

**Book of Estimates and Comprehensive Review Expenditure (CRE)-
Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

Submission



Youth Work Ireland

October 2011

Executive Summary

Youth Work Ireland is the leading organisation in the provision of services to young people in Ireland. Founded in 1962 we are a national federation of 22 local youth services that share a common ethos and approach. Youth Work Ireland works with over 80,000 young people, nearly 1,000 staff and over 7,000 volunteers annually through 450 clubs and projects in all parts of the country with spin off benefits for local communities and economies. Youth Work Ireland's aim is to change society for the benefit of young people and the wider community. Our work is underpinned by the Children Act 2001 and the Youth Work Act 2001 and contributes every day to achieving key government policy objectives including the National Children's Strategy, the Agenda for Children's Services, the Youth Justice Strategy and & Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007 as well as the European Union Strategy for Youth.

Youth Work Ireland is making this submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review in order to inform the debate on how best to ensure the provision of efficient, effective and sustainable youth services in a time of sharp cutbacks in funding and of increasing risk and potential alienation of many young people. The submission is made based on comprehensive inputs from all the federation's member organisations.

Our members operate in a wide range of communities, providing a one stop shop for integrated locally-based youth services. These services include information and support, education, health, garda diversion, employment and training services which achieve positive outcomes for the young people involved many of whom are disadvantaged or at risk. Involvement in youth work also fosters confidence and independence and these skills contribute to entrepreneurship and economic growth.

In carrying out our work Youth Work Ireland invests €32 million into local communities. Furthermore we estimate that our work results in €1billion in cost savings to the state by preventing many young people from needing to move on to higher level, more costly state services such as probation, justice, specialist health services etc. To this figure could be added the additional costs saved as a result of reduced welfare dependency and lower unemployment rates among these young people, if such preventative work had not been undertaken. Youth Work Ireland also provides an effective gateway and referral service for young people to more specialist services thus reducing the costs of such services and increasing their accessibility.

Youth Work Ireland projects also leverage considerable voluntary effort with over 7,000 volunteers currently involved in the provision of Youth Work Ireland's services. Our members invest substantially in the training and development of these volunteers thus increasing their chances of employment and enhancing the contribution they can make to their communities, to the economy and to society throughout their working life and beyond. We estimate that volunteers contribute €6 million in unpaid contributions to youth services in their local area.

Nationally Youth Work Ireland supports young people to have a voice in the development of services and national policies that affect them. The national organisation also provides oversight on the delivery of projects and programmes and ensures accountability for public funds. Youth Work Ireland leads in the development of a national standard in best practice through our unique and comprehensive Quality Standards Framework.

Youth Work Ireland continually strives to achieve efficiencies, particularly in the current financial and exchequer crisis, by utilising economies of scale in relation to how we deliver our projects with over 80% of project budgets going directly into young people's services. We also achieve ongoing efficiencies by providing integrated services locally that share buildings, costs and overheads across projects as well as with other service providers.

If our services are cut further many young people, especially those at risk will lose out at a time when the need for our services is in fact increasing. Youth Work Ireland has estimated that further reductions could wipe out up to 25% of our already stretched local members. Closure of individual

projects that serve adolescents would have serious knock on and long terms effects. This would be reflected in terms of increased early school leaving, increased mental health issues, increased misuse of drugs & alcohol, increased family pressure, increased dependency on the state, greater demand for prison spaces, higher unemployment payments, more children in care and the need for more health care treatment. Added to this the huge experience and institutional knowledge that has been built up by local Youth Work Ireland projects would be lost.

Youth Work Ireland projects by their very nature save the exchequer funding. The loss of such projects will therefore increase rather decrease exchequer expenditure. However Youth Work Ireland is aware of the serious constraints on government expenditure and is willing to work with government in achieving further efficiencies and in maximising the spinoffs possible from its expertise and experience. Specific areas where Youth Work Ireland believes that it could help save exchequer funding are summarised as follows:

- Youth Work Ireland be funded to co-ordinate and provide training throughout the country in the Quality Assurance Framework (NQSF) which is currently being carried out in a range of formats and by a large number of organisations. This would include taking over some of the work currently being managed by VEC Youth Officers who are not being replaced due to government cutbacks (the VEC subhead for youth services is currently €1.4 million, a ten percent savings could reduce costs by €0.14 million.)
- Reduce the current duplication of back office services by transferring the management of independent local youth projects (estimated at 150-200 projects nationally) as well as those run by non-youth work groups to Youth Work Ireland's Regional Youth Services which have the expertise, experience and a physical presence in the areas concerned with estimated savings of €30,000 per project.
- Youth Work Ireland coordinate and provide the regional training of youth workers and volunteers in child protection etc to other service providers which is currently being offered by a range of organisations with varying programmes and standards.
- Youth Work Ireland take over and run Comhairle and Dail n'Og thus eliminating the administrative and reporting duplication and the current need for ongoing engagement of Local Authority staff and VEC officers as well as Youth Workers and National Participation Officers.
- Greater sharing of building and facilities locally with statutory funders encouraged to develop arrangements whereby their funded groups share facilities.
- Youth Work Ireland be funded to provide a number of services to young people to support the work of the new National Employment and Entitlement Service (NEES) through utilising Youth Information Centres, Youth Cafes and other centres offering locally-based information and referrals to other parts of the NEES. (Based on ESF returns and the book of estimates we estimate that the total NEES budget including FAS, LES and DSP Employment Supports is about 100m annually. If 15m was contracted out with a 10% reduction in costs an estimated €1.5m could be saved by the state.)
- The Department of Children & Youth Affairs carry out a review of Youth Affairs spend to ensure that all such funding go towards youth work within the meaning of the Act. (For example over €1m was spent from the youth budget on a Community (Development) facility in Cabra – the Management of this facility is paid for from the Youth Budget though the activity of the centre goes well beyond youth work. Furthermore the Gaisce Awards is fully paid for by the Youth Budget even though 70-80 participants come from Formal Education. The Department also funds sporting development officers in each county from Youth Funds and this is not youth work within the meaning of the Act.)

Introduction

Youth Work Ireland was founded in 1962 and is a national federation of 22 local youth services with a turnover of €32 million that work in the interest of young people through the provision of a range of services that share a common ethos and approach. Youth Work Ireland works with over 80,000 young people, nearly 1,000 staff and over 7,000 volunteers through 450 clubs and projects in all parts of the country with spin off benefits for local communities and economies. Youth Work Ireland's aim is to change society for the benefit of young people and the wider community.

This submission is being made by Youth Work Ireland to the Comprehensive Spending Review in order to inform the debate on how best to ensure the provision of efficient, effective and sustainable youth services in a time of sharp cutbacks in funding and of increasing risk and potential alienation of many young people. The submission is made based on comprehensive inputs from all the federation's member organisations.

Youth Work Ireland's aim is to change society for the benefit of young people. The principles that underpin our work are participation, equality, valuing volunteers, quality, continuous learning and innovation. Youth Work Ireland's federal structure supports shared learning and development and works to ensure best practice across all its services and in all its governance structures.

Youth Work Ireland is making this submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review as the federation and all its member organisations wish to contribute and to inform the debate on how best to ensure the provision of efficient, effective and sustainable services to young people in a time of sharp cutbacks in funding and of increasing risk and potential alienation of many young people. The paper firstly outlines what Youth Work Ireland does and then go to answer a number of questions of relevance to the Comprehensive Spending Review work:

1. How does Youth Work Ireland serve the public interest?
2. What is the impact of the Youth Work Ireland?
3. Could Youth Work Ireland services be delivered more efficiently and if so how?
4. What would happen if this Youth Work Ireland experienced further major cuts?
5. Could Youth Work Ireland be funded differently, are there potential private or fundraised sources of income?
6. Could charges be made to Youth Work Ireland to generate income?
7. Could activities be merged, delivered more efficiently or share services with other projects or organisations?
8. Can Youth Work Ireland contribute to economic growth and if so how?
9. Can Youth Work Ireland save the exchequer money in the current or future two years and if so how?

