

'Engaging the Power of Youth'

- Youth Peer Education and Youth Peer Mentoring in Kerry

By Gerald Fitzgibbon

Commissioned by the Community-Based Youth Network, Kerry.

"In the actions of the best of men, others find their rule of action"
Bhagavad Gita, (3, 21).

"We are witnessing a collision between our civilisation and the earth.....we have no more than ten years in which to make a difference, otherwise it's too late. It's a question of political will."
Al Gore from the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* 2006.

"While roads and similar infrastructural initiatives might be critical to the continued development of the economy, we should not forget that the key goal is to build a safer, more inclusive and more fulfilling society rather than simply a wealthier one." Paul O'Mahony, 2002, *Copping On Annual Report*

"Suicide was the biggest cause of death amongst young people between 15-24 years in 2003. There were 444 deaths by suicide in Ireland in 2003, 30% of these deaths occurred amongst 15- 24 year olds"
Central Statistics Office (2004) *Vital Statistics for the Fourth Quarter of 2004 and Summary for 2003*, Dublin Stationary Office.

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Do Cearbhúil na h-aislinge geala a thug *main amie* quando ci voleva.

The Community Based Youth Network

The Community Based Youth Network in Kerry is an informal network of Education and Youth personnel from the Partnerships and Community Groups in the county. We meet fairly regularly in the interests of information sharing, cohesion and mutual support. For example, we recently compiled an overview of counselling services to adolescents in County Kerry and made a presentation to the regional office of the Department of Education and Science.

All of our members had had some positive experiences of peer education and peer mentoring in practice and were anxious to adopt a more strategic approach to its development and proliferation locally. As a result we pooled our resources and drew up terms of reference for a review of best practice and defined action plan for Kerry. Gerald Fitzgibbon was awarded the research contract and we wish to thank him for his dedication and enthusiasm in producing such a comprehensive and innovative document. We were also ably assisted by the insights and input of Joe Brennan from Kerry Education Services and Adele Kerrisk from KDYS, both crucial partner agencies in expanding peer education and implementing best practice in the county.

There is much food for thought and action in this report and we trust that it will lead to new ways of engaging and empowering our young people into the future.

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Foreword

“Le combat spirituelle est aussi brutale que la bataille d’hommes.” Arthur Rimbaud

At the same time as advertisers idealise all things youthful in an effort to make us associate the positive elements of youth with their products, another section of the media presents us with the negative side of youth: troublesome teenagers, drunk & disorderly yobs, vandalism, theft, and daily hand-wringing about how to fix this problem, in some cases, as though youth were a disease that had to be treated. Every generation grows up and forgets when they themselves were young, every generation thinks “the youth of today” have gone to the dogs. Yet young people are generally, full of energy, impressionable, and able to move mountains once they begin to apply themselves in a positive way.

More and more commentators of the industrially developed world are beginning to point to internal cultural problems in how their society frames and educates young people. In times past some children were unwillingly forced into adulthood, through the scourges of child labour. Yet children also had the ability to travel, go to university, learn a trade at a much earlier age than they do now. Intellectually, children grow up quicker today, but are kept in legally enforced childhood even longer. Some criticise the academic passive nature of much of conventional schooling as unsuited to the very kinetic intelligence of the average teenager who has only in very recent history been subjected to sedentary lifestyles. (John Abbott, The 21st Century Learning Initiative.)

Education like human civilisation itself, is currently in the throes of a crisis. Like all crises, this one presents the opportunity for ‘decision’ and change. [‘Crisis’, from the Greek “*krisis*” meaning ‘decision’.] With the growing complexity of global society, some educational practitioners, like some of their political leaders, seek shelter in more radical, fundamentalist, simplistic versions of old values and old belief systems. The growth in creationist teaching is an example of this (though this, in many ways, is a reaction to the equally unsatisfactory and objectionable positing - to spiritually oriented people, that is - of science and “Big Bang” theory as the foundation of human morality and ethics.)

The 60s brought with them a freer, less authoritarian society. However, for freedom to work, it must be accompanied by the complementary value of responsibility. This is the challenge of a more child-centred approach to education: getting the balance right between discipline and freedom. The 60s also saw the growth of liberatory education, influenced by people like Paolo Freire. In this approach, taking responsibility for the progress of ones learning and the development of critical awareness are the key values. The continual growth of peer-education and mentoring methods fits into this schema, where getting youth involved in their own learning is recognised as a positive development and a more effective form of education in certain situations.....

Introduction to Peer Education & Peer Mentoring

Context

Over the past 15 years, like many other aspects of life in Ireland, the nature and context of youth education and services have changed significantly. Changing families, changing work practices, changes in leisure habits, the move from rural to urban, technological changes, changes in culture and values have all meant a changed landscape. Institutions that have traditionally dealt with youth have had to modify their practice to keep abreast of those changes, while many new providers of youth education and other services have appeared on the scene.

In Kerry, as well as nationally, new structures, policy and methods have come into being, as investment in Youth work and Education has grown steadily.

Rationale

This review of Youth Peer Education and Youth Peer Mentoring in Kerry comes in the context of all of these changes. The proposal for a referendum to enshrine the rights of Children in the Irish Constitution is the latest demonstration of more child-friendly official attitudes to children. Much of Irish policy regarding youth is influenced by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the Irish government signed up to in 1992. In it's submission to UNCRC the Irish government states that it "*....recognises its duty to care for children, but also its duty to empower children and young people to participate in issues that affect their lives.*" Participation is also Goal 1 of the National Children's Strategy: "*...children will have a voice in matters which affect their lives.*" At the level of policy, approaches & methods involving youth-participation and youth-empowerment are now mainstream.

It is acknowledged in years of research & practice that the peer-led approach to youth education and development strengthens and empowers young people to take an active role in influencing policies and programmes that affect their lives. The purpose of this work is not to further evaluate the basis of peer-led methods of education. The rationale of this review comes in view of the fact that to date, in Kerry, peer-led projects have taken place on an ad hoc basis. The steering group of the Kerry Community Based Youth Network (a countywide network of Education and Youth Officers from Partnerships and Community groups delivering the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme under the National Development Plan) was looking for a defined action plan to identifying current best practice, strategic partnerships and potential funding sources. By compiling an overview of current peer-led projects in Kerry, looking at good practice nationally and internationally, and by consulting with local involved groups and organisations, it was hoped to pool information and ideas and create a more cohesive approach by making specific recommendations.

In Kerry, the Community-Based Youth Network oversees cohesion of the Community-Based Youth Initiatives and comprises representatives of North Kerry Together, Partnership Tralee, KDYS, Comhar Dhuibhne, South Kerry Development Partnership, Kerry Education Service /Youthreach Killorglin.

Notes on approach to review

Co-ordinated by the Kerry Community Based Youth Network, this work is a primarily a review. With many different departments and agencies working with youth: from Justice, to Health, Education, Social & Family Affairs, county councils, fisheries boards, including sports organisations; the scope of this report was potentially extremely vast. A choice was made to deal mostly, though not exclusively with the projects under the sphere of influence of the organisations represented by the steering group. This work does not examine the great work done by sporting organisations all across the county (this would merit research in its own right).

Youth Peer Education

“Youth Peer Education is an approach or a strategy whereby well-trained and motivated young people actively attempt to reach their peers (those similar to them in age and background) and help ensure, either in an organized or an informal way, that those peers have the optimal knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills to be responsible for and to protect their health and well-being.” Y-PEER – (www.youthpeer.org) Y-PEER is one of the activities of the Subcommittee on Peer Education of the United Nations Interagency Group on Young People's Health Development and Protection.

“Peer Education and training is based on the principle that people (whatever their age) are the experts on their own lives and therefore they are the best starting point for any local planning or action process.” (p.31) Tammi, Lynne (2003) *Telling It Like It Is – An Introduction to Peer Education and Training*, Article 12, Scotland.

In researching this report I take into account two main views of Peer Education:

1. peer-to-peer teaching - one group of people acting as educators to another of close or similar age;
2. involvement in, control of & leadership among a group of their own learning process; this sees peer education as being intrinsically linked to youth participation and empowerment, an educational method which implies a change in the relationship between teacher and student and in the manner in which the teaching/learning process occurs. The teacher doesn't use the authority of his/her position to direct those being taught; it's a horizontal relationship where both student and teacher move together towards a goal, with mutual respect for each other.

This method can be used amongst people of any age. In this report, we are dealing principally with Youth Peer Education:

1. one group of young people acting as educators to another of close or similar age (also known as Peer-to-Peer),
2. involvement in, control of & leadership among a group of young people of their own learning process.

Youth Peer Education then, is both the youth-led approach to education as well as young people teaching and influencing each other. (One of the youth organisations examined below uses the peer-influencing ability of younger youth workers as the basis of its work, - see p.41 Opportunity Youth, Northern Ireland).

Reason for it's popularity

Peer Education's popularity as a method for working with young people comes from the strength of peer influence among that age group. Education is happening all the time, informally, among young people. Youth Peer Education seeks to tap into that same energy and motivation behind natural educational processes, and direct it in a beneficial way.

Peer education is often also seen to be a more effective method for certain topics: Lalor and Baird highlighted the crucial role that peers play in the everyday lives of young people, particularly as providers of 'new information'¹. While an article in a recent issue of *Drugnet* suggests that adult groups that deliver drug education to young people should

reflect on their methods and give serious thought to training young people themselves in the design and delivery of peer education².

Importance of The Facilitator

How Peer Education is delivered very much depends on the people involved, especially the facilitator. How democratic is it to be? That can often be a matter of subjectivity and interpretation.

The values and life-skills of the teacher/facilitator are crucial to the success of the peer education project, and are themselves measured in the process. It will be a learning experience for both the peer trainer and the young peer educator. A good teacher/facilitator tries to motivate their students to be interested, involved and engaged in the learning process, so that elements of peer education are often used instinctively to complement conventional educational practice.

System of Values

Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire advocated a form of learning that empowered the learner develop a critical consciousness and take command of their own development. These theories have wide acceptance as educational methods, and have greatly influenced the peer-based approach. They are also, however, quite political, in that they imply a certain view of the world and of people, whereby, education is seen as a process for the liberation of human beings within that world. As such, these methods are unlikely to be suitable where liberation is not desirable, or where education is viewed as a means of indoctrination.

A group of young people could deliver, word for word, an educational programme that they have received from an adult facilitator. This might be satisfying for the facilitator but hardly that engaging for the young people. More empowering would be for the young people, with the help of the facilitator, to come up with a way of delivering the programme suited to their strengths and talents. If more time-consuming and challenging, it also allows the young people to be more engaged with the subject matter.

Just how peer-led the peer education will be depends much on the values of the facilitator. If an educator's goal is to give young people power and confidence to achieve their own aims, the young people's own ideas, talents & energies are more likely to emerge. The job of the teacher/facilitator is to use their perhaps greater experience and knowledge to support and guide the student/young person towards achieving their own ends.

Formal & Non-formal Educational Settings

Peer Education methods can be used in formal and informal educational settings.

It might be seen to be less suited to mainstream teaching practice, where teachers have to follow a pre-defined lesson plan; nonetheless, elements can be incorporated. Transition Year at second level already allows students and teachers much leeway for more student involvement and participation.

One academic has suggested further changes to shift the focus of Junior Cert from the Leaving Cert ethos to the wider emotional, social, physical and aesthetic development of the child. He proposes

“devolving the design of the Junior Cert syllabus to the local school.. [in order to]...give teachers a much closer relationship to the syllabus[...].allow for student involvement in developing the syllabus and provide for much greater synergy between the school and the wider local community. [This..]could

transform the student-teacher relationship whereby the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning to a programme that is driven by an actively engaged student group."³

In youth work practice, peer education can also be understood in a broad or narrow sense. Youth involvement and leadership are key values in that field, so in a broad sense, peer education is what youth work is all about. The Youth Work Act 2001 defines youth work as a "*planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation.*" (my emphasis) Projects and programmes initiated and led by young people with the assistance of older people can also be classed as peer education. A narrower sense would be where peer education is the specifically chosen method, employed in a pre-designed educational programme on certain themes, e.g. a number of youths doing a training course on mental health, then designing & delivering a presentation on that subject to their peers.

Youth Peer Education then, can involve a number of different approaches, whether in the formal school setting, as part of youth work practice or indeed independent of formally trained practitioners.

Underlying Values, Belief System

People's values and understandings can differ widely, depending on the assumptions arising from their core belief systems. Some educationalists believe in empowering people to liberate themselves from oppressive political, social and economic circumstances. Others see education as a means of getting people to function efficiently in the economy. This raises the question of "education by whom, for whose benefit?" In Ireland today, the collapse of the Catholic Church and the rise of commercialism, has led to a crisis of values. Constantly promoted by advertisers and interests, the acquisition of wealth is currently promoted as the marker of a new morality, as important in making value judgements as millennia-old Christian notions of fairness or charity. It is important that those working with young people have reflected on their own values, as these often provide 'object', unspoken lessons.

The background for investment in education and youth development in Ireland is the National Development Plan and the National Partnership agreements between government, unions and civil society groups. These reflect a value system that places education and development in a humanistic notion of self-realisation, not just economic notions of success. Every person (young person in this case) has emotional, spiritual, intellectual as well as financial potential that needs to be developed in order to further that person's quality of life, and that of their community. With the ever-increasing influence of trans-national business over public life, it is vital that educators continuously assert and uphold these core cultural values, so that *society* does not become *economy*.

Youth peer-based methods then, imply an underlying value system: belief and trust in the liberation and freedom of the young learner; and youth peer education methods are best suited and most appropriate when the over-riding goal is that of youth empowerment and youth leadership; when the greater freedom of young people to make their own choices is viewed as something positive to attain.

Youth Peer Mentoring

“Mentoring refers to a developmental relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced partner referred to as a mentoree (sometimes vernacularized into mentee) or protégé.”⁴

Peer mentoring is different from peer education, although based on similar understandings of teaching and learning. The notion of mentoring is more in the public discourse than the notion of empowerment. RTE has a high profile reality TV programme called ‘The Mentor’. In this and in other related international TV formats, aspiring business entrepreneurs are teamed up with successful business people for guidance and support in their project. Enterprise Ireland for example runs a Mentor Network service for business people. While mentoring is also among the services provided by the Business Incubation Centre on campus at IT, Tralee.

A mentor is someone who exercises influence over another usually due to superior experience or knowledge. These relationships are often initiated by younger more inexperienced people, in an effort ‘find their feet’ in a new field or area. Other times, the senior person will take a person *under their wing*. These relationships involving *mentoring* often occur informally. Formal structured mentoring seeks to replicate this naturally occurring learning phenomenon.

The word ‘mentor’ was inspired by the character of Mentor in Homer’s *Odyssey*, who had the role of guiding young Telemachus in his time of difficulty. Historically significant systems of mentorship include the guru-disciple tradition practiced in Hinduism and Buddhism, the discipleship system practiced in Judaism and the Christian church, and apprenticing under the medieval guild system.

Although much less common than the classic older-younger person mentoring, what is meant in this review is peer mentoring between young people, 12-24years. Youth peer mentoring uses the fact that young people can have a positive influence over and educate each other. In Ireland, many secondary schools have mentoring arrangements between pupils of older years and incoming first years as a way of easing the transition from primary education.

Policy context

Other reports & studies are available that look at the range of national & international policy governing youth work and education. Here we will confine ourselves to a glance through policy development that emphasises the participative and leadership side of youth education.

Many positive policy changes have occurred over the last few years. The National Children’s Strategy, The Children’s Act 2001, the setting up of local youth fora, Comhairle na n-Óg and Dáil na n-Og, student councils, proposed referendum to enshrine children’s rights in the constitution, the changes to the criminal justice system with regard to young people and restorative justice. Much of this change has been accelerated by Ireland’s ratification of the UNHCR Convention of the Rights of Children in 1992, and the subsequent comments on Ireland’s lack of progress in implementing it made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1996.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. By ratifying it, Ireland undertook to respect the Convention as international law and to implement its provisions. States are required to submit reports describing progress towards implementation. Ireland now has a National Children’s Office, a Minister for Children and a committee overseeing the implementation of the National Children’s Strategy.

A plethora of other bills, strategies and policies have been produced over the last number of years: Education (Welfare) Act 2000, National Drugs Strategy (2000), the Youth Work Act (2001), National Youth Homelessness Strategy (2001), Ombudsman for Children Act (2002), Strategic Task Force on Alcohol (2002). The National Suicide Prevention Strategy, Youth Facilities & Recreation strategy, the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), The Disability Bill (2004) to name but a few.

Although one could question, in certain areas, the follow through in action to some of these policies & strategies, the landscape with regard to young people has and is changing, where being consulted and involved is no longer an idealistic aspiration, but a right.

THE EUROPEAN WHITE PAPER ON YOUTH⁵

The White Paper, titled *A New Impetus for European Youth* is a report about the circumstances of young people that was published by the European Commission in Brussels in November 2001. It makes suggestions about how European countries can improve things for young people aged 15 – 25.

Section A identifies four priority areas for member states to look at.

1. Participation of Young People
2. Information for Young People
3. Voluntary Service for Young People
4. Getting a better understanding of the issues that affect young people

Section B sets out work for the European Union to do, with help from Member States, in five areas:

1. Employment
2. Preventing poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion
3. Fighting racism and xenophobia
4. Lifelong learning, education & mobility
5. Autonomy (independence) for young people

EU YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME⁶

Youth in Action is the new EU Programme in the field of youth, which will be implemented from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013 with a total budget of 885 million euros. It is the successor of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006).

The Youth in Action Programme provides young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension. It encourages the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and addresses young people aged between 13 and 30.

The Youth in Action Programme foresees five operational actions:

Action 1 - Youth for Europe: supporting exchanges and youth initiatives;

Action 2 - European Voluntary Service:

Action 3 - Youth in the World: building networks, info exchange with partner countries

Action 4 - Youth Support Systems: development of exchange, training and information

Action 5 - European Cooperation in the development of policy in the youth field.

Overview of Current Youth Peer Education & Mentoring in Kerry

Examining youth peer education and mentoring in County Kerry one finds interesting projects here and there, little cohesion between them, as well as differing understandings about the basic components of peer education. Many of the projects are one-off and often don't register or feed into newer ones. However, with all the policy, technological and socio-logical changes in Ireland and Kerry over the last few years, one also finds a greater readiness and increased opportunities, both in the formal and non-formal educational sectors, to engage with different methods, including peer education & mentoring.

Peer Education in Kerry

Formal - Within schools

The very notion of youth empowerment means a great shift in habits & thinking from traditional second level schooling, however many schools are already engaged in projects and programmes that involve youth empowerment. Specific Peer-to-Peer programmes are less easily taken on, given the amount of time and commitment such programmes entail, and the lack of experience in running them.

Schools are under strict time constraints to get pupils over the two main academic hurdles in second level education: the Junior Certificate, and the Leaving Certificate.

Apart from physical education, 2nd and 5th years provide the main opportunities for less-academic focused classes and programmes. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Educational (CSPE) are now mainstream classes in all schools, with one class per week for each year of Junior Cycle. The curriculum provides wide scope for peer-led work and for community involvement. The Department of Education and Science operate alcohol and drug prevention programmes such as "On My Own Two Feet" and "Walk Tall" through the formal education system, as part of CSPE and SPHE. Often, however, teachers dealing with CSPE or SPHE could do with more support in order to fully grasp the opportunities provided by these programmes, and this could be an area for collaboration between CBYI and schools.

Transition year offers the most scope for alternative educational approaches within 2nd level education, giving students opportunities to partake in projects and activities of a non-academic nature and smooth the passage from the dependent type learning of Junior Cert to the independent type learning required for Leaving Cert. Over half the 2nd level schools in Kerry choose not to have a Transition year. In some cases this has been due to a lack of demand from students. In others, due to opposition from parents who view it as a sort of "doss year."

Student councils

Most schools now have a student council, as provided for under The Education Act 1998, though again, their actual workings vary from school to school. The best have an assigned a member of staff to co-ordinate regular meetings of student representatives from each year. The council can then make proposals or recommendations which are put forward to the board of management. According to one of the adult council co-ordinators: *"It works for certain things. It doesn't work for others. It has to appear to be democratic, and that can be problematic, if the young people's view of democracy is to elect the most popular or troublesome student. Often, of course, that can work to that student's advantage, when they take on the responsibilities that go with the position. In*

our school, the Student Council's main responsibility is organising the school debts and the school sports day." (Interview)

In general, approaches and attitudes within schools differ from one to the next. The same is true for youth-focused projects and structures. Some seem to have a more open attitude to youth participation and to external collaborations (E.g. with the county youth service KDYS) than others. One principal admitted that schools tend to often be quite introverted, reluctant to get involved with outside groups.

A number of Kerry schools also run the Leaving Cert Applied and Junior Schools programme, which also offer broad scope for participation in project work.

The Junior Certificate School Programme

The Junior Certificate School Programme is a national Department of Education and Science Programme within the Junior Certificate, aimed at students who may leave school early.

The JCSP Programme provides a curriculum framework to assist schools and individual teachers in adopting a student-centred approach to the Junior Certificate specifically aimed at those young people who show signs of school failure or early leaving.

It is not an alternative to the Junior Certificate but a support framework to it. It aims to ensure that all participating students sit the same Junior Certificate examination as their peers, in as many subjects as they can succeed in.

[The Junior Cert Schools Programme website includes a manual for teachers on starting a *peer tutoring* programme, to improve literacy. Cf: www.jcspliteracy.ie]

Kerry Education Service (KES) – The VEC in Kerry

Kerry Education Service is the name of the VEC in Kerry. Operating 8 out of Kerry's 27 post-primary schools, KES is Kerry's largest provider of second level schooling.

