

YOUTH WORK CHANGES LIVES



NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022



NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND

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

www.youth.ie

Edited by: Daniel Meister & Elaine Lowry

Designed by: Fuse

Photography: Julien Behal, Marc O'Sullivan, Saoirse Reynolds, Tommy Clancy.

First published in 2018 by:

© National Youth Council of Ireland 2018.

All rights reserved.

ISBN no: 978-1-900210-52-2



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| FOREWORD | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION TO PLAN | 3 |
| STRATEGY 2022 AT A GLANCE | 6 |
| SUMMARY OF KEY POLICY DRIVERS | 10 |
| NYCI STATEMENT OF YOUTH WORK PRACTICE | 12 |
| MAKING IT HAPPEN: OUTCOMES, INDICATORS AND ACTIONS | 14 |
| NYCI the Representative Body: Supporting its Members | 16 |
| Supporting Quality Practice Development | 18 |
| Sustainable, Multi-Annual Investment in Youth Work | 20 |
| Role and Impact of Youth Work | 22 |
| Influence and Win Policy Change | 24 |
| Organisational Effectiveness | 26 |

.....



ROCK THE
BOAT, GET OUT
AND VOTE

WE
VOTING

**" THE HISTORY OF THIS ORGANISATION
IS ONE OF DEEPLY CARING, INTENSELY
AMBITIOUS ACTIVISM BY AND FOR THE
YOUNG PEOPLE OF IRELAND. "**

Launch of young voter registration drive in conjunction with USI. Credit: Conor McCabe Photography

FOREWORD

Looking back over the history of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), I am always struck by two major emotions: a sense of profound appreciation for those who built up the NYCI into what it is today, and a feeling of trepidation at the scale of the challenge we face in living up to their proud example.

The history of this organisation is one of deeply caring, intensely ambitious activism by and for the young people of Ireland. Our story is created by a long chain of impressive people and member organisations, stretching right back to 1967 and where it all began. Those given temporary custodianship of that legacy are only too aware of the proud inheritance we have been entrusted with.

The milestone of our 50th anniversary is a moment in which the weight of that inheritance is especially clear. In thinking of the challenges faced and surmounted by so many dedicated NYCI activists in our first half-century, it invites the question: how will the view back look from our centenary? How will the face of youth work have adapted and evolved over the years that now lie ahead?

I'm optimistic that the view will be positive; and that this Strategic Plan will mark a significant step in renewing our strengths as a representative and member-led organisation. My hope is that the next few years will see the NYCI decisively conquer the cyclical challenge of securing appropriate funding and recognition for youth work, and that our Youth Work Changes Lives campaign will be the catalyst for a new and better foundation for the sector.

I also hope that we will have done our forerunners proud in another vital area of our work: that of amplifying and mobilising the collective voice of young people, whether in public policy-making or at the ballot box. Today's Ireland is the youngest country in Western Europe, with a youth population increasingly politicised as

it comes to terms with its own economic and social inheritance. In the past, NYCI has been instrumental in ensuring political leaders actively courted and heeded that vote; today, it is our task to serve as that link once again. By working to ensure the real concerns of young people are engaged with and acted upon, we can once again see that our country comes to look on itself with fresh eyes.

Now, as we move into an exciting new strategic phase of our history, I want to say a word of special thanks to those most involved in fashioning this new vision for the coming years: to Mary Cunningham and James Doorley for their tireless dedication; to the board and staff of NYCI for their vital engagement; to the members, stakeholders and funders for their trust and support; and to Helen Newman, who has facilitated this process with consummate professionalism and indispensable skill.

Working together towards the goals outlined in these pages, I am absolutely confident that we will continue to draw on the very best traditions of our history. In doing so, I believe, we can make the second fifty years of the NYCI every bit as worthy of a proud legacy as the first.



Ian Power
President
National Youth Council of Ireland



1,400
people
employed



work with
40,000+
volunteers

.....



to support over
382,000
young people



INTRODUCTION TO PLAN

The National Youth Council of Ireland passionately believes in an Ireland where every young person in every community across the country is empowered through excellent youth work to realise their potential and actively participate in an inclusive society.