We also illustrate our responses to these questions with specific examples of our work.

Youth Work Ireland at a Glance

Youth Work Ireland is the leading organisation in the provision of services to young people, including the provision of appropriate services for young people that have experienced disadvantage or are at risk. Youth Work Ireland works within a wide range of local communities, providing a one stop shop for integrated youth services that meet and lead on national standards of service provision for young people.- e.g. garda vetting, child protection guidelines etc.. Youth Work Ireland staff draw on and develop local volunteers to provide quality and relevant services for young people within their own local area while the organisation's funding of €32 million annually leverages additional funding through the purchased of services and products locally.

Through this approach Youth Work Ireland provides non stigmatising services to all young people with spin off benefits in terms of greater inclusion and involvement in their communities. Youth Work Ireland provide their services in a universal and integrated way while also including young people leaving care, those exhibiting challenging behavior and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Youth Work Ireland thus both directly and indirectly saves the state funds by proving

high quality services at a relatively low cost. Youth Work Ireland also supports the government's agenda of moving towards prevention and early intervention by reducing the likelihood of young people engaging in anti-social and criminal activity and increasing the likelihood of them participating positively in their local economy and community.

Youth Work Ireland also advocates strongly on behalf of young people and supports them in having their voices heard in the shaping of policy, legislation and public opinion. Youth Work Ireland are committed to a collaborative and coordinated approach which draws on the knowledge skills and experience of a range of disciplines. Our model of youth work is shaped by and responds to key pieces of legislation and related strategies. In particular the 'U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child' forms an important foundation to our ethos and direction as does "the Children Act 2001', The Agenda for Children's Services, The Youth Work Act 2001' and the Youth Justice Strategy, and we subscribe fully to the definition of Youth Work set out in that Act.

We recognise that a strategic, integrated and coordinated approach to addressing the complexity of issues facing young people has never been more important than in the Ireland of today.

Youth Work Ireland's Services

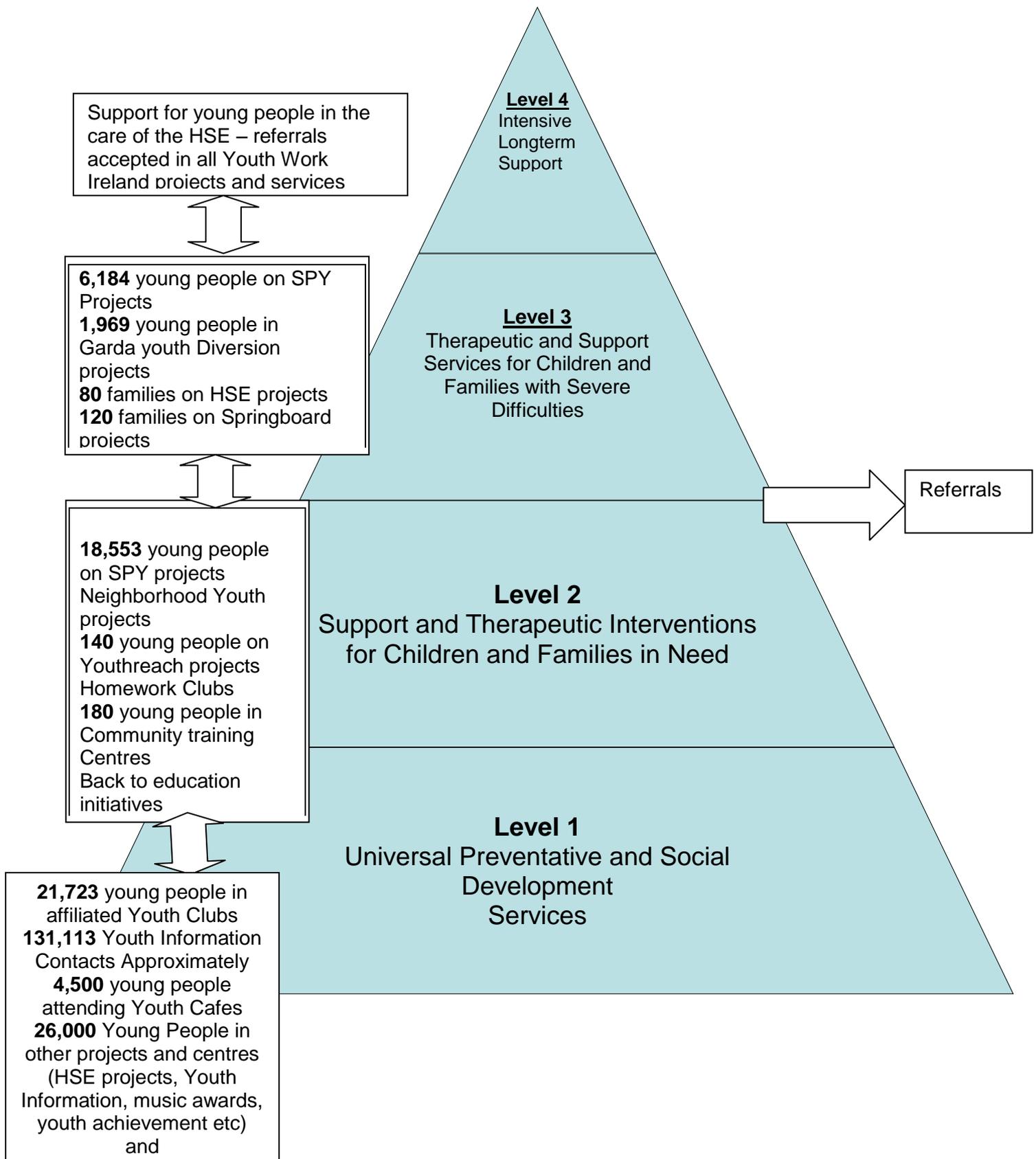
Youth Work Ireland provides a range number of services and projects that meet the needs of a variety of young people. Our members operate in a wide range of communities, providing a one stop shop for integrated locally-based youth services. These services include information and support, education, health, garda diversion, employment and training services which achieve positive outcomes for the young people involved many of whom are disadvantaged or at risk. Involvement in youth work also fosters confidence and independence and these skills contribute to entrepreneurship and economic growth.

Figure.1 illustrates Youth Work Ireland's projects and services by number of young people supported, going from universal services to services for young people at different levels of risk; along the lines of the Hardiker model.¹ (The Hardiker Model provides a framework in which to understand different levels of need within a population of children. This model has been widely used as a planning framework by The Irish Government (Centre for Effective Services, 2010)).

It is worthwhile to note that the majority of resources of statutory services are invested in Level 3 and 4 while Youth Work Ireland plays a major role in providing services at Levels 1 and 2, thus playing a vital preventative role for children and families. Youth Work Ireland also provides an effective gateway and referral service for young people to these more specialist services thus reducing the costs of such services and increasing their accessibility. Details of each programme provided by Youth Work Ireland are given below.

