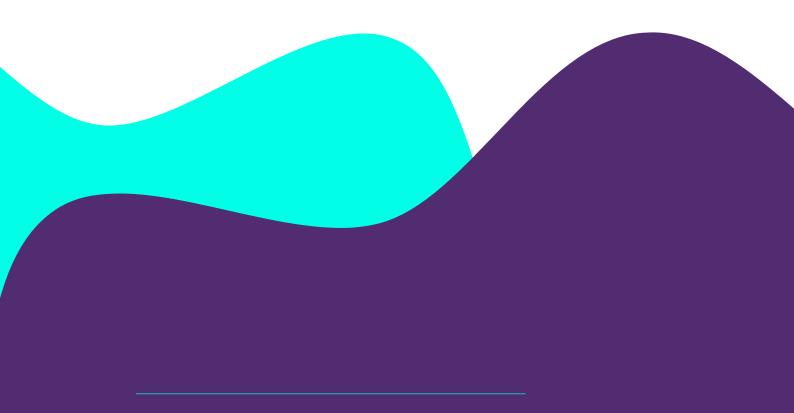


The National Youth Council Of Ireland

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

www.youth.ie



NYCl complies with The Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland and is a signatory of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

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President's Welcome

As the representative body for the youth work sector and youth organisations in Ireland, the National Youth Council of Ireland draws its strength and values from its diverse, talented, and committed member organisations.

Speaking for and with 54 members who work with thousands of young people, volunteers and staff the length and breadth of Ireland is not an easy task, but one that NYCI will continue to rise to. We know that our strength comes from collaboration, cooperation and coming together to share problems and identify solutions.

Our sector is facing into a period of strategic change and reform.

Ongoing consultation and contact with member organisations has identified challenges including the acute needs of many young people, ongoing recruitment issues, underfunding of youth work and longstanding infrastructural needs.

There are also real opportunities for NYCI and its members to act as a key strategic partner in delivery of the forthcoming Action Plan for Youth Services, to strengthen youth work links across the island of Ireland, to increase diversity and foster inclusion in the sector, and to achieve the sector's Vision for Youth Work, which will prove a critical enabler of this strategy. NYCI's board firmly believes its strategic plan for the period 2023-2027 will equip it and the sector to meet these challenges and opportunities, and maintain the flexibility needed to tackle emerging issues.

After a period of significant and unprecedented growth over the 2018–2022 strategy, NYCI has a strong foundation to build upon. Our members' valuable and insightful contributions played a critical role in arriving at a strategic plan which places them and young people at its core. Their inputs have ensured the next phase of NYCI's development is focused on mobilising solidarity across the sector, vital partnership working, continuing to deliver best-in-class programmes members can implement and ensuring excellence in all the work NYCI does to support youth organisations and young people.

NYCI's members' reflections on the work of NYCI were overwhelming positive, and for this and their excellent contributions, I would like to share my heartfelt thanks. It is not something the board or NYCI team will take for granted. Representing the breadth of this passionate and vibrant sector is what drives us all.

I am very grateful for the inputs of youth work volunteers, young people, NYCl's members, staff and funders, along with statutory bodies and key stakeholders in the sector and in Government. These have ensured the delivery of a plan in which the board focuses on the capacity of the organisation to represent and support the sector.

NYCl's board is inspired by our collective desire for young people to thrive, participate and lead happy, healthy and connected lives. We all look forward to implementation of this plan designed to ensure the organisation continues to strive for the highest standards in representation of members, programme support and good governance, while maintaining the flexibility to respond to changing situations.

Finally, I would like to thank Mary Cunningham, NYCI'S CEO, and her Senior Management Team, along with all of the staff of NYCI for their commitment to fulfilling our mission to represent the collective voice of the youth work sector and build capacity, leadership and influence to deliver better outcomes for young people. I know that over the coming five years, the NYCI team's diligence, drive and ambition will ensure a successful strategy that creates meaningful change for all of its members and young people across Ireland.