In 2018 fresh and innovative approaches to supporting and developing the youth work sector are needed as organisations embrace a significant reform agenda, coupled with increasing legislative and policy compliance requirements, along with increasing needs and demands on services - and all of this against a backdrop of considerable financial pressures.

The voluntary youth work sector in Ireland is large and dynamic, comprising more than 40 national organisations who in turn oversee a much larger number of local community-based projects, services and clubs that deliver services to young people on the ground. There also are many regional youth work organisations and possibly 100s of independent providers of youth work services to young people. The delivery of youth work in Ireland is unique in that volunteering is such a critical component in the delivery of the work and voluntary youth work organisations are the sole providers of youth work services. The sector employs more than 1,400 people and benefits from the voluntary contribution of more than 40,000 people.

The sector is extremely diverse – from small local youth clubs to large national organisations. In the middle is a vast array of small and medium-sized organisations/groups that are specialist in

nature. The specialisms are wide ranging from environment and youth drama to Irish language, faith based and those organisations working with particular equality and minority groups of young people. The unifying tie that binds all of these organisations together is that they exist to support young people to be the very best they can be.

The National Youth Council of Ireland's strategic plan expresses our determination to represent and strengthen the voluntary youth sector. It recognises that while youth work is an educational and developmental process contributing positively to the development of young people, it is also enjoyable, fulfilling and fun! Youth work adds value to the lives of all young people by helping them build lasting skills and attributes; we know that those who take part have more opportunities and options for the future.

Youth work can particularly affect the lives of those young people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or are most challenged by school. It can help build confidence, provide role models, open up new experiences and provide a sense of belonging.

Youth work is also about adults and young people working together building community spirit and playing an active role in the development of their communities whilst tackling real social issues, combating disadvantage, encouraging active citizenship, enhancing democratic life and of course it is value for money! An indecon report highlighted that every €1 invested in youth work benefitted the state to the tune of €2.20 in the long run.

NYCI has remained responsive to the sector, acting to tackle emerging issues, developing expertise and ensuring credibility and integrity. Over the lifetime of NYCI's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 we delivered on a number of key achievements and initiatives. Though too many to detail here, some highlights include:

- The launch of 'Youth Work Changes Lives' a new campaign to highlight the positive contribution of youth work to young people, local communities and Irish society as a whole.

- The establishment of Ireland's first-ever UN Youth Delegate programme.

- Over 2,390 media mentions and interviews, providing a credible, authoritative voice for the youth work sector and helping to keep youth issues to the fore.

- The roll-out of major campaigns to encourage young people to make their voices heard in the Children's Referendum, European Parliament elections and Marriage Equality referendum.

- Evidence based advocacy and research and informed practice, working collaboratively internally and externally.

- The development of best practice in youth health, youth arts, development education, child protection, STEM, and equality and interculturalism supported through continued professional development, training, resource development, capacity building, information and advice.

Ireland and the world have changed since the publication of our last plan in 2012. We are in an era of uncertainty but also a moment of real opportunity. There has been significant turbulence and change at a global level. A more self-centred, nationalistic, simplistic narrative has found voice, audience and agency. Decisions like Brexit and, in Ireland, the result of the 2016 General Election produced a shift indicating disillusionment with the old ways of organising society and distributing resources. For our sector, there are positives in this – strong signals that people want change. The outcome of the marriage equality referendum highlights that Irish people understand and gravitate towards the benefits of equality and caring for others like never before.

This phenomenon has been strengthening against a backdrop of increasing inequality and poverty in Ireland and the resultant increased demands for the services provided by many of NYCI's member organisations. However, following the financial crisis, funding cuts have led to a dramatic reduction in funding to the youth work sector. This has meant that some services and programmes have been reduced, suspended or cut entirely. Taken together, these factors – less funding and increased demands for services – create huge pressures for everyone working in the youth work sector and present serious challenges for organisations.

We need to respond to those challenges by communicating a compelling message about the value of youth work that inspires policy makers and funders to see the real value of the work. We need to work together, sharing, supporting and acting in solidarity to make the case for a progressive approach to youth work in Ireland. However, other challenges exist. The regulatory and legal changes have increased the need for transparent governance in all that we do alongside the need to provide the best value for money and greatest impact for those who invest in our work, leading the youth work sector and others in the community and voluntary sector to feel overwhelmed by the 'burden of compliance'.