¹ Please note that some young people may attend more than one service and that 75% of SPY programme participants have been assigned to Level 2 and 25% to Level 3

Figure 1 Youth Work Ireland Services by Hardiker Level (Source: Hardiker *et al*, 1991)



1. How does Youth Work Ireland serve the public interest?

Serving National Policy

The importance of Youth Services and Youth Work to the public interest has long since been established. In 1984 Mr Justice Declan Costello, at the request of the then Government, published a report on the need for Youth Services;

‘Youth Work provides invaluable help to young people in their personal, social, cultural and spiritual development. It is a vital form of social education which is a key component in the process of helping young people to play a full and active part in life and in reacting to, understanding, and shaping the political and economic factors which affect their lives. It is participative because it is based on the freely given involvement of young people and adult readers.’

Selwyn (2007)² writes that “many of the pressing issues surrounding the information needs of young people remain the same as they have throughout the past 30 years, albeit with an additional technological dimension” Our experience of supporting young people to deal with ‘information overload’ and an ‘inability to filter out useless and sometimes inaccurate information’ allied with the need to ‘assist young people relate the information to their individual situation’ indicates a real and pressing need for quality information services to be available for all young people.

The Programme for Government 2011-2016 continues to recognise the importance of supporting youth services stating:

- ‘We will continue support for social innovation projects for young people through education, community and voluntary structures.
- We will give special emphasis to alternative programmes for juvenile offenders through extensions to the Juvenile Liaison Officer Scheme and the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme, and the extended use of Restorative Justice where appropriate. We will also examine outcomes-based contracts with community organisations to help reduce reoffending by young people, based on the social impact bond model in the U.K.
- Require all local and regional drugs taskforces to build on the success of Education Prevention Units in other taskforces;’

Youth Work Ireland contributes every day to achieving these objectives as well as to a wide range of specific government plans and strategies. In particular our work is underpinned by the **Youth Work Act & Youth Work Development 2003-2007** which emphasise the developmental and educational nature of youth work, the centrality of voluntary organisations, the voluntary participation of young people, as well as objectives of social inclusion, social cohesion and active citizenship in a rapidly changing national and global context. Youth Work Ireland also contributes to an expanded and enhanced infrastructure for youth development, support and co-ordination at national and local level as well as enhancing professionalism and ensuring standards in youth work in Ireland.

Youth Work Ireland’s services and projects play a key role in achieving the three main goals of the **National Children’s Strategy**:

- Goal 1 - Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be

² The Future of Youth Information in Europe, 2007

given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

- Goal 2 - Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services.
- Goal 3 - Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development.

Youth Work Ireland also supports the 7 outcomes in the **Agenda for Children's Services**:

1. Healthy, both physically and mentally
2. Supported in active learning
3. Safe from accidental and intentional harm
4. Economically secure
5. Secure in the immediate and wider physical environment
6. Part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community
7. Included and participating in society

Youth Work Ireland are central to delivering quality outcomes in partnership with the **Irish Youth Justice Service** and in achieving the **Youth Justice Strategy under the Children Act 2001**.

Youth Work Ireland also plays a key role in achieving the **National Drugs Strategy** in supporting the development of a 'greater understanding of the dangers of problem drug/alcohol use among the general population'. Youth Work Ireland Youth Clubs support young people to develop better decision making skills, build reliance and coping skills thus contributing significantly to better mental and physical health.

Youth Work Ireland contributes to other national policy priorities by encouraging and facilitating lifelong learning, helping to overcome fractured life transitions, challenging hopelessness and empowering young people, volunteers and communities; all of which are critical to boosting economic prosperity and sustainability. In addition, Youth Work Ireland's preventative approach reduces demands and pressures on statutory health, justice and housing services, thus proving value for money and increasing the cost benefit of state investment.³

Specific and general work on literacy by Youth Work Ireland has resulted in qualified young people with increased literacy skills, providing a firm foundation for further training and employability. This work is in line with government policy as stated in **The National Literacy Strategy' Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life' 2011 to 2020**.

Youth Work Ireland services also reflect key international developments notably the **European Union Strategy for youth** entitled "Youth – Investing and Empowering" (2009). This cross sectoral strategy acknowledges that young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, especially in the current economic and financial crisis. Youth Work Ireland actions feed into key EU policy areas particularly youth education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, health and sport, civic participation and volunteering which are all central to Youth Work Ireland's mission, principles and activities.

Working with Young People –universal and specialist services

Youth Work Ireland services include young people from all backgrounds who each in their own way learn and grow through participation in Youth Work Ireland projects. Young people that have experienced disadvantage in many cases develop for the first time dreams and

³ See 'From Justice to Welfare: The Case for Investment in Prevention and Early Intervention Candy Murphy, CMAAdvice Ltd for IPRT, 2010

aspirations for their future while the more privileged learn that we live in an unequal society and are motivated to engage more in voluntary activity. All the young people involved are encouraged to engage and contribute to their development of their communities and to society generally.

Youth Work Ireland projects work also provide specialist services for disadvantaged young people many of whom are educationally disadvantaged or are involved in “at risk” behaviour, and supports them to develop new skills, as well as equipping them with the skills necessary to make informed decisions, to develop to their full potential while increasing their sense of civic responsibility. It also recognises the role of the family and supports parents in supporting their children to make positive life choices.

Young people are often referred to Youth Work Ireland when other interventions have not been successful. Youth Work Ireland accepts referrals from a range of other organisations including parents, school completion officers, social workers, Gardai, probation officers etc. Youth Work Ireland also strongly encourages ‘self referrals’, where young people chose the type of support they wish to access and they feel they need.

Many Youth Work Ireland projects are located in RAPID areas and work with communities which are severely disadvantaged in terms of unemployment, early school leaving, poor housing, anti social behavior, crime, risk behaviour and drug use. Youth Work Ireland supports disenfranchised members of society, young people who feel they have been let down by education, family and society by engaging with them helps to give them a sense of hope and motivation for the future.

Youth Work Ireland projects in rural areas work with young people who are or have experienced rural isolation, economic disadvantage, early school leaving, domestic violence, abuse and neglect, as well as mental health difficulties.

Youth Work Ireland projects are also important agents in delivering on stated **policies on equality**, for example working with LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual) young people who still have major issues particularly in smaller towns and urban areas, and in working with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and with Young Travellers.

How specific projects contribute

Individual Youth Work Ireland projects contribute significantly to key public policy objectives in relation to young people. For example, The National Recreation Policy for Young People (OMCYA, 2007) recognises that **Youth Cafés** offer an “*innovative response to the changing context of youth development in Ireland*” and supports the engagement and support of young people in their communities. While there has been a limited amount of support for Youth Cafes from the Dormant Accounts fund the vast bulk of facilities have been developed from within existing Youth Work Ireland’s youth service resources.

Youth Work Ireland projects also contribute to the provision of local facilities and we have a comprehensive network of facilities which are often the only places where young people can meet and are welcomed within their communities, particularly young people at risk.

Voluntary Youth Clubs provide a supportive and safe environment in which young people have an opportunity to participate in activities which are recreational, developmental and educational within their own communities. Youth Work Ireland supports over 450 locally based Youth Clubs all over Ireland.

Youth Information projects serve the public interest by providing relevant and up-to date information to young people, their parents and those who work with them. Information is key to enabling people to make informed decisions in all areas of their lives. Good decision making ensures better outcomes for the individuals concerned and for society as a whole.

Youth Information Centres play an important role in providing entry level employment services and career guidance for young people, assisting and directing young people in their choices of career and study. Such work is done in a community setting at appropriate hours thus providing an accessible service for young people not available elsewhere.