KES has a special role in adult education, traveller education, sports education, youth work co-ordination, and providing youth work grants. Kerry Education Service also operates a number of outreach centres, an outdoor education centre, a sports centre, and works in partnerships with other agencies.

Under Kerry Education Service Education Plan 2006-2010, KES commits itself to a wide range of measures to enhance participation, innovation and resources, formal and informal learning opportunities, intercultural issues, special needs, partnerships with other bodies and Irish culture.

KES functions as a corporate body, and as such is in a very influential position in developing innovative educational approaches in Kerry. KES should be an ideal partner for developing innovative peer education projects.

Kerry Education Service, Riverside House, Dan Spring Road, Tralee, Co. Kerry
T: 066-7121488. E: info@cokerryed.ie

Developing More Engaging Schooling - KES ORBIT Programme

KES is at the cutting edge in developing forms of education more active and engaging than traditional academic focused second-level schooling.

Since 2005 KES has been involved in developing a new EU Commission-approved second-level programme in Killarney Community College, in conjunction with Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre and the Killarney National Park Education Centre.

Entitled Espair ORBIT (Outdoor Resources Brought Into Teaching), ORBIT is a three-year informal training and educational course that mixes formal schooling with outdoor sporting and environmental education, to tackle early school leaving.

ORBIT places particular emphasis on facilitating active learning while remaining directly grounded in the Junior Certificate programme. ORBIT is divided into five modules and each module is of a six-week duration. The students spend one day per week participating in a structured learning environment out of the classroom.

The days are guided, in turn, by Killarney Community College, Cappanalea OEC and Killarney National Park Education Centre and each student writes an individual detailed report of his/her learning experiences at the end of every module. English, Science, History, Geography, Mathematics and Home Economics are particularly targeted, and all the subjects are linked to the excursions.

A committee of five teachers, led by John Keane, programme co-ordinator at the Killarney Community College, have worked the programme, with Kate O'Donovan of Kerry Education Service. Contact KES.

(Hit the road, Jack tells Kerry pupils, The Kingdom, Thursday, November 03, 2005)

Youthreach

Offers educational programmes for students who have drifted out of mainstream schooling. Youthreach Projects for early school leavers in Listowel, Killarney and Tralee are delivered in partnership between KDYS and Kerry Education Service. With smaller numbers, and low exam priorities, YOUTHREACH allows for more contact time with students, staff meetings to discuss individual cases, more open informal relationship between teachers & students. Centres can take in students on a continual basis. "Youthreach is person-centred. Schools are programme centred" was one comment proffered.

Students often get involved in community type projects.

Students can attend YOUTHREACH for 2 years, and work covers three main strands:

1. IT/Maths
2. Communication/Social science/Personal Development
3. Arts & Crafts

Although, there were no examples of specific peer-to-peer programmes, the YOUTHREACH courses involve strong elements of teamwork & personal control of project work.

Kerry Youthreach Programme is provided by the Kerry Education Service (The VEC in Kerry) with centres in Tralee, Listowel, Killorglin and Killarney (in partnership with the KDYS (Kerry Diocesan Youth Service)).

Non-formal KDYS

“Peer education initiatives tend to focus sharply the minds of youth, community workers, and young people on issues of control, partnership and tokenism.” 7

Kerry Diocesan Youth Service is the principal countywide youth service in Kerry. With over thirty years' involvement in co-ordinating and supporting youth clubs around Kerry County, KDYS is well established and trusted by the communities where they operate. In June 2006, KDYS became the first recipient of the Youth Work Ireland Quality Standard Award.

KDYS has Youth centres based in Listowel, Tralee, and Killarney. It has youth workers based in Caherciveen, Kenmare, Killorglin, Castleisland, Dingle, supports over 50 youth clubs and as many youth projects around the county. The priority age-group KDYS deals with are 12-18 year olds. All youth clubs and projects rely heavily on volunteer and community support.

In terms of *peer education* KDYS tends to see much of its activities as embodying the principles and values of youth peer education: *“The peer approach infuses all of KDYS work. Youth participation and youth leadership are what we are about,”* was the opinion of one KDYS manager. KDYS has also offered specific Peer-Education programmes in school and out of school. KDYS Youth Information Workers underwent peer education training using a 1994 National Youth Federation peer education manual. Elements of the material and the approach have been used in KDYS' youth worker training.

KDYS runs programmes in youth clubs but is also doing a lot more work within schools. Good relationships exist with most, with some schools having KDYS youth workers take double classes each week.

The KDYS *Junior Committee Training* is a one-day programme for young people in their early teens, and gives them experience in setting up and running a youth-led group. The KDYS *Youth Empowerment Programme* is a minimum 12-hour Junior Youth Worker Programme for young people over 16 involved in KDYS clubs/projects. In both programmes, youth workers act both as facilitators and trainers, providing workshops on various topics such as teamwork, leadership, roles & responsibilities and health & safety.

KDYS Youth Information Service has information offices in Listowel, Killarney and Tralee. KDYS Tralee Youth Information Officer Linda Kearin facilitated a Peer Education training programme in Gaelcholáiste Trá Lí for 2 years running. (See Case Study p.48) KDYS Youth Information service has delivered Peer Education programmes in number of secondary schools in Kerry, based on the Youth Work Ireland/ NYF model. After 12 or so sessions, the peer educators then work with local primary and secondary schools. KDYS also provides a young mothers' information service. Tralee KDYS Youth Information Centre provides peer educator training in the 5 secondary schools in Tralee town.

-KDYS/Kerry Radio project: Peer education was also involved in a KDYS/Kerry Radio project where the KDYS Radio Drama group prepared a series of sound-bites on Drink, Drugs, Smoking, Depression which were aired repeatedly with the aim of educating young listeners about those topics.

-KDYS has used leaflets researched & designed by groups of young people from Belfast's Shankill as part of FASA's Youth Drug Awareness Programme. (Forum for Action on Substance Abuse)

-Kenmare KDYS developed a Peer Education Substance Abuse project, where Transition Years designed a series of posters about drug and alcohol misuse, which were then distributed to all schools and youth clubs locally.

-*Drinkweisers Project 2002*: was a 20 week training programme on alcohol awareness with Transition years, who went on to deliver over 40 sessions to 300 students with support from a KDYS youth worker.

-*Mind Yourself*: a leaflet on mental health produced by a youth group.

-*Band projects*: KDYS have responded well to the resurgent interest in playing and performing music by young people, and Killarney and Tralee have run exemplary young band's projects over the last number of years. Again though, musically minded youths in more rural areas can't easily access such facilities, due to the distance and lack of transport.

Drop-in Centres/ Youth Cafes

KDYS operates a youth café in Tralee as well as a number of drop-in centres around the county (Killarney, Listowel, Kenmare, Killorglin, Moyvane, Ballybunion). The nature of these projects varies from place to place. Many developed out of the Band Project. The main KDYS centres are quite well equipped in terms of facilities and staff. In more rural areas, KDYS activities tend to revolve around the local youth club and depend on the availability of a KDYS local youth outreach worker. KDYS currently sees the Drop-in model accompanied by structured activities as the most preferred option, especially for rural areas.

Youth Fora/ Comhairle Na n-Óg/ Dáil na n-Óg

KDYS co-ordinates the countywide Youth Forum which encompasses Comhairle Na n-Óg, the regional political forum for young people supported by Kerry County Development Board and Kerry County Community and Voluntary Forum.

The Youth Forum is promoted in all Kerry schools. Local Youth Forums happened in Tralee, Listowel, Killarney, Dingle, Castleisland, Kenmare and Caherciveen. These forums feed into the Comhairle, which in turn feeds into Dáil na n-Óg. In total 118 young people were engaged in Local Youth Forums.

The Comhairle na n-Óg event is a regional youth forum where young people can debate and discuss youth issues. Each year the Comhairle elects a group of representatives to attend the Irish Youth Parliament, Dáil na n-Óg. The Comhairle is supported by Kerry County Council. The event encompasses young people from KDYS as well as schools.

For example: At the Dingle Forum na n-Óg, 6 young people went forward as election candidates. 5 of these made their presentations as *gaeilge* – 15 young people attended. One of these candidates went forward to Comhairle na n-Óg as the West Kerry Gaeltacht representative.

Role of Partnership Groups

Partnership groups in Kerry play a significant role in supporting equality in education. Combating exclusion in education is one of the three pillars of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme under which Partnership Groups operate.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme - LDSIP

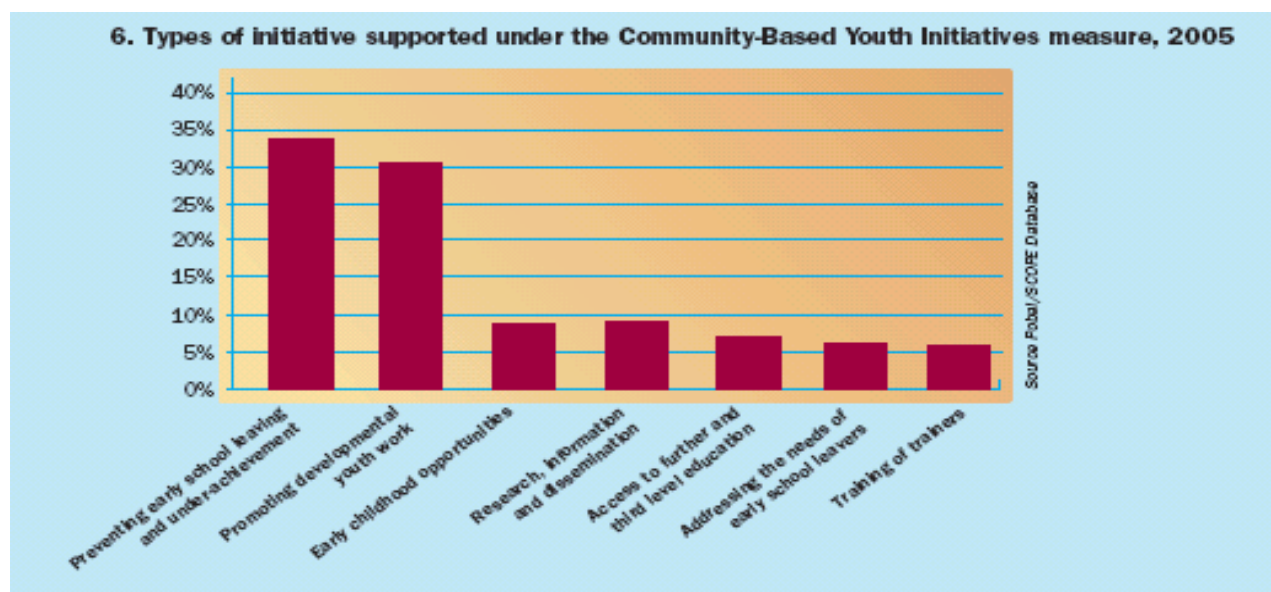
The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Partnerships were first established in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. 'Promoting social inclusion' was set as one of the four stated objectives of the Government in the 2000-2006 NDP, and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme is an important part in this. The three principal measures of this programme are a) Services for the unemployed, b) Community development and c) Community-based youth initiatives.

Community-Based Youth Initiatives

The range of actions under measure 'C' include community-based supports and interventions that *complement provision in the formal education system*, to increase equality in education, to break the link between young people's background and their life-chances.

Typical actions under the Community-based Youth Initiatives measure include:

- Initiatives to prevent early school leaving
- Education access and transition programmes
- Community-based Traveller education programmes
- Supplementary support for students with physical and learning disabilities
- Homework clubs, breakfast clubs, summer camps and after-school supports
- Developmental youth work
- Preventative projects in relation to substance misuse
- Awareness raising for teachers on educational disadvantage, and capacity-building for parents.



(SOURCE: *Working Together, Working for Change – the achievements of the LDSIP 2000-2006* POBAL 2006)

Work done under Community-Based Youth Initiatives Measure

Examples from one of the Kerry Partnerships((Partnership Trá Lí) include:

- Volunteer Community Mentoring Project.
- Pathfinders: facilitating access to 3rd level.
- Parent Support within 2nd Level Enrolment.
- Parenting Courses with "One Family".
- Youth Development: summer camps.
- Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service.
- Working Group on Substance Abuse: Commissioning research.
- Tralee Learning Together Network: involved in community based Afterschools & Homework clubs.
- Peer Education Models – this report, as part of the CBYN.

South Kerry Development Partnership Rural Youth Initiative 2005

South Kerry Development Partnership Limited was set up in 1991 to tackle exclusion suffered by people living in rural areas.

SKDP funds the Rural Youth Initiative designed to "support innovative community-based youth projects leading to social education and peer integration of disadvantaged rural young people." The Rural Youth Initiative is an attempt to address the chronic lack of funding affecting rural youth work practice. The following is some of the work that has been done with RYI support:

- The Killorglin Youth Strategy Group and members of Laune Youth Club produced a booklet called "Opportunities for Youth People in Killorglin" using peer education principles.
- Sneem Youth Club ran a teenage events programme as part of the Family Festival.
- The Same Difference Drama Project was a drama project and performance between Valentia Youth Club and Saidhbhín Care that integrated Down Syndrome & able children.
- Teenage Spirituality is a peer-driven programme run with a group of volunteer young people from Caherciveen

SKDP works with Kerry Diocesan Youth Service in developing outreach information and training programmes for young people and volunteer leaders.

The partnership also coordinates a Schools' Counselling initiative aimed at young people at risk in secondary schools.

SKDP have a good relationship with FASA. 12 Youth and Community workers received training from FASA under Leader + funding. They are now the Drugs Awareness Network (DAN) and are available to facilitate workshops with youth groups, schools and other groups. (See FASA below)

Private Peer Education Facilitation & Training Provider

YIELD Ireland, based in Killarney, provides Sexual health & drugs peer education programmes, accredited through The Northern Ireland Open College Network(NIOCN), for young people interested in developing skills and knowledge in this area.

They also provide a 10-day HIV/AIDS Peer Education programme as well as a 2-day programme, aimed at those organisations that wish to develop peer education within their groups/schools.

According to Tim Bingham, YIELD Ireland's Manager of Education & Training:

"YIELD has been working in the field of Peer Education for the past four years and has developed a programme that has seen positive results. We believe that both the 'traditional' methods of youth programming and peer education can be interlinked and should be."

"Peer education is all about empowering young people with information that can be passed onto others in their peer group. If a young person is interested in becoming a peer educator, firstly they have to complete an application form and then go through an interview on why they want to go onto the programme. As part of the programme, we discuss why they want to become a peer educator, the values of an educator, i.e., should they smoke, drink or take illegal drugs. As the facilitator of the programmes, it is very important that my own views never come into the programme. Young people need to know what they believe, whether I agree or not. They need to have that firm foundation because they will be challenged by others and part of the programme is that they will be challenged by myself and others in the group."⁸

Contact Yield Ireland **E:** yield@gmail.com **W:** www.youthhealthinfo.com

Mentoring in Kerry

The main formal peer mentoring practice in Kerry takes place in secondary schools where 5th years are trained to help first years adjust to secondary school. Mentor training is done either by a member of staff, by KDYS or by an outside counsellor.

Some schools found that the kids who'd volunteered for the mentoring were also very good at representing the school.

FORMAL

Mentoring in schools

Mentoring of new entrants to secondary schools by older students. Training is provided to equip fifth year students with the skills necessary to meet with and support first year students with their transition into secondary school, in doing this creating a sense of belonging and involvement. Fifth year students work in pairs to meet with a group (5-8) of first years on a regular basis. Mentors volunteer, and the training looks at their motivation for volunteering, then explores the idea of leadership & styles of leadership; listening & communication skills using games and discussion. Over half the secondary schools in Kerry have mentoring programmes for new entrants from primary level. KDYS Youth Information Service currently works directly with 3 secondary schools (Tarbert, Ballybunnion, Mercy Mounthawk) co-ordinating Mentoring programmes between the senior and junior school students, and will be expanding the programme this year.

Second Level Pathfinder Initiative

South Kerry Development Partnership Pathfinder Initiative provides funding to schools to focus on young people who are at risk of leaving school without completing examinations. Some one to one support is given and mentoring. Mentoring is done at home or in KDYS, 2 hrs/week.

Young people are referred by Gardaí, schools, school welfare officer, social worker or other project, if they are in danger of leaving school or if they've been expelled.

Some small class groups are funded and there is scope to develop home school liaison in schools systems which never had the possibilities of developing this before.

C: Mary Lyne, Head of Education & Training, **T:** 066-9472724, **E:** mlyne@skdp.net

Secondary to Third Level Pathfinders Programme

The Institute of Technology Tralee, working with the Kerry Access Network – runs the Pathfinder Programme, originally initiated by ITT and Partnership Trá Lí. This is a programme to increase participation in Third Level education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pathfinders is a comprehensive programme for 5th & 6th year students involving taster lectures, lessons on exam & study techniques, parental involvement. A quota of IT, Tralee places are reserved for Pathfinders students who fully complete the programme.

The Pathfinder programme contains a mentoring element called Student Shadowing: here participants decide on an ITT course they'd like to follow and then spend the day in the company of a third level student following that course on campus. The programme currently runs in Department of Education & Science Designated Disadvantaged schools: Tralee Community College, Killarney Community College, Killorglin Community College, Listowel Community College. A number of places are also kept aside for the other schools in Tralee: Mercy Mounthawk, CBS The Green, Presentation School, Gaelcoláiste Chiarraí. The course is still evolving, and it is possible that it will expand the mentoring elements over the coming years.

Pathfinders Co-ordinator: Marian Campbell. **T:** 066-7191708

E: Marian.Campbell@staff.ittralee.ie

ITT Access Officer Valerie Moore. **T:** 0667191682. **E:** valerie.moore@staff.ittralee.ie

Volunteer Community Mentoring Pilot Programme

The Volunteer Community Mentoring Project is a school-based mentoring project in Mercy Mounthawk Secondary school in Tralee. It is a joint project between the school, Tralee Volunteer Bureau and Partnership Tra Lí.

Although an Adult-Youth mentoring project, it is worth mentioning as it is the first such programme of it's kind in Kerry. (Other counties have already long established programmes of this kind: eg County Wexford Young Adult Support YAS.)

As part of the Home School Liaison Scheme, there must be a local school committee. On this are the Home School Community Liaison Officer, the principal, parents & students representatives. Each year the Committee proposes a project. This year, the visiting teacher for Travellers proposed a Volunteer Community Mentoring Project, to deal with the kids that were broadly at risk of leaving school early.

The Partnership Trá Lí Education Officer did research on mentoring models, a Mentoring Steering Group was set up and a project co-ordinator/tutor taken on.

Funding has been obtained from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs(one off grant) and Partnership Trá Lí. Volunteer Adult mentors were recruited, training carried out, volunteers were then assessed. Garda Clearances were obtained. Young people had to volunteer, and an information night was held for parents & students.

A full evaluation is due at end of the academic year 2007.

C: Deirdre Kearin, Partnership Trá Lí, 7 Ashe St., Tralee. **T:** 066-7180190.

NON-FORMAL

The Mentor Programme

Run in association with FÁS, the Tralee-based KDYS Mentor Programme is the name given to the nationwide Pathways Project for early school leavers. The programme has been going 11 years working one-to-one with young people who have left school early, supporting them in their options. The Mentor Programme offers guidance and mentoring to enable young people return to education, training or employment. The project is about a young persons progression, not just about employment. Young people are welcome to drop in any time.

3 times a year, the Mentor project collects school data on early school leavers in Tralee. The Mentoring project is the central point in Tralee for statistics on early school leaving and has a constant list of who's on which programme, whether in School, at Youthreach, FÁS, or on Community Training Centres courses. Staff then get in touch with the young people, who've either already left or are at risk of leaving schools, and begin the Mentoring programme with them, if they agree.

The Mentor Programme also work with young people from outside Tralee, but only if they have been referred, they do not pro-actively track kids like they do in Tralee, due to a lack of resources.

C: Catherine Galway, KDYS Youth Mentoring Project, Tralee. **T:** 066-7121674.

After School Study Support

After School Study Support provides a structured study support programme offering specific learning support in certain areas and study groups supervised by ITT mentors to young people between 12 and 18 years who may be at risk of underachievement or early school leaving

Contact Denise O'Sullivan, KDYS. **E:** deniseosullivan@kdys.ie

Conclusion

With a wide range of organisations and people involved in youth education, there is great potential within Kerry for further developing quality peer-led practice. It is important to build on the structures and experience that already exists and offer new and practical support support. The areas in need of developing can be classed under three broad headings:

- increasing training to bolster skills and awareness,
- networking: developing existing networks and building new links between education practitioners in order to optimise the flow of skills and information throughout the county,
- supporting innovative model pilot programmes, in areas of concern, that can be quickly rolled out to other areas after successful evaluation.

The next chapter will look at examples of interesting peer-led or related projects and practice from Ireland and beyond, under a number of broad youth education themes.

A Review of Youth Peer Education & Peer-Led Practice in Ireland and Internationally

Peer education and mentoring is less well-established in Ireland than in Northern Ireland or the UK. There is a vast number of peer education and mentoring projects out there. This selection is made of those that came to the attention of the researcher, and which were thought to have a potential interest to developments in Kerry. These projects are examples of the diversity of methods and approaches that are possible.

YOUTH ORIENTED SPACES

Youth Health Centre, Cork

Free and confidential service especially for 17 to 25 year olds. Non-directive pregnancy counselling. Contraceptive and safer sex advice. STI clinic. Drug / Alcohol counselling and support.

Cork Youth Health Centre is an innovative approach to health service and information provision for young people. It doesn't use peer education methods specifically, but its approach is based on a respect for the value, dignity and integrity of the young person that it seeks to serve. In terms of accessibility and friendliness, and sensitivity to youth needs, it embodies an approach to health service provision to young people based on genuine respect, inclusivity and consultation. This is a model to copy.