.....

We believe that this Strategic Plan primarily supports the delivery of the 5 National Outcomes with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures National Policy Framework whilst also recognising that the work of NYCI and our members contributes directly or indirectly to a wide range of other national strategies.

NYCI will continue to represent those who work directly with young people using youth work practices and work with others with an interest in the wellbeing and development of young people. We will ensure our membership is diverse and inclusive.

So how can we better support our member organisations? What services and supports do they need? What role does NYCI have in supporting our members to continue to work with openness, creativity, ambition, bravery and passion to deliver the highest quality work that makes a real impact on the lives of the young people of Ireland?

Our members understand that the National Youth Council of Ireland has a key role in solidarity with our members, helping them address those challenges. Our strategic plan aims to provide answers to these questions and will provide the basis for our implementation plans up to 2022.

As an organisation we look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. We look forward to providing courageous leadership in galvanizing and representing the youth work sector, and to working in partnership with our members, government departments and agencies and with the wider community and voluntary sector to ensure better quality outcomes for young people and to make the ambition in this plan a reality.



Mary Cunningham
Director
National Youth Council of Ireland

VISION

An Ireland where young people in every community are empowered through excellent youth work to realise their potential and actively participate in an inclusive society.

ROLE

NYCI is a membership organisation that represents the shared interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses our collective expertise to act on issues that impact on young people.

We do this by:

- Representing the shared interests of voluntary youth organisations.
- Building solidarity among our members.
- Advocating on issues that impact on the lives of young people.
- Promoting the development of evidence informed high quality specialist youth work practice.
- Capacity building and professional development.

MISSION

To represent the collective voice of the youth work sector and build capacity, leadership and influence to deliver better outcomes for young people.

VALUES

We believe that all young people have a right to develop a sense of belonging and empowerment in a fair and just society. We are concerned for young people disconnected from the mainstream.

We are an organisation that promotes learning, innovation and forward thinking.

We believe that a strong vibrant voluntary youth sector has a critical role to play in engaging all young people.

We believe that better outcomes are achieved when young people are involved in making decisions that affect them.

We value volunteering and the vital role it plays in a healthy vibrant community.

We are an organisation that consults and represents our members with integrity.

We value the diversity of the voluntary youth sector and believe that is a key strength.

OUTCOMES

1 NYCI is a professionally run, responsive, representative organisation supporting its members to implement policies and best practices for working with young people.

2 Best practice in youth work is mainstreamed, standardised and sustained in our member organisations.

3 Ireland's ambition for its young people is supported by sustainable, multi-annual investment in youth work.

4 The positive role and impact of youth work in achieving national outcomes and local priorities is reflected in policy and acknowledged by government.

5 The National and European Policy agenda responds to and addresses the needs of young people.

6 NYCI is a professionally run membership organisation with the capacity and resources to deliver on Strategy 2022.

4 THEMES



Participants at NYCI Youth Arts Summer School. Credit: Saoirse Reynolds.

FOUR THEMES THAT UNDERPIN THE PLAN

REPRESENTING

We will be a strong, coherent uniting voice for our member organisations of all sizes.

1

We will work to ensure that the impact of the voluntary youth sector is properly understood and valued by stakeholders and decision makers; that the legislative, policy and operational environment is supportive of youth work and young people; and that the youth sector and young people are represented in settings where decisions are made.

SUPPORTING QUALITY PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

2

We will actively support community, voluntary and not for profit youth organisations to be as effective as possible in their work to deliver positive, high-quality change for young people. We will emphasise the importance of strong leadership, good practice, transparency and accountability in organisations and in demonstrating the real impact of their work.

PROMOTING YOUTH FRIENDLY POLICY

3

We will ensure advocacy is one of NYCI's most essential and important tools enabling us to be an informed voice on issues that impact on young people and the youth sector. We will promote young people's participation in all aspects of their lives, and in particular the principle of involving young people in public decision processes that affect their daily lives.

BEING A VIBRANT MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION

4

We will ensure that NYCI is well run, responsive and effective. Our members are the lifeblood of NYCI. We are committed to ensuring that we engage our members in all aspects of our work. We will strive to remain relevant to our members' needs and that we address those needs thoroughly, effectively and in a timely manner. We will ensure that our members' voice is strong in shaping not just the work we do but how we do our work.



