of youth work in a developing country and to share educational material and ways of working
- Make direct links to specific organisations and individuals within those organisations which could lead to sustainable links between youth work in Ireland and Zambia
- Increase the commitment of youth organisations to development education
- Youth organisations see exchanges within the broader context of development
- The educational dimension of exchanges is promoted. The emphasis should be on learning from other cultures and exploring development issues. In the longer term, this will contribute to the development of participants and their peers, organisations and communities
- The commitment to reciprocity promotes sustainability and ensures that learning from the exchange spreads beyond the individuals or organisations that travel
- It affects the way people see continents like Africa, countries like Zambia and individuals from those countries
- Having an exchange rather than a study visit, and having reciprocity within the exchange, has increased our credibility with the organisations we met and want to make links with. One-way study visits to developing countries may place unsustainable burdens on local organisations and communities without offering anything in return

## Sample Game

Set up a pile of sand with a stick standing up in the centre. Tell the participants to slowly take away a small section of sand trying not to knock the stick. Get them to continue doing this until eventually the stick does fall over. Explain to them that the stick represents someone who needs a support system, for example someone with HIV; the sand represents that very system. Ask them to take notice that every time some of that support is removed the 'person' becomes weaker. Finally when all support is removed the person falls. Then during a discussion bring up the points that we must not only take support but give it too so that no one is left out and everyone gets some help and has more of a chance of not falling.

## → Comments

- had the opportunity to meet lots of organisations but not to build relationships
- follow-up should be more specific
- cost so far is a drop in the ocean, will require a big investment to have an impact
- needs honest negotiation
- huge value in Zambians coming back
- young people in Galway learned a lot from Maria's presentation on her return, but meeting the Zambians in person had the biggest impact
- altered young people's impressions (about Zambia, Africa, black people)
- opportunity to see poverty first hand but has changed the way we see poverty
- important for getting development education on the agenda of our organisations



### The photos in this resource show:

- 📷 Volunteers from Lilanda Home-Based Care in Lusaka;
- 📷 Young people from Galway Youth Federation Westside with Zambian Youth Workers;
- 📷 Students at the Chibolia Compound school in Lusaka; Exchange participants in Livingstone;
- 📷 Staff and volunteers from Youth Alive Zambia;
- 📷 Participants in One World Week activities in Cork;
- 📷 Staff and volunteers from Youth Alive in Lusaka;
- 📷 Students from Arakan Barracks High School;
- 📷 Exchange participants at the Girl Guides Association of Zambia;
- 📷 Children participating in games and activities at Chibolia compound;
- 📷 Exchange participant Rose Zulu in Galway.

# Key lessons learned... to date!

Following both visits, outcomes were reviewed separately and together. The lessons identified below come from both Zambia and Ireland participants.

- **Preparation is crucial to success** – being clear about why the visits are taking place, what each ‘side’ wants to get out of them, consider the size of the group travelling, the length of the visit and what the activities will deliver is crucial. The groups travelling should meet together beforehand – at least a couple of times!
- **Build in reciprocity from the outset** - having a genuine two way exchange increases the potential for learning and the longer-term impact of the exchange
- **Activities to be delivered ‘in country’ need to be prepared in advance** – organisations receiving visitors need to be prepared, agendas negotiated and outcomes discussed – activities need to be thought through. A clear, yet flexible agenda is important
- **Everyone does not need to follow the same agenda ‘in country’** - breaking into different groups would be helpful and then coming back to share outcomes and experiences within the full group would maximise capacity and results
- **Ensure interaction with young people directly** – engaging directly, rather than simply via leaders, is important in getting a real feel for the possibilities
- **Being realistic about how much can be achieved** – having (or creating) expectations that cannot be achieved, especially those around follow through agendas, will damage the agenda and set groups up for failure
- **Follow up is fundamental** – everyone who participates is responsible for ensuring that the minimum follow through is achieved – thank you letters, reports, email contact, workshops in your own youth setting, feedback to national structures, etc
- **The value of the social agenda** – it’s obvious, but it can easily be left to chance
- **Sustainability** - one of the key results of the exchange programme should be networked groups, we need to think more on the sustainability aspect. Otherwise, we might just be investing in individuals that end up doing little or nothing with their experience
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – we need to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to effectively measure the results that exchange programmes can yield, we don’t think reports alone are effective enough
- **Also** - the importance of not being narrow-minded, the effectiveness of exploring group dynamics and individual strengths, amalgamating ideas and experiences is the best way of developing effective practices



# List of participants

- Tara Madden - Fishbowl Youth Group Clare Youth Service (Youth Work Ireland)
- Dick O'Donovan - Foróige Galway
- Jill Murray - Lucan Youth Service (Catholic Youth Care)
- Joanne Keohane - Ógra Chorcaí
- Maria José Torres - Galway Youth Federation Westside (Youth Work Ireland)
- Johnny Sheehan - NYCI
- Benjamin Mwape – Student Partnerships Worldwide (SPW)
- Annie Kalao – (SPW)
- Liyani Mathews Kaputo – Women for Change
- Jonas Silupumbwe – Ex-Volunteers Network (SPW)
- Rose Zulu – Savannah Intercultural Institute/Youth Alive Zambia

## Thank You

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- 80:20 Ireland and Zambia - Marjorie Laville-Pain, Toni Pyke & Royd Mundongo
- National Youth Development Council of Zambia
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development
- Irish Aid
- The Embassy of Ireland in Lusaka and in particular, Ambassador Bill Nolan
- Youth organisation volunteers, staff and young people in Ireland and in Zambia for welcoming and hosting exchange participants
- Development agencies in Zambia whom we met
- The youth workers and young people who participated in the exchange between Ireland and Zambia



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