Denis O'Brien
President,
National Youth
Council of Ireland

CEO's Statement

I am delighted to present the National Youth Council of Ireland's Strategic Plan for the period 2023-2027. This ambitious roadmap paves the way for a future where young people in every community are empowered through excellent youth work to realise their potential and actively participate in an inclusive society.

It embodies the mission of our Board of Directors, members and staff to represent the collective voice of the youth work sector and build capacity, leadership and influence to deliver better outcomes for young people. Over the next five years, our goal is that:

- NYCI and its members influence policies that empower and support young people,
- NYCI supports the youth sector to deliver impactful, responsive and inclusive youth work,
- NYCI achieves impact by working in partnership with its members and others and that,
- NYCI is a high-performing organisation.

This new strategic plan underscores the remarkable potential of the NYCI and our proven ability to adapt and lead in an evolving social, political, and economic landscape. Youth organisations come in many different shapes and sizes and that diversity, and the wide range of youth work opportunities they offer, is their great strength. As Ireland itself becomes more diverse, it's important that youth work continues to embrace interculturalism, encouraging young people, volunteers and staff from all communities to join youth work organisations.

This plan also reinforces our commitment to building a stronger political and public understanding of the value and impact of youth work. Policymakers and stakeholders increasingly recognise the critical role our sector plays in supporting young people to reach their full potential, and NYCI and its members will work to ensure the transformational impact of youth work and needs of young people are placed firmly on the Government's agenda.

Over the course of NYCl's most recent strategic plan, youth work proved its vital importance, adapting, innovating and thriving during a challenging period. This strategic plan ensures we continue supporting the youth sector in responding to emerging challenges. It also acknowledges the critical relationship between the youth work sector and the state and includes strategic actions that acknowledge the need for strong partnerships to implement and deliver the new National Policy Framework for Children and Young People and Action Plan for Youth Services.

In many ways, we will continue to do what you have told us we do well. We will remain tireless advocates, representing and championing the interests of our members, the broader youth sector, and most importantly, young people themselves. We will continue creating opportunities for our members and other organisations to connect, share knowledge, and explore collaborations, while supporting their practice and enabling them to work with impact.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in NYCI, our Board, our member organisations and with other key stakeholders to achieve the ambitions in this plan. We are confident that, with your support and collaboration, the next five years will mark a significant chapter in NYCI's journey. This plan is more than a document; it will be our compass, guiding our decisions and actions. It will inspire confidence in our mission and set the stage for a future where every young person in Ireland has access to high-quality, well-resourced youth work services.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to our shared vision.



Mary Cunningham CEO, National Youth Council of Ireland

About NYCI

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland.

Our member organisations work with, and for, up to 380,000 young people in every community in Ireland, with the support of 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 paid staff. NYCI functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations and our role as the National Representative Youth Work Organisation is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act, 2001).

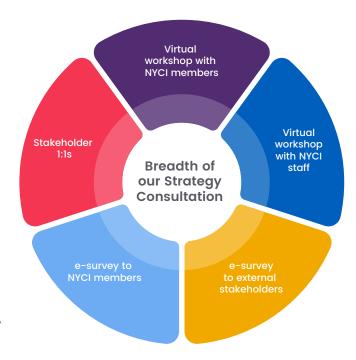
The work of NYCI is based on principles of equality, social justice and equal participation for all. In achieving these aims, the NYCI seeks the emergence of a society in which young people are valued and supported to achieve their full potential.



Our Strategic Planning Process

Drawing on our five-decade legacy of representing and championing the youth work sector, we began this strategic planning process by reflecting on our work with members and others across the sector - work which has positively transformed the lives of countless young people. Our vision for the next five years is to build on our collective success and chart a course that addresses the challenges facing young people and their communities in the years to come.