SUMMARY OF KEY POLICY DRIVERS*

| | | |
|--|-------|---|
| | 2030 | ANNUAL GOVERNMENT BUDGETARY CYCLE |
| SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD: THE 2030 AGENDA FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD | | ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS |
| NATIONAL DIGITAL STRATEGY | | REBUILDING IRELAND: ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS |
| COMMISSIONING OF HUMAN, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES | 2018+ | |
| NATIONAL LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY | | UNITED KINGDOM EXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION (BREXIT) |
| NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN – GET IRELAND ACTIVE | | |
| | 2017 | |
| CHILDREN FIRST: NATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN 2017 | | CREATING EFFECTIVE SAFETY, TUSLA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY STRATEGY 2017-2022 |
| IRISH AID DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION STRATEGY 2017-2023 | | NATIONAL TRAVELLER AND ROMA INCLUSION STRATEGY 2017-2021 |
| NATIONAL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE REPORT 2017 | | WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE 2017 |
| | 2016 | |
| THE MIGRANT INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2016: A BLUE PRINT FOR THE FUTURE | | PATHWAYS TO WORK, 2016-2020 |
| PUBLIC HEALTH (ALCOHOL) BILL 2016 | | PROGRAMME FOR A PARTNERSHIP GOVERNMENT 2016 |
| THE ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION, 2016-2020 | | MAKING GREAT ART WORK – ARTS COUNCIL'S 10 YEAR STRATEGY 2016-2025 |
| | 2015 | |
| BETTER OUTCOMES BRIGHTER FUTURES, THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, 2015-2020 | | NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY 2015-2025 |
| NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION, 2015-2017 | | NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY, 2015-2020 |
| NATIONAL SEXUAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2015-2020 | | NATIONAL STRATEGY ON CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING 2015-2020 |
| | 2014 | |
| | | VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEW OF YOUTH PROGRAMMES 2014 |
| | 2013 | |
| | | HEALTHY IRELAND, 2013-2025, A FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING |
| | 2010 | |
| EU YOUTH STRATEGY, 2010-2018 (AND SUCCESSOR STRATEGY) | | NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS FOR YOUTH WORK 2010 |
| | 2009 | |
| | | CHARITY ACT 2009 |
| | 2001 | |
| YOUTH WORK ACT 2001 | | |

* It is not within the scope of this document to capture every policy or piece of legislation that will impact on our work, particularly given that new policy drivers will emerge over the lifetime of this strategy. Thus this list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to provide an overview of the policy environment within which the strategy will be executed.



GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE
A VOICE



Participants at 'We're Here, Hear Us Now' consultation event. Credit: Tommy Clancy.

NYCI STATEMENT OF YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

PURPOSE OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work has a number of purposes including:

- Building on young people's capacity to consider risks and consequences in order to make informed choices and take responsibility. Developing an ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- Building self-esteem and confidence.
- Enhancing young people as active citizens.
- Giving young people a voice in decisions that affect their lives.
- Giving young people the opportunity to talk and be listened to.
- Helping develop social awareness and a sense of social solidarity.
- Offering worthwhile and challenging experiences.
- Providing learning opportunities to gain knowledge and develop new skills.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

The active and critical participation of young people is essential. The methods adopted along with the programmes and activities engaged in are very diverse including:

- Arts and culture including drama and the Irish language.
- Citizenship, social action, youth participation, rights and equality issues, the environment, development education and politics.
- Critical analysis, creative and reflective thinking.
- Information technology.
- Intercultural and international awareness activities and exchanges.
- Life skills including leadership, teamwork, planning and decision making, communication, problem solving, initiative and responsibility.
- Recreation, sport and indoor/outdoor leisure pursuits.
- Welfare and wellbeing such as health promotion, relationships and sexuality, stress management, first aid, drugs, alcohol and smoking.

VALUES OF YOUTH WORK

The values of youth work match the purpose of education and are fundamental to the process; raising confidence of individuals, their contribution to society and their value as citizens. These values include:

- Young people make the choice to be involved.
- The work starts where young people are at.
- Promotes equality and inclusion.
- Facilitates and empowers the voice of young people.
- Involves young people in decision making.
- Partners with young people, communities and other agencies.
- Respects all young people.