C: 73 Shandon Street , Cork City. **T:** 021-4220490. **E:** yhs@mailp.hse.ie

Youth Cafes

The youth café model has gained wide acceptance over the last few years as a method of catering for youth needs. A great variety of examples already exist in Ireland, and they go some of the way towards answering a demand that has been heard again and again from Ireland's youth: the need for somewhere to hang out.

"We have found from our own research on teenage recreation a strong demand among teenagers for youth cafes as a place to meet and talk about issues that concern them. I will be bringing our teenage recreation policy to government shortly.it is clear to me that these venues could help us fill in the information gaps that teenagers have about a whole range of issues...."

Speech by Brian Lenihan TD, Minister for Children, 13/11/06⁹.

This problem is brought into perspective with a new development in the UK where local councils and business people have fitted a recently invented "sonic youth deterrent" to public places in an effort to disperse groups of teenagers. This device emits a high pitch tone that most people over 25 can't hear but is extremely irritating to younger people. One company in Leinster has already installed dozens of these devices outside shops, pubs, factories, apartment blocks and car parks.

According to Mary Cunningham, of the National Youth Council of Ireland:

"The real problem is that young people need appropriate facilities where they can hang out. This measure is an infringement of their very basic human rights and will alienate them further from adults." (Sunday Tribune 10/12/'06)

"Notwithstanding the high involvement rates in a range of activities, a majority of young people believe there is very little leisure provision for adolescents in their locality. Young people from rural areas are strongest in this belief, reflecting a lack of facilities and provision for young people in rural areas."[The other structural barriers identified in the study were: *financial barriers, difficulties with transport, safety, time constraints, weather.*]

(de Roiste, Á & Dinneen J, 2005, *Young People's Views about Opportunities, Barriers and Supports to Recreation and Leisure*¹⁰)

"In focus groups undertaken with young people who were not attending school, a striking feature was the frequency with which they spoke of being 'barred' from leisure activities." (ibid.)

"Adolescents want accessible, user friendly services, specific to their needs." Tony Bates, *A Vision For Change*, a report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, 2006.

The Youth cafés are a badly needed attempt to engage with young people, providing a positive focal point for their energies. As well as being a youth-friendly space, many of them offer a range of extra services, from youth information to youth-run activities and events. The youth café offers great potential for youth involvement and participation, and can be seen as peer education in action.

"A youth Café is a safe, secure and non-alcoholic, place in which young people may relax, socialise and enjoy recreational activities, whilst also benefiting from opportunities for self-development."

CCH/BT Ltd, 'The Youth Café-Survival Guide'. 14th June 2004

Galway City's "The Gaf"

In Galway a number of agencies came together to create an alternative space where young people could hang out, get involved in a range of activities, and access health services. The Gaf Youth Café on Galway's Francis Street, is a drug and alcohol-free facility run and operated by young people. Teenagers are involved in all its activities. They chose the interior, the courses and are part of the 10-person management committee of the centre. The Gaf is open 35 hours a week and has band nights, movies, drama and art courses, access to health services and education, such as sexual health programmes.

"The Bubble" Bandon's Experimental, Shoe-string Youth Café

Bandon Youth café came about after a lobbying campaign by a coalition of youth groups before the 2004 EU & local elections. A meeting was organised between local candidates and 40 young people from 8 different groups. 2 things which came out of the meeting were: 1. lack of facilities for young people; and 2. the need for a youth forum.

In August 2005 the local Foróige made a DVD about Bandon youth's needs which showed young people asking for a youth-friendly space where they could gather. Bandon YMCA, who were running the local youth information service, got involved, obtained the use of the former Tourist Information office and "The Bubble" was born. "The Bubble" is the new youth information centre in Bandon, it also serves as a peer-run youth café, open 3.30-5pm Wed-Fri and Friday evening 6-9pm.

According to secretary of Bandon YMCA T.J. Hourihan: *"We would love to stay open Saturday, but we simply don't have the resources. "The Bubble" is an experiment, we are running it on funding for the youth information centre. If we had proper funding, there's a lot more we could do."*

Drop-in Centres

Drop-in Centres are now KDYS' preferred model for the delivery of many services to young people, and a number have already been developed in North Kerry.

The following is an excerpt from a KDYS report on the development of Drop-in Centres:

"All youth work projects should be needs based, a drop-in centre is no exception. The need for this provision should be extensively researched, the following questions would assist in this:

What other provisions are there in the community?

What is the teenage population of the area?

What is the exact need? As crime diversion provision? To address social problems etc.?

When the need is fully explored, practical steps need to be taken. The following has been applied to the 3 centres established in North Kerry."

The HUB

Carlow Regional Youth Services has a newly renovated activity space, called "The Hub" which is home to the Drop-in club. Young people drop in, join in activities or just relax. They can also join in the specialist activities available: motorbike repairs, art, furniture making, and music club. Monday evening is Cinema Evening.

"The Hub" is open 5 nights per week. 65 (42 boys and 23 girls) young people who have been involved in different elements of the programme.

Contact Ciaran or Leslie at Carlow Youth Services, Kennedy Street, Carlow.

T:059-9130476. **E:** carlowys@iol.ie

St. Mary's Students Help Set Up A Youth Cafe In New Ross

Go-getting students at St. Mary's School have translated talk into action by working to set up a youth cafe in New Ross.

Earlier this month Transition Year students from the Irishtown secondary school competed in the *Young Social Innovators Competition* in the City West Hotel, with their project 'Carpe Diem - Seizing The Day The Teenage Way' being shortlisted for an award.

As part of their project they had to identify a problem faced by young people in New Ross and come up with a viable solution.

Their research, including a survey of teenagers in New Ross, brought them into contact with FDYS (Ferns Diocesan Youth Service).

Interestingly both the students and FDYS had come to the same conclusion, identifying the need for a place for young people to meet, relax, chat and have a cup of tea without the pressure of having to buy food or get involved in 'compulsory activities'.

The St. Mary's students began working with Kieran Donoghue from FDYS, organising a class committee to help get a youth cafe off the ground.

Their hard work paid off on May 6 when a premises for a youth cafe was secured. The premises, whose location has yet to be publicly revealed, is due to open during the summer. (Source: Thu, May 27 04 New Ross Standard.)

[Note: New Ross Drop-in Centre "The Hive" is still going strong, and now has a full-time youth worker from FDYS.

C: Youth Worker – Gerald O'Connor, Ferns Diocesan Youth Service, Francis Street, Wexford. **T:** 053-9123262. **W:** fdys@iol.ie]

YOUTH DEMOCRACY

Student councils

The Education Act 1998 obliges School Boards to “encourage”, “facilitate” and “give all reasonable assistance to” students wishing to establish Student Councils.

- NYCI has produced a pack to help students as well as school boards, teachers, parents and other interested parties to set up and run successful working structures. The pack was supported by the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture, under the heading ‘Citizenship and Youth - Communicating with the Public’. The pack includes some ideas and advice about how Student Councils operate.
- National Children's Office's Student Council Working Group was set up to promote democratic student councils in second level schools. Eleven second-level students, aged 13 – 17, are on this Group, working equally with teachers, school management bodies, government departments and parents. It has a website with many resources and a 144 page Second Level Student Councils Resource Pack: http://www.studentcouncil.ie//filestore/SCI_ResourcePack-ENG.pdf

W: www.studentcouncil.ie

YOUTH SOCIAL AWARENESS

Young Social Innovators

Young Social Innovators was created in 2001 to develop social awareness and activism amongst young people (15-18yrs) so that they may become effective champions for social justice no matter what they do in later life.

Social awareness education does not form part of the established senior cycle curriculum. Young Social Innovators see this as a major gap in the education of young people. Volunteering has also declined by 1/3 in the last 10 years. (DKM, November 2004, *Report on Volunteers and Volunteering in Ireland* For the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)

YSI's major activity is a framework for social awareness education for 15-18 year olds which can be used in schools at second level and in other educational centres, eg Youthreach Centres. Project-based, it is also open to youth services in Northern Ireland.

Students working in teams, identify a social issue that they feel they could help to change. This issue could affect their school, community, locality or Ireland in general. Then through research and meetings with people concerned, they come up with radical, innovative suggestions and actions that can make a real difference to people's lives.

Over 10,000 students have participated in Young Social Innovators since it began as a pilot programme in the Dublin area in 2001. In 2006, over 6000 students from 205 schools and youth educational centres throughout Ireland participated. The programme culminates with the Young Social Innovators Showcase in May in Dublin.

Programme elements:

Speak Out For-a-Better World (introduced 2006) - A platform for young people to present their innovative ideas to an invited audience of peers, community leaders, local representatives and influencers in business, the media, social, voluntary and community services.

In-Service Workshops – These are support workshops for guides of young social innovators throughout the year in venues around Ireland.

Showcase of Young Social Innovators – this is an end of year celebration for all participants of YSI and is a showcase of some of the social action projects.

Resources – for teachers and students of YSI.

Young Social Innovators was co-founded by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy and Rachel Collier who are its Chairperson and CEO respectively. Young Social Innovators is located at 2 St Andrew Street, Dublin 2.

T: + 353 1 6458030. **W:** www.youngsocialinnovators.ie

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In this era of Global Warming, environmental education has become accepted in mainstream society. It is vital that young people be given every opportunity and encouragement to participate in environmental projects. There is an ever growing number of organisations and groups that can support young people, teachers and youth workers in this.

Eco-Unesco Youth Environmental Organisation

Eco-Unesco is a non-profit organisation providing practical environmental education services to young people, youth groups, schools and interested individuals, events, workshops and activities. Each year ECO-UNESCO runs the 'Young Environmentalist Awards', a national competition rewarding environmental projects.

Resources & Training

ECO-UNESCO also publishes a wide range of material, information packs, posters, leaflets and CD ROMs and provides Fetac-Accredited training(Level 5) on Sustainable Development for teachers, youth leaders, community leaders and environmental officers.

The Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA)

The Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) is an all-island environmental awards programme for young people. The YEA has been running since 1999, and attracts hundreds of young people each year.

The aim of the YEA is to support and honour young people who take part in environmental projects which protect their local environment, prevent environmental damage and promote environmental awareness. The competition is open to all young people, in school, youth groups, youth clubs or community groups between the ages of 12 to 18.

A YEA project follows a simple 6-step programme: 1. Build a team, 2. Choose an environmental issue, 3. Decide on a plan, 4. Decide on an way to improve the environment, 5. Make an improvement to the environment, 6. Raise awareness with others. (Contact details on next page)

Youth Eco-Parliament 2006

Ireland was represented at the Pro Europe Youth Eco-Parliament (YEP), which ran from October 18th to 20th, in Paris. Three participants from the ECO-UNESCO Youth Representatives Programme represented Ireland at this prestigious Repak/ECO-UNESCO sponsored event.

The Irish delegates are part of the ECO-UNESCO Youth Representatives Programme, which aims at empowering young people to become peer educators.

The programme targets transition year students and consists of a series of workshops and excursions focusing on young people's environmental concerns.

Course content: developing skills in presentation, facilitation, leadership, teamwork, auditing, organisational skills, researching and communication, environmental and sustainable development issues.

A: 26 Clare Street, Dublin 2. **T:** 01 662 5491 **E:** ecounesco@eircom.net

W: www.ecounesco.ie

Green Schools/Young Reporters For the Environment Projects

Green-Schools is an international environmental education programme and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment. It introduces participants (students, teachers, parents and the wider community) to environmental management.

It also promotes citizenship, leadership and teamwork among teachers, students and the wider community towards a common goal. It democratises school management structures.

Green-Schools increases students' awareness of environmental issues and transfers this knowledge into environmental action. Participating schools are awarded the 'Green-Flag', a well-recognised Eco-Label renewed every two years.

Green-Schools is an initiative of FEE - Foundation for Environmental Education, referred to internationally as Eco-Schools. There are currently over 14,500 schools in 37 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania and South America taking part in the programme.

The Irish Green-Schools programme is one of the most successful within the international network. Over 50% of Primary, Secondary and Special schools are participating in the programme, and 885 schools have been awarded the Green Flag.

Green-Schools is run by An Taisce, the Irish Heritage Trust, in co-operation with Local Authorities throughout Ireland. Each of the Local Authorities has an Environmental Education Officer who provides invaluable support to schools undertaking the programme.

For more information on Ireland's Green-Schools Programme, please contact:

Jane Helps, Green-Schools Manager, An Taisce, 5A Swift's Alley, Francis Street, Dublin. **T:** 01-4002222 **E:** greenschools@antaisce.org

W: www.antaisce.org www.greenschoolsireland.org

W: International Eco-Schools Programme: www.eco-schools.org

Young Reporters for the Environment

An Taisce also runs another second level environmental programme called Young Reporters for the Environment where students work as an entire class or as a small team on an environmental projects.



Heightening awareness of the local environment and local issues, it improves the students communication skills, encourages teamwork among the class and introduces them to the notion of environmental citizenship.

C: An Taisce, 5A Swift's Alley, Francis Street, Dublin 8. **T:** 01 400 2222

E: yre@antaisce.org

Cork Community Gardens

Cork Community Gardens is a relatively new and innovative project that mixes education, community work with environmental and artistic activism.

The organisers are a group of professional gardeners, artists and community workers who work with communities in Cork city to help them set up gardens.

They work with communities in Cork city to help them to design, create and maintain gardens specific to their needs. These include community groups, schools, the local Environmental Forum. One project worked with people with physical disabilities, another with dyslexics.

Funding comes from a wide variety of sources: The Heritage Trust, RAPID, Lord Mayor's Fund, VEC, HSE Green Gym project. During Cork Capital of Culture 2005, Cork Community Gardens got funding for 8 new projects.

Plants are continually donated from various sources including private gardens. Opening ceremonies are held in all the gardens as well as regular tours.

The projects accept new volunteers and days are set aside for work in the gardens, in a different site each week.

Sample Projects:

Blarney Street School

Here a weekly gardening club is held, and discussions with teachers take place about maintenance and the responsibilities of each class. Special planting days are held.

At Ard Bhaile, Cork Community Gardens have a project with a local youth group.

While at Mahon Traveler's site flowers have been planted with residents. Regular meetings are held with the women travellers group in Mahon community centre to discuss their planting ideas and plant preferences.

Co-ordinators:

Claire Osborne **T:** 021-7332927 & Elinor Rivers **T:** 021-4322600

CORK COMMUNITY GARDENS, Ti Na Greine, Gortdonaghmore, Vicarstown, Cork.

W: www.corkcommunitygardens.com

Kerry Earth Education Project (KEEP)

5 miles from Tralee is a very innovative environmental education project. Kerry Earth Education Project (KEEP) is based at Gortbrack, a ten acre farm organic, with some vegetable production, open for training and guided tours.

In Gortbrack Farm, KEEP runs BTEI & FETAC accredited Adult Education courses for Kerry VEC; a children's environmental summer-camp; is open to guided visits from schools, groups, communities, youth groups and carries out practical composting workshops for Kerry County Council & Duhallow IRD.

KEEP is currently involved in 9 practical environmental training projects off farm: work 5 schools; Shanakill/Rahoonane Community Garden; 2 HSE Day Care Centres (psychiatric and geriatric in Castleisland & Killarney); and one HSE training centre. The long term aim of Kerry Earth Education Project is to act in an advisory & supportive capacity for schools & communities setting up gardening and environmental projects.

Schools

KEEP is currently active in 5 schools, with 4 primary schools, and with Transition years at Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School Tralee.

The schools are visited regularly and practical activities are carried out such as planting native hedges, creating vegetable beds, growing herbs, making compost, creating wildlife ponds. One of the primary schools has a designated support teacher for the project.

Ideally, KEEP would like to see a school gardens with environmental features connected to the school curriculum, and a programme of study whereby each teacher & class would be able to contribute in a creative way to the garden.

With teachers already over-stretched in classrooms, it is difficult for second level students to engage with environmental education in a meaningful way.

C: Niamh Ní Dhúill-project co-ordinator/Ian McGrigor-project secretary, Gortbrack Organic Farm, Ballyseedy, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

T: 066 7137011 **E:** earthedkerry@eircom.net **W:** www.earthedkerry.com

Community Organic Garden, Shanakill, Tralee

Originally developed with Kerry Earth Environmental Project, the Organic Community Garden is now a project of the Shanakill/Rahoonane Family Resource Centre.

The garden was set up with KEEP, the local RAPID co-ordinator, KES and Leader. The garden has been running for 5 years and is managed by a garden committee.

The Shanakill/Rahoonane Community Organic Garden aims to be a social, recreational & educational resource within the local community. The garden is maintained by towns people, local residents and course participants. The FRC has since recruited a Garden Development Worker to manage programmes in the garden.

Afterschools Clubs, gardening clubs, various open days, 'harvest fairs', school visits, environmental arts & crafts, sowing, raising, making compost, cooking, are some of the activities taking place in the garden. Though after initial set-up costs, funding required for the project is minimal (the garden now makes all its own compost, collects its own seeds, has its own tools), the small amount needed can still be difficult to get, as the project doesn't fit in to any set criteria.

In November, Minister Eamon O'Cuiv visited the project, having been very impressed by footage of it on a DVD made by RAPID organisers in Tralee.

C: Shanakill Family Resource Centre. Garden Development Worker Rachael Budd.

T: 066-7127831.

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

From Colombia To Moyross – International Peer Educators Strike a Chord (See Case Study p.54)

Secondary School Activists out to Change the World - St. Angela's Peace and Justice Group, Waterford. (See Case Study p.53)

Development education in Ireland is a very vibrant and active area. Ireland has a long tradition of engagement with the world overseas. Pre-Christian Ireland sailed on boats pillaging mainland Europe (eg. Niall of the Nine Hostages), until it embraced Christianity and proceed to spread that faith and practice all over Europe. For most of the 20th century Irish missionaries travelled all over the world and many of these people are very highly regarded for the development and human rights work that they did and still do in many cases. A strong cultural habit remains of volunteer work overseas, despite the media promotion of commercialist values. The transnational nature of economic and environmental issues today mean that teachers and students are ever ready to explore the links that bind us to other people and cultures.

Goal, Concern, Trocaire, Bóthar, Comhlámh, Amnesty International, Frontline Human Rights Defenders, the Latin American Solidarity Centre along with dozens of solidarity organisations, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid, the National Youth Council of Ireland... there are many organisations that can interest and inform young people and those involved in youth education, formal and non-formal.....

Common Ground Development Education Conference

Common Ground is a loose association of NGOs and educationalists working in the development field. It aims to bring together a wide variety of organisations to provide a strong stimulus to members of the public, the youth sector and second-level school-goers to engage with global issues.

In October 2006, Common Ground held a conference entitled: "WORKING TOGETHER IN A DEVELOPING WORLD" in the Silver Springs Conference Centre, Silver Springs Hotel, Tivoli, Cork. The event had 5 main headings: Second Level CSPE/NGOs/Missionary groups/Third level/Youth and Community-based groups. A number of guest speakers were in attendance, and workshops were held for schools & youth groups.

Common Ground will be held again in Cork in October 2007. This type of event provides a great opportunity for practitioners to network, find partners and develop ideas for educational projects. Among the groups present in 2006 were: Christian Aid Ireland, Comhlámh, The HOPE Foundation, Friends of Londiani, Bothar, KADE, Self Help Development International, NYDEP, Trócaire, Chernobyl Children's Projects, Concern, Niger Delta, Eco-Unesco, Irish Missionary Union, The Sexual Health Organisation, YMCA, EIL Intercultural Learning, Ogra Chorcaí LTD, Girl Guides, Cork Environmental Forum, University College Cork, Mary I, Tipperary Institute, Waterford One World Centre, Congolese-Irish Alliance, NASC, Ghana & Friends, Zimbabwe Progress Social Group, National Youth Council of Ireland, Debt and Development Coalition, Just Forests, Puppet Power, Kinsale Fair Trade Community.

Further details from Jeremy Meehan, Director of Education, Bóthar.

T: 021-487 8693; **E:** jmeehan@indigo.ie

KADE - 'Global Justice through Local Education'

KADE(Kerry Action for Development Education) exists to promote Development Education in County Kerry in the formal and non-formal education sector and community development groups, in co-operation with agencies and other organisations.

KADE is a voluntary organisation formed in 1993 and aims to support local projects related to development issues, such as human rights, fair trade, intercultural understanding. KADE's work is based on "the educational development model, employing participative and inclusive 'learner centred' strategies."

KADE provides:

- advice and guidance on DE theory and materials for use in both the formal and non-formal sector
- contact details for national and international DE-related organisations
- internet access to DE sites (research time must be booked in advance)
- DE speakers/trainers for local workshops, public meetings, courses and seminars
- assistance to people/groups organising their own DE events
- material on specific subjects such as anti-racism, interculturalism, refugee/asylum seeker issues,

KADE resource centre stocks reference materials and books, packs, videos, slide sets, etc. available for loan to members and open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

KADE is currently functioning as the project secretariat for the 'Twinning The Kingdoms' programme between Kerry and Lesotho. This project will involve exchanges between many sectors of County Kerry and Lesotho, and should provide lots of scope for imaginative projects involving young people.

KADE, 11 Denny Street Tralee, Co. Kerry. **T:** 066-7181358 **E:**kade@eircom.net

A.I.D.S, Africa & Ireland Peer Education Video and Info Pack

Positive Youth, a peer education video and information pack, which engaged young people in Ireland and Zambia in the national and global HIV/AIDS debate, was launched by Dublin AIDS Alliance, in partnership with Concern, on Irish AIDS Day June 5th 2004.