To develop this ambitious Strategic Plan, we partnered with 2into3 and engaged in extensive consultations with a wide array of stakeholders. Our staff, Board, members, funders and supporters, and other key partners in the youth work sector, civil society, politics and the media all contributed to the process.



The strategic planning exercise provided a valuable opportunity to assess our operating environment, examine future trends, and gather important insights and feedback.

We are grateful to everyone who gave their time and energy to this process. Together, driven by this shared vision, we will work towards better outcomes for all young people.

2into3's Strategic Planning Process



Below are some highlights from the consultation feedback:

Strengths

NYCI is effective at supporting the youth work sector to be more impactful.

NYCI provides relevant and responsive programmes and supports.

NYCl's work is based on research and evidence.

NYCI's communications are high quality and effective.

NYCI is effective at uniting and representing the voice of the youth work sector.

NYCI is effective at raising the profile of youth work.

NYCl's team is professional, responsive and approachable.

NYCI is effective at responding to emerging needs and adapts when necessary, e.g. its role in supporting the sector to adapt to COVID-19

Opportunities

Leverage the Vision for Youth Work as an opportunity to align all actors involved in youth work.

Continue to create opportunities to elevate the voices of members and the youth work sector.

Strengthen member engagement and coordination to ensure NYCl's work reflects members' priorities.

Continue to strengthen diversity and inclusion across NYCI.

Clarify NYCl's approach to youth participation.

Coordinate and support local and national collective advocacy by members

Support the youth work sector to be responsive to emerging challenges.

Support the youth work sector to better evidence its impact on the lives of young people.

Campaign for increased and sustainable funding and resources for the sector and for youth workers.

Support the sector to remain at the forefront of best practice and innovative approaches.

NYCI stakeholders were also asked to reflect on the biggest external challenges facing the youth work sector. The top responses included:

Funding for youth work, frontline services and core services. Staff and volunteer recruitment and retention. Rising overheads (rent, energy, insurance).

The impact of poverty on young people.

Adapting to the increasing demands of young people.

Our Vision, Mission & Values



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.

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

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.

Values

We value the experience and views of our member organisations and will consult them and represent them with integrity.

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

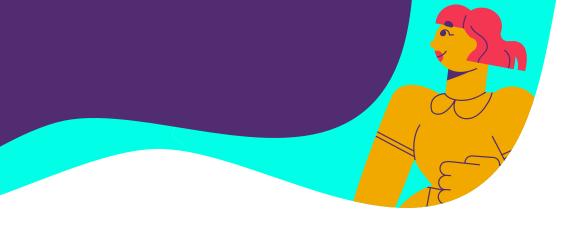


Strategic Priorities

> Influence Impact

Partnership

Performance



Pillar 1: Influence

NYCI and its members influence the policies available to empower and support young people.

To achieve our vision of an Ireland where all young people realise their potential and actively participate in an inclusive society, it is essential that the right policies are in place to support this at the local, national and international levels. Additionally, NYCI and our members must be in a strong position to take a leadership role and help shape the policy landscape. To advance these objectives, we will advocate for accessible and well-resourced youth work, mobilise action on key youth-related issues, work to ensure youth work is a priority for policy-makers, and influence national and international youth work policies and practices, as outlined in our goals below. Together, we will use our combined influence to ensure the policies affecting young people bring us closer to our vision, and to an Ireland young people deserve.