BENEFITS OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work adds value to the lives of all young people by helping them develop lasting skills and attributes. It can particularly affect the lives of those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or are most challenged by school. It can help build confidence, provide role models, open up new experiences and provide a sense of belonging.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE Youth work is educational, enjoyable, fulfilling and fun. Those who take part have more opportunities and options for the future.

FOR COMMUNITIES Youth work is about adults and young people working together building community spirit and playing an active role in the development of their communities.

FOR SOCIETY Youth work tackles real social issues, combats disadvantage, enhances democratic life and is huge value for money!

DEFINITIVE FEATURES OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work is about voluntary participation.

Young people are involved in youth work as they choose to be. It enables them to do worthwhile enjoyable things in their free time in the company of friends and interested, supportive adults both paid and voluntary.

Youth work starts where 'young people are at'.

Youth work is flexible and versatile in its approach.

It embraces a young person's interests and ambitions and helps them to develop and expand their horizons.

Youth work is about partnership.

In youth work the young people are active partners in making decisions, planning programmes and setting priorities. The youth work relationship is based on dialogue between young people and adults.

CONCLUSION

Youth work is an empowering process that tips the balance in young people's favour.

It provides one of the few settings where young people have the power to make decisions, follow them through and take responsibility for the consequences in a safe and supportive environment.





MAKING IT HAPPEN
OUTCOMES, KEY ACTIONS & INDICATORS

OUTCOMES

1

NYCI THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY: SUPPORTING ITS MEMBERS

NYCI is a professionally run, responsive, representative organisation supporting its members to implement policies and best practices for working with young people.

2

SUPPORTING QUALITY PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

Best practice in youth work is mainstreamed, standardised and sustained in our member organisations.

3

SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-ANNUAL INVESTMENT IN YOUTH WORK

Ireland's ambition for its young people is supported by sustainable, multi-annual investment in youth work.

4

ROLE AND IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK

The positive role and impact of youth work in achieving national outcomes and local priorities is reflected in policy and acknowledged by Government.

5

INFLUENCE AND WIN POLICY CHANGE

The National and European Policy agenda responds to and addresses the needs of young people.

6

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NYCI is a professionally run membership organisation with the capacity and resources to deliver on Strategy 2022.

OUTCOME

NYCI THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY: SUPPORTING ITS MEMBERS

NYCI is a professionally run, responsive, representative organisation supporting its members to implement policies and best practices for working with young people.

INDICATORS

- NYCI has a strong sense of solidarity amongst its members.
- NYCI is trusted by its members.
- NYCI speaks with a strong collective voice.
- NYCI has a diverse, actively engaged and growing membership.
- NYCI is recognised and respected as the strong, inclusive and influential voice for the Youth Sector in Ireland.
- Support the awareness and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals in partnership with our members to strengthen their role in influencing Ireland's responsibilities as a signatory.
- NYCI is represented and facilitates its member organisations and young people to be represented at a National, European and global level.
- Member organisations are supported to engage in international youth work and the international sharing of best practice for working with young people.
- Member Organisations implement inclusion strategies (e.g. LGBTI+ Youth strategy; Migrant Integration Strategy) at policy and practice level.
- Member organisations implement Public Sector Duty on equality and Human Rights.
- A significant proportion of NYCI's members use Digital Youth Work including STEM as part of their youth work methodologies.
- NYCI member organisations implement best practice in child safeguarding and protection.

ACTIONS

- 1 Develop and implement a comprehensive membership engagement strategy.
- 2 Increase our regional presence and activities to support members.
- 3 Establish networks of interest and peer to peer engagement opportunities for members.