The **Youth Service Grant** is used by the Youth Work Ireland to facilitate communities to open and operate local clubs and projects. The Youth Service Grant is one of the few funds that has the capacity to have an impact on the lives of all young people. In line with government policy Youth Work Ireland members welcome and cater for all young people equally. Those who are disadvantaged or marginalised are not isolated in any way but embraced by the project and supported to be part of their local community and to contribute to that community.

Special Projects for Youth (SPY) projects work towards the three goals identified by the National Children's Strategy, ensuring young people have a voice in their projects and in the wider community. SPY projects also play a pivotal role in building young people's resilience and strengthening disadvantaged communities. Resilience has been described as the ability to 'overcome personal difficulties and withstand stress' and is hailed a 'key factor in adolescent coping' (Gilligan, 2001; Daniel and Wassell, 2002 cited in Pinkerton and Dolan, 2007:222). This work is crucial in reducing demands and pressure on more costly and more resource intensive state led interventions. By engaging with SPY Projects, the progress of young people as they get older is tracked, positive relationships are created and maintained, and participants are encouraged and supported to engage with appropriate services at an early stage.

Youth Work Ireland's members manage and deliver 37 **Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP's)** s around the country, providing a cohesive infrastructure which oversees the delivery and development of these vital services. The emphasis is on cost effective delivery with maximum impact in the community. We provide the financial administration to all members for IYJS and through the governance structure all projects are represented in the National Management Forum with IYJS and Garda Office for Children and Youth Affairs. These projects are local community based activities which work with children. These projects aim to help children move away from behaving in a way that might result in them or their friends into trouble with the law. They help children develop their sense of community and their social skills through different activities. The projects offer opportunities for education, employment training, sport, art, music and other activities. Most projects operate outside of school hours. However, in areas with a high proportion of early school-leavers, activities may also be planned during the daytime. The projects seek to encourage a better quality of life for everyone in the community.

Youth Work Ireland runs FÁS funded **Community Training Centres** which target early-school leavers who have been excluded/excluded themselves from mainstream education and offer them second chance vocational training and educational opportunities. Accreditation is through FETAC or LCA from the Department of Education. There is a particular focus on progression to either further training or employment. As the CTC's are integrated into the Youth Service there are opportunities for engagement in youth work in local communities and staff are supported by youth workers in providing a holistic service to the learners. **Youthreach** programmes are also run by Youth Work Ireland which focus on educational progression. Both these initiatives target hard to reach young people and have a strong track record in integrating into the Communities, networking effectively with statutory, community and other voluntary bodies and supporting each person at their particular point of need.

HSE supported projects nationally include Springboard Projects, Neighborhood Youth Projects and Youth Intervention Projects. These projects provide a holistic community based family support service to young people and families. They are key projects supporting the community, based on core principles of health and well being that place particular emphasis on working with young people who are (or at risk of) experiencing difficulties at home, in school or in the community.

2 What is the impact of the Youth Work Ireland?

National Impact

Youth Work Ireland nationally supports and ensures a quality service locally to the benefit of young people and communities particularly through the development and implementation of a Quality Standards Framework throughout its member network. This framework has been extremely influential in the development of the Department's own NQSF. Nationally Youth Work Ireland supports young people to have a voice in the development of services and national policies that affect them. The national organisation also provides oversight on the delivery of projects and programmes and ensures accountability for public funds.

By supporting work in a diverse number of fields Youth Work Ireland nationally assists in improving outcomes for young people and in continuing innovation and responsive to the changing needs of young people in Ireland. A national lead is also given in best practice in Irish youth services. The national organisation also plays a critical role in hosting other national programmes (Music Awards, Youth Work Ireland Games, etc) and supporting healthy lifestyle choices and youth culture and arts. It also ensures effective and efficient child protection practices through staff and volunteer training and Garda vetting and supervision.

Impact of Local Services

In carrying out our work Youth Work Ireland invests €32 million into local communities. Furthermore we estimate that our work results in €1 billion⁴ cost savings to the state by preventing many young people from needing to move on to higher level, more costly state services such as probation, justice, specialist health services etc. To this figure could be added the additional costs saved as a result of reduced welfare dependency and lower unemployment rates among these young people if such preventative work had not been undertaken. Youth Work Ireland also provides an effective gateway and referral service for young people to more specialist services thus reducing the costs of such services and increasing their accessibility.

Youth Work Ireland projects also leverage considerable voluntary effort with over 7,000 volunteers currently involved in the provision of Youth Work Ireland's services. Our members invest substantially in the training and development of these volunteers thus increasing their chances of employment and enhancing the contribution they can make to their communities, to the economy and to society throughout their working life and beyond. We estimate that volunteers contribute €6⁵ million in unpaid contributions to youth services in their local area

⁴ In calculating the impact of Youth Work Ireland's engagement with young people at local level the different types of work- universal services, preventative work with young people at Level 1 (Low risk) and Level 2 (Higher risk) have been banded together (See Figure 1) to give a total number of young people involved in Youth Work Ireland's service at each level per year adding up to a total of 80,000 clients. (For family services we have assumed 3 people pre service) Estimated costs of providing state services for a young person for whom our preventative services had not been available have been estimated at €106,000 per person (the IYJS annual cost for detaining young offenders) for the highest level, €53,000 for the next and a nominal figure of €1,000 for all other interventions. We have divided these figures in half to allow for deadweight.

⁵ We have valued volunteers at a minimum wage and 2 input hours per month.

These figures illustrate how further reductions in Youth Work Ireland services far from saving the state money are likely to increase costs to all government Departments dealing with young people in both the short and longer term.

Example : Youth Work Ireland member Kerry Youth Work Service (KYDS)

KYDS provides the following benefits into the local economy:

Total number of KYDS youth club members: 2233
Average number of young people engaging per mini region: 279
Average number of young people engaging per youth club: 50

Total number of KYDS youth club leaders – 244
Average number engaging per mini region – 30
Average number engaging per youth club - 5

The average youth club in Kerry is allocated approx 1.6 hrs a week per club by KYDS. Child protection training (6 hours) is delivered annually to each mini region in the Diocese. Each mini region receives Volunteer training and young people receive youth participation training. There are 3 key events organised throughout the year for youth clubs to attend. KDYS have also developed a number of policies and procedures which are communicated to clubs annually along with a support pack to inform their practice. An approximate cost for providing this service to 1 youth club for a year is €4,677 euro.

KDYS currently have 45 youth clubs registered which means that the total youth club's support service costs the organisation approximately €210,465 per annum. This figure exceeds the Member Youth Service Grant allocation (2009 = €114,000). The remainder of the cost is subsidised through the Special Projects for Youth Grant (€45,000) & a current annual shortfall of €51,465.

The total value of volunteer contributions to KDYS Youth Club Service is estimated annually at €458,300. This is made up of:

- 244 volunteers @ 2 hours a week (club night) x 26 weeks in the year @ €25 per hour - €317,200
- Volunteer contributions to local events- €73,200
- Volunteer contributions to county events-€18,000
- Volunteer contributions to Munster events- €5400
- Volunteer contributions to national events-€17,000
- Youth Day Volunteer Contribution Total €27,500

The estimated total value of KYDS youth club service is therefore: $€210,465 + €458,300 = €668,765$.

In Limerick over 2010 and 2011, 12 young people from across Limerick City Regeneration areas took part in a Youth Democracy programme, partnered with a group from Ballyfermot Youth Service and 2 groups from Italy. The participants all aged between 17 and 22 years took part in an innovative programme that allowed democracy become relevant for them in their localities and to share these experiences at a national and international level. The programme successfully engaged this older age group, tackling feelings of disenfranchisement, encouraging participation and community involvement.

In summary Youth Work Ireland projects and services aim to deliver

- Less anti-social behaviour among young people
- Lower levels of court attendance

- Healthier lifestyles/less medical costs
- Longer periods in education
- Personal development for young people
- Earlier interventions with young people and families at a local level and in a manner that does not require statutory services.
- Free early and easily accessible counseling service.
- Access to therapists, counsellors, play and educational therapists, Psychologists, life coaches and skilled trades people. These services are all free to the project, are offered by professionally qualified people who volunteer their time to the organisation/project.
- Partnership with schools, statutory and voluntary agencies, local communities and young people which allow the projects to implement prevention programmes targeted at younger people who are at risk.
- Participation on case management conferences and are often the only project/agency that can provide a practical local support and solution
- Safe and welcoming spaces for young people for recreational and social development. Without the project these spaces would not open.
- Support for young people with mental health issues and self harm/depression. These interventions reduce the use of emergency services and therapeutic services.
- Support and post suicide supports that are critical to young people and communities. (Without this there would be a greater need for all statutory services like An Garda Siochana, Social Workers, Emergency Services and therapeutic services.)

3 Could Youth Work Ireland's services be delivered more efficiently and if so how?

Youth Work Ireland has already striven to and achieved efficiencies in response to the current financial and exchequer crisis, particularly by utilising economies of scale in relation to how we deliver our projects. Youth Work Ireland is providing a value for money service to young people and to their communities. Cuts have already been made in Youth Work Ireland's childcare services. Over 80% of project budgets go directly towards the young people they are targeting with the remaining 20% used for overheads and to support a professional standard of delivery.

The process of achieving efficiencies is also being supported nationally. The organisation is committed to a culture of continuous improvement which will lead to ongoing efficiencies in the way we operate. For example Youth Work Ireland supports and ensures a quality and effective service locally to the benefit of young people and communities particularly through the development and implementation of a Quality Standards Framework throughout its member network. Youth Work Ireland leads the national standard in best practice through our unique and comprehensive Quality Standards Framework

The Youth Work Act 2001 acknowledges that youth work programmes are delivered primarily by voluntary youth organisations. Voluntary youth services utilise volunteer time to the maximum by developing a trained and dedicated workforce that delivers frontline services in the most disadvantaged communities at no cost to the state. By utilising volunteer effort scarce state resources and can be concentrated on meeting the needs of those that require higher level professional inputs. Youth Work Ireland's services also limit the number of young people requiring these higher level services by undertaking effective preventative work thus creating the type of savings illustrated in the previous section of the report.

Youth Work Ireland also achieves ongoing efficiencies by providing integrated services locally sharing buildings, costs and overheads across projects as well as with other service providers. Youth Work Ireland are taking the lead in sharing of their premises and resources. This also involves sharing with state agencies such as Irish Youth Justice, The Probation Service, HSE, Family Resource Centres, etc. (However it must be noted that these other voluntary and state bodies are also subject to major cuts and are also looking to make similar savings.)

A number of examples of the type of efficiencies that have been achieved in recent times by Youth Work Ireland include:

- Developing strategic partnerships with other service providers, for example sharing rural transport and youth centres, and working with sports partnerships
- Savings in rent, light, heat, salaries, travel etc.
- Reductions in staff hours, pay and staff numbers
- Renegotiating service contracts, achieving discounts
- Group and bulk purchasing nationally of for example phone packages and insurance with up to 50% savings
- Local fundraising.

The way that Youth Work Ireland operates is also very efficient. For example in the Midlands Regional Youth Service one trained and qualified youth worker supports over 280 volunteers working with 1,861 young people. Youth Work Ireland Cork / Arts Programme designs workshops with very low cost in terms of materials by, for example, using recycled materials, off cuts from companies and the like.

Looking to the future further efficiencies could be made by:

- Multi annual funding which would lead to increase efficiencies and better planning and utilization of limited resources.
- Greater sharing of buildings, facilities and other service locally.
- Greater use of new technology to interact with young people.

However Youth Work Ireland must state that the scope for further efficiencies without serious and potentially serious reductions in front line services is limited.

4 What would happen if Youth Work Ireland experienced further major cuts?

*'That's typical they are taking away everything that's good from us because we are young'
A young person regular said: It would be a tragedy for the young people.*

'While in school I hadn't used the youth info cafe much but after making bad choices I dropped out of my first year in college. I called in to the cafe and was helped decide what I really wanted to do and I was put in the right direction. Thanks to staff help I'm now very happy in my course and I regret not going in sooner and before making my original choices.' **Castlereagh Youth Info café**

If Youth Work Ireland services are cut further many young people will lose out, and those most at risk will be at the greatest disadvantage. Early intervention supports provide by Youth Work Ireland would be lost with resulting additional costs to the young people themselves, to their local communities and to the state. Funding under the Youth Affairs budget line already only covers a proportion of the cost of youth projects. Youth Work Ireland projects also assist in the leveraging of other funding sources in both the public and private sphere.

Such cuts if implemented would be happening at a time when the need for Youth Work Ireland services is in fact increasing. . In 2010 Youth Work Ireland has seen greater demand for more developmental and issue-based programmes, with a growing number of young people 13-15 olds years coming to Youth Work Ireland with extremely low self esteem, little or no confidence, little sense of belonging to the community, who are entering into destructive anti-social and "at risk" behaviour with very little knowledge or understanding of personal safety or emotional damage involved. Discontinuation and reduction of funding for youth projects will further this spiral. The reality of the situation and the experience of Youth Work Ireland's service nationally, is that statutory services such as Social Work, NEWB, etc rely heavily on youth service to support young people and families in achieving their goals. Well established partnerships and relationships locally form a comprehensive and wrap around service for young people experiencing difficulties, which is the 'ideal' situation that is being described and

prescribed in Irish Policy.

For instance in Cork there is already an ongoing unmet demand from schools, HSE, communities, young people, Garda, mental health services, and other agencies to expand services, increase opportunity for access and requests by statutory agencies to access CDYS resources such as counselling services, mentoring services, therapeutic and support services.

The closure of Youth Work Ireland projects supporting literacy would run counter to government policy aimed at improving literacy levels in response to research such as the PISA Report and the OECD.

Reductions in funding of Youth Work Ireland's National Office would lead to a reduction in governance standards, less central best practice support for child protection and vetting and potential increase in insurance and other support costs for individual projects.

Given the Youth Work Ireland's strong links within locally communities a reduction on our services could seriously reduce the relevance of youth services within local communities and limit their capacity to respond to ongoing change. Key community based referral points to social services in relation to child protection and welfare issues could be lost. Over time the majority of youth clubs could close as new volunteers are not trained; child protection training is not done and people drift away due to lack of support. Support for volunteering would be lost, along with huge local knowledge present in localities which other agencies can't compensate for.

Youth Work Ireland have estimated that further reductions at local level could wipe out up to 25% of our already stretched local members leading to diminution of service provision, greater youth alienation, poorer communities, lack of a coherent and informed voice for young people, for and a reduction in employability amongst volunteers and greater unemployment and loss of expertise among our staff workers

Closure of individual projects would have serious knock on and long terms effects. This would be reflected in terms of increased early school leaving, increased mental health issues, increased misuse of drugs & alcohol, increased family pressure, increased dependency on the state, greater demand for prison spaces, higher unemployment payments, more children in care and the need for more health care treatment. As is stands, it is generally accepted that many of our most vulnerable young people 'fall through the cracks' and suffer extreme disadvantage. Further cuts in the Youth Sector would worsen this situation.

The removal of Youth Information services would result in young people making less informed choices, failing to access available supports and emergency services at times of crises with more being ill prepared for the challenges they face in life.

The most disadvantaged areas and young people would lose most. Many young people taking part in youth projects are not taking part in other forms of activity like sports or recreational activity so they would lose touch with mainstream society. A recent example of this can be noted with the London Riots in August 2011. If our projects close, vulnerable children would not come to the attention of HSE until in crisis, if at all. This would result in:

- A rapid rise in demand for other services and referrals to already overstretched state agencies such as the HSE, the Gardai
- An increase in rural isolation
- Loss of many community facilities currently managed by Youth Work Ireland members
- Lack of professionally trained resources to carry out Garda vetting, child protection training

For example Westmeath Comhairle na nOg, facilitated by Youth Work Ireland's Athlone Youth Information Service, has been highlighted nationally for its ability to engage seldom heard

young people in its Comhairle and subsequent Dail na nOg representatives. These services could be lost if Youth Work Ireland services in the Midlands were reduced.

In the past 18 months Youth Work Ireland's Southill Youth Intervention Project in Limerick has played a central role in helping to close several active social work cases by working closely with social workers and providing community based supports for the young people and families concerned.

Letterkenny Youth Information Centre had an average footfall through its Centre (including drop-in facility) of 133 young people per day based on 246 days open in 2010. These young people would lose the youth information 'process' whereby they develop a rapport with staff over time and benefit from information provision, internet access, drop-in activities, one to one sessions, teen between and a host of outreach developmental education programmes.

Navan's Youth Café has a footfall of 7,000 p.a. in one of Ireland's biggest and fastest growing towns could be lost.

Young people in Roscommon would probably no longer have the experiences they reported when using the local Youth Work Ireland's service:

"It means having my voice and opinions heard - but having fun along the way!"

"I gained a sense of who I truly am!!! 😊"

"means a lot to me. It has helped me through hard times and made me feel like someone and I can do anything I want and has helped me build my future. It means everything to me"

The huge experience and institutional knowledge that has been built up by local Youth Work Ireland projects could be lost if further cuts are imposed on Youth Work Ireland services. The focus instead Youth Work Ireland believe must be on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided to young people in pursuit of government policy aimed at improving the prospects and experience of all young people to reduce risk and help to mitigate the profound effects of the current recession on young people in Ireland today.

5 Could Youth Work Ireland be funded differently, are there potential private or fundraised sources of income?

Fundraising at local level for Youth Work Ireland projects has always taken place but this has become more much more challenging over the last few years. A certain amount of fundraised income is already built into the plans of many Youth Work Ireland projects. All projects are involved in street collections, bag packing, sponsored cycles, mini-marathons, and corporate days.

Youth Work Ireland nationally is becoming more proactive in the fundraising area but the impact of this on the bottom line will take some time. Fundraising work also diverts crucial effort and time away from the actual frontline contact work and can reduce the level and impact of such work. However early successes have been achieved with B&Q and IMRO however this takes time and a lot of reorganisation which is not explicitly supported by our funders. Opportunities for leverage existing funding are constantly being investigated.

Many rural and isolated projects see little potential for fundraising as the local economy is already depressed and these areas are already experiencing a decline in state services.

An exemption from VAT and Employers PRSI by the state could save Youth Work Ireland and other services a huge amount. The Government could examine more imaginative sources for funding for this type of work such as Community Bonds.

6 Could charges be made to Youth Work Ireland to generate income?

We can show many instances of integrated services aimed at reducing costs and we are open to more. While there might be further potential in selling services to the private sector and we are conducting consultations to assess this but resources would need to be freed up to do this in a substantial way.

Individual projects are continuously seeking to generate income and this is already happening in certain limited areas. However a significant proportion of Youth Work Ireland projects are based in RAPID and other disadvantaged areas. Charging the most disadvantaged young people to participate would be counterproductive and could reduce participation amongst these key young people. ⁶Many support services are already provided to volunteers who would not be in a position to pay for them. (A key tenet of the European Youth Charter is that "Youth information services shall be free of charge" while the Standards for Youth Information state "Information is provided free to all users.")

All Youth Work Ireland members are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee and therefore their ability to commercialise their activities is restricted. However Youth Work Ireland could sell more of their services to other service providers but this would take time and presumably is not what Youth Work Ireland are being publicly funded to do. (The Standards for Youth Information state "There will be financial provision, at a realistic level, to cover start-up and running costs, for e.g. premises, staff, information materials, promotion, support services, furniture, and equipment.")

However, some additional services offered by Youth Information Centres can generate some income, e.g. Secretarial services, Small ads. Internet Access, ID cards, Passport photos. It is our experience that these do not generate a huge income and barely cover the costs of providing the service.

Youth Work Ireland does see scope for some franchised or contracted out services that Youth Work Ireland could provide for the state at much reduced cost if there was a willingness to do so. For example:

- Youth Work Ireland could be funded to co-ordinate and provide training throughout the country in the Quality Assurance Framework (NQSF)
- Youth Work Ireland could be funded to provide a number of services to young people to support the work of the new National Employment and Entitlement Service (NEES).
- Youth Work Ireland could coordinate and provide regional training to youth workers and volunteers in child protection etc..

7 Could Youth Work Ireland's activities be merged, delivered more efficiently or share services with other projects or organisations?

Youth Work Ireland already provides a joined up service locally. For instance the SPY project in Midleton provides services to over 450 young people aged between 10 and 19 years in Mallow. The project addresses a wide range of issues;

- Early school leaving,
- Mental health issues / One to One supports and interventions
- Advocacy and family mediation
- Non formal education programmes / personal development
- Recreational / health and well being

⁶ Some projects are already charging a small fee for their services and the scope for further expansion here is very limited.

- Anti-social behaviour
- Breaking the cycle of disempowerment that can be inherent in the family.
- Counselling/Mentoring and personal development
- Arts/Drama/Music groups/Drop in Services/Youth Cafe/ Outreach Service

As is best practice, Youth Work Ireland projects and services safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people in communities and families through up to date child protection practices and procedures. Youth Projects and Clubs are often the place where child protection and welfare concerns arise and are reported to statutory agencies and authorities.

Many of the young people engage in the SPY project through self referrals, referral from schools and other agencies as well as targeted outreach. Engagement in all Youth Work Ireland services and projects is entirely voluntary. This project also provides support and direction to a range of volunteers and youth clubs in rural villages and communities around Midleton.

The SPY Projects in Carlow work collaboratively with the Carlow School Completion Programme, the HSE and NEWB Staff. All of the projects are more effective as a result of this collaborative approach. By engaging with the SPY Projects, their progress as they get older is tracked, positive relationships are created and maintained, and they are encouraged and supported to engage with appropriate services at an early stage.

Youth Work Ireland's Integrated work also involves working in partnership with the HSE, schools, Gardai Probation, Drugs projects etc.

For the future there may be potential for more multifunctional spaces that Youth Work Ireland can use along with other organisations but the initiative for such developments often lies with the state.

Reductions in the current duplication of services for young people could provide savings for the state. For example an increasing number of agencies with no experience or qualifications in delivering youth work projects and with little evidence of best practice are providing or considering providing services for young people in their area. If the state were to require such services to be provided by organisations with recognized expertise and experience and with a physical presence in the area, such as Youth Work Ireland, this could maximize the efficiency and impact of such funding.