	Goal	Strategic Actions	Outcomes
1	Advocate for youth work to be sustainably funded	 Advocate for youth work to be sustainably funded Work with the government and the youth work sector to address current and future workforce planning needs 	Increased funding and capacity for youth work
2	Mobilise solidarity and action on key issues affecting the youth work sector and young people	 Use the strength of our membership to identify priority advocacy issues and to campaign nationally and locally for change Pioneer impactful and agile communications and advocacy campaigns Deliver high quality research evidence to inform, provide thought-leadership and underpin public policy goals Amplify the voices of youth work organisations and young people in our communications and campaigns 	Policy-makers & organisations are well informed on issues & possible solutions

	Goal	Strategic Actions	Outcomes
3	Ensure youth work & young people remain a top priority for policy- makers	 Work to ensure that the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People - and any resulting strategies - are implemented and that the sector is a key partner in delivery Work across government and with the Oireachtas to ensure that other relevant strategies and frameworks are aligned with the Vision for Youth Work and the needs of young people 	Stronger recognition of NYCI, members, youth work and young people by policy makers
4	Influence international policy & practice in youth work	 Position Ireland as a centre for good practice and influence in youth work, youth participation, policy and practice through collaborations with our European and global partners 	Increased recognition of Ireland's role in the delivery of youth work



Pillar 2: Impact

NYCI supports the sector to deliver impactful, responsive and inclusive youth work.

Youth work organisations are the forefront of responding to the diverse challenges facing young people today. Their work is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of society, and we know that this requires on-going support. In order to achieve our vision of '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' we will work with our members and the wider youth work sector to promote excellence and innovation in youth work; facilitate coordinated responses to emerging challenges affecting young people; and communicate the inherent value of youth work to a broader audience. Working together, we will ensure that as a sector we are well-placed to deliver youth work that is responsive, inclusive, and has a real, lasting impact.

	Goal	Strategic Actions	Outcomes
5	Enable the sector to deliver best practice and innovation in youth work	 Ensure our programmes offer is aligned to the sector's priority needs and the Vision for Youth Work Continue to build the knowledge skills and capacity of the youth work sector, and widen access to good practice development Highlight learnings from national and international best practice, innovation and research from across the sector and academia Deliver resources that support the sector to continue to be diverse and inclusive 	Organisations have greater capacity and feel supported to improve policy & practice
6	Coordinate and support sector-wide responses to emerging challenges affecting young people	 Develop supports and resources that build members' responsive capacity and agility Ensure the sector's response to emerging challenges is sensitive to the experiences of young people impacted by disadvantage Demonstrate leadership, coordinate and represent the sector's voice and response to emerging challenges to government, funders, and other relevant stakeholders 	Youth organisations feel supported to respond to emerging issues
7	Demonstrate & communicate the value of youth work	 Establish an improved political and public understanding about the value and nature of youth work Collaborate with members and government to scope and scale the impact of the sector, and to demonstrate the need for standardised data collection Create opportunities and resources to support the sector to showcase its impact at local, national and international level 	Policy makers, organisations, and the public recognise the value of youth work practice

Pillar 3: Partnership

NYCI achieves impact by working in partnership with its members and others.

As a representative body, partnership is at the core of everything we do. Our work thrives on the strength and energy of our vibrant and dynamic membership and our collaborations within the sector and beyond. In this plan, we set our focus on fostering and growing a dynamic and inclusive community of members and continuing to cultivate a diverse and engaged network that collaborates effectively. Through strategic partnerships, we aim for amplified impact, realising that by working together, we can achieve more. Additionally, we're committed to ensuring that youth participation remains central to our work, collaborating closely with our members to practice meaningful and impactful engagement. Together, we have achieved remarkable change that has made a positive difference and shaped a brighter future for all young people, and we will continue to do so, in partnership.

	Goal	Strategic Actions	Outcomes
8	Continue to build a vibrant, diverse and engaged community of members	 Increase our membership and ensure this growth continues to reflect the broad profile of the youth sector Implement a comprehensive engagement strategy that deepens our connections with members and mobilises them around our public policy and practice development work Create opportunities for members to connect, collaborate and share learning Provide capacity building to support smaller and newer youth work organisations to become members, including those working with marginalised young people 	NYCI's work responds to and engages their members
9	Nurture strategic partnerships to achieve greater impact	 Create meaningful partnerships within and beyond our sector to advance common objectives Foster connections between key stakeholders on a North-South basis 	NYCI works collaboratively internally & externally
10	Coordinate with our members to ensure that, together, we practice effective and meaningful youth participation	 Define NYCi's approach to youth participation, ensuring that it is aligned with our mission and strategy, and that it complements and informs the practices within our membership and with other relevant national and international strategies Work with membership to strengthen youth participation and engagement practices 	NYCI's work is relevant and reflects the voice of children & young people