ACTIONS

- 4 Articulate and communicate the impact of the work of our members.
- 5 Map the youth sector, identify who is and is not in membership, and grow our membership on this basis.
- 6 Provide member only services and resources.
- 7 Ensure through our membership of the Coalition 2030, that in Ireland's reporting on its implementation of the Global Goals/Sustainable Development Goals, the contribution of our members and the youth sector is recognised.
- 8 Participate in a formal process of consultation with the youth sector about Ireland's responsibilities under the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 9 Inform and update members about SDGs and how they relate to their work.
- 10 Demonstrate the benefits of all of our members pooling information, ideas and learnings so as to achieve the SDGs in Ireland in terms of how we all do our work.
- 11 Support member organisations' commitment to developing governance and leadership, management and operations including GDPR, through continuous development and training.
- 12 Support the development of CEO and Chairs of Boards.
- 13 Engage our membership to develop robust evidence to support consultation responses to key national policies ensuring that the voice of young people is central.
- 14 Conduct annual performance surveys with member organisations.
- 15 Support member organisations to actively participate in implementing policy initiatives that focus on equality and inclusion of minority and marginalised young people.
- 16 Ensure, in collaboration with IHREC, that member organisations are aware of how they can promote equality, interculturalism and human rights through the Public Sector Duty.
- 17 Generate a body of evidence around the support needs of youth workers and organisations in relation to Digital Youth Work and STEM in Youth work.
- 18 Provide a support to youth organisations in the area of digital youth work, through a suite of training in digital youth work, evolving from the Stem in Youth Work, Maker Project and information on digital youth work policy and practice.
- 19 Provide support, information and training to our members to ensure that young people are safe and protected from harm.
- 20 Provide support, information and training to our members to ensure that youth organisations are compliant with all relevant child protection policy and legislation.

SUPPORTING QUALITY PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

Best practice in youth work is mainstreamed, standardised and sustained in our member organisations.

INDICATORS

- NYCI is responsive, proactive and innovative in supporting its members to deliver best practice in youth work.
- There is an increase in the level of knowledge, skills and competence for those engaging in NYCI Programmes.
- NYCI Member Organisations are committed to continuous improvement.
- All NYCI Programmes are evidenced informed.
- Increase the members participation in NYCI programmes and services.
- The Sustainable Development Goals are evident in members youth work practice.
- Youth organisations and young people engage in international sharing of best practice.
- Member organisations are aware of benefits and opportunities to introduce and develop an international dimension of youth work and international funding opportunities.
- Resources are developed and disseminated by NYCI and used widely within the sector.
- Gaps in youth work opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees are identified.
- Facilitate opportunities for youth organisations to share international best practice through hosting a meeting of National Youth Councils from Europe to discuss youth policy and hosting an exchange of youth organisations on Digital Youth Work.
- Facilitate the training of member organisations and the young people they work with to engage in international training in the area of youth work.
- Partner with the European Youth Forum for the Yo!Fest at the European Youth Event and give workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals.

ACTIONS

- 1 Provide a national comprehensive and affordable training, support and information service to our member organisations and the broader Youth Sector informed by national and international best practice.
- 2 Review the 'fit' of our training offerings with the requirements of the Reform Agenda and adapt and develop our offerings as appropriate.
- 3 Develop communities of learning and support peer learning and peer collaboration across the Sector to encourage innovation.
- 4 In partnership with DCYA, surface and share the learning and best practice from the NQSF process.
- 5 Identify, communicate and promote models of best practice in youth work with a particular focus on young people centred approaches.
- 6 Provide our members with a comprehensive suite of know-how information that focus on advice, tips and practical suggestions to support the measurement of impact and support the improvement of organisational performance in this area to meet the requirement for improved impact reporting.
- 7 Promote high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence in youth work and explore the registration of youth work professionals.
- 8 Provide our member organisations with information and support on the Erasmus+ funding programme, working together with Leargas the national agency for the Erasmus+ programme.
- 9 Identify, communicate and promote international opportunities for member organisations and the young people they work with through the European institutions, the European Youth Forum, the UN, and Leargas, the national agency for the Erasmus+ funding programme.
- 10 Member organisations engage in the NYCI International Advisory Committee.
- 11 Develop resources that are evidence informed and based on the needs of the sector.
- 12 Undertake research on youth work opportunities that are available for asylum seekers and refugees and identify gaps in provision.

OUTCOME

SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-ANNUAL INVESTMENT IN YOUTH WORK

Ireland's ambition for its young people is supported by sustainable, multi-annual investment in youth work.