Young people from throughout Ireland, North and South, and young people in Zambia talk openly and frankly about HIV and associated issues. The Department of Education & Science has invited schools to adopt the programme for students within the appropriate age range. Both Concern and DAA have distributed the video and information pack to a wide range of youth groups, schools and colleges nationwide. The initiative was sponsored by Development Co-operation Ireland, and is available from both DAA and Concern.

A: "The Eriu Centre," 53 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland. **T:** 01-873 3799.

E: info@dublinaidalliance.com **W:** www.dublinaidalliance.com

International Youth Exchanges & Volunteering

EIL Intercultural Learning is the Irish National Office of the worldwide organisation founded in the USA in 1932 as The Experiment in International Living.

It is the oldest educational exchange organisation in the world involving over 30,000 people each year on a variety of educational and cultural travel programmes. It is a not for profit, non religious and non political association.

EIL was first introduced to Ireland in 1960 and EIL Intercultural Learning is also a member of the National Youth Council of Ireland. There are seven permanent staff based in the EIL offices in Cork and 2-6 part time staff depending on the time of the year. A team of 10 local co-ordinators are also located in various parts of Ireland and assist with placements and local programmes. A total of 2,200 people participated in EIL programmes to/from Ireland in 2003.

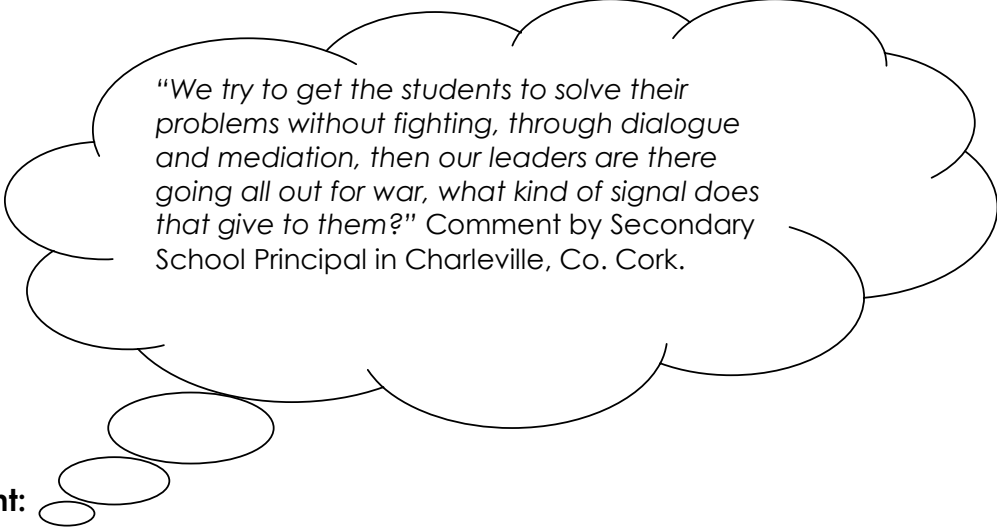
EIL is part of Federation EIL, the international nonprofit membership association which facilitates the work of its autonomous member organizations in 25 countries. Federation EIL members promote the lifelong involvement of individuals in intercultural learning experiences through homestays, group travel, study abroad, language training, work exchange and other cultural immersion programs. Federation EIL, the Worldwide Network of The Experiment in International Living has a website at: **W:** www.experiment.org

Contact EIL Intercultural Learning, 1 Empress Place, Summerhill North, Cork, Ireland.
T: 021-4551535. **E:** info@eilireland.org **W:** www.eilireland.org

Resource Highlight

National Youth Council of Ireland *"Making a Difference - Young People participating to change their World"* (2005) available for download at www.youth.ie

This booklet, which features stories, games and actions, looks at the issue of youth participation, shows the importance of young people taking action for a more just and equal world, and shows examples of youth activism from around the world. It is intended for use by youth workers, youth leaders, peer educators and others.



"We try to get the students to solve their problems without fighting, through dialogue and mediation, then our leaders are there going all out for war, what kind of signal does that give to them?" Comment by Secondary School Principal in Charleville, Co. Cork.

Food for thought:

YOUTH INPUT INTO EDUCATION

Youthreach Student Networking/feedback conference

An innovative event was held at the Brehon Hotel, Killarney, in December 2006.

150 Youthreach students (6 students from each Youthreach centre in Munster) attended a networking/feedback conference, where they had a chance to express their feelings on various aspects of Youthreach in a forum that also included staff.

Workshops were held on:

- future of Youthreach,
- disability issues,
- equality issues.

Students and staff participated in a drama at the end of the day by Stop & Stare Theatre company (Colm O'Doherty). This type of event promotes involvement by students in their own education, and one wonders could such an event happen in mainstream Second Level education.

ART & DISABILITIES

IntroArt

IntroArt disability art services in partnership with Vodafone Ireland Foundation (VIF), deliver a nationwide art based Youth Integration Programme for young people with disabilities. The partnership involves funding to support a series of workshops throughout the country.

IntroArt aims to assist young people with disabilities so they can gain access to youth services through the Arts. The workshops, organised by IntroArt and funded by the Foundation, focus on educating, training and assisting youth leaders in the development of services and programmes accessible to youths with disabilities.

IntroArt also runs a mentoring service, providing advice to individual artists in their chosen art field, hosts work at arts exhibitions and public events, and produces a free newsletter.

IntroArt is working with a number of organisations to deliver the programme including: Irish Wheelchair Association, Deich Le Cheile Youth Project and Oileain Beo, Castleisland, Co. Kerry, Galway Youth Federation (Ballinasloe Youth group), Louth Youth Federation (Dundalk), The Hartstown Den Youth Club, Hartstown.

Contact IntroArt, Room 1, 4th Floor, 121-122 Capel Street Dublin 1.

T: 01-8727930 **E:** introart@iol.ie

SEXUAL HEALTH

Cork Sexual Health Centre Peer Education Courses

The Sexual Health Centre in Cork provides training, support, advice, counselling to people regarding sexual health, drugs and HIV issues. It is funded by the Cork Local Drugs Task Force, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund.

Cork Sexual Health Centre runs regular peer education courses on substance abuse and sexual health, Level 1 and Level 2. These courses are run over 20 hours, usually 10 X 2 hour sessions, depending on the group's needs, and are accredited by Open College Network Northern Ireland (www.ocnni.org.uk).

Courses are mainly given in Cork, at the Centre or in offices of community groups or schools. The courses are advertised in schools, youth clubs, and through posters and flyers. According to a senior member of staff: "We find it easier to run the courses from our centre here. It can be difficult working in secondary schools if you've a group of young people in a class who don't really want to be there."

The Centre also provides support to active peer educators, and keeps in touch through it's Peer Educator Network. It also has a peer-run helpline in operation on Wednesday afternoons, where trained Peer Educators are available to answer questions.

The Centre's Health Promotion team also provides Sexual Health Workshops for young people in Secondary Schools and Youth Groups across Cork and Kerry.

C: The Sexual Health Centre, 16 Peter's Street, Cork City. **T:** 021-4275837.

E: info@sexualhealthcentre.com **W:** www.sexualhealthcentre.com

Youth Health and Theatre – Dalliance Peer Project

In 2005 Dublin AIDS Alliance initiated a project, sponsored by the Dormant Accounts Fund, entitled 'Dalliance' to introduce young people to HIV, drug use and sexual health issues through drama.

'Dalliance' is the fusion of arts and health, with workshops based on Augusto Boal's theatre of the oppressed and forum theatre, combined with information sessions focusing on HIV, sexual health and drug use delivered by specialist staff at DAA.

As a backdrop to the peer education workshops given to communities in the North Inner City, Dalliance devised a short play called 'Bang On', incorporating the programme's central messages. The play was entirely devised by the participants themselves, in collaboration with the Project Co-ordinator.

'Bang On' was performed on Irish AIDS Day, 15th June 2006, in Liberty Hall Theatre, with a second performance on 16th June.

C: Dublin AIDS Alliance, 53 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland. **T:** 01-8733799

E: info@dublinaidalliance.com **W:** www.dublinaidalliance.com

MENTAL HEALTH

Community-Based Peer Support Education Programme for Young People

– An Innovative Response to Suicide Prevention in Midleton Co Cork

In 2004, a group of young people in Midleton, County Cork, approached their local G.P., seeking help after a number of young suicide deaths in the town. The G.P. put the young people in touch with Southern HSE Mental Health Resource Officer, Brenda Crowley, who along with National Learning Network Psychologist, Mary Boylan, developed the 'Peer Support and Education' initiative, the first of its kind in Ireland.

The young people participated in the pilot project one evening a week over the course of five weeks. The aim of the course was to help participants develop their listening and communication skills, and be aware of depression and suicide, so that they might help other young people, who are in some sort of difficulty or crisis, in a practical and logical way. The HSE's course was based on a similar model that has been used in Canada.

According to Brenda Crowley: "3 things came out of the pilot: It made a huge change in their OWN personal development; also, they all became much more aware of judging people; then they also have a link now, after the course, with their GP or a counsellor, if crisis arises."

Having got very positive feed back from participants, the National Learning Network obtained Dormant Accounts Funding and has now developed a training programme and package, which will be piloted with youth workers all over Munster.

Ms. Brenda Crowley, Mental Health Resource Officer, HSE Southern Area, St. David's Hostel, Clonakilty Hospital, Co Cork. **T:** 023 33297. **E:** brenda.crowley@mailp.hse.ie

(See Appendix, for more information on this project)

TRAINING FOR YOUTH HEALTH

NYCI Youth Health Programme

The National Youth Council of Ireland's National Youth Health Programme also provides training on a wide range of youth health related issues on an in-house, local or regional basis. Contact the NYHP on 01-4784122 or nyhp@nyci.ie; 3 Montague St., Dublin 2, Ireland.

ASSIST Training

The HSE also provides Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASSIST), which gives caregivers suicide First Aid skills.

ASSIST is a 2-day workshop designed to help workers with youth recognise symptoms of distress in young people, and enhance caregiver's intervention skills to reduce the immediate risk of suicide until additional resources can be found.

The workshop is for all caregivers including professionals, paraprofessionals and lay people (mental health professionals, nurses, physicians, teachers, counsellors, youth workers, police and correctional staff, school support staff, clergy, and community volunteers.)

The Positive Mental Health Foundation

The Positive Mental Health Foundation was set up in June 2005 by Violet Gavin a retired guidance teacher and counsellor, who recognised the need to educate and train young people in the development of positive mental health skills.

The primary goal of the foundation is to introduce mental health awareness as early as possible in the school cycle.

Among the key objectives and guidelines are:

- To coach adolescents in developing sound mental and emotional life skills through discussions and group work.
- To train and educate student counsellors for schools and communities.
- To liaise with existing mental health organisations and experts in the field to keep up to date with best practices.
- To work in unison with the educational authorities and youth organisations.

Positive Mental Health aims to bring positive mental/emotional issues to adolescents by reducing stigma & to train peer facilitators in 2nd Level (TYO). Ongoing projects are: Preparing modules for school entry; Preparing group skills; delivering courses in schools 6 – 8 weeks.

Currently, PMHF recruits and trains volunteers from around the Galway area, from the university. The volunteers are trained then do shadowing/observing in classes with experienced facilitators.

The PMHF currently depends on fundraising but is seeking mainstream sources. PMHF is open to collaborating with other individuals and organisations interested positive mental health among young people: *"Promoting positive mental health can be many things: organising activities, fundraising to help improve resources, counselling, or volunteering to train as a facilitator."*

C: Violet Gavin, Chairperson, 'Labasheeda', Truskey West, Barna, Co. Galway.

T: 091 592179. **W:** www.positivementalhealth.ie

Drama & Mental Health - Using drama to raise awareness about suicide

During the North Clondalkin Mental Health Awareness Week May 2006, Smashing Times Theatre Company ran a series of drama workshops and performances of their play 'Testimonies' in local secondary schools.

'Testimonies' consists of three dramatic monologues adapted from the experiences of those who have lost loved ones to suicide and from the experiences of those who have been through a suicidal crisis and survived. Testimonies was developed after a series of participative drama workshops which took place throughout 2005.

Smashing Times Theatre put in place a support structure around the drama workshops and performances and also distributed an information pack including an Information Leaflet on Suicide Prevention to all those who attended the drama workshops, performances and post-show discussions.

Smashing Times also has a guidebook for individuals and organizations wishing to carry out drama workshops to raise awareness of positive mental health and suicide prevention.

Smashing Times runs two accredited training programmes: Certificate in Community Drama and the Diploma in Drama Facilitation Skills, the latter is the first ever course in Ireland to provide accredited training at university level for drama facilitation within a community context.

(<http://www.smashingtimes.ie/actingForTheFuture.htm>)

PEER SUPPORT

Rainbows Peer Support

RAINBOWS is a not-for-profit, international organisation that offers training and curricula for establishing peer support groups in churches, schools or social agencies. Rainbows is a 12 week peer support programme to assist children, adolescents and adults who are grieving a death, separation or other painful transition in their family.

The Rainbows programme provides a safe setting in which participants can talk through their feelings with others who are experiencing similar situations with the help of a facilitator or listener. Rainbows provides the resources for a structured programme to lead a person gently through the grieving process.

Rainbows offers programmes for young people of different ages: 'RAINBOWS' for children aged 5-12; 'SPECTRUM' for young people, 13-18; and 'KALEIDOSCOPE' for young adults of 18 and older. In the Rainbows programme, a peer group of not more than five, meet once a week for twelve weeks with a caring adult/facilitator. Rainbows offers accredited training for all volunteers to prepare them for the commitment of assisting bereaved youth.

There are many Rainbows groups and sites around Ireland:

Ennis, Antoinette Barry, ClareCare, Harmony Row, Ennis. T: 065 - 6828178

Coláiste Eoin, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow.

Baltinglass, Co. Carlow: Marita: T: 059 648 1254.

(See: <http://archives.tcm.ie/carlownationalist/2003/09/17/story18680.asp>)

RAINBOWS Ireland National Office, Loreto Centre, Crumlin Rd., Dublin 12.

T: 01-473 4175. E: ask@rainbowsireland.com

DRUGS

Report on Louth Drugs Peer Education Project (See Case Study p.49)

Award-winning Kilkenny 421 Peer Drugs Education Programme (See Case Study P.51)

One Year Pilot Peer Education Programme in Wexford

Ferns Diocesan Youth Service are running a one year pilot Peer Education programme on Health(including drugs & alcohol), funded by the Local Drugs Task Force.

The facilitators of the programme learned much from the experience of the 421 Peer Education project in Kilkenny. (See Case Study p.51)

Ferns Peer Education programme has developed it's own manual for use by the future peer educators. The manual deals with general health, drugs & alcohol, mental and emotional health, friendships and relationships and diet, and the emphasis is on raising the ability for personal assessment by young people.

For the pilot project, 4 groups were selected for training:

- a Transition year school class at St. Peters College, Wexford,
- 1 Youth group,
- 1 Meitheal group (5th year mentoring group),
- 1 Youthtrain group.

One of the pitfalls which the Ferns Peer Education co-ordinators identified from the experience of the successful 421 Kilkenny Peer Education Programme is the danger of the peer volunteers being the usual type of candidates: the high achievers, often doing it for their CV, but not necessarily the kind of people that others look up to.

Ways to avoid this include:

1. consulting with a teacher or youth leader familiar with the young people
2. Asking the group who their choice of natural leader might be,
3. asking the groups to elect someone

It falls to a good facilitator to be able to get through to the potential peer educators that this really is about them, about their choices, about empowering them, not just another chore enforced upon them by their seniors.

It's also important that enough peer educators are trained up to allow for a certain number who will not want to go ahead with the programme.

It was felt that another important aspect of peer education projects was the coaching element. Once the young people have done the main training, it is essential that there is proper coaching support and backup in place when the peer educators begin their work.

C: Denis O'Connor, Ferns Diocesan Youth Service, Francis Street, Wexford, **T:** 053-9123262.

E: fdys@iol.ie.

NORTH/SOUTH COLLABORATIONS

Civic-Link

Civic Link is a North/South education programme which aims to promote understanding and co-operation through a practical community action project. Civic Link aims to build positive relationships between young people North and South by encouraging the exploration of social, civic and political values

It is an action-learning project where young people first explore their own communities and the issues which affect them. They will then build their links with their partner group and learn about their community. Together, communicating by e-mail, website, video-conferencing and, most importantly, by residential exchange they will devise, implement and evaluate their action plans.

Contact Details:

Marianne Mc Gill, Manager Education Programme, Civic Link, 20 Herbert Place, Dublin, 2. **T:** 01-6610588 **E:** mmcgill@cooperationireland.org **W:** www.civic-link.org

Civic Link Exchange Carlow

Running since 2001, this group is made up of young people (15-17 years) from the Carlow Vocational School and partnered with a group in Banbridge, Co. Down (Carlow's twin town in Northern Ireland).

The group select an issue or problem they find of interest, research it, analyse solutions, share with their partner group and develop an action plan. Two exchanges take place during the year (one in Carlow, one in Banbridge).

In 2006/2007, students chose to look at the question of anti-social behaviour and the links with drugs & alcohol. In March 2007 the two groups will meet and give a presentation of their findings to each other.

The Civic Link programme link schools of disadvantage North and South, is supported by The Schools Completion Programme and has one 2-hour session per week. It is funded by Co-Operation Ireland and run in conjunction with Carlow Regional Youth Services, Kennedy Street, Carlow.

C: Mairéad **T:**059-9130476. **E:** carlowys@iol.ie

The North/South Project

Since 1994, YouthNet and the National Youth Council of Ireland have developed close working relations.

Both organisations have come together to form The North-South Project. This initiative is a partnership approach to increasing communication and building relationships in the youth sector throughout the island. Funded by the Departments of Education in the North and the South, it works to increase communication and strengthen links between youth organisations across the island, through creating practical structures to support organisations seeking to explore and develop north/south dimensions to youth work.

An audit of services available to young people throughout the island is underway and will continue to inform the work of The North South Project. Planning will also take into account individual needs and also the commitment from YouthNet and NYCI to ensure that organisations, projects and people can link, through the initiative, in a meaningful and practical way.

National Youth Council of Ireland, 3 Montague Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

T: 01-4784122. **W:** www.youth.ie **E:** northsouth@nyci.ie info@nyci.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Children's Law Centre's "Road to Rights" Peer Education Programme

The Education and Training Project is part of the advisory youth group of the Children's Law Centre. Established in 1999 this project consists of young people from various backgrounds across Northern Ireland, who have an interest in lobbying to put children's rights to the fore of the public agenda.

An exciting development for this group has been the successful and innovative peer education programme "Road to Rights". This programme was designed by the Children's Law Centre to enable young people aged 16 – 20 explore rights issues, develop group work and facilitation skills, and enable them to take this knowledge into the community in the form of peer education. The course has been accredited through the Northern Ireland Open College Network (5 credits at Level 3, equivalent to A level standard).

The course's first run was fully booked by schools and youth groups, with a waiting list compiled for the next run, reflecting the innovative nature of the course and the lack of existing opportunities for young people in this area.

The Children's Law Centre compliments existing services provided by the voluntary, community, statutory and legal sector and is developing a comprehensive and accessible advice service on children's rights and the law as it relates to children and young people. The Children's Law Centre is a registered charity, (number XR24365). **C:** 3rd Floor, Philip House, 123-137 York Street, BELFAST BT15 1AB Northern Ireland. **T:** 00 44 2890 245704. **W:** www.childrenslawcentre.org

FASA – Drugs Awareness, Support and Training

FASA is an organisation based in North and West Belfast providing a wide range of services for those directly or indirectly affected by drugs, alcohol and other substance. FASA also provides training to young people and youth workers on drugs awareness and peer education.

Training

Youth Support: Young people are challenged to examine and possibly change attitudes to drugs. Peer design of literature, drug awareness sessions, mentoring.

Community Support: 8 week Drug Awareness sessions with youth groups, community groups, training organisations.

Drugs Education accredited training: A variety of OCN accredited training to meet the needs of young people, clients, parents and professionals; support to local secondary schools; one-off training sessions; a DVD resource – for young people ages 9 - 12 years.

Information Resource Drop-in Centre

The FASA building where the general public can call in without appointments and request help, assistance, guidance on a range of issues.

Local Network of Support

Community support to other voluntary and community groups who specialise in other fields given that drugs are not a problem in isolation, but contribute to anti social behaviour, crime, parental problems, and family breakdowns.

FASA Nature Nurture Essential Health Shop

A local community resource developed to target health in the community. Offering holistic alternatives to legal and illicit drugs.

FASA, Bingham House, 16 Woodvale Road, Belfast, BT13 3BS. **T:** 02890803040

E: info@fasaonline.org **W:** www.fasaonline.org

Opportunity Youth

Opportunity Youth, was established in 1993 in order to meet the needs of young people involved in vocational training in Belfast.

Today Opportunity Youth provides personal development, Lifeskills, Active Citizenship programmes; mentoring, counselling services, and a Youth Advice Centre to young people (11-25 yrs) in vocational training, schools, communities, voluntary and statutory services all over Northern Ireland. Opportunity Youth has a proven track record and has been through numerous evaluations over the years.

Peer Education

Peer Education is the methodology used to deliver these services. Opportunity Youth's approach to Peer Education is to recruit and train young youth workers to deliver their programmes. Opportunity Youth has grown to become the largest peer education youth organisation in Ireland with 70 professional staff supporting over 4500 young people each year. Partnerships include the Department of Employment and Learning, the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust and the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Accredited Courses

Opportunity Youth offers young people and youth workers a wide variety of accredited (NIOCN) and non-accredited courses, including Peer Education. Levels 1 & 2 for younger age groups, Level 3 for those involved in working with young people.