Similarly the non implementation of the Youth Work Act means that a number of Youth Officers within the VEC lack a clear remit. Added to this the agreed Government policy of merging VEC's is likely to reduce the funding required for these positions. This provides an opportunity to consolidate funding for local youth services within the Youth Work Ireland with resulting cost savings to the state.

8 Can Youth Work Ireland contribute to economic growth and if so how?

'I wanted to do hairdressing but I also felt I would need business so I decided to do business first. It was only when I went into the youth info cafe and was telling the workers my plans that they pointed out if I did business first I wouldn't get a grant for doing hairdressing after because business was a level above hairdressing. Only for them I'd have messed up big time'

Strokestown Youth Info Café

Youth Work Ireland's youth Information centres provide the following services which assist young people to access employment and thus contribute to the economy:

- Project reference material for students on subject areas such as homelessness, poverty, health issues, drugs, alcohol, crime etc.

- Personal assistance with Curriculum Vitae, job applications and college applications, interview preparation
- Provision of and assistance with completing applications forms, e.g. driving license, driving theory Test, ISIC, IYC and Passport forms.
- Access to computers with internet access.

Through participation in such programmes young people:

- have the capacity to stay in education/training longer.
- have better opportunities for gainful employment.
- become independent professionals as entrepreneurs e.g. in the music industry.
- have the ability to make informed life struggle decisions e.g. having a healthier lifestyle.

Youth Hubs and Youth Cafes also provide employment in communities and put money back into the local economy.

Youth work also fosters confidence and independence and these skills contribute to entrepreneurship and economic growth. Several projects directly support entrepreneurship such as the Irish Youth Music Awards and the Youth Bank.

The Irish Youth Music Awards engage with over 15,000 young people from twenty-two regions across Ireland, the IYMA's core aim is to give young musicians and those interested in working in the music business, the opportunity to develop their creative and collaborative skills and access the knowledge and advice of some of Ireland's most respected music industry professionals. The end goal of the twenty-two competing regions is to win The Irish Youth Music Award.

Youth Bank is a unique way of involving young people in community activity. It is an all-island of Ireland initiative operating through a network of grant-making committees run by young people. The funding distributed by these decision-making committees supports projects designed and run by young people that address issues and concerns relevant to them and their local community.

Youth Work Ireland's Youth Information Services play a key role in the labour market choices and activity of young people thus assisting the National Employment Service at a critical time of growing youth unemployment when young people need to be well informed of their options.

Young people will have the capacity to stay in education/training longer through support, development and coaching services and will have better opportunities for gainful employment.

Various commentators and bodies such as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment have pointed to the need not just for more young people to take up maths and science but also the need for more rounded young people who are better able to communicate and have a wide range of flexible skills. Youth Work is a bedrock for such an approach to the development of young people. Youth Work Ireland projects foster employability, soft skills, training and up skilling. also supports volunteers and staff in their development and in linking them into higher and further education.

Based on Youth Work Ireland's past experience of a similar situation in the 80's early 90's when again youth emigration was a reality, we can state without fear of contradiction that the provision of proper information to young people is imperative in making informed and positive choices about their futures. Also importantly assisting young people to access education, training and work opportunities that will enhance the ability of these young people to contribute to the economy.

For example Youth Work Ireland's **projects and services** champion the idea of young people as problem solvers. This has instilled in SPY participants an interest in contributing positively

to their local community and society as a whole. A trend has emerged for young people from targeted areas involved with the Youth Work Ireland moving on to third level education and availing of employment options thus reducing welfare dependency in these areas. A positive example of such activity is the Youth Work Ireland's Youth Bank, an innovative model promoting community leadership & entrepreneurial skills.

Youth Work Ireland also stimulates economic activity within local communities by, for example, organising national and regional level events using vendors and venues from the local community. Youth Work Ireland youth clubs themselves also run events on a smaller scale purchasing services and supplies from local vendors and using local venues with spin off benefits and multiplier effects on the local economy.

For example Limerick SPY Projects are the biggest hirers of the rural bus in Limerick. In the first six months of 2011 this rural bus transported over 3411 young people at a cost of €25,600.

Added to this volunteers that are trained and work with Youth Work Ireland projects provide free services and expertise into the local economy. For instance in Limerick City and County it is conservatively estimated that Youth Work Ireland volunteers provide an average of 490 hours per week to the community which has been valued at the equivalent of €110,000 per week of paid labour.

Overall Youth Work Ireland projects create social capital within local areas and often in highly disadvantaged areas.

9 Can Youth Work Ireland save the exchequer money in the current or future two years and if so how?

All Youth Work Ireland projects save the exchequer money by leveraging considerable voluntary effort in the provision of valuable local services with over 7,000 volunteers currently involved in the provision of Youth Work Ireland's services.

By maintaining its services Youth Work Ireland can continue to reduce the costs to the state of a failure to invest sufficiently in prevention and early intervention services for young people, especially young people at risk. As shown above Youth Work Ireland estimates that our work results in €1 billion cost savings to the state by preventing many young people from needing to move on to higher level, more costly state services such as probation, justice, specialist health services etc.

Every youth work intervention also contributes to participants' wellbeing. The gains in improved health and quality of life generate significant economic benefits including public expenditure savings. According to the Irish Sports Council, for every €1 invested in sport there is a potential saving of €3 in health service spending. A recent UK report estimated that every £1 invested in childhood social and emotional programmes had a saving of £83 (Munro 2011⁷).

All these contributions have significant spin off benefits for the individuals concerned, their families, local communities and the wider economy.

Youth Work Ireland projects by their very nature save the exchequer funding. The loss of such projects will therefore increase rather decrease exchequer expenditure. However Youth Work

⁷ Munro review of child protection.

Ireland is aware of the serious constraints on government expenditure and is willing to work with government in achieving further efficiencies, in maximising the spinoff possible from its expertise and experience and in optimizing the contribution it can make in helping to ensure that the young people it serves can contribute to their local community and to the economy now and over their lifetimes.

Specific areas where Youth Work Ireland believes that it could help save exchequer funding are summarised as follows:

- Youth Work Ireland be funded to co-ordinate and provide training throughout the country in the Quality Assurance Framework (NQSF) which is currently being carried out in a range of formats and by a large number of organisations. This would include taking over some of the work currently being managed by VEC Youth Officers who are not being replaced due to government cutbacks (the VEC subhead for youth services is currently €1.4 million, a ten percent savings could reduce costs by €0.14 million.)
- Reduce the current duplication of back office services by transferring the management of independent local youth projects (estimated at 150-200 projects nationally) as well as those run by non-youth work groups to Youth Work Ireland's Regional Youth Services which have the expertise, experience and a physical presence in the areas concerned with estimated savings of €30,000 per project.
- Youth Work Ireland coordinate and provide the regional training of youth workers and volunteers in child protection etc to other service providers which is currently being offered by a range of organisations with varying programmes and standards.
- Youth Work Ireland take over and run Comhairle and Dail n'Og thus eliminating the administrative and reporting duplication and the current need for ongoing engagement of Local Authority staff and VEC officers as well as Youth Workers and National Participation Officers.
- Greater sharing of building and facilities locally with statutory funders encouraged to develop arrangements whereby their funded groups share facilities.
- Youth Work Ireland be funded to provide a number of services to young people to support the work of the new National Employment and Entitlement Service (NEES) through utilising Youth Information Centres, Youth Cafes and other centres offering locally-based information and referrals to other parts of the NEES. (Based on ESF returns and the book of estimates we estimate that the total NEES budget including FAS, LES and DSP Employment Supports is about 100m annually. If 15m was contracted out with a 10% reduction in costs an estimated €1.5m could be saved by the state.)
- The Department of Children & Youth Affairs carry out a review of Youth Affairs spend to ensure that all such funding go towards youth work within the meaning of the Act. (For example over €1m was spent from the youth budget on a Community (Development) facility in Cabra – the Management of this facility is paid for from the Youth Budget though the activity of the centre goes well beyond youth work. Furthermore the Gaisce Awards is fully paid for by the Youth Budget even though 70-80 participants come from Formal Education. The Department also funds sporting development officers in each county from Youth Funds and this is not youth work within the meaning of the Act.)

Appendix Relevant Government Strategies and Plans

National Development Plan 2007-13

The current National Development Plan is structured on a life cycle basis. One of the four high level goals in the Executive Summary is;

“Further equipping our children and youth with the skills and education to grasp the opportunities presented to us”

There is a specific section of the plan on Youth Work which provides

Some €424 million will be available under the Youth Sector Sub-Programme to support the development of the youth sector, i.e. the non-formal education sector which aims to advance the social and personal development of young persons. The first National Youth Work Development Plan (NYWDP) set out a strategy for the development of youth work in Ireland 2003-2007. The NYWDP provides broad goals as well as measures to counter social exclusion and disadvantage that fit within the framework of the NDP 2007-2013.

These are as follows:

Supporting the Youth Work Sector

The objective of this measure will be to develop and resource the sector, both voluntary and statutory, for the continued rollout of the provisions of the Youth Work Act, 2001 and of the various elements of the NYWDP. It will also support the work of volunteers and youth work practitioners

National Youth Work Development Unit and Assessor of Youth Work Initiatives

The objectives under this measure include the undertaking of a number of key research and development initiatives, in line with relevant policy objectives. The National Youth Work Development Unit will facilitate, over time, the rollout of certain key initiatives envisaged under the Youth Work Act, 2001 and the NYWDP including initiatives such as the Youth Work Development Project Fund, and the National Award Scheme for Volunteers. The Assessor of Youth Work will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating youth work projects and programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science and assisting in the development of definitive criteria for the evaluation of youth work. The Assessor of Youth Work will also confirm, through evaluation, that public funds are being used efficiently and effectively.

Developing the Existing Physical and Human Infrastructure

The aim of this measure will be to develop and improve the current schemes administered by the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science drawing upon the resources and expertise of the National Youth Work Development Unit and the Assessor of Youth Work. These schemes include the Youth Service Grant Scheme, Special Projects for Youth Scheme, Local Youth Club Grant Scheme and the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund. The area of Youth Information Centres will be addressed with a view to maximising their usage in a cost-effective, targeted and innovative manner.

Equality, Cultural, Social, Multi-ethnic and Citizenship Youth Initiatives

This measure will include new and existing initiatives which will have a broad positive impact on young people, including those who are socially excluded or disadvantaged. These initiatives will be developed on a partnership basis between the appropriate agencies. An equality initiative will be undertaken with pilot projects and training programmes aimed at promoting best practice on equality issues in youth organisations. A programme will be devised aimed at enhancing the

contribution of youth work in a multicultural society to be supported and resourced by the relevant statutory bodies.

There are also relevant sub programmes and commitments on youth justice, Youthreach, education, drugs and suicide.

This role is realised in the Ryan Report and it's Implementation Plan;

“In general, such children are best served by community-based family support services that work directly with them and their families, offering, for example, pre-school places, school breakfast clubs, youth clubs, mentoring services and practical help with parenting.”

“Short-term reactive neglect, a welfare concern, is best dealt with at a primary care team level, with inputs from public health nursing, family support services, and youth or other community Agencies”

“Generic services, such as youth services, have much to offer and should be involved at planning and operational level with those services that work with neglected children and those at risk. It is a failing of the current child care system that cooperation among agencies and staff is dependent on local leaders rather than on standard practice. Agencies working together with families for whom there are child welfare concerns should identify a key worker – not necessarily a social worker – to ensure duplication of services does not occur and the child's needs are met.”

“Reducing risk is not just about responding to problems; it is also about avoiding the circumstances that create risk in the first place. Access to social networks for young people at risk in the community and in care, such as youth and sporting organisations, is critical and contributes to their sense of inclusion and achievement of positive outcomes. Research indicates that engagement with youth service providers can be one of the few constants in the lives of many young people in care. This, combined with the ability to maintain engagement with young people well beyond the age of 18 (either as service users or as leaders), means that youth services play an important part in supporting children and young people at risk.”

Agenda for Children's Services

This is seen as a key handbook for practitioners and people under the auspices of the department and is a key document. The broad focus on on;

- a whole child/whole system approach to meeting the needs of children;
- a focus on better outcomes for children and families.

There is also a strong emphasis on reflective practice in the document so this may be a good way of incorporating a lot of non frontline work.

The Document sets out 7 National Service Outcomes for Children in Ireland

8. Healthy, both physically and mentally
9. Supported in active learning

10. Safe from accidental and intentional harm
11. Economically secure
12. Secure in the immediate and wider physical environment
13. Part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community
14. Included and participating in society

Services are seen as active, strengths based and positive. Children are themselves resilient active participants in their own lives and the lives of those caring for them. Young people should experience the service as

- Whole child/whole system focused;
- Accessible and engaging;
- Coherent and connected to other services and community resources;
- Responsive to their needs;
- Staffed by interested and effective staff;
- Culturally sensitive and anti-discriminatory.

In order to promote the 7 National Service Outcomes for Children, services need to strive to achieve 5 essential characteristics:

1. Connecting with family and community strengths.
2. Ensuring quality services.
3. Opening access to services.
4. Delivering integrated services.
5. Planning, monitoring and evaluating services

Youth Justice Strategy and Review

The document is still the latest statement of policy in the area. Through a set of high level goals, the National Youth Justice Strategy sets out the focus for agencies working in the youth justice system over the next three years (2008 – 2010). These high level goals are:

1. To provide leadership and build public confidence in the youth justice system.
2. To work to reduce offending by diverting young people from offending behaviour.
3. To promote the greater use of community sanctions and initiatives to deal with young people who offend.
4. To provide a safe and secure environment for detained children that will assist their early re-integration into the community.
5. To strengthen and develop information and data sources in the youth justice system to support more effective policies and services

Educational Reform, Disadvantage and Early School Leaving

Since 2005 the Department of Education has consolidated all its support and work in the area of educational disadvantage into the DEIS Initiative (Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools). The vast bulk of the measures under the initiative are targeted at designated disadvantaged schools but some have a broader community remit. The Initiative works by designing a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and introducing a new integrated School Support Programme (SSP). The action plan seeks to achieve outcomes in the following areas;

- Early childhood education provision
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Family literacy
- Early childhood education
- Primary education

- Second-level education
- Role of local authority library system
- Role of home and local community
- Measures to enhance attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment
- Targeted additional educational supports
- Curricular relevance and choice
- Role of information and communication technologies (ICTs)
- Higher education access programmes

Youth Work Ireland Members

Canal Communities Regional
Youth Services
Carlow Regional Youth Service
Clare Youth Service
CDYS Youth Work Ireland
Youth Work Ireland Cork
Donegal Youth Service
FDYS Youth Work Ireland
Youth Work Ireland Galway
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service
Kildare Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland Laois
Limerick Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland County Longford
Youth Work Ireland Louth
Meath Youth Federation
Midlands Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland Monaghan
North Connaught Youth Service
Ossory Youth
Youth Work Ireland Roscommon/
North East Galway
Tipperary Regional Youth Service
Waterford Regional Youth Service

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