INDICATORS

- Political parties recognise the value of and impact of youth work and are committed to multi-annual investment in it.
- Youth work is a recognised contributor to young people's development.
- The policy and funding environments are more supportive of youth organisations delivering quality youth work programmes to a growing youth population.
- There is a year on year increase in investment in youth work by DCYA, HSE and TUSLA, Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Justice etc. in line with the growing youth population and the findings of research on what is necessary and sufficient investment in youth work for quality outcomes for young people.
- Funding streams are available for Youth Work focused at prevention and early intervention.
- The membership of NYCI has increased its capacity to access diverse funding sources for youth work
- The quality of funding applications submitted by members has improved and is evidenced in an increased success rate.
- NYCI is consulted, invited to contribute to and influences high level strategy planning with key Government and state agencies.
- The case for a sufficient workforce to match young people's needs and aspirations supported by labour market intelligence, is made to funders, employers and other stakeholders.

ACTIONS

- 1 With our members, develop a collective vision for youth work in Ireland and of what sustained investment in youth work, including the provision of a sufficient workforce looks like.
- 2 Develop a solid platform of what is required for sustainable and proportionate funding for youth work.
- 3 Publish our vision for and stimulate thinking about the prevention and early intervention role of youth work.
- 4 Undertake and publish research to present the facts in relation to the nature, scale, impact and significance of urban and rural youth work in Ireland.
- 5 Develop and implement an engagement strategy for influencing key people in the statutory sector, political system, media and the public. (e.g. Showcase).
- 6 Bring funders together annually to build awareness and agreement about the nature of funding required for youth organisations to deliver quality outcomes for young people to include exploration of full cost recovery, multi-annual funding and recognition of core funding.
- 7 Contribute to and influences Government Policy that impacts on the investment in youth work.
- 8 Support our members to improve knowledge and practice in relation to accessing funding.
- 9 Work with Government, national agencies and our members to ensure our work is embedded in mainstream policy and that the sector is better resourced to deliver on the relevant national and local priorities.
- 10 Develop an overview of the pay and conditions in place across the youth sector.

ROLE AND IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK

The positive role and impact of youth work in achieving national outcomes and local priorities is reflected in policy and acknowledged by Government.

INDICATORS

- Political parties recognise the value and impact of youth work in achieving Governments national outcomes for young people.
- Youth workers have increased their capacity to evaluate and promote quality youth work and articulate its distinctive approach.
- The impact of youth work is positively promoted by the media and Government.
- The youth work sector has the skills to collate, articulate and demonstrate the role and impact of youth work.
- Policy development accurately reflects the potential role of youth work in achieving the national outcomes.
- The role of youth work is articulated positively in policy documents at local and national levels.
- Young people have the understanding and skills to positively promote youth work.
- Agencies and organisations with responsibility for policy implementation acknowledge and respect the role and impact of youth work.
- Compliance requirements are proportionate to the scale and nature of volunteer led and voluntary nature of service delivery and do not hinder voluntary youth groups.
- Laws likely to impact the voluntary youth work sector are sent to NYCI for comment at bill stage and NYCI will suggest legal changes to reduce unnecessary compliance burdens.

ACTIONS

- 1 In collaboration with our members, develop and roll out a campaign that demonstrates the positive role and impact of youth work. **#YouthWorkChangesLives**
- 2 Engage with our member organisations to maintain and regularly refresh policy platforms with key messages on the positive role and impact of youth work.
- 3 Undertake and publish research that demonstrates the positive role of youth work in achieving national outcomes and local priorities.
- 4 Campaign for all political parties to recognise the value of youth work and commit to invest in it.
- 5 Use NYCI communications channels to help highlight the positive role and impact of youth work on young people and demonstrate its social and economic value.
- 6 Produce a Youth Work Manifesto that highlights the positive role and impact of youth work and the need for continued investment and support. This will inform pre-budgetary policy submissions and influence political manifestos.
- 7 Work with Government, national agencies and our members to ensure our work is embedded in mainstream policy and that the sector is better resourced to deliver on the relevant national and local priorities.
- 8 Work with other infrastructure bodies to ensure that regulation of the youth work sector is credible, proportionate and supportive.

OUTCOME

INFLUENCE AND WIN POLICY CHANGE

The National and European Policy agenda responds to and addresses the needs of young people.

INDICATORS

- NYCI's national and European policy agenda is informed by young people's views.
- Policy-makers and organisations are aware of relevant youth issues.
- NYCI is recognised as the thought leader in agreed areas like digital youth work, smart youth work and other areas of specialised youth work.
- NYCI has increased capacity to engage young people in its policy agenda and participation structure.
- Young people are facilitated to influence the policy agenda of NYCI.
- Policy priorities are identified by NYCI pertaining to Government policy and strategy on health, education, employment, welfare, housing, migration, arts, integration, global citizenship education and sustainable development, child protection, and social policy affecting young people is improved.
- Young people and youth organisations are facilitated to influence the policy agenda at a National, European and Global level through consultations and the direct engagement with policy and decision makers.
- NYCI has influence.
- People are aware of NYCI.
- NYCI is recognised as the key national advocate for the youth sector.
- Existence of active partnership with European Counterparts/Partners.

ACTIONS

- 1 Develop our work with the Irish Government and other agencies on agendas such as education, employability, social policy, health, housing, migration, youth justice, arts and culture, equality, human rights, interculturalism and inclusion, child protection, digital youth work, global citizenship education and sustainable development and other areas of specialised youth work and will maintain our commitment to improving the sector's involvement in promoting positive choices and opportunities for young people.
- 2 Support key stakeholders to involve young people in the development of policy and the design of services.
- 3 Engage our membership to develop our contribution to key national and European policies ensuring that the voice of young people is central.
- 4 Undertake research which will improve the quality of our evidence and track the influence of our work on policy and legislation.
- 5 Support and facilitate young people from our member organisations to youth proof our policy positions.
- 6 Focus on planned and sustained engagement with our key audience, with one major 'set piece' PR activity each year.
- 7 Increase awareness of the NYCI brand externally, and enhance internal understanding of the brand and the supports available, to ensure NYCI is recognised as a key national advocate for young people and the youth sector.
- 8 Maintain and enhance our engagement with European and International processes and structures to address the needs of young people and the youth sector.
- 9 Build the capacity of NYCI members to involve young people and the youth work sector voice in shaping and influencing national and international policy.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NYCI is a professionally run membership organisation with the capacity and resources to deliver on Strategy 2022.

INDICATORS

- NYCI is compliant with all necessary regulatory requirements.
- NYCI has robust Corporate Governance.
- NYCI's Board composition and operations are fit for purpose, evidenced in annual Board Reviews.
- NYCI is recognised as a learning community for its workforce.
- NYCI grows and strengthens its funding base. The funding base has grown by 40% by 2022.
- NYCI has suitable premises appropriate to the ambitions set out in Strategy 2022.
- NYCI has rigorous management and financial controls.
- NYCI achieves the highest standards of transparency and accountability.
- NYCI has a suitable online presence appropriate to the ambitions set out in Strategy 2022.

ACTIONS

- 1 Maintain full compliance with the three good practice standards for charities – the Governance Code, the Statement of Good Practice in Fundraising and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for financial and activity reporting.
- 2 Review Board and Sub Committee membership and experience and skills base to anticipate strategic needs 2018 – 2022 and beyond.
- 3 Develop, implement and monitor the Implementation Plan that underpins the Strategy in the following areas: HR, Finance and Funding, Information and Communications, CRM, GDPR and Digital ICT.
- 4 Produce Annual Operations Plans and Budgets that underpin the implementation of the Strategy.
- 5 Develop and implement a framework and indicators for monitoring the effective implementation of this Plan.
- 6 Develop a HR Strategy for NYCI ensuring that we have the appropriate mix of skills and expertise to deliver on the Plan.
- 7 Ensure every staff member has a written and regularly reviewed set of goals and objectives that are clearly linked to the organisational goals and strategy.
- 8 Develop and implement a training and development plan for both staff and Board to support the implementation of the Strategy.
- 9 Explore and consider adopting an externally recognised standard in quality.
- 10 Secure new premises.
- 11 Redevelop NYCI's websites in line with the priorities established for Strategy 2022.
- 12 Build our capacity in digital and online communications.



National Youth Council of Ireland
3 Montague Street
Dublin 2
Ireland
D02 V327

info@nyci.ie
+353 (0) 1 478 4122
www.youth.ie