Opportunity Youth Programmes:

Peer Education Skills programme enables young people to develop personally and professionally and prepares them for voluntary/paid work with other young people where they can impart their knowledge and experience. The certificate in Peer Education Skills identifies 4 major areas of learning increased self awareness and development of individual skills that enable them to work more effectively with young people, increased understanding of peer education methodology, increased knowledge of health and social issues that affect young people & development of facilitation techniques relating to youth work.

Peer Mentoring Service

Lifeskills Programme

Community Relations is a Belfast based programme designed to offer young people the opportunity to explore their effectiveness within a cross community context and identify barriers that may impede their work.

Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination

Understanding Active Citizenship in the Local Community

Only For Men - Operates on Thursday night 6.30- 8.30pm. An all male team (male doctor and peer educators) provide health advice and support. They can drop in any Thursday and group visits are welcomed.

Training options include: 2 hour classes one night/week up to 16 weeks or 2 or 3 residentials

Opportunity Youth has started looking to partnerships in the Republic of Ireland, and are open to giving presentations and exchange visits with a view to collaborating with other organisations and projects here.

C1: Anne-Marie McClure, Chief Ex., Hildon House, 30-34 Hill St., Belfast BT1 2LB.

T: 028 90435810. **W:** www.opportunity-youth.org **E:** opportunity.youth@dnet.co.uk

C2: Donegal/Derry Area Manager Darren Boyle: T: 00 44 2871371162

E: darren@opportunity-youth.org

UNITED KINGDOM

Teen Mothers School Visits Educate About Teenage Pregnancy

Young mothers give talks in schools as part of a radical sex education project run in Southwark, south London, one of the most socially deprived areas in the country, with the fifth highest teenage pregnancy rate in England.

The Southwark project is one of a growing number of "peer education" programmes around the country. Funded by Southwark Council and Brook, the young people's sex advice and contraceptive service, young mothers and young fathers undergo training to go into local schools to teach 13- to 16-year-olds about the realities of teenage parenthood.

They also encourage classes to discuss other consequences of underage and unprotected sex, particularly the risks of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, which have increased alarmingly in recent years. Among 16- to 19 year-olds, cases of chlamydia (which can lead to ectopic pregnancy and infertility) rose by 53% between 1995 and 1997, and cases of gonorrhoea by 45%.

Another programme called Teens & Toddlers sees teenagers 'twinned' with a toddler in a local nursery. For 20 sessions they are exposed to the realities of dealing with a very young child. So far, the results have been very good.

Centrepont Peer Projects about Homelessness

Centrepont is the UK national charity working to improve the lives of socially excluded homeless young people. It provides a range of services including emergency night shelters; short stay services; specialist projects for care leavers, ex-offenders, and young single parents; foyers, supported flats and floating support services.

Centrepont Peer Education Project for Schools

The aim of Centrepont's peer education programme is to reduce the risk of young people leaving home in an unplanned way and promote positive behavioural choices. Centre Points education team works with targeted schools where research indicates a potentially high risk of young people leaving home in a way which may lead to them becoming homeless. Centrepont's work with schools has led to the development of lesson plans which are interesting, accessible and fun.

C: Dan Amoaten/Leoncha Leavy, Neil House, 7 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DU.

T: 0207 4265300 **W:** www.centrepont.org

Centrepont Peer-Produced DVD on Homelessness

'You Are Homeless' is a film made by a group of young people who experienced homelessness in Worcestershire. The aim of the film is to teach the dangers of life on the streets and it was shown in schools and youth centres in the county.

The young people formed a Peer Education Group and used their own experiences of being homeless to develop a storyline for the film. The end result was a DVD which they used to run a series of workshops in schools, pupil referral units, youth centres and City Councils around the county. Centrepont have distributed the film and lesson plan to every secondary school in Worcestershire.

The DVD highlights some real life experiences and some of the challenges faced by homeless young people. It is aimed to initiate a discussion on youth homelessness and its causes and to help young people start to think of ways in which they can avoid becoming homeless.

For further information please contact Victoria Pearcey/Paula Hector at Centrepont.

T: 00 44 207 423 6887/6808 **E:** vpearcey@centrepont.org

EUROPEAN UNION YOUTH SUPPORTS

European Youth For Action

European Youth For Action (EYFA) is a group that receives EU funding to organise projects and events. It is a European platform for grassroots, collectives, organisations, projects and individuals active on environmental and social justice issues all around Europe.

EYFA is characterised by a grassroots, bottom-up orientation. It considers that most environmental problems are also a question of social and economic (in)justice. EYFA works to challenge the mainstream economic system and promotes socially and environmentally sound ways of living. This is done by supporting and organising actions, seminars, trainings and other events in Europe.

EYFA plays a role in supporting newly emerging projects as well as established ones, fundraising support and organising meetings together with grassroots organisations and initiatives.

EYFA supports all forms of activism...From non-violent campaigns against ecologically and socially unsustainable systems to cultural performance...to building sustainable ways of living and working. EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential - some have become independent sustainable long-term projects.

EYFA's yearly returning project is the Ecotopia gathering, the annual summer camp for activists in Europe.

In 2002 Ecotopia was held in Scarrif, Co. Clare in conjunction with the Irish Environmental youth activist network *Gluaiseacht*.

W: <http://eyfa.org/>

The European Voluntary Service

The European Voluntary Service [EVS] has been around for a number of years and is now part of the new Youth In Action programme.

EVS is an opportunity for young people between 18 and 30 to go to a foreign country for up to 12 months to work on different projects.

The EVS projects provide volunteers the opportunity to volunteer within the European Youth For Action Network(see above), and work on environmental, cultural, independent media, car-free, green-life, social justice, political art initiatives.

EVS is also a useful tool for organisations to find volunteers to work on their projects. Since 1997, EYFA has taken part in various EVS projects as sending, hosting and coordinating organisations. Since 2004, EYFA has widened its scope to include partner organisations from Eastern Europe as well Latin America.

For further information about the European Voluntary Service, and EYFA's Involvement, please contact: Natalie Caine or Roy Pullens EVS Coordinator(s)

E: evs@eyfa.org

Resource Highlight(see Appendix)

Telling It Like It Is – An introduction to Peer Education and Training

Lynne Tammi (National Co-Ordinator, Article 12, Scotland.) 2003.

This manual was produced to provide guidance, to members of the European Young People's Commission, on the use of Peer Education and Training.

Chapter 4

Youth Peer Mentoring, Peer Counselling & Peer Mediation

Community Big Brother Big Sister

BBBS is a mentoring programme that matches an adult volunteer to a young person (10-18 years). The basic idea is that a friendship will form between the young person and adult volunteer that will promote the positive development of the young person.

It believes that the friendship will act as an early intervention to help prevent future difficulties and be a support to a young person and his/her family facing adversity in their lives. Having a caring adult friend seeks to help build positive assets for a young person and to enable them to have:

- A positive sense of self and the future
- Positive values of caring, social justice, honesty and responsibility
- Social competencies of making friends, planning, making decisions and resisting negative behaviour
- A commitment of learning.

School BBBS:

The BBBS programme operates in two different settings; community and school. The school programme operates within the school environment. The big brothers/big sisters are senior students and the little brothers/sisters are first/second year students. They meet up once a week in the school and take part in activities that are available to them in the school; play board games, eat lunch together, play sports, have a chat....

The programme is based on the simple idea of friendship that can help the young person develop skills in decision-making, communication, assertiveness and taking responsibility. It provides a young person the opportunity to gain support and advice from an adult in a friendly and caring environment.

Background

The BBBS programme began in the United States of America in 1904. It is the oldest and best-known mentoring programme in America with over 500 affiliated programmes catering for over 100,000 one-to-one relationships between a volunteer adult and a young person.

The programme began in Ireland (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon) in 2000 and is affiliated to the Big Brothers Big Sisters International Organisation, which has developed programmes in 37 countries throughout the world.

Foróige Head Office, Block 12D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12. **T:** 01-6301560 **E:** info@foroige.ie **W:** www.foroige.ie

Voluntary Mentoring For Young Immigrants

The Transition Supports Project (TSP) is an EQUAL Community Initiative that works with Separated Children Seeking Asylum (SCSA) and young asylum seekers (17 to 21 year olds).

The Transition Supports Project (TSP) invites men and women from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (over 21 years) to become mentors in its Voluntary Mentoring programme. The Voluntary Mentoring Programme provides a structure where a young person (17-21 years) who arrived and sought asylum in Ireland as an unaccompanied minor, can receive regular support and guidance from a designated adult.

Training and Support

Prospective volunteers undergo a detailed and thorough screening process and when accepted and successfully matched with a young person, receive on-going support and supervision from the Transition Supports Project.

Commitment

A volunteer mentor is required to participate in a 6-hour orientation session run over 2 evenings, before committing to at least one evening per week for a minimum of one year.

Contact the Transition Supports Project for a full application package at:

CDVEC Adult Learning Centre, 1 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. **T:** 01-8147913=966,
E: infotsp@parnell.cdvec.ie

Peer Counselling for People with Disabilities

Peer counselling is a nationwide service that is delivered by people who live with a disability and is available to support people with vision impairments or physical disability. It is a joint service offered by the Irish Wheelchair Association(IWA) and the National Council of the Blind in Ireland (NCBI).

Peer counselling is an opportunity for a disabled person to discuss what is happening in their life with a trained counsellor who can help find solutions to problems or difficulties. The peer counsellors have first hand experience of disability. After an initial meeting with the peer counsellor, both agree whether the service might be useful and arrange further meetings, which last approximately one hour.

Who are the counsellors?

All the peer counsellors have completed a two year training course accredited by the National Association of Pastoral Counsellors and Psychotherapists (NAPCP). This service is provided in partnership with the Irish Wheelchair Association.

Where does peer counselling take place?

The service is community based, so the counsellor can be met at a location convenient both.

Peer Counselling Training Programme

The Peer Counselling training programme is accredited by the National Association for Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy. All peer counsellors attend supervision meetings and are supported by a full-time psychologist/family therapist.

International Recognition

The work of the IWA/NCBI Peer Counselling service recently received international recognition at the International Narrative Therapy and Community Work conference and through the publication of a paper on the service in an international journal.

In Kerry

The IWA have counsellor in Cork who visits Tralee and Killarney. There is currently no peer counselling for under 18s.

Phone Support

The Peer Counselling service also operates a phone support service. This service provides emotional support and is available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7pm to 10pm. The number is a low call number 1890 234313.

Contact Peer Counselling: **T:** 01-818 6400/Direct line 01-833 8219 (24 hour message service) or local office. **E:** peer@iwa.ie.

'Include Youth's Innovative Peer Mediation Programme

Include Youth was formed in 1979 primarily as a campaigning organisation working to enhance services for vulnerable young people at risk of entering the care or criminal justice systems. Today Include Youth works with young people from socially disadvantaged areas, those with a learning disability, those with special needs, those who have been truanting, suspended or expelled from school, those from a care background, those who have had a negative parenting experience, young people who have committed or are at risk of committing crime, misusing drugs or alcohol, undertaking unsafe sexual behaviour or other harmful activities, or of being harmed themselves.

Include Youth runs the Give and Take Scheme, Peer Mediation, the Looked After Children's Education (LACE) Project, and a youth participation project called Young Voices.

Peer Mediation

Include Youth has been supporting schools to establish Peer Mediation schemes since 2000. The Peer Mediation project has been funded by the Department of Education. It has worked with 14 schools, both primary and post-primary providing information and training for staff, training for pupils and follow-up support. It has also developed a number of training resources to aid schools to establish peer mediation as an approach to dealing with conflict.

Mediation aims to help people find a solution to their conflict and come to an agreement. The mediator is someone 'in the middle' helping other people who are having an argument to sort out the problem for themselves. When a pupil is a mediator they are called a 'Peer Mediator'.

The people who disagree have a chance to sit face-to-face and talk uninterrupted, so that each point of view is heard. The aim is to come to a win/win situation, where both sides are agreeable to the solution, so that there isn't one winner and one loser but both are winners.

Include Youth has also piloted Peer Mediation in a non-formal education setting and has published a manual for introducing peer mediation to young people.

Resources

Include Youth have developed a number of resources and contacts to assist schools and organisation in establishing peer mediation schemes: Training Manuals, Video Introductions, training courses. Comprehensive information is available from the website including model forms and documents.

Outcomes/Evaluation

Key outcomes from internal evaluation (October 2003) include fewer minor conflicts following training, new skills developed by pupils (listening, communication, problem solving), raised self-esteem of pupils, better understanding of conflict management and improved teacher/pupil relationship.

Manager of Peer Mediation Project Lorraine Thompson, Belfast. **T:** 0289031 1007
W: www.peermediation.org www.includeyouth.org

Case Studies

KDYS Peer Education Substance Abuse Programme 2002/2003

From May-September 2001, KDYS Tralee Youth Information Officer Linda Kearin completed the SUPER programme[Substances Use Peer Education Responses] run by National Youth Federation, now known as Youth Work Ireland, (a federation of 22 local youth services, including 500 Youth Clubs and Groups, 40 Youth Information Centres and Outlets and 100 Youth Projects.) This was a FETAC level 5 programme(2 modules Substance Abuse & Peer Education) to train Local Youth Service staff and volunteers in the process and content of Peer Education, in order to help them plan and support Peer Education work with young people. See Appendix for details on the SUPER Training Manual.

Out of this, Ms Kearin facilitated a Peer Education training programme in Gaelcholáiste Trá Lí for 2 years running. This involved 4 weeks training on the topic: Substance abuse, THEN 4 weeks training on Peer Education. However, as the students didn't feel they were ready, the training was extended to 16 weeks. The young peer educators then delivered a presentation on drugs to first years in Méanscoil na Toirbhirte Girls Secondary school in Dingle. The Peer Educators didn't do their peer teaching in Tralee, as they didn't want anyone to know them.

The training worked well in the girl's school. The facilitator felt that the training and teaching had a positive benefit on the Peer Educators, and created an understanding of the job of teachers. However, it was felt that the young peer educators ought to have had more than one opportunity to teach. The facilitator was unsure how beneficial it was to the children being taught. The importance of the work not being tokenistic was expressed, and it was felt that this depended on the worker.

As to the certain dangers in dealing with the topic of drugs, the facilitator stressed the importance of laying down the ground rules at the start, that the approach was to inform about drugs, not discuss or ask personal questions about whether or not certain individuals had taken drugs.

An attempt was made to do Peer Education training with Transition Years in a boys school, which didn't work out, as they had no interest in the training.

The facilitator also developed peer education training pack, which is available in the KDYS library in Tralee.

Report on Louth Drugs Peer Education Project

The Dundalk Local Committee (D.L.C.) set up by the Home-School Liaison Officers, looks at the issues that impinge on young people's learning. The first problem that the D.L.C. tackled was non-attendance at schools. The next issue that the D.L.C. addressed was the problem of smoking, alcohol and drugs and the impact they have on the education and lives of our young people. The D.L.C. decided to undertake a Peer Education Project to address these issues. It was felt that a student-to-student peer education/mentoring would work better with impressionable 11 to 14 year olds. The Health Service Executive (H.S.E) members of the local committee informed the committee members that Peer Education had worked successfully in other parts of the country.

The planning started in the last school term of 2004/05 school year. The Home School Community Liaison (H.S.C.L.) personnel from St. Vincent's, St. Louis, De la Salle, O'Fiaich College and Colaiste Ris met with the H.S.E. and the Principals of these Post-Primary schools who gave their approval to the Peer Education Project.

Awareness sessions were also held at community-based venues to inform the parents and the wider community about the Peer Education Programme.



It was then decided to train Transition Year and fifth year pupils as Peer Educators to work in conjunction with Social Political and Health Education (SPHE) teachers. Meetings were held in May and September involving Transition Years, fifth years, and SPHE co-ordinators to present the outline of the programme and to prepare for its smooth implementation.

From September 2005 to January 2006, the H.S.E. in conjunction with Youth Work Ireland Louth (Y.W.I.L.) trained twenty-two Peer Educators from five Post-Primary schools. This training took place over eight sessions with each session lasting a full school day. The training entailed Confidence Building, Sharing Information, Group Work, Role-Play, Public Speaking, Presentations, Teamwork and in-depth education on the topics of Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs (S.A.D.). The Peer Educators thoroughly enjoyed mixing with students from other schools and learning about these issues.

During February and March, the Peer Educators delivered the programme over a four-week period in their respective schools to all First Year classes as part of their SPHE curriculum under the supervision of the relevant SPHE teachers.

In the first week of April, the Peer Educators met their tutors from the H.S.E. and Y.W.I.L. to review the Post-Primary delivery and plan for delivering the programme to fifth and sixth classes of these primary schools: St. Nicholas Monastery School, Castletown Girls National School, St. Joseph's National School, Redeemer Girls National School and Redeemer Boys National School. The primary school delivery took place in the last term of the current school year.

The Peer Education Programme was evaluated through hearing the views of the Peer Educators, Primary and Post-Primary Pupils, Parents, Tutors, Principals, SPHE teachers, Transition year, Fifth year and HSCL co-ordinators. The overall feeling was that this was a very worthwhile project.

Youth work Ireland Louth and Dundalk Local Committee believe that the Peer Education Programme has had a huge impact not only on young people but also on the community in general.

Contact: Samantha Teather, Youth Work Ireland Louth, Rivercourt Business Centre, River Lane, Dundalk, Co. Louth. **T:** 042-9338323. **E:** youth@lyf.ie or Liz-Ann Mckevitt, HSE.

Louth Peer Education Project – a HSE worker's involvement

Dundalk Local Committee

"The local committee was set up in November 2003 by the Dundalk Home-School Community Liaison Officers in line with the community involvement element of their job. The committee looked at areas that impact upon school achievement/early school leaving, identified a number of areas (e.g. school attendance, substance use, teen pregnancy) and then devised action plans for each area. This approach is not specific to Dundalk, it is used throughout County Louth and nationwide.

The committee approached the HSE to come up with a plan to deliver Substance Mis-use education to teachers, parents and pupils. HSE Health Promotion already delivers such training to teachers and parents via the HSE Schools Team and Outreach workers respectively, and don't usually work directly with young people, believing it to be more beneficial to train the teachers. However, as it was perceived that teachers were under-resourced in delivering the Substance Use module of the SPHE programme, the HSE trainers developed a substance use peer education programme.

Development of the Peer Education Programme

Although peer programmes from abroad were looked at, in the end, a model that the HSE had used in a community setting in Cavan/Monaghan was adapted and developed. Working within the school timetable allowed for more structure and afforded greater chance of success.

Content was worked on in conjunction with a HSE Addiction Service outreach worker and with two experienced workers from Youth Work Ireland Louth. Content included: facilitation skills, presentation skills, programme planning, delivery and evaluation, smoking, alcohol and drugs. The peer education training was delivered over 8 full days from September to February during school hours. The peer educators then delivered peer education to the first years in their respective schools and after mid term they tweaked their programme and delivered to fifth and sixth class of their feeder schools, ones that have Home-School Community Liaison Officers.

Funding/Sustainability

To date the programme has had no funding. Administrative support came from HSE Health Promotion Department and Youth Work Ireland and the premises costs were met by the schools. The sustainability of the programme is up for debate at the moment, as the Youth Work Ireland staff are short term CE contracts. Replacement CE may not have the same experience they had, and you can't afford to take that chance when working with young people. Human resources are the biggest concern. We are currently exploring funding options to retain the workers, through the North East Regional Drug Task Force and/or education grants from Dundalk partnership.

Word is spreading about the programme and requests have come in to run it in schools in Drogheda, Monaghan and Cavan."

Award-winning Kilkenny 421 Peer Drugs Education Programme

The 421 Programme began in 2003 after a school chaplain in Kilkenny saw that a new approach was needed provide drug education in local schools. The SPHE drugs programme seemed to be failing in some schools. It was seen that the success of adult-delivered SPHE drug education was limited, and could be strengthened by active participation of young people both in both design and delivery. Two HSE drug education workers and the local youth service then developed what has become the 421 Peer Education Programme.

The 421 initiative uses peer education to train Transition year students design and deliver drugs education to first-year students. The overall aim is to provide meaningful education to young people about drugs and the main risks associated with their use. Over three days, Transition years are trained by local youth workers from Ossory Youth and the drugs education officer from the Carlow/Kilkenny HSE Substance Misuse Team. The training involves: facts about drugs; attitudes to substance misuse; signs, symptoms and patterns of drug use; peer education skills, planning a programme and presentation skills.

Schools pay a fee of €20 for the training of each student. These students then design their own six-session drugs education programme, after which 2 or 3 students working together, take half a first year class with whom they do 5 or 6 peer education sessions, usually part of the SPHE classes.

According to one of the youth workers involved: *"Young people get so much more from it than adult-delivered drugs awareness. 4th years learn about drugs & addiction and gain from the experience of designing their own programme. It can improve communication between classes and understanding of teachers' roles. At the same time though, it is hard to document how much exactly 1st years gain."*

Up to summer 2006, the programme had trained 92 fourth-year students from six schools in Co Kilkenny. These young people have gone on to provide drugs education to approximately 880 first-year students.

An external evaluation of the whole programme came out in February 2006. If the project is to expand it will need more support and possibly a specific worker to take it on. It could be opened up to other agencies eg Foroige, Kilkenny V.E.C.

In 2006, Kilkenny's 421 Peer Drugs Education Programme, was awarded The European Prevention Prize, an accolade given by the Council of Europe Pompidou Group, to highlight drug prevention projects that have successfully involved young people in their design and implementation. The Transition year co-ordinator of one school I spoke to felt that the programme's success depended very much on the motivation and interest from the students. The previous year had been very good, but the current year seemed more interested in getting out of classes! In that school, a teacher is present in the class while the peer educators are delivering the course.