Enablers

Vision for Youth Work
Diversity & Inclusion
Collaboration

These three enablers emerged over the course of the strategic development process and consultation with our stakeholders. Each of them underpin, inform and support the delivery across our strategic plan.

1. Vision for Youth Work

The Vision for Youth Work sets out a vision for the future direction of youth work in Ireland over the next 10 years. Developed out of extensive consultations with the youth work sector, it provides a roadmap for the development of youth work policy and practice. Many of the priorities in this Strategy strive towards achieving the Vision for Youth Work.

2. Diversity & Inclusion

The diversity of the voluntary youth sector is one of its key strengths, and its vital that we continue to nurture and develop it at all levels in this Strategy. This ranges from the sector's youth work practices and approaches, to the people who participate in or deliver youth work, to the policies and resources that enable youth work and supports for young people to continue to be inclusive.

3. Collaboration

As a membership organisation, we know we are stronger together. Delivering this Strategy will involve collaboration across the organisation, with members, with the voluntary and statutory sectors, with peer organisations working in relevant sectors, with partners across government – and of course, with young people themselves.



Overview of Plan



Vision

Mission

Values

Pilla

Strategic Goals

1: Influence

NYCI and its members influence the policies to empower and support young people

2: Impact

NYCI supports the sector to deliver impactful, responsive and inclusive youth work

3: Partnership

NYCI achieves impact by working in partnership

4: Performance

NYCI is a high performing organisation

- Advocate for all young people to have access to adequately resourced youth work relevant to their needs
- Mobilise solidarity and action on key issues affecting the youth work sector and young people
- Ensure youth work & young people remain a top priority for policymakers
- 4. Influence international policy & practice in youth work

- Enable the sector to deliver best practice and innovation in youth work
- 6. Coordinate and support sector-wide responses to emerging challenges affecting young people
- 7. Demonstrate & communicate the value of youth work

- 8. Continue to build a vibrant, diverse and engaged community of members
- 9. Nurture strategic partnerships to achieve greater impact
- 10. Coordinate with our members to ensure that, together, we practice effective and meaningful youth participation

- 11. Support our staff and Board to deliver for the youth work sector
- 12. Strive for operational excellence

Enabler

Vision for Youth Work

Diversity & inclusion

Collaboration





Core Funding

NYCI would like to recognise the vital core funding provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth which enables the important work of the organisation in supporting our members and the youth work sector to bring about better outcomes for young people. Below we also acknowledge the specific funding provided to each of our programmes and initiatives.

National Youth Arts Programme

Key Funders: The Arts Council; Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Main Objective: To support the development of youth arts practice and provision in youth work and non-formal education settings; to build the capacity of youth workers and artists to create high-quality, youth-centred arts practice that empowers young people and supports their development; and to advocate for improved youth arts provision for young people and recognition of the value of youth arts.

National Child Protection Programme

Key Funders: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Main Objective: To support the youth work sector to meet their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection and fulfil their legal obligations under Children First through the provision of training, developing resources, provision of advice and guidance, responding to emerging safeguarding and child protection issues, and advocacy on behalf of the youth work sector.

Equality & Intercultural Programme

Key Funders: Dept. of Rural and Community Development; Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Main Objective: To build the capacity and understanding of the youth work sector that they may deliver responsive, diverse and inclusive practice based on the principles of social justice; to develop resources, and training, and to advocate for policies that meet the needs of minority and marginalised young people; to respond to emerging issues, through thought leadership and amplification of minority voices.