In developing such a programme, a youth worker involved suggested *"the kids need to know that it's work, so some method is needed to get the 4th years best suited to the programme. With the 421 Programme, we give a talk in schools, after which those interested fill out an application form. The volunteers are then called for a formal interview before a panel. After this years' evaluation we hope to tighten up the programme further."*

The programme is also very cost effective as the training costs very little - €24/ student, though as of yet no follow has been done with former peer educators now in 5th or 6th years.

The organisers of the programme also felt that parents should also be given drugs education training, and that it would be useful to organise a National Conference on Peer Education to pool the experience of people involved in such programmes around the country.

Contact Mr. Mel Bay, Kilkenny City Drugs Project/Ossory Youth Services.
T: 056-7761200. **E:** mbay@ossoryyouth.com

Secondary School Activists out to Change the World - St. Angela's Peace and Justice Group, Waterford

The Peace and Justice group of St Angela's Convent School Waterford was set up in 1990 by twelve students and one teacher, concerned with doing local community work, researching development issues and raising funds for worthy third world charities. 2006 and the group is still going strong. With their motto "To See, To Act, To Change" the group has over 100 student members from 2nd to 6th year, and is run by a committee of six sixth years, assisted and encouraged by a group of 5 teachers. St. Angela's Peace & Justice Group is Peer Education in practice.

At the beginning of each year, the students decide on a number of development related projects that they will work on for the coming year. These are on local, national and international issues, eg. child slavery, the AIDS epidemic, the work of Ireland's missionaries abroad, and usually include one environmental project.

Each Wednesday, a guest speaker comes in to give a lunchtime talk: this might be a well known personality, a Trocaire aid worker, an asylum seeker residing locally, a person of note in the area, a human rights campaigner, a peace activist etc.

Then before Christmas, the students organise Peace & Justice Week, which features talks, discussion fora, musical and cultural events, capped off by the Peace & Justice Award Ceremony for individuals who have made a difference in obtaining justice and diminishing suffering in the world. The fact that so many high-profile winners have attended the school's award ceremony is a tribute to the dedication of the students and staff, the esteem in which their work is held, and what can be achieved by such a project. It is also a credit to the students and staff, in this age of political correctness, that they are not afraid of making controversial choices in their choice of speakers. (One was an activist involved in opposing the use of Shannon airport during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.)

(Past recipients of awards have been Trócaire Director Justin Kilcullen; Michael D. Higgins; the McCartney sisters from Belfast; Sellafeld campaigner Janine Allis-Smith; journalist John Pilger; Aung San Suu Kyi – leader of opposition in Burma; Archbishop Belo – Nobel Laureate from East Timor; Senator Gordon Wilson; Dick Spring T.D.; Adi Roche; Niamh Brennan (former St Angela's student) for her charity work in the Philippines; local woman Bernadette O'Brien who set up the Siberian Childrens Trust.)

The work done on the Peace & Justice Group is completely voluntary and extra-curricular, both for the students and the teachers. The teachers give up one hour/week to meet the student committee. The students do most of work, overseeing projects while the teachers oversee the students.

St. Angela's has a good link to Trocaire which invests a lot in education projects. A Trocaire member from Cork often comes to give talks, or accompany visiting speaker (contact John Smith @ Trocaire, Cork).

St Angela's Peace and Justice group has built up enormous experience over the last 16 years. The Group has the potential to serve as a model for other schools interested in constructive youth activism. It could be possible for schools to do a skills exchange with St. Angela's. Perhaps a group of transition years could team up with St. Angela's 4th years, as part of their GAISCE project, to learn about the Peace & Justice model.

Peace and Justice Group, St Angela's Convent School, Waterford.

T: St Angelas School 051-876510. Retired teacher Pat O'Driscoll (on teacher's committee) 051-391607. **E:** steckied@hotmail.com

From Colombia To Moyross – International Peer Educators Strike a Chord

One World Week is co-ordinated by the National Youth Council Of Ireland. Each year sees a different theme. The theme for One World Week 2006 was 'Global Health'.

Among the activities on the programme was a visit to Ireland by a group of young people from Zambia and Colombia.

3 Colombians girls (ages 15, 14, 19) toured Ireland giving workshops to Irish young people. (They were accompanied by their Colombian Youth Worker, who had given them the training.) The girls were from a youth group from Medellin, a large city in Colombia.

NYCI contacted local youth services to link them up with Irish young people.

In Limerick city, the Colombians called to the Limerick Youth Service youth centre, the Family Resource Centre in Ballinanty, and a secondary school in Moyross. The international peer educators travelled with an interpreter as they had no English.

The Colombians were amazed with the facilities in Limerick Youth Services Centre, because they get no government funding in Colombia.

In the school in Moyross they did a workshop with Transition years & 5th years. They brought bracelets, info about their organisation, videos on young women in Colombia (one of girls was single mother). They played a game to try and get the Irish class to loosen out, and then a workshop on making friendship bracelet.

According to one of the Irish facilitators: "Youngsters from other countries could teach Irish children about not being so uptight. Colombians are less uptight with their bodies. In Ireland, male and female students are reluctant to get involved in activities."

At the Family Resource Centre, the Colombians showed a video to a group of Irish girls aged 15-20. Uncommunicative at first, by the end, the locals were asking loads of questions about the war and drugs. The Colombians spoke about the media image of women and macho culture, which the Irish girls also identified with.

The Irish facilitator felt that communication was much better in the non-formal education environment than in school, where the Irish kids were conscious of their teachers being present. The young Irish girls in the Resource Centre were much more relaxed.

This experience would suggest that peer education works well for Development Education, that it is easier for young people to connect with each other than with figures of authority, despite barriers of language and culture. The young people involved in this project found similar issues between being young in Colombia and in Ireland.

Johnny Sheahan is the Director of the National Youth Development Education Programme with NYCI and co-ordinator of One World Week activities in November. NYCI has tonnes of free publications and resources on development education & youth work generally.

NYCI **T:** 01-4784122.

St Cuan's College Peer-led Youth Information Point and Library, Galway

St Cuan's College is a second level school and St Cuan's Information Point and Library is a joint project of Roscommon Youth Service and the college.

The facility is run by nine specially trained second level students under the management of the Youth Information Coordinator, a teacher and the director of the County Roscommon Youth Service. The initiative is a response to the needs of young people in the school and the wider community.

In 1998 they secured the use of a disused boys' cloakroom from the college to set up the Information Point and Library. The Centre was officially opened in December 1999 and is available to all students. It contains information on areas such as: accommodation, employment and training, education, finance, health, social welfare and travel. In addition to the Information Point the facility also has a library of over 3,000 books that provides a reference and lending service.

Each year all fifth year students in the college learn how they can participate in the service from the director of the local Youth Service. Students have the opportunity to apply for the nine team places to run the Information Point and Library. The successful candidates receive certified training from the Youth Service and the school, both inside and outside the facility.

Marie Madden, 18, a student at the college, has been involved in the initiative for over a year. 'We look after everything in the Information Centre and give students the information that they need ... I really enjoy the responsibility.'

Donna Coffey is the Secretary for the team. 'When we were selected we had an induction training and also spent time shadowing the previous group. We give a lot of input into what types of books are bought and what we think people are looking for.'

The young people involved in providing the service, and those using it, are empowering each other and are a good example of peer education at work.

In May 1999 the Youth Information Point received a Silver All-Ireland Award from the Gulbenkian Citizenship Foundation. In addition, the Student Information Officers received Gaisce Awards from President McAleese for their contribution to the provision of services for their peers.

The initiative is an example of formal and informal education working together to encourage the participation of young people in making decisions that affect their community. Work is being initiated on compiling and implementing a training manual and policy document that would inform other organisations of this model.

St Cuan's Information Point is part of a network of Youth Information Centres and Facilities run by County Roscommon Youth Service under the auspices of the National Youth Information Monitoring Committee of the Department of Education and Science.

(NYCI – Taking the Initiative 2001. <http://www.youth.ie/download/irelandtext.pdf>)

Chapter 6

An Ghaeltacht – The Gaeltacht

Cás Faoi Leith/A Case Apart

Cás ann fhéin í an Ghaeltacht i saol muintir Chiarraí, gur cheart déileáil léi mar ábhar eisceachtúil. I gCiarraí atá beirt de na h-ocht ceantair beaga sa domhain ar fad, in a labhraítear fós mar mháthair teanga, An Ghaeilge, teanga a bhfuil na mílte bliain de stair agus cultúr inti. Taobh amuigh de gach nasc atá ann lenár gcultúr agus stair fhéin, séard atá ann ná píosa den saibhreas teangeolaíochta agus oidhreachta an domhain.

Cé nach bhfuil mórán cleachtas oideachasúil le h-aimsiú sna Gaeltachtaí Corca Dhuibhne agus Uíbh Ráthach gurbh fhéidir píar-oideachas a glaoch air, is fiú scagadh gearr a dhéanamh ar cúrsaí oideachais agus ar na struchtúir atá ar fáil a cuireann le greasán sóisealta daoine óga sa Ghaeltacht.

Fomhór muintir na Gaeltachta, tá siad bródiúil as a ndúchas, agus gníomhach dá chosaint, in ainneoin na fórsaí tromchúiseacha atá ag brú isteach air go leanúnach (teaghlaigh gan Ghaeilge ag bogadh isteach, tithe samhraidh, easpa fostaíochta srl). An rud a chuireann ionadh ar daoine ag teacht isteach do Ghaeltacht Chiarraí ná a laghad suime is atá ag roinnt mhaith dos na daoine dúchasacha fhéin i leith na teanga. Sa 'Bhéarlacht', tá an meon i leith an Ghaeilge athraithe go h-iomlán ón gránna marfach a bhí ag chuid mór don phobail di. Tá meon i bhfad níos dhearfaí anois, agus i measc dreamanna áirithe, fiú amháin, tá sé faiseanta bheith dá labhairt.

I measc cuid de muintir na Gaeltachta, sé ioróin an scéil nach bhfuil mórán athruithe tagtha ar cúrsaí.

Ó thaobh tacaíocht forbartha de, tá roinnt mhaith Grúpaí Forbartha suite sna Gaeltachtaí i gCiarraí (Udarás na Gaeltachta, Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta, Comhar Dhuibhne srl) ag cur deontasí is scéimeanna forbartha ar fáil. Ag an am céanna, tá cúigear iarbhunscoileanna Ghaeltachta nó lán-gaelach. Cuid dóibh súid, níl an teanga ró-thréan iontu. I scoil amháin, is í an bhéarla gnáth teanga cumarsáide na daoine óga. Usáidtear Béarla i leath de na ranganna, agus sa leath eile, freagraíonn roinnt mhaith de na daltaí ceisteanna Gaeilge as Béarla. Ón fíor bheagán comhrá as Gaeilge a chloistear idir óga ar shráideanna an Daingin, is léir mar sin gur phobal teangeolaíochta i léig é pobal Corca Dhuibhne.

Faoi láthair, tá KDYS i mbun aistriúcháin a dhéanamh ar na príomh-lámhleabhair a usáidtear sna cláracha a chuireann siad ar fáil sna scoileanna Gaeltachta agus sna clubanna óga. Cabhrófar sin le cleachtas an oibrí áitiúla KDYS.

I 2006, bunaíodh seirbhís nua do óige na Gaeltachta. Tugann Óige na Gaeltachta seirbhísí tacaíochta, monatóireachta do clubanna agus grúpaí óga deonach sna ceantair Gaeltachta. Cuireann siad scéimeanna maoiniú ar fáil, cúrsaí cinnireachtaí, comórtasáí, imeachtaí spóirt, seirbhís seiceáil gardaí, chomh maith le scéim trealamh.

Faoi láthair, tá scéim philòtach Youth Café á n-eagrú sa Cheathrú Rua a bheidh ar an chéad ionad den tsaghas sin sa Ghaeltacht/faoin tuath. Tá na daoine óga áitiúil ar an gcoiste stiúrtha.

The Gaeltacht - An Ghaeltacht

A Case Apart/Cás Faoi Leith

The Gaeltacht is a case apart in the life of Kerry people, and needs to be dealt with as such. County Kerry has 2 of the 8 small regions on planet Earth where the Irish language is still spoken natively, a language that has thousands of years of history and culture contained in it. Beyond all considerations of history and culture, Irish represents part of the world's linguistic heritage. For this reason it is worth taking a brief look at educational and other elements that add to the social network of young people in the Gaeltacht.

Many people in the Gaeltacht have pride in their unique culture and are active in defending it, despite the continual pressure that it is under (non-Irish speakers moving in, holiday homes, lack of employment). What is surprising to people going to the Gaeltacht is the lack of interest that many local people display towards the language. Outside the Gaeltacht, people's attitudes have changed radically from the hatred that many there had for it. A much more positive attitude is now common, with some people even finding it fashionable to speak it. It is ironic therefore that, some of the old attitude seems to still pervade in *within* the Irish-speaking areas.

In term of development supports, there are quite a few development groups situated in Kerry's Gaeltachts (Údarás na Gaeltachta, Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta, Comhar Dhuibhne srl) providing grants and other supports. At the same time, there are 5 Gaeltacht or Irish-speaking secondary schools. In some of those, Irish is quite weak. In one of the main Kerry Gaeltacht secondary schools, English is the main language used among the young people. English is also used in many of the classes, and in others students reply in English to questions in Irish. From this and from the scant conversation in Irish that one hears among young people on the streets of Dingle, its clear that Corca Dhuibhne is a linguistic population in decline.

At the moment, KDYS is translating the manuals that are used for the programmes that they run in Gaeltacht schools and youth clubs. This will help the work of the local KDYS worker.

In 2006, a new youth service was set up for Gaeltacht youth by Údarás na Gaeltachta. Óige na Gaeltacht monitors and supports clubs and voluntary youth groups in the Gaeltacht regions. They provide funding, leadership courses, organise competitions, and sports events, facilitate Garda Clearance for volunteers and support equipment purchase.

At the moment, a pilot Youth Café is being set up in Carrowroe in Conamara. This will be the first rural/Gaeltacht facility of this type, and will have young people on its management committee.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Peer education is not a quick-fix, easy formula for working with youth. After all the projects we have looked at in the process of this report, coupled with the researchers personal experience of working with young people, it is clear that peer-led and peer education projects and programmes require the same if not more commitment, effort and vigilance as applies to all other types of youth development work.

Peer-led methods call for trust and belief in the capacities of young people, they allow greater freedom for young people to initiate and develop their own ideas and energies. At the same time, they also call for the proper measures to be in place to support and watch over those freedoms. Youth-led cafés, or topic-specific peer projects call for dynamic partnerships between youth & youth education workers. Working in partnership requires new habits and more horizontal relationships. Some young people might not seem to have the adequate maturity to take on the extra responsibility called for. That is possible. But that is also the essence of the whole approach: building maturity and initiative through allowing greater freedom and responsibility. It is this mix of freedom and responsibility that make peer-led methods attractive and more importantly, makes them work. The same expectations of proper behaviour and respect apply, but these are built up through partnership and trust. The projects we looked at in this report give different examples of that partnership in action.

It is a long-term criticism of schools that they are long on factual information and rote learning but slow on critical analysis and application of knowledge. The information revolution is greatest democratisation of information since the invention of the printing press. (The printing press led to the Reformation, and later, to the Enlightenment) Change is slow, but it is clear that education can no longer be about the transfer of chunks of facts from one person to another when there is infinite information out there. That is the challenge facing educators today, how to adapt their practice in order to arm young people to be able to successfully process that information.

Peer Education, youth empowerment and participation is part of that change. The CBYN should continue their support of schools programmes and should look at ways of supporting teachers obtain maximum advantage from the real opportunities afforded by SPHE, CSPE and Transition Year. There are a number of innovative, award winning peer education programmes in development and established in Ireland, north and south. It should be possible to learn from the experiences of these programmes and adopt best practice. The CBYN should work with partners in schools and youth work to provide FETAC accredited training for trainers in facilitating peer-led programmes.

Developing and improving the capacity for Peer Education Programmes in Kerry is not just a matter of importing a number of pilot programmes. Training must also be provided to increase the skills and awareness needed for peer-led methods, both of those who work with youth and of young people themselves. New habits of trust need to be created between young and old. Teachers, youth workers and facilitators need the appropriate 'educational technology' to take on peer-led projects with more confidence.

There exists great scope for further youth peer education and mentoring in Kerry which has a good network of development organisations and innovating educational groups. However, a lot of work is going on in isolation in this area, even nationally, and there needs to be better cohesion between practitioners. The recommendations below seek to take that into account.

Recommendations & County-wide Development plan

for the further development of Peer Education and Peer Mentoring in Kerry

The recommendations in this report aim at raising the general empowerment of young people, as well as the development of peer education practice throughout Kerry. This is part of more general moves towards a more inclusive, engaging and participative experience of education for people from all backgrounds, with particular attention to those who have traditionally experienced exclusion. Young people are supposed to challenge us. They test our practice, our views, our values and our ideals, whether we have any or not. If we respect young people's need to challenge us, they will respect our need to advise them. If we close our ears and shun their voices, we will get rocks through our car windows in response. The more empowered young people are, the more positively they'll be able to respond to the challenges facing them.

Main Themes

Information Exchange & Resources (1-7)

Training (8-10)

Capacity Building (11-16)

Youth Cafés (17-19)

Youth Health Centre (20)

Counselling, Peer Support in Schools and Communities (21-24)

Special Needs (25-26)

Environmental Education (27)

Development Education (28-29)

Active Citizenship (30-32)

Ceannasaíocht Óige Sa Gaeltacht(33-34)

(Youth Leadership in the Gaeltacht)

Migrants (35-36)

Travellers (37)

Strengthening Values (38)

Funding (39)

Specific Recommendations

1. Information Between Youth
2. Disadvantaged Youth Database
3. *Peer Education Resource Library*
4. Networking between Youth and Youth work Personnel
5. County-wide Youth Website
6. Handbook on Youth Empowerment and Participation for & by Young people
7. *Youth Empowerment Worker (YEW)*
8. Student Councils
9. Support for Transition Year Co-ordinators
10. Pilot Peer Education Substance Use Programme
11. SPHE Teacher Training
12. Tutor/Youth & Community Worker Training
13. Peer Education Methods – Conference

14. All-island Schools Peer Mediation Project

15. All-island Youth Organisation Exchange

16. Active Learning

17. Kerry Youth Cafés Stakeholders' Study Group

18. Develop a model for a youth-run café in a rural area

19. Gaeltacht Youth Café

20. Youth Health Centre

21. Expand South Kerry Pilot Counselling Programme

22. *Community-Based Peer Support Education(Mental Health)*

23. Youth Peer Counselling

24. Regular Positive Mental Health Initiatives For Youth

25. Joint Able/Disabled Youth Projects

26. Disabled Youth Peer Counselling

27. Schools and Community Gardens

28. School Pairings for Peace & Justice

29. Peer Education Development Education

30. Democracy For All Social Classes

31. Meet The Candidates

32. Consulting With Youth

33. Ceardlanna don Óige

(Youth Workshops)

34. Óg-Naisc Gaeltacht-Béarlacht

(Youth Links In & Outside Gaeltacht)

35. Translations

36. Peer Mentoring for Migrants

37. Munster Harness Racing Track

38. Teenage Spirituality

39. Expand SKDP Rural Youth Initiative

Information Exchange & Resources

1.

Increasing information exchange between practitioners of youth development

In the course of the research it came to light that youth workers were not always aware of projects and programmes running in other parts of the county. Intermittent organised forums would allow youth workers learn from each other and improve their practice. As Kerry Education Services is the statutory agency for developing and co-ordinating youth work in Kerry, this report supports the creation of a structured forum (Youth Work Committee) for youth workers in Kerry to share their experience & knowledge on an annual or bi-annual basis.

In future Kerry Youth Development Plans, the KES Youth Development Officer should take account of the work of the existing Community-Based Youth Network, the group of Education and Youth Development Officers from Kerry Partnership groups that networks voluntarily.

2.

Disadvantaged Youth Database

KDYS Tralee Mentor Programme (See p. 20) keeps track of young people either at risk of leaving school early or who have already left, through a database updated through regular contact with local schools. Funding should be sourced through the CBYI to set up a similar database in Killarney. The CBYN should also examine the possibility of supporting the expansion of this database, with other relevant partners (DES, FÁS, KDYS) as a means of following young peoples progress, and being better able to recognise and respond directly to the needs of those most disadvantaged. It would also allow youth workers better link with other programmes that the same young person might be involved with. (eg. currently a youth worker working with a young person on one programme mightn't know what other programmes they were on.)

3.

Peer Education Resource Library

To advance peer education methods across youth work and education practice, a database of peer education resources and practitioners should be built up. This could be incorporated into KDYS or KES websites and would allow schools, youth clubs or other youth-focused groups access to innovative peer education programmes and methods or to benefit from work previously done. Groups could also post resources and reports of events online.

4.

Greater Networking between Youth and Youth work personnel

Efforts should be made to allow further networking opportunities between youth and youth workers. This would allow youth ideas and demands to feed into youth initiatives, and tap into the potential generated by student councils, KDYS Youth Empowerment Programmes, Comhairle and Dáil na nÓg, to increase youth empowerment in Kerry.

- youth development officers could address Comhairle na nÓg meetings, this would make youth leaders more aware of the structures and supports there for young people;
- organise a one-off "Youth Empowerment Event" as a step towards a future Local Youth Council(as provided for in The Youth Work Act 2001), and enable young people meet some of the people and groups involved in youth development. This could also allow formal and non-formal education workers to connect. This could be facilitated by the CBYN together with KDYS or Kerry County Council, or could be done as a Young Social Innovators SpeakOut type event (See main report p.26) A Kerry Youth Empowerment Event could involve student representatives, (Transition year, 5th year, student councils, Youthreach), Comhairle/Dáil na n-Óg reps, youth

workers, members of the CBYI, local counsellors, representatives of school staff, Transition year/SPHE/CSPE co-ordinators, members of Travellers groups, students from third level, as well as young people in general. It could also incorporate stands and presentations by youth-focused groups as well as an Alternative Careers Fair.

5.

County-wide Youth Website

Create a county-wide online youth forum, eg. Kerry Youth: this would be a wholly youth-oriented, youth-run site which would provide Kerry youths with an online means of finding out about events and activities in the county. This could be a database of organisations and activities available to youth, a means of posting notice of events by young people as well as a way of explaining young people their rights in plain and simple terms. This website could itself be a peer education project in the making. Day-to-day moderation/running and long-term management of the website would obviously be an issue: this could be facilitated by students from ITT, Comhairle na nÓg, or could start as a small pilot extension to the current KDYS website.

6.

Handbook on Youth Empowerment and Participation for & by Young people

This book could be tied in with website above, and would include information on rights, responsibilities, opportunities, voting, media awareness, health issues, education, support, counselling and contacts. It could again be done as a peer education project, and copies given to all 13/14year olds in Kerry. Most of this information is already out there, but this handbook would condense this into an attractive, easily-digestible text, that would reach all over the county. This would represent a direct investment in young people and could be facilitated by the KDYS Youth Information Service, in conjunction with schools. Funding for such a broad project could be sourced from a wide variety of sources.

7.

Youth Empowerment Worker (YEW)

Often it is assumed that setting up a service or initiative is the most important work, yet people can not take advantage of what they are not aware of. So often, young people fail to see the potential of what can be done or relevance of new services provided them. Other times, older people, can be constrained by their own limitations, and be none too keen on young people's 'notions'.

CBYN should look at the possibility of supporting the appointment of an innovative pilot Youth Empowerment Worker. Working all over Kerry, in schools, Youthreach/PLC centres, youth clubs and groups, this person's role would be to connect with young people throughout the county, inform and inspire them with the possibilities for them to improve their own lives (funding and assistance available; setting up or taking part in youth-run, youth-focused projects; programmes and events throughout the county, country and internationally, youth exchanges etc). This person would have a wide knowledge and experience of organisations and programmes supporting and engaging youth development, and would act as a networker between programmes and young people. One option might be to create the post as an extension to the Youth Information Service.

Training

8.

Student Councils

Although most schools have a council, many are not as developed as they could be: irregular meetings, lack of motivation & initiative. With some external support, such as training on how to run meetings, how to lobby, listening/communication & facilitation

skills, student councils could become much more effective and democratic, and have a more beneficial influence on student and staff alike.

- The CBYN should create an action to support the development and working of student councils in schools, Youthreach and PLC centres These could offer support to both liaison teachers and students in terms of examples of best practice and training workshops.
- Part of this could be to facilitate a *Countywide Schools Councils Meeting*, which would allow council representatives to share their experiences. This could be modelled on or done in conjunction with Kerry Education Service (KES) which is already developing a Student Council Forum (in its 5 year plan, KES commits itself to strengthening both the councils and the council forum among its schools.)
- Student councils are currently invited to participate in KDYS Youth Forums leading to the Comhairle na nÓg event. KDYS should further encourage and support this through the schools.

9.

Support for Transition Year Co-ordinators

Transition year co-ordinators do great work in providing a diverse programme of events and activities for students. The CBYN should look at ways of collaborating with Transition Year co-ordinators, on projects and events that involve young people in tackling issues of development, racism and exclusion in their communities. This could help better link the change agendas of Partnership Groups with the community/project focus of Transition year. This might involve training, support for programmes that address issues facing youth at that age (self-esteem, health, drugs awareness, sexuality, empowerment) taking on interns or proposing other such linking measures.

10.

Pilot Peer Education Substance Use Programme

The CBYN should look at the potential for supporting a pilot-peer education substance use programme in suitable schools around the country. Projects can be built up from the ground, but a number of long-term/hands-on staff would be required. Such project could be modelled on examples outlined in this report (See Report on Louth Peer Education Project p.49) which took place in conjunction with the Home-School Liaison Officers, HSE and local Youth Service. The CBYN could explore whether the local Home-School Liaison Officers might be interested in becoming involved with such a project.

Such an approach should also be examined as a means of providing the substance abuse training in FÁS, Youthreach, PLC centres, recommended by Jackson in the 2004 report *Smoking, Alcohol, and Drug Use in Cork and Kerry*.

Capacity Building

CBYN should also look to building capacity around peer-education in Kerry. The Irish Youth Federation has already done work in this area and peer education programmes are being run in a number of areas around the country. Peer-education FETAC training courses for teachers and youth workers would increase the pool of skills that exist in this area. Northern Ireland is ahead of the Republic in this respect, with a number of well-established organisations offering peer-education programmes and accredited courses such as Opportunity Youth (see report p.41) or Include Youth(see p.47).

11.

SPHE Teacher Training

The Department of Education and Science (through the SPHE Support Service - Marino Institute of Education, Dublin) should look to support the provision of training to SPHE

teachers in peer education methodologies and facilitation skills. This would assist teachers take full advantage of the potential within the SPHE course. Clusters of courses could be offered around the county possibly in conjunction with the Tuition Centre Tralee which provides in-service training for teachers.

Kerry Education Service's Education Plan 2006-2010 proposes establishing teacher networks/ seminars/workshops around particular subjects and issues. KES could include training on peer education methods as part of its focus on innovative teaching. (KES Implementation Plan Objective A3.1/C1.1)

12.

Tutor/Youth & Community Worker Training

Members of the CBYN should support the provision of similar training to youth and community workers, as well as Youthreach workers, in peer education methodologies and facilitation skills. Specific courses should be tailored to meet the participants' needs.

13.

Peer Education Methods - Conference

A number of interesting peer education and mentoring projects are currently going on around the country, in relative isolation from each other. It would be interesting to network and exchange with these projects. A small conference on Youth Peer Education would bring peer education practitioners together and allow groups in Kerry to learn from these different experiences. This could be done in partnership between CBYN, Youthreach, KDYS, KES and national youth organization like NYCI and YWI.

14.

All-island Schools Peer Mediation Project

Members of the CBYN should look into creating a link between a school in Kerry and a school in Northern Ireland with a view to learning from their experience in running peer mediation in schools. Do this in partnership with Include Youth(See p.47), who have set up peer mediation in schools across the north. Added significance could be achieved by proposing schools north and south from opposite sides of the cultural spectrum: perhaps a Gaelscoil and a school in a traditionally loyalist area. Funding could be provided under Youth Affairs cross-border funding (see Department of Education & Science Youth Affairs website).

15.

All-island Youth Organisation Exchange

A collaboration between KDYS/Youthreach and Opportunity Youth from Northern Ireland would be an useful exchange. Opportunity Youth has developed a lot of accredited training programmes and expertise in the area of peer education. (See p41) (Opportunity Youth also provides courses to Youthreach-type projects in the North.)

An initial exchange could be sponsored by NYCI & Youthnet's 'North/South Project', an all-island Department of Education project which works to increase communication and strengthen links between youth organisations across the island.(see p.39)

16.

Active Learning

CBYN should follow the progress of KES pilot ORBIT programme which offer an innovative mix of outdoor, environmental education with the Junior Cycle programme to students at risk of early school-leaving. This pilot is potentially a groundbreaking approach to second-level education, and a model that could be developed in other educational centers e.g. Youthreach. (See KES ORBIT Programme, p.13)

Youth Cafés

Local and national research and policy, anecdotal evidence and common sense have all been pointing in the same direction on the subject of safe recreational spaces for young people. Killarney has a drop-in centre on Friday evening, and Tralee has a youth café, however the smaller urban centres are less well catered for. Rural areas have the difficulty of lower populations to support such spaces.

17.

Kerry Youth Cafés Stakeholders' Study Group

With many reports supporting the youth café model of youth service delivery, and with the Government Ministry for Children's Teenage Recreation Policy also proposing setting up youth cafés, it would be useful to get the potential stakeholders (local authorities, youth organizations, community groups etc) together to develop co-operation on a county-wide basis. The Kerry County Enterprise Board might be a suitable body to bring the necessary stakeholders together. Funding and staffing issues could be examined on a county-wide basis. Youth management committees should be looked at for all such facilities: by getting local youth involved in development stages and management, the projects can also be an exercise in youth participation and empowerment.

18.

Develop a model for a youth-run café in a rural area

The CBYN should support the piloting a drop-in centre/youth café model in small urban/rural areas. Such spaces could be designed to serve multiple functions, as a means of making them sustainable, incorporating a number of different existing facilities (eg. youth club) as well as new facilities such as café, youth information (the recent Goodbody Report for Youth Information Provision for the DES Youth Affairs section pointed to the need to get away from library style of information provision, and suggested youth cafes as a point for disseminating youth info). Cahersiveen might be a possible venue for such a Pilot Drop-in Centre: it has a community resource centre, a youth club, and a Family Resource Centre which could be involved in an eventual project. Such a space should be open when young people most need it, outside regular office hours, at evenings and weekends. (Bantry Youth Café could provide a useful model for this type of space. It is funded by the local partnership, run by young people, EVS volunteers and youth workers.)

19.

Gaeltacht Youth Café

A youth café should be developed in Dingle. The purpose of this should be both to encourage youth development and to support the Irish Language among young people. This should not be a tokenistic measure of having an Irish Language policy, but should be accomplished rather through engaging young people, youth workers and volunteers natively competent and confident in the use of Irish as the working language of the café. The language should not be used to exclude people, but Irish would benefit among the local youth in being part of an innovative empowering youth project.

20.

Youth Health Centre

A feasibility study should be done on the viability of a Kerry youth health centre, based in Tralee or Killarney, modelled on the Youth Health Centre in Cork. The concept of the Youth Health Centre is as a one stop shop catering for young people's health needs (physical, mental, sexual) and presenting information on drugs, alcohol, smoking and sexuality in a positive way. (See Cork Youth Health Centre p.22)

Counselling, Peer Support in Schools and Communities

"The bishop wants to bring in a chaplain next year, so I mightn't be here," confided a Kerry Secondary School counsellor after relating to the researcher the cases of depression, alcohol abuse, lack of knowledge about sexuality, sexual abuse, and anorexia she has come across in her weekly short visits to the school. "With troubled boys or girls, early intervention is vital. The problem is that there aren't enough time or resources. I'm only here for 5 hours one day per week; I should be here at least 2 days, but there's no funds."

21.

Expand South Kerry Pilot Counselling Programme

Outreach adolescent counselling needs to be mainstreamed and funded by the Department of Education and Science. Currently, South West Counselling Centre in Killarney, supported by SKDP Counselling Initiative, is active in schools taking referrals, providing training for mentors, as well as workshops on bullying, self-esteem, exam anxiety. It also provides counselling to students & staff in Youthreach in KDYS. This pilot programme in South Kerry should be expanded out to other areas, and should be looked at by other Local Partnership groups in Kerry.

22.

Community-Based Peer Support Education (Mental Health)

Southern HSE Mental Health Resource Officer Brenda Crowley, based in Midleton, is offering certified training for trainers on Community Based Peer Support Education for young people. This follows the successful pilot Peer Support programme run in Midleton among young people affected by suicide. The CBYN should recommend and if necessary fund this training for community youth workers with the longer term aim of setting up a programme for youth. This would help broaden awareness of peer-support projects for young people. (See Case Study p. 35) Effective partners could be found in Kerry Mental Health Association or AWARE.

23.

Youth Peer Counselling

The CBYN, schools, together with counselling providers, should look at the possibility of identifying students as Peer Counsellors/mentors.

With young people more likely to depend on their peers when they have a problem, such an initiative would increase young peoples capacity to recognise and respond to difficulties that arise in their lives: CYBN members should support a pilot peer counselling/mentoring programme, given over a number of weeks by trained counsellors/facilitators to a group of 10-15 volunteer students from a number of schools in the less well-served areas of Dingle, Listowel or Castleisland. Themes: personal development, life-skills, communication & listening skills, anxiety, depression, suicide and bullying, open forum discussion participants. The approach should ensure that prospective peer counsellors are from all backgrounds & social classes. The peer counsellors would then bring their knowledge back to their peers both informally AND by through presentations/workshops on life-skills. Kerry Mental Health Association as well as The Positive Mental Health Foundation in Galway might have some expertise to offer in this proposal. (p.36) This could tie in with the Community Peer-Support Training.

24.

Regular Positive Mental Health Initiatives For Youth

In view of the level of mental health problems among youth, positive mental health initiatives should be held regularly in schools, PLC and Youthreach centres. Group facilitated sessions tend to be more effective than straightforward talks, and guided discussion tends to anchor topics better. This could be done in conjunction with Kerry

Mental Health Association. This could be tied in with SPHE in 5th year or 2nd year, or it could fit into Leaving Cert Applied.

Special Needs

25.

Joint Able/Disabled Youth Projects

CBYN should look at continuing support to innovative joined abled/disabled youth projects like The Same Difference Drama Project between Saibhín Care and Valentia Youth Club with a view to building on the experience and possibly running it in other parts of the county.

26.

Disabled Youth Peer Counselling

The Irish Wheelchair Association together with The Irish Council for the Blind run a peer counselling service. (see p.46) However there is no facility for counselling people under 18. Should the need arise, the CYBN could examine the possibility of collaborating with the IWA/ICB with a view to training up some youth counsellors for Kerry.

Environmental Education

In view of the now accepted problem of global warming, is it essential that the CBYN be involved in facilitating young people's interest and initiative to tackle environmental issues from an early age at a local level. The CBYN, other youth agencies and NGOs could offer support and funding for innovative environmental projects set up and run by young people.

27.

Schools and Community Gardens

Look at the possibility of a collaboration between a Local Development Partnership, a local school/youth group and Kerry Earth Education Project (see above p.29) for a Schools garden project. This could involve running a pilot project to create and integrate an environmental garden into the curriculum of a local school. A two-phase programme could see core funding to develop model lesson plans for different secondary school classes and subjects, while a second phase would see delivery of this programme on a pilot basis in a Kerry School. The educational approach would involve a strong peer education and youth participation element. This would be an innovative project on a national basis. (KES already offer FETAC-accredited horticulture and organic gardening courses, so perhaps a KES school might be a suitable partner.)

Development Education

28.

School Pairings for Peace & Justice

A pairing could be developed between a county Kerry school and St. Angela's Convent Peace and Justice Group in Waterford (see p.53), to learn from the great experience the school has built up in Peer-led development education, through its student-led social/global awareness campaigning group. This might suit a Kerry Education Service school, under Objective C1.1 of its Education Plan 2006-2010 to set up pairings for the exchange good practice & innovation.

29.

Peer Education Development Education

KADE in association with KES and Lourdes Youth Dublin could look at the possibility of developing and providing FETAC-accredited training to youth workers, teachers and young people in delivering Development Education through peer methods. Lourdes Youth have recently developed a training pack on Development Education called

Connecting Communities for use in community settings. LASC, NYCI, Comhlámh, Concern, Trócaire, and Ógra Chorcaí also provide general training on Development Education. They would empower young people involved with the Kerry & Lesotho twinning and other initiatives to share their experiences with their peers.

Active Citizenship

30.

Democracy For All Social Classes

It is important that young people from all socio-economic backgrounds have the opportunity to participate meaningfully in fora such as Comhairle and Dáil na nÓg. This might mean looking to build capacity in educational environments such as FÁS, Youthreach, and PLC centres through workshops on active citizenship, participative democracy and public speaking. This might also mean reserving a place in such events for candidates from more disadvantaged backgrounds. CBYN could provide support to KDYS and other partners in this.

31.

Meet The Candidates

With the voting age stuck at 18, school-going youth are generally excluded from the mainstream democratic process. (Senior British politician Gordon Brown recently gave his support to lowering the voting age to 16, as a way of combating voter apathy.) With the current background hubbub about active citizenship, young people in Kerry should have the opportunity to link up with candidates at local, national, and EU elections. An open event/forum should be created to allow young people meet and question election candidates on their proposals and policies. This would involve members of student councils, Youth forum, Comhairle and Dáil na nÓg representatives, as well as a percentage of interested youth. This could be an interesting project for KDYS and other partners for an upcoming General Election, and would be an ideal opportunity to underline to politicians the lack of funding for rural youth work.

32.

Consulting With Youth

Young people should be consulted and listened to by bodies involved in the development of youth policies and infrastructure in County Kerry. This might mean young people addressing the relevant County Enterprise Board Form, Kerry County Council, KDYS, KES or DES. Kerry Education Service Student Council Forum might be an interesting model to watch, as regards student feedback into education.

Ceannasaíocht Óige Sa Ghaeltacht

Chomh maith le scéimeanna eile, ba cheart féachaint ar scéimeanna suimiúla a bhainfeadh tairbhe as saibhreas teanga na n-óg Gaeltachta. (Mar a dúradh sa cabidil faoin nGaeltacht, is chuid den oidhreacht domhanda i an Ghaeilge, gur cheart tacaíocht cuí is ciallmhar a thabhairt dí chun go n-eartófaí an tírdhreach beag teangeolaíochta ina mhaireann sé fós.)

33.

Ceardlanna don Óige

D'fhéadfadh KDYS, Comhar Dhuibhne, Óige na Gaeltachta (Udarás na Gaeltachta) nó páirtneírí eile, iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar sraith gearrchúrsaí/ceardlanna suimiúla as Gaeilge, idir praiticiúil agus cruthaitheach, a chur ar fáil do dhaoine óga san aois 12-15 déag. D'fheidhmeadh na ranganna seo mar caitheamh aimsire i rith na bliana. Ag an am céana, chuirfeadh na cúrsaí seo le ciall don léinn i measc na n-óg, chomh maith lena muinín agus scileanna Gaeilge. D'fhéadfaí ceistneoir a chur faoi bhráid daltaí scoile, nó sna clubanna óige, cén ábhair bheadh suim acu iontu, agus d'fhéadfaí míreanna

beaga a chur isteach i gach ceardlann a chuirfeadh an béim ar cúrsaí scileanna bheatha agus sláinte coirp is intinne.

D'fhéadfadh KES cuidiú leis chomh maith, chun chuid dá chúrsaí a aistriú go gcomhthéacs óige. In a Phlean Oideachas KES 2006-2012 (B3.3) tá moladh ann mar gheall ar forbairt leanúnach an tionscadal *Breacadh* (a astríonn cúrsaí go Gaeilge).

Bheadh na cúrsaí seo dírithe ar óga deonacha, agus bheadh siad curtha ar fáil ag áisitheoirí le Gaeilge ó dhúchais (chun go mbeadh siad inglactha do óige na háite).

34.

Óg-Naisc Gaeltacht- 'Béarlacht'

Ní léir do a lán daoine sa 'Bhéarlacht' go bhfuil daoine in áiteanna in Éireann a úsáideann an Ghaeilge mar gnáth teanga cumarsáide.

Ba cheart Oifigigh Forbartha Óige na Gaeltacht, KDYS, nó pairtnéirí eile féachaint ar naisc a chruthú idir óga Gaeltachta agus óga ón 'Bhéarlacht'. Cabhródh sé dóibh súid ón taobh amuigh chun tuiscint níos fearr a bheith acu ar an saol sa Ghaeltacht agus thaispeánfadh nasc mar sin an suim agus an meas atá ag roinnt mhaith daoine óga taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht do teanga agus cultúir na Gaeltachta, rud nach léir i gcónaí do muintir na Gaeltachta.

D'fhéadfadh malartú nó comh-oibriú a chothú idir Clubanna óige nó idir scoileanna Gaeltachta agus scoileanna 'Béarlachta'. D'fhéadfaí scéim cara pinn, nó comhrá idirlíon a bheith i gceist, co-óibriú ar tionscadail, nó malartú níos praiticiúla.

D'fhéadach maoiniú ar fáil ó Fhoras na Gaeilge, Óige na Gaeltachta, nó KES.

Youth Leadership in the Gaeltacht

As well as other measures, interesting projects should be examined to benefit from the linguistic richness of the Gaeltacht youth. (As was mentioned in the chapter about The Gaeltacht, the Irish Language is part of the World's Heritage, that the appropriate support should be given in order to strengthen the small linguistic landscape where it still lives.)

33.

Youth Workshops

KDYS, Comhar Dhuibhne, Óige na Gaeltachta (Údarás na Gaeltachta) or other partners should look at providing series of workshops/short classes through Irish, practical and creative, for young people between 12 & 15 years. These classes would serve as an engaging pastime during the year. At the same time, they would increase young people's general appreciation for learning, their confidence and Irish language skills. A questionnaire could be given out in schools and youth clubs to ascertain which subjects would be most popular, and short segments could be incorporated into each workshop, on life skills, mental and physical health.

KES could also assist in adapting some of their courses to young people. The KES Education Plan 2006-2012(B3.3) has a recommendation about developing the *Breacadh* Project(which translates KES courses to Irish)

These courses would be aimed at youth volunteers, and they would be given by native-speaking facilitators(in order to be credible to the local Gaeltacht youth).

34.

Create Links with Young People outside the Gaeltacht

Many people outside the Gaeltacht have little understanding of the areas where Irish continues to be used as an everyday language.

Youth Development Officers from Óige na Gaeltachta, KDYS, or other partners should look at the possibility of creating links between young people from the Gaeltacht and those outside. This would increase the understanding of those outside of life in the Gaeltacht and at the same time show young people from the Gaeltacht, the interest and respect that many people have for the culture and language of the Gaeltacht, something not always appreciated by people from the Gaeltacht.

Exchanges and co-operation could be promoted between youth clubs and/or schools within and outside the Gaeltacht. This might involve linking up Penpals, internet chat, project work or more practical exchanges.

Foras na Gaeilge, Óige na Gaeltachta or KES could help fund and facilitate these schemes.

Migrants

The arrival in Ireland of hundreds of thousands of immigrant marks a historic change in Irish social and cultural life. The human and cultural riches brought by these people needs to be understood and benefited from, and measures promoted to enable positive interaction between Irish and international cultures.

35.

Translations

Translations should be made available in the principal foreign languages of immigrants to Ireland of selected leaflets from educational and youth organisations e.g.: KDYS, KADE, KES. (Clare Youth Services has already produced such a brochure)

36.

Peer Mentoring for Migrants

The CBYN, KDYS and/or suitable schools could look at the benefit of establishing a peer mentoring scheme for young migrants. Shadowing relationships between Irish and migrant youths would promote greater understanding and develop friendships. (see p.45, Voluntary Mentoring Scheme for Young Migrants)

Travellers

There needs to be more positive engagement with the strengths of Traveller culture. Educationalists' mostly middle-class, settled backgrounds as well as Travellers' own mistrust and suspicion of 'buffers', work against this. Many Traveller young people, who might do badly or be disengaged from formal schooling, have great skill in breeding, rearing, and selling horses. This seems to contain vast educational potential that has yet to be tapped into. Many Travellers are also interested in sulky racing, also called harness racing or trotting (a form of chariot racing). Yet such races, often end up being held in dangerous situations, in crowded fairs (e.g. Killorglin's Puck Fair). Apart from West Cork, where there is a tradition among the general public, harness racing is almost completely unknown in the rest of the country, except among Travellers. Such a sport seems to have huge potential as a practical means of developing a positive area of Traveller culture, and facilitating Traveller youth development in an integrated Traveller/settled community venture.

37.

Munster Harness Racing Track

Kerry Sports Partnership, Youth and Traveller Groups should examine the possibility of setting up a sulky racing track and facilities, open to all. Such a track would serve all of Kerry County, but would also have the potential to attract people from all over Munster. It would have a particular focus on Traveller youth.

Strengthening Values

The collapse of the moral consensus enforced by Church authority, has left a vacuum in its wake that today is mainly being filled by commercial interests. The majority of advertising consists of carefully crafted materialist messages, designed to promote a sense of inadequacy in the receiver, to be filled by whatever product is being sold. The net effect of this continual barrage of materialist moral messages, and the increasing presence within media of sponsored content, is the slow erosion of social solidarity, community awareness, and people's critical capacities and the creation of more self-interested, materialist-minded people. This development needs to be identified as a real event, and educational strategies developed that confirm and reinforce young people's innate social awareness.

38.

Teenage Spirituality

KDYS & CBYN should continue support for the innovative, multi-ethos Teenage Spirituality Programme run in Caherciveen and look at the possibility of expanding it out to other areas.

Funding

Funding remains a key problem for youth projects and youth workers in Kerry. The lack of core funding means large amounts of time spent applying for funding from a dizzying variety of sources (the HSE funds the "Rock It" variety shows in Killarney!!). Often, money can just be stopped, like with the KDYS Killarney Afterschools Worker, where money was stopped after 6 years continuous funding.

Urban centres are more resourced while outreach workers in rural areas struggle to scrape together funding in order to maintain their positions. Proper outreach workers are needed for urban estates, to meet volunteers and residents, and to train them to deal with young people in the own area. Weekend youth workers – should be available out of hours in all larger urban areas.

According to one youth worker: "Our biggest challenge is to sustain what we have currently. Funding is secure in none of our areas, and we all work on contract basis, year to year or shorter."

39.

Expand SKDP Rural Youth Initiative

SKDP's Rural Youth Initiative has funded many innovative rural youth activities. This model should be followed by other partnership groups, awaiting proper support for rural youth work. (See p.17)

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Appendix 1

Peer Education-related Resources & packs & Websites

Telling It Like It Is – An introduction to Peer Education and Training

Lynne Tammi (National Co-Ordinator, Article 12, Scotland.) 2003.

(This manual was produced to provide guidance, to members of the European Young People's Commission, on the use of Peer Education and Training.)

The **Substances Use Peer Education Responses Manual** – A resource for developing Peer-led approaches to Drugs Education., compiled by Bernie Roe, NYF 2001

Peer Education Session Plans, by Linda Kearin, KDYS TRALEE

Resources National Youth Council of Ireland "Making a Difference - Young People participating to change their World" (2005)

Web addresses

www.sphe.ie

www.lecheile.ie

probation service mentoring project...

www.childrensrights.ie

This site spotlights children's rights in Ireland, providing up to date information on developments affecting children and young people both in and beyond Ireland.

The site has been developed by the Children's Rights Alliance. A coalition of 80 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the area of children's rights and welfare in Ireland. Young visitors to the site can find out what their rights are, about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Ireland's National Children's Strategy

www.sexualhealthcentre.com website of Cork Sexual Health Alliance.

United Nations Y-PEER project: <http://www.youthpeer.org>

Y-PEER is one of the activities of the Subcommittee on Peer Education of the United Nations Interagency Group on Young People's Health Development and Protection (IAG) established in 1999. Y-PEER has provided support to peer education in 27 countries in the Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, the Baltic States and Central Asia. Support is provided through sub-regional training workshops, advice on project development and educational materials, and through dissemination of information and exchange of experience and good practice. For more information please contact:

<http://www.europeer.lu.se>

A resource centre about youth peer education in Europe. It forms the core of a European network focusing on the health, development and empowerment of young people.

Europeer is an international project facilitating collaboration and offering support to young people, practitioners, policy makers and researchers working in youth peer education.

<http://europa.eu/youth>

The European Youth Portal is an initiative of the European Commission. It has been suggested by Commission's White Paper "A new impetus for European Youth". Its aim is to give as many young people as possible quick and easy access to relevant youth related information on Europe.

www.epto.org - Youth leadership for inclusive societies: "European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) educates youth leaders to discuss issues related to prejudice and discrimination; lead workshops that challenge stereotypes; and become activists against exclusion within their youth organisations and schools.

www.leargas.ie/youth or on <http://www.salto-youth.net/youthinitiatives>
SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres. Information on the EU Youth programme and funding in Ireland can be found on these sites.

<http://www.yesworld.org/events.htm>
Helping young leaders build a better world

<http://www.thementoringpartnership.com/index.asp?section=2&article=mentorreg>
Toronto Mentoring & Immigration for Adults

www.youngsocialinnovators.ie

www.iyf.ie
Irish Youth Foundation

www.btyoungscientist.ie
Young Scientist Competition

<http://pt30.org.uk>
Prince's Trust: info on youth cafes in Scotland & UK

www.schoolsacrossborders.org
Project linking Irish, Palestinian and Israeli schools.

Appendix 2

Telling It Like It Is – An introduction to Peer Education and Training

Lynne Tammi (National Co-Ordinator, Article 12, Scotland.) 2003.

This manual was produced to provide guidance, to members of the European Young People's Commission, on the use of Peer Education and Training.

Telling It Like It Is is a good basic introduction to the concept and method of peer education. It puts across how there are good intrinsic reasons for choosing this method, while neither advocating it above others, nor evaluating it in comparison to others.

Central to the whole approach is the real level of experience & knowledge of the facilitator, as opposed to the just simply, formal, accredited knowledge.

"Effective facilitation moves a learning experience from closed ownership of information by "experts" to public ownership of processes and outcomes. It empowers local people to control the process and set their own agenda." (P.6)

"Effective group facilitation is reliant on appropriate behaviour from you, the Facilitator." – Lynne Tammi, UK 2001.

The manual gives a summary of the core elements of a good Peer-to-Peer project:

Establishing a Peer Education Project involves four key tasks:

1. Securing Funding,
2. Recruiting Peer Educators,
3. Programme Planning(aims, objectives, action plan, evaluation) and Implementation(content, delivery)
4. Programme Management.support & ownership of programme (P.25)

Peer Education Training experience will include the following core elements:

1. A *preparatory meeting* to introduce the concept of peer education and identify training needs
2. *Skills training*: communication, facilitation, research (see action research, below) and evaluation (allow collective sharing of existing skills and knowledge)
3. Opportunities for personal development (practice, feedback, practice, feedback...)
4. Access to formal knowledge (the focus of the Peer Education Programme, in this case The European White Paper on Youth)
1&2=competence needs. 3&4=confidence needs for peers to be able transmit what was learned (P.7)

Ownership of the programme

Peer Education Programme management structures are non-hierarchical. There are two distinct parallel roles in the management structure.

1. Role of Peer Educators: The Peer Educators are the "bosses"; they determine the direction of the Programme. They are the Programme Directors.
2. Role of Adult Support Workers: The Adult Support Workers guide and support the Peer Educators through the process. They are the Programme Facilitators.

Support

This will be a new experience for many of the Peer Educators; during the course of the work they may find themselves in situations that challenge them both in personal and practical terms. It is important then that appropriate support systems are in place before the work begins.....your support system should include the following core elements:

1. Regular meetings to enable reflection and evaluation
2. Programme specific information updates
3. Professional and technological advice and support
4. Further training and learning experiences

P.29

Peer 2 Peer 4 You - Actions & Outcomes Report 2002-2005

This is a report on an international youth-led project that used peer education to monitor and promote the European White Paper on Youth.

The report charts the results of projects from a number of European countries. In February 2005, the results of the project were presented to the European parliament in Brussels by peer educators from each country.

The groups involved had very different approaches. Some very thorough, some less so; some clearly less inclusive and following an adult agenda, others featuring young people out on their own without clear guidance. Good peer education involves a large element of trust of young people's talents and resources in dealing with issues that are of real concern to them. Token peer education would entail young people training in something they didn't really believe in just because a group of adults thought it was a good idea.

- The Polish group of peer educators had difficulties in teaching more troublesome classes, and looked like they could have done with some guidance on how to manage this.
- The Lithuanian group came up with a not very interesting game that seemed like a not very well thought out idea, taken on half heartedly by not very inspired youths.
- The Italians on the other hand, seemed to have a good mix of adult involvement and youth participation and direction. The Italian project is of particular interest. It describes how a local municipality decided to use Peer education principles to allow local youth participate in the planning process to build a youth centre.

Appendix 3

A Community based Peer Support Education Programme for young people.

- An innovative response to Suicide Prevention in Midleton, Co. Cork.

BY Eric Desmond,
Peer Support Group, Midleton.
Brenda Crowley, HSE South.

The Uniqueness of this Programme is that the identification of the need for such a programme came directly from young people who wanted to make a difference in their community after experiencing the suicide of friends and/or family members

Background: Dr Jordan's own words:

"There were many suicides in Midleton and its surrounds, far too many. The Community was devastated repeatedly and a sense of hopelessness prevailed, stirring all sorts of emotions. Something had and needed to be done. But what?

A young man came to me and cried about his friend who had died by suicide. He was raging at the world, his friends, God, the Community everything and everyone – even himself. His friends felt the same. I met him again with his friends and they asked if I could do something. The literature suggested some possibilities, but who to ask for help and advice?

I have a particular interest in Interpersonal Communication in my work as a G.P. and am saddened by the breakdown in communication between parents and their children. Postvention is there. Counselling is there for the bereaved, supports are in place for after. But that is too late. We need to find a way to engage with the troubled young person before they harm themselves and show we care. We know they may not talk to parents, teachers or other adults, but they may talk to their friends."

The Aim of Course: to help participants to develop their listening and communication skills so that they might help other young people who are in some difficulty or crisis in a practical and logical way. The Focus of this Programme is around the difficult situations posed by suicide and related issues.

Practical aspects of setting up Programme:

- Funding
- Getting people interested in taking part in programme.
- Commitment from participants to attend for all aspects of programme.
- Having ongoing support from G.P.
- All people wishing to do the programme meet with the G.P Dr. Brian Jordan, prior to starting.
- The Programme is for 5 weeks, every Tuesday night for 2 and a half hours.
- Follow up night after 6 months.
- After 1 year, another follow up night.
- At all times they have access to a link professional and access to G.P.

Commencement of Programme, June 2004.

- To date 8 groups have taken part in the programme.
- A total of 65 people have completed the course.
- 7 groups , age range 18-30 years.
- 1 group, age range 40-50 years.
- 35 females, 30 males.

Feedback from Group 1 to Tutors:

Eric, Aidan, Catherine, Gillian, Dan and Evelyn participated and this is the feedback from them:

Feedback on first anniversary:

- They were more passionate about continuing work in their community.
- They are committed to establishing a youth café for young people in Midleton.
- They have made presentations in schools and in community settings.
- They have done a lot of work with the media and have become confident in doing this.

The majority had changed jobs or made changes within their existing jobs. Individually they shared the following thoughts:

- I am more confident. I took on more responsibility at work. I lose my temper now only on the golf course, before I would have bottled it up.
- This course always comes up in conversations I have with my friends who did the course.
- We are more comfortable with each other.
- I talk to friends more and am listening more.
- I would have been quick to give my opinion. They have noticed at home that I am much more mellow.
- I have helped one person a lot just talking and putting them in contact with someone. They came to me because of my doing this course. It has been ongoing for the last three or four months. They ring me when they need to. It has made me think about changing my job and doing social work.
- I deal with bad days now. I am much stronger.
- My motivation is higher. I don't shut myself off as much and have set goals.

From the groups six months follow up, the following comments were made:

- It makes you pick up things. You would be more sensitive and holding back on advice and judgement allowing people come to their own conclusions.
- I am more careful how I phrase things, engaging my brain more than my mouth.

Feedback given to Dr. Jordan by the participants:

When talking to group members, I'm heartened by their comments such as:

- "It's made such a difference to me in my personal life and in the way I listen rather than always talking."
- "I've been able to help my friends with their problems just by listening and showing I care".
- "If I knew then what I know now about listening and about the signs of depression I might have been able to talk to him and help."

So I am convinced that we have something that could make a significant difference to the suicidal and depressed young people in our Community and perhaps in other Communities.

The Way Forward

At present Dr. Mary Boylan and Brenda Crowley are developing a training pack of the Programme and hope to have it ready by February 2007.

Any enquiries re Programme to :

Brenda Crowley, Mental Health Resource Officer
Tel: 023 33297 or Email brenda.crowley@mailp.hse.ie

North/South Co-operation Unit

The North/South Co-operation Unit is responsible for the development of co-operation and common action in the field of education between both parts of the island of Ireland, in the context of the *Good Friday Agreement*.

The principal function of the unit is to take forward this co-operation through the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and to develop common policies in the designated areas of special education needs, educational underachievement, teacher mobility and school, youth and teacher exchanges.

This includes providing support to the Minister in her participation at North/South Ministerial Council in Education Sector meetings.

The unit also develops, supports and participates in a range of programmes and joint initiatives designed to increase mutual understanding and promote closer co-operation.

A number of these extend beyond the island of Ireland, involving co-operation with education authorities in Britain, the United States, the European Union and other countries and institutions with a view to maximising the positive contribution they can make to North/South co-operation.

The website gives a list of projects funded by the unit as well as links to other interesting cross-border projects.

North/South Cooperation Unit, Training College Building, Marlborough St, Dublin 1, Ireland. **T:** 01-8896416. **W:** www.education.ie **E:** nscu@education.gov.ie

Invitation to Tender for Research

Tender Brief

To carry out a research study on current peer education and peer mentoring provision in Kerry and to develop a countywide action plan for its future development.

Research Context

The Community Based Youth Network, Kerry is a countywide network of Education and Youth Officers from all Partnerships and Community groups delivering the Social Inclusion Programme under the National Development Plan. The group wishes to carry out a study of current peer education and peer mentoring provision in the county and to determine future strategies and actions in order to inform our collective work. To date, projects have taken place on an ad hoc basis and the CBY network recognised the need for a defined action plan for peer education and peer mentoring, identifying current best practice methodologies, strategic partnerships and potential funding sources.

Peer education is often used to generate healthier behaviours among young people around issues such as substance abuse, sexual health, anti-racism and equality. It utilises young people's influence over one another to make positive interventions in young people's lives on the principle that young people are more likely to be genuinely influenced by members of their own group of friends than by outsiders, especially adult authorities. Peer educators receive specialised training and information, which they then pass on their friends and peer group. Peer education is a methodology that develops, strengthens and empowers young people to take an active role in influencing policies and programmes that affect their lives.

Research Objectives

- ◆ To identify current best practice in peer education and peer mentoring with young people aged 12 – 26 nationally and internationally
- ◆ To compile an overview of current peer education and peer mentoring provision in Co. Kerry in both formal and informal education settings
- ◆ To consult with relevant agencies and stakeholders including CBY Kerry network members, Kerry Diocesan Youth Service, Kerry Education Service, secondary schools, Drugs Awareness Network, youth fora, Kerry Mental Health Association, Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service, South West Counselling Centre, Kerry Local Sports Partnership and other relevant groups
- ◆ To devise a countywide action plan for the future development of peer education throughout the county, identifying needs, partners and potential funding sources on a pilot basis in each geographic area

Methodology

- ◆ Specific methodologies should be devised for the purpose of gathering relevant information from groups listed above. They may include the following:
 - Literature review including local, regional and national research
 - Individual and group interviews in person and by telephone/e-mail
 - Questionnaires or similar templates
 - Facilitated discussions and focus groups
- ◆ Relate and link recommendations from policy documents to the situation in Kerry

- ◆ Identify gaps in current provision and supports and resources needed
 - ◆ Develop specific action plan for further co-ordination and linkages between existing peer education services and responses in Kerry
 - ◆ Identify potential funding sources and partners to meet identified needs
 - ◆ The study should be presented in the form of a report with proposals and recommendations on developing appropriate peer education programmes

Tender Requirements

Written tenders should include:

- ◆ Name, address, telephone number and email address of tenderer
 - ◆ Details of the qualifications, skills and experience of the person(s) who will undertake the study
- ◆ Details of other work or studies carried out that is relevant to this tender
 - ◆ Brief proposal on how the research will be conducted, the proposed methodology, budget breakdown, indicative timetable for the work from initiation to completion

Timeframe

The researcher will commence the study in August. It is expected that a draft report be presented to the CBY Kerry network in November and the final draft should be completed and submitted by early December 2006.

Reporting

The researcher will report to the CBY Kerry network who will act as Steering Group for this peer education research project and meet with the group and individual members as required, including representatives from other relevant agencies.

Budget

The total budget for this project is currently €4,000. Partnership Trá Lí, North Kerry Together, South Kerry Development Partnership are each contributing €1,000 from Social Inclusion Programme and KES has allocated an additional €1,000.00 to the project. This is an inclusive fee for the entire research project, to include all costs incurred by the researcher. Payment will be in accordance with different stages of the work as outlined in the contract.

Tenders

Tenders for this peer education research project are now sought from interested individuals/organisations and should be sent to:

Sarah O' Brien
 Youth Officer
 South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd.
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Closing Date

The closing date for receipt of tenders, by post or e-mail is **Friday 21st July 2006.**

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Specific Recommendations

1. Information Between Youth
2. Disadvantaged Youth Database
3. *Peer Education Resource Library*
4. Networking between Youth and Youth work Personnel
5. County-wide Youth Website
6. Handbook on Youth Empowerment and Participation for & by Young people
7. *Youth Empowerment Worker (YEW)*
8. Student Councils
9. Support for Transition Year Co-ordinators
10. Pilot Peer Education Substance Use Programme
11. SPHE Teacher Training
12. Tutor/Youth & Community Worker Training
13. Peer Education Methods – Conference
14. All-island Schools Peer Mediation Project
15. All-island Youth Organisation Exchange
16. Active Learning
17. Kerry Youth Cafés Stakeholders' Study Group
18. Develop a model for a youth-run café in a rural area
19. Gaeltacht Youth Café
20. Youth Health Centre
21. Expand South Kerry Pilot Counselling Programme
22. *Community-Based Peer Support Education(Mental Health)*
23. Youth Peer Counselling
24. Regular Positive Mental Health Initiatives For Youth
25. Joint Able/Disabled Youth Projects
26. Disabled Youth Peer Counselling
27. Schools and Community Gardens
28. School Pairings for Peace & Justice
29. Peer Education Development Education
30. Democracy For All Social Classes
31. Meet The Candidates
32. Consulting With Youth
33. Ceardlanna don Óige
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34. Óg-Naisc Gaeltacht-Béarlacht
(Youth Links In & Outside Gaeltacht)
35. Translations
36. Peer Mentoring for Migrants
37. Munster Harness Racing Track
38. Teenage Spirituality
39. Expand SKDP Rural Youth Initiative

FOOTNOTES

¹ (Lalor K and Baird K, 2006, *Our views – Anybody listening? Researching the Views and Needs of Young People in Co Kildare*, Kildare, Kildare Youth Services.)

² Drugnet Ireland, Issue 19, *Inequality and the stereotyping of young people*, www.ndc.hrb.ie/articles.php?drart=199&issid=14

³ Professor Tom Collins, Head of Education at NUI Maynooth, Irish Times, Education Supplement, Tuesday, October 3rd 2006.

⁴ Wikipedia, *Mentoring*

⁵ Visit www.article12.org or www.europa.eu.int

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index_en.html

⁷ Murtagh B, *Peer Education Manual*, National Youth Federation, 1994

⁸ <http://www.etr.org/recapp/forum/forumsummary200112.htm#peereducation>

⁹ http://www.omc.gov.ie/docs/Age_of_Consent_Speech_131106.doc

¹⁰ de Roiste, Á & Dinneen J, December 2005, *Young People's Views about Opportunities, Barriers and Supports to Recreation and Leisure* Cork Institute of Technology/National Children's Office. Executive Summary. (Chapter 6 Conclusions: p.20-21)