National Youth Health Programme

Key Funders: HSE, Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme HSE, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Main Objective: To build the capacity of the youth work sector by embedding health promotion practices and policies which in turn will support the health and wellbeing of not only the young people involved within the youth work sector but the volunteers and staff.

International

Key Funders: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Leargas, European Commission.

Main Objective: We aim to facilitate and promote the involvement of youth organisations and young people in international activities and to encourage youth organisations to include an international dimension to their youth work, through creating opportunities for sharing of best practice in youth work and facilitating international collaboration.

Skills Summary

Key Funders: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Main Objective: Support the youth sector to use the Skills Summary tool to support young people to recognise and capture skills gained through youth work and non-formal education to build their confidence and learn to articulate those skills for themselves and future employers.

STEAM Programme

Key Funders: Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)

Main Objective: To increase the uptake of and embed STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) in both the Youth Work and Youthreach sectors, opening up opportunities to young people previously underserved in science and related subjects.

Youth 2030 – Global Youth Work

Key Funders: Irish Aid, Concern Worldwide, Trócaire

Main Objective: The Youth 2030 – Global Youth Work Programme seeks to strengthen, support, and empower the youth sector in Ireland ensuring young people are informed, skilled and engaged as Global Citizens through Global Youth Work, challenging injustice, inequality, and climate change, in solidarity with those left behind.

North/South Youth Work Development Hub

Key Funders: Education Authority

Main Objective: The purpose of the North-South Youth Work Sector Practice Development Hub is to strengthen and develop sustainable north-south youth work sector relationships among and between organisations, staff and volunteers, and enhance the quality of the learning experience of young people participating in youth services across the island.

Policy & Advocacy

Key Funders: Department of Rural and Community Development, Community Foundation of Ireland

Main Objective: NYCl's policy and advocacy function advocates on issues which impact on the lives of young people, on our member organisations and on the youth work sector. The Department of Rural and Community Development supports the NYCl's work developing policy. The Community Foundation of Ireland supports NYCl's grassroots advocacy and helps ensure the sustainability and impact of its campaigns.



Our Members



Our work thrives on the strength and energy of our vibrant and dynamic membership. Together we have achieved remarkable accomplishments that made a positive difference and shaped a brighter future for all young people.

- Amnesty International Ireland
- An Óige
- AsIAm Ireland
- BeLonG to Youth Services
- Blakestown & Mountview Youth Initiative
- Boys Brigade
- Catholic Guides of Ireland
- Central Remedial Clinic
- Church of Ireland Youth Department
- Cobh Youth Services
- Coláiste na bhFiann
- Crosscare
- ECO-UNESCO
- EIL Intercultural Learning
- Enable Ireland
- Feachtas
- Finglas Youth Resource Centre
- Foróige
- Gaisce The President's Award
- Girls Brigade Ireland
- Girls Friendly Society

- ICTU Youth Committee
- Involve Youth Service Ltd
- Irish Association of Youth Orchestras
- Irish Girl Guides
- Irish Methodist Youth & Children's Department
- Irish Red Cross Youth
- Irish Second-level Students' Union
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- Junior Chamber Ireland
- Killinarden Community Council Youth Project
- Labour Youth
- Localise Youth and Community Service Ltd
- Macra na Feirme
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- No Name Club
- Ógras
- Ogra Fianna Fail
- Order of Malta Cadets

- Scouting Ireland
- Sphere 17 RYS
- SpunOut.ie
- St. Andrew's Talk About Youth Project
- Swan Youth Service
- Union of Students in Ireland
- Voluntary Services International
- West End Youth Centre
- YMCA Ireland
- Young Christian Workers
- Young Fine Gael
- Young Irish Film Makers Ltd
- Young Social Innovators
- Youth Theatre Ireland
- Youth Work Ireland





National Youth Council of Ireland

3 Montague Street Dublin 2 Ireland D02 V327

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

Connect with us:







