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# Leadership

Foróige's Leadership for Life Programme

## Evaluation Report

Undertaken by the

UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, NUI Galway





## **Foróige's Leadership for Life Programme Evaluation Report**

Undertaken by

**The UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, NUI, Galway**

on behalf of

**Foróige's Best Practice Unit**

January 2013

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Foróige is a national Irish youth organisation which aims to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and the development of society. Since Foróige was established in 1952, youth leadership has been a core offering of the organisation. In 2009, Foróige established its Best Practice Unit, with investment from The Atlantic Philanthropies. Through the Best Practice Unit a comprehensive Youth Leadership Programme was developed, building on both practice wisdom and available international evidence in terms of what works in building young leaders. The youth leadership programme seeks to enable young people to develop the skills, inspiration, vision, confidence, and action plans to be effective leaders and to empower them to make a positive difference to their society through the practice of effective leadership. Over 1,600 young people have taken part in the Youth Leadership Programme to-date, with 232 young people having completed the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action which is accredited to the National University of Ireland, Galway at NFQ Level 6. The programme is a three module, 80 hour youth leadership programme that runs over the course of one academic year. It is offered to young people aged 16-18 years. The programme consists of facilitated youth leadership content, individual reflection, self-directed learning, team research and a community action project. The programme contains experiential activities that are explored in groups as well as practical work and opportunities for leadership in each module. Module one focuses on the individual and their leadership skills, building their self-awareness, communication skills, values and ability to take the lead. Module two focuses on their ability to lead as part of a team enabling them to cultivate their skills further. This module engages them a team research project which develops their capacity to project manage, lead and learn from team work. Module three focuses on their individual leadership aspirations and offers the participants the opportunity of leading their own project within their community from concept to completion.

## **Purpose of the study**

The evaluation was undertaken to:

- explore whether the Youth Leadership Programme was successful in achieving its desired outcomes.
- compare Youth Leadership Programme participants with a group of similarly matched peers who did not receive the programme.
- explore the impact of the programme for young people considered high and low risk in terms of adolescent well-being.

## **Who participated in the study?**

This study involved a review of the national and international literature, together with a mixed-methodology incorporating both a quantitative and qualitative aspect. Under the quantitative strand of the research, a total of 431 young people were recruited to the study, of whom 267 took part in the leadership programme (hereafter referred to as the Leadership Group) and 164 formed a comparison group (hereafter referred to as the Comparison Group). Sampling for the leadership participants was by census for one academic year of the programme. All participants in the leadership programme were asked to complete questionnaires at three time points over an 18 month period. The comparison group was selected based on being a similar age, gender and geographical location to the leadership group. This sampling approach is known as block stratification and helps with ensuring equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups as well as reduces variability between the groups. The questionnaires were composed of a selection of standardised measures, including Life skills, Leadership skills, Resilience, Social Support, Adolescent Well-being, Self-awareness and Empathy. All young people completed surveys at time 1, with 184 leadership youth and 99 comparison youth participating at time 2 (67.7% response rate), and 140 leadership youth and 45 comparison youth participating at time 3 (68.9% response rate T2-T3 and 46.6% response rate T1-T3).

The sample for the qualitative strand of the study was drawn from the quantitative sample just described. Young people who had the highest and lowest scores on the Adolescent Well-being measure at baseline were invited to take part in qualitative interviews. This form of sampling was done with the intention of selecting young people who could be considered high and low risk in terms of well-being as one of the aims of the study is to understand the impact of the programme on different types of young people. This strand of the research involved interviews at three time points. At time one 22 participants were interviewed and of these, 21 were also interviewed at time two. At time three a smaller cohort was selected from the initial group interviewed (n=6). A further 17 participants were selected to take part in 'photo-voice', an illustrative way of exploring the young people's leadership journey. Five focus groups were also carried out with 23 programme facilitators (17 Foróige staff and 6 volunteers).



## Key Findings of the Research

### Quantitative evidence

The key findings of this part of the research were as follows:

***The youth leadership programme appears to be effective in increasing and sustaining leadership skills over time:*** The young people involved in the youth leadership programme demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement between times one and time two. Furthermore, the benefits were maintained and built upon between time one and time three, as youth demonstrated statistically significant increases for empathy, communication skills and goal setting. This suggests that programme participants improved over the course of the leadership programme and beyond.

***Greater improvements over time were observed for the Leadership Group than for the Comparison Group:*** The results of paired t-tests show statistically significant improvements for the leadership group over the comparison group on goal setting, leadership skills and community involvement at time two. At time three the leadership group demonstrated further statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, team work and problem solving. These findings indicate that involvement in the youth leadership programme may increase, sustain and grow the leadership skills of the young people involved when compared to a cohort of youth who receive no intervention.

***Youth leadership programme involvement appears to increase resilience:*** Young people involved in the youth leadership programme demonstrate statistically significant increases on all measures of resilience when compared to the comparison group. The comparison group demonstrate no statistically significant change in resilience over the three time points. Resilience is an important component for young people, which helps them navigate and overcome challenges effectively both day to day and in more traumatic events ensuring they 'bounce back' from them.

***Youth leadership programme appears to improve social support:*** The youth leadership programme participants demonstrated statistically significant improvements in perceived sibling support over time. This indicates that young people involved in the leadership programme may gain additional skills to enable them to source more support from siblings or to help them deal with challenges in sibling relationships better. The leadership group also demonstrated enhanced emotional support when compared to the comparison group.

***Gender differences are apparent:*** When it comes to gender the males involved in the research demonstrated enhanced well-being when compared to the females, while females on the other hand demonstrate enhanced empathy and resilience over males. This indicates that males tend to feel better about themselves, while females tend to empathise more with other people. When carrying out Paired-T tests results indicate

that both males and females benefit from their engagement in the programme with females appearing to gain more in terms of support.

Males improved significantly over time on *decision making, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills, leadership skills, resilience total and concrete support*. Females on the other hand improved significantly over time on *resilience 1, critical thinking, team work, life skills, leadership skills, parental support, sibling support, social support, concrete support, esteem support, community involvement and resilience total*. This indicates that the leadership



programme benefits both genders with females actually improving greatest in terms of supports, which when looking at the research the area of greatest need to improve females capacity to take on leadership roles i.e. their sense of support from others and belief that they can succeed (Morrison et al., 1987).

When compared to males in the comparison group, males in the leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *problem solving, sibling support and social support*. Females in the leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *adolescent well-being, understanding themselves, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving, life skills, concrete support, emotional support, community involvement and resilience total* compared to females in the comparison group. It would appear that the females accrued greater benefits from involvement in the youth leadership programme than the comparison group.

**Self-Perception as a Leader improved for high & low risk young people over time:** Seeing yourself as a leader improved for both high and low risk groups over time. The high risk group improved the most on this measure, with 9.1% believing they are leaders at baseline to 81.3% believing they are leaders at follow-up. While there was a significant difference between the high and low risk groups at time one, by time three there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of self-belief. This suggests that belief in ones' own capacity for leadership is significantly improved over the course of the programme. The very nature of this change in self-belief can result in a youth seeing more opportunities to use their skills and take on leadership roles.

**Youth leadership is effective for high risk youth but sustained engagement may be needed to enable further advancements:** When this study looked at how high and low risk youth fared when it came to leadership skills, resilience and social support, it became evident that the high risk group started at a significantly lower skill level than the low risk group. The high risk group demonstrated statistically

significant improvements in *adolescent well-being, decision making, critical thinking, sibling support, parental support, total social support and advice support* between time one and time two. At time three further statistically significant improvements were seen in *leadership skills and goal setting*. Positive trends were noted over time for resilience, communication skills, team work, problem solving, life skills and community involvement. However, many of the supports from friends, parents and siblings as well as esteem support and total social support, returned to baseline levels at time three. Therefore, high risk young people may need additional longer-term involvement to sustain social support increases.

The low risk comparison group showed a statistically significantly decrease on the adolescent well-being, problem solving, understanding self, friendship support, parental support and sibling support measures between time one and time two. Additionally, a statistically significant decrease in score was observed for the high risk comparison group for resilience and community involvement between time one and two and adult support between time two and three, while goal setting significantly increased between time two and time three. These findings suggest that young people involved in the leadership programme accrue positive benefits from their involvement in the programme, compared to youth not involved, who remain the same on a number of the measures used or appear to decrease on others.

***The study highlights key factors of importance in developing young leaders:*** Multiple regression analyses show that measures which consistently predicted leadership skills across a number of time points were: *leadership self-perception, average grade, resilience total, adolescent well-being, empathy and understanding oneself*. At time three, *social support* also emerged as significant in contributing to the development of young leaders.

In summary, the data indicates that those who participated in the Youth Leadership Programme demonstrate improvements in Leadership skills, Resilience and Social Support. As well as this, those young people considered At risk demonstrate enhanced leadership skills and resilience, however may need additional linkages to sustain improvements in social support.

### Qualitative evidence

Interviews with the low and high risk young people identified the following benefits resulting from involvement in the Youth Leadership programme:

- The low risk group reported receiving more friendship support, adult support, sibling support and esteem support than their high risk counterparts.
- The high risk group appear to receive more emotional support and this may be congruent with the fact that these young people were experiencing more traumatic life experiences in the form of family deaths and depression, and as such may require more emotional support.
- Both groups felt that their supports had changed over the course of the programme with the high

risk group feeling that it changed the most at time two. This reflects the quantitative findings that levels of social support appear to return to baseline levels at time three.

- Young people in the high risk group were exposed to more situations requiring resilience - for example, death, family separation, self-harming, depression and chronic shyness. These young people described being better able to cope with and overcome challenges and access supports to help deal with these situations after involvement in the youth leadership programme.
- In terms of skills development the young people highlighted that they had improved in leadership skills, communication skills, team work, conflict resolution and problem solving, social skills, sense of achievement and self-belief, empathy, self-awareness, self-control, confidence, public speaking and assertiveness.
- Young people involved in the programme felt they had more opportunities to engage as a leader and felt that they could see opportunities in their communities to use their skills.
- Persistence and motivating were also qualities that the young people felt they had developed over the course of the programme.

Focus groups with facilitators found that the leadership programme contributed to:

- Improvements in communication skills, presentation skills, reflective skills, research skills, team work, confidence and self-awareness for the young people involved.
- Enhanced support networks including additional friends and ability to access other supports as well as opportunities for facilitators to build relationships with the young people.
- Enhanced opportunities for community involvement, including positive recognition and appreciation from the young people's involvement and contribution.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that participants in the Foróige Youth Leadership programme garner benefits from their involvement both personally and in their ability to contribute to their communities. In terms of quantitative measures, the participants demonstrated statistically significant improvements over time when compared to the comparison group in goal setting, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, team work, problem solving, leadership skills, resilience, sibling support, total social support, emotional support, esteem support and community involvement. High risk youth also demonstrated significant improvements over time, indicating that the programme may have benefits for youth experiencing adversity. The study identified a set of factors as key to developing young leaders, including; resilience, self-belief, adolescent well-being, empathy, understanding oneself and social support. In addition, qualitative

results indicate that the participants feel they have gained many additional skills and attributes from involvement in the programme including social skills, a sense of achievement, self-control, confidence, public speaking, assertiveness and ability to access more leadership opportunities. The study indicates that the programme appears effective in realising its desired goals of enabling young people to develop the skills, inspiration, vision, confidence, and action plans to be effective leaders and to make a positive difference to their society through the practice of effective leadership.

## Recommendations

- This programme significantly increases human capital in a number of important ways. A young person who completes the youth leadership programme demonstrates an increase in empathy and thus be more attuned to the needs of others and as such can relate to people much better. As well as this, having skills in goal setting, communication, critical thinking, team work, problem solving and leadership skills are very beneficial to employees, entrepreneurs and college students. For organisations who want to advance, having employees with skill sets such as these are pivotal to their success. Therefore, government departments should consider funding such leadership initiatives at the programme or organisation level and encourage the inclusion of youth leadership development parallel to the school curriculum.
- The findings of this study suggest that adopting a programme of this nature would be advantageous for communities and schools who wish to develop the leadership skills and abilities of young people.
- There are options for further development of the leadership programme – for example, bringing in mentors to support and guide the young person through their community project and future leadership opportunities. Furthermore, youth leadership graduates could be encouraged to mentor newer recruits.
- Policy makers need to realise that good leaders need a wide range of social support. Attention should thus be focused within the school and youth leadership curriculum on how to build social support and networks. For example, sponsoring mentoring programmes, adult-youth partnerships, availability of mentors for young leaders, access to sources of advice and exploring ways to involve parents, friends, siblings and communities in giving and receiving support.
- There is an acknowledged need for more female representation in leadership roles throughout society, including in business, politics and the public service. The literature highlights that women may not put themselves forward for leadership roles due to a lack of support (Ryan et al., 2007). This research indicates that this programme is of particular benefit in developing the leadership potential of young women. It is therefore recommended that the programme continues to involve females and develop further routes for them to take on specialised roles.

- This study has shown that young people deemed to be 'high risk' can benefit from leadership programmes of this nature. It is important, therefore, that policy makers look to youth leadership programmes as not just for the elite but for the general population including those at risk and ensure there is substantial provision for youth leadership opportunities. However, the study suggests that these young people could benefit from additional programme involvement to maintain their social support improvements. Additional opportunities to engage in the community beyond the initial period would be good for this group. Mentoring would be a good additional support to ensure that the benefits accrued are sustained.





## 1. Introduction

In recent years youth leadership has received growing attention both nationally and internationally as a way of preparing young people to contribute meaningfully to society (Anderson et al., 2007; Libby et al., 2006; Detzler et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2008; Klau, 2006; Shelton, 2009; Kahn et al., 2009; Nelson, 2010). Similarly concepts of resilience and social support have gained increasing interest as mechanisms of enabling youth cope with adversity and deal with challenges of everyday life (Masten, 2001; Ungar 2004; Cutrona, 2000; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). However, there is limited research into the effectiveness of youth leadership programmes in achieving their goals of developing young leaders. As well as this no studies to-date have explored whether involvement in youth leadership confers any additional benefits to youth in terms of their capacity to enable resilience or enlist social support.

As countries consider their legacy to young people, in light of a global economic downturn, it is important for governments to consider their contribution to effectively enabling youth to deal with the challenges they face today and in the future. At the same time there is an increasing need for youth organisations to demonstrate that money invested is in fact yielding positive results in terms of outcomes and value for money. In a time when families are under increasing pressure financially, it is important to consider effective ways of ensuring our youth are adequately supported and display sufficient resilience to withstand the uncertainty that faces them. Having at least one person who can consistently provide support to a young person can help them deal with problems particularly when tangible advice and support is offered (Cutrona, 2000). Therefore, social support is a valid area to be considered in the context of youth development particularly when emotional distress and mental health problems appear to be on the rise (Dooley et al., 2012; NOSP, 2007). Promoting resilience involves a process that enables them to adapt to situations of adversity while maintaining their health and well-being (Ungar, 2004; Benard, 2006). A greater understanding is required of how the mechanisms which enhance young people's capacity for resilience assist in leadership development.

Furthermore, there is the need to invest in the development of young leaders as change makers so that they can contribute meaningfully to the challenges their communities face. Considering how resilience

and social support interact with leadership is an area of interest as both appear to play an important role in normative youth development (Ungar, 2004; Benard, 2000; Cutrona, 2000; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). However knowledge of their contribution to youth leadership is largely unexplored and understanding the interaction of these three areas will help to broaden the understanding of the benefit of youth leadership in both normative youth and youth experiencing adversity.

Historically, young people would have had substantial responsibilities in the family and community spending much of their time working to secure food and materials (SRDC, 1996). In more recent times the role of the adolescent has changed and it seems the focus is more on what they fail to do rather than what they are capable of doing (SRDC, 1996). The media may be largely responsible for the negative stereotype of adolescents in today's global society, often portraying young people as a menace for loitering on street corners, engaging in public order offences, and drugs and alcohol consumption (Devlin, 2006). Counter to this negative stereotype there can be seen a rising desire to portray youth in a positive light through youth leadership and civic engagement (Kahn, et al., 2009; Nelson, 2010; Best & Dustan, 2008). Some of the emphasis of youth leadership programmes has been on the intent to make leaders for the future, possibly denying them the right to contribute today to their community and to the wider society (Kahn et al., 2009; Connor & Strobel, 2007; Nelson, 2010). This focus on young people as leaders of tomorrow may be a failing of youth organisations, schools, and community groups to see young people as valuable assets in the present. The emphasis on youth participation in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and the forthcoming amendment to the Irish constitution are welcome changes in societies contemplating the civil rights of young people. As Article 12 highlights that young people's voices should be heard in decisions that affect them, it paves the way for youth to get increasingly involved in their communities. Seeing youth as having a contribution to their society encourages them to use their skills, time and energy to harness the will of their peers to find unique solutions to issues they see as relevant. This in turn can have a positive impact on themselves, their peers and their communities.

Given the rise in youth leadership programme development is important to consider whether these initiatives have the capacity to shape young leaders in the present, so they can contribute meaningfully to civic society now as well as in the future. Indeed whether such programmes have benefits beyond youth leadership in areas such as resilience and social support merits investigation.

Foróige is a National Youth Organisation in Ireland established in 1952 which aims to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and the development of society. The Foróige youth leadership programme aims:

- To enable young people to develop the skills, inspiration, vision, confidence, and action plans to be effective leaders.
- To empower young people to make a positive difference to their society through the practice of effective leadership.

The leadership programme is run through youth clubs, projects and schools throughout the country and involvement in the programme is voluntary. Over 1,600 young people have taken part in the youth leadership programme to-date. The programme is delivered by Foróige staff and volunteers who undergo a two day training programme to facilitate the programme with young people aged 15-18 years. The programme involves three modules; module one and two are 15 hours of taught material and 15 hours of individual reflection coupled with self-directed learning, module three involves a 20 hour community action project, successful completion of which along with journal and portfolio results in the achievement of a Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action which is accredited by the National University of Ireland, Galway as a level 6 Certificate. The programme is delivered in two mechanisms: through a one year long programme which is facilitated once a week for 1-1.5 hours and covers all three modules, it is also delivered through an International Conference held annually over one week which covers either module one or two of the programme.

While leadership has been a programme within Foróige since its inception, it has undergone significant development since 2009 through the work of Foróige's Best Practice Unit. It has become a manualised three module programme which is accredited by the National University of Ireland, Galway, one of the first of its kind in Ireland. Foróige staff and volunteers throughout Ireland have been trained in the delivery of the manualised programme.

## 1.1 Aim & Objectives of the Study

Being able to demonstrate that involvement in Foróige and Foróige's programmes yields positive outcomes for young people is a key aim of Foróige's current strategic plan. The function of the Best Practice Unit is to develop programmes, deliver training and support programme implementation, and to gather evidence in relation to the impact the programmes have. The aim of this study was to explore the outcomes of a youth leadership programme amongst a cohort of young people engaged in the Foróige youth leadership programme and compare them to a comparison group of young people not engaged in the youth leadership programme, over the course of the programme and beyond for a further six months. This study will also explore whether the leadership programme accrues any additional benefit in terms of contribution to youth resilience and social support.

This study also describes the programme and its development, a theoretical focus which is encompassed in the literature review and a process and outcomes evaluation which looks at both the experiences of the youth and facilitators involved in the programme as well as whether the programme achieves its outcomes.



The five objectives of the study are:

1. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).
2. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.
3. To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.
4. To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in a youth leadership programme and again in light of having received the youth leadership programme.
5. To identify key messages for practice, policy and research in light of this study.

## **1.2 Structure of the Report**

The remainder of the report is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 deals with a literature review in relation to youth leadership. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology for the study. Chapter 4 provides a description of the service provider, Foróige, and a detailed description of the youth leadership programme and its development. Chapter 5 outlines the findings of the research. Chapter 6 discusses these findings in light of the literature and sets forth recommendations for policy, practice and research. Chapter 7 provides the reader with a summary of the key findings and recommendations as well as presents some concluding remarks to the study.



## 2. Literature Review

### Introduction

Youth leadership attracts growing interest as it offers the opportunity of communities to harness their resources to solve problems in new and innovative ways. Utilising these resources enables young people to grow in meaningful skills and enhance their contribution economically and to social causes. This section distinguishes youth and adult leadership, and goes on to define youth leadership. Key concepts in relation to youth leadership are discussed next which include a brief overview of leadership theories and styles. Different education models documented in the research are outlined and components necessary to develop young leadership namely; skills, environment and action are explored. Following this the influence of gender and adversity are visited. Finally, a distinction was made between civic engagement and youth leadership following which the benefits and limitations of youth leadership were explored.

### 2.1 Distinguishing Youth & Adult Leadership

Youth leadership as distinct from adult leadership focuses on the methods by which leadership can be explored, taught or experienced by young people. These methods include experiential learning (Kolb, 1971) or learning by doing (John Dewey cited in Tanner, 1991) which enable young people develop key skills at a young age. Adult leadership on the other hand is learned in the context of practicing leadership (MacNeill, 2006). Bearing this in mind youth leadership must not only develop skills but also provide opportunities for youth to apply them in meaningful and authentic ways (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; MacNeill 2006). By meaningful MacNeill highlights that decisions must have true impact and consequences, and authentic as referring to real decisions that need to be made for organisations and communities. Indeed much of the adult literature supports and is the foundation upon which youth leadership has developed giving way to emerging approaches, styles and opportunities. However a critical distinction is that youth leadership has a tendency to plan for leadership to be in the future, instead of encouraging young people to take an active leadership role in the present (MacNeill, 2006; Dolan, 2010; Kahn et al., 2009). There are many ways that young people can be leaders. Kahn (2009)



highlighted that youth leadership is tied to other areas such as youth development, citizenship, youth action, youth engagement and youth participation, all of which offer opportunities for youth to take on leadership roles. It is vital therefore that young people be exposed to the opportunities that enable them to experience leadership as well as opportunities that build their desire to become leaders.

Zeldin and Camino (1999) highlight a caution that there is the potential to weaken youth leadership by describing everything as youth leadership when it is not defined properly. This ambiguity, Conner and Strobel (2007) argue may be considered beneficial in enabling flexibility to tailor to the strengths and needs of young people. Van Linden and Fertman (1989, p.8) stated that 'understanding and appreciating the complexity of leadership is a prerequisite to supporting and challenging teenagers to be the best leaders they can be'. Youth leadership is a growing phenomenon with many programmes available, however few of which have been rigorously evaluated leading to an absence of evidence based youth leadership programmes (MacNeill, 2006; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; Klau, 2006; Avolio et al., 2009). This study aims to, in some way, redress this imbalance.

## **2.2 Youth Leadership Defined**

The exact concept and term leadership is used widely for many different approaches to facilitating change and is often interspersed with management and authority. A multitude of different definitions of leadership exist. Northouse (2004) outlines how some definitions view leadership as the focus of group process, i.e. the leader is the centre of group change and activity. Central to leadership from Northouse's perspective are the following components: leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs within a group context and leadership involves goal attainment. Based on these components he proposes leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse 2004, p.3). To do this however a set of skills are required to ensure the process is directed effectively. Whitehead (2009) argues for a definition of an authentic leader as one who: (1) is self-aware, humble, always seeking improvement, aware of those being led and looks out for the welfare of others; (2) fosters high degrees of trust by building an ethical and moral framework; and (3) is committed to organisational success within the construct of social values.

The work of Heifetz (1994) highlights that leadership is the ability to mobilise people to face problems, and that communities make progress on problems because leaders challenge and help them to do so. To exercise leadership he argues means providing a vision and influencing others to realise it through non-coercive means. Some other examples of definitions include Chemers (2002) who proposes leadership to be the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. While Wheeler and Edlebeck (2006, p.89) described youth leadership as 'learning, listening, dreaming and working together to unleash the potential of people's time, talent and treasure for the common good'. Others have described it as a set of competencies that enable people to lead (Eldeman et al., 2004; Zeldin & Camino, 1999). Kahn et al., (2009, p.6) defined the development of youth leadership 'as young people empowered to inspire and mobilise themselves



and others towards a common purpose, in response to personal and/or social issues and challenges, to effect positive change'. However, most notable is the recommendation for consistency in the use of the term and the need for embedding theory in its use (Conner & Strobel, 2007; MacNeill, 2006). If leadership is defined as a process through which a set of learned skills and competencies facilitate this process, the position outlined by van Linden and Fertman (1998) that every person is capable of becoming a leader, highlights the potential of programmes to teach these skills.

It is important also to distinguish between youth leadership and youth development at this point as these terms have been used interchangeably. Edelman et al., (2004) highlights that youth development is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence through activities that help them become competent to be successful or deal with challenges. Youth leadership on the other hand focus on the ability of young people to lead others or get others to work together toward a common goal or vision (Wheeler & Edelbeck, 2006).

## 2.3 Theories & Styles of Leadership

Northouse (2004), Van Wagner (2008) and Kahn et al., (2009) compiled a list of major theories on leadership. These include the Great Man/Trait Theory, Contingency Theory, Situational Theory, Behavioural Theory, Participative Theory, Transactional or Management Theory, Transformational or Relationship Theory and Servant Leadership. An important shift has occurred over time through the conceptualisation of these leadership theories, as each was critiqued as not holding true in different situations. Only those considered relevant to youth leadership development will be discussed in this section.

**The Behavioural theory** proposes that leaders can be 'made', that successful leadership is based on definable, learnable behaviour (Skinner, 1971; Skinner, 1984). People can learn to become leaders by observation and teaching.

**Transactional theory** believes that people are motivated by reward and punishment (Bass, 1998). Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges between leaders and their members. For example promotions given on the basis goals attained.

**Transformational theory** proposes that people will follow a person who inspires them, one that has vision, enthusiasm and energy (Bass, 1980, 1998). Burns (1978, p.20) saw transformational leadership as a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of 'raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation'. The core of this theory is that both the leader and follower benefit. As well as highlighting that values and ethics are important. This approach to leadership links in strongly with the team member's needs and motivations. Hernez-Broome (2004) described transformational leaders as providing a compelling vision of a better future which inspires trust through self-confidence and conviction. This in turn results in performance beyond expectations.

**Servant Leadership** is an approach which sets out to turn followers into leaders by developing their potential instead of using their leadership role to control others (Daft, 2011). Servant leaders give up control and make a choice to serve their followers (Greenleaf, 1970). Greenleaf (1970) highlights that the servant leader puts service before self-interest by helping others develop and understand their greater purpose. Servant leaders transcend self-interest to serve the needs of others, help others grow and develop, and provide opportunity for others to gain materially and emotionally (Daft, 2011, p.156). Greenleaf (1970, p.7) highlights that the servant leader ensures that other people's greatest needs are being met and aims for their followers to 'become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants'.

## Leadership Styles

Different leadership styles have been elucidated over time. Kurt Lewin (1939) identified leadership styles of **autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire**. These categories detail how leaders involve the group in decision making. Autocratic leadership style holds decisions centrally and appears controlling. Democratic leadership style enlists the views of others and involves participation. Laissez-faire leadership style is easy going and offers little or no direction. How decisions are made and a sense of involvement can be pivotal in keeping people within a team committed to its goals. Democratic decision making can ensure participants feel listened to and that their opinion matters. The autocratic style of non-consultation can be excluding and authoritative, while the laissez-faire approach can be too freedom giving.

Goleman et al., (2002) described six styles of leadership and highlighted that it is important to have the capacity to move between these styles should the situation or need arise. These styles include **visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pace-setting and commanding**. He also highlighted the benefits and drawbacks to each demonstrating the importance of balance and adaptation to the required situation or context to be an effective leader. This demonstrates that with self-awareness leaders can mould themselves into an appropriate leader given the situation, once they know how. Goleman (2006b) stressed emotional intelligence as being more important than intellectual ability when it comes to how people succeed in the world. He illustrates that a person's ability to relate well with others, express empathy, build capacity, belief and opportunity were critical to leadership success. Some of the theories mentioned above such as transactional, transformational and servant leadership also act as styles of leadership.

## 2.4 Youth Leadership Education Models

Taking the assumption that leaders can be made, as argued by van Linden & Fertman (1998), this then implies that there are certain ingredients essential in the making of great leaders. This section will explore current available youth leadership educational paradigms.



An education model for teaching and developing leadership in youth outlined by Ricketts and Rudd (2002) conceptualised a model to include five dimensions: 1. Leadership knowledge and information. 2. Leadership attitude, will and desire. 3. Decision making, reasoning and critical thinking. 4. Oral and written communication skills. 5. Intra and interpersonal relations. Their focus frames some of the skills required by a leader. This model does however fail to include the ability to collaborate or problem solve. Furthermore, it focuses solely on skills without giving consideration to opportunities to practice these skills.

Research by Roberts (2009) outlined the SEED's model which represents important attributes required for a leadership programme. These include S: social and emotional competencies that include self-awareness, social awareness and social skills, E: emotional resilience; the ability to cope with shocks or rebufs that may be short or long-term, E: enterprise, innovation and creativity: the ability to shape situations, imagine alternatives, remain open to new ideas, problem-solve and work in teams, D: discipline: both inner discipline to defer gratification and pursue goals, as well as the ability to cope with external discipline. This model focused strongly on skills, characteristics and discipline however similar to the previous model gave little attention the practice of leadership.

Work by Brendtro (2009) highlights an extension of Maslow's Hierarchy that for growth and development to occur a person needs four components: Attachment or belonging; to provide safety and significance. Achievement or mastery; brings knowledge, competence, and esteem. Autonomy or independence; builds efficacy, power, and self actualization. Altruism or generosity; fosters morality, virtue, and self-transcendence. Brendtro has successfully applied this model to youth in leadership and also youth in crisis. This model has many of the components of what is needed for a young person to develop i.e. the ideal conditions for them to be in such as belonging as well as the commitment to action through altruism and achievement. However it is missing the skill set that young people require to be able to engage in some of these processes.

Research carried out by Heifetz (1994) and Klau (2006) outline three components required for leadership development: 1. The need for both technical and adaptive challenges, technical being straightforward problems with clear answers, adaptive challenges having no clear solution and involving values, attitudes and behaviour. 2. Case in point learning which provides on the spot opportunities to explore group dynamics and group learning. 3. Below the neck learning provides practical experiences that challenge participants out of their comfort zone including reflective practice, which offers the space to reflect on what has been learnt and put it into practice in their lives. This model illustrates the importance of reflection for learning to occur, as well as the adaptability of thinking in action. This model focuses very much on the facilitator teasing out the learning for the group through group dynamics, however it also fails to look at the skills and opportunities necessary for the young people to put their reflection and learning into practice.

Research by Boyd (2001) found that the combination of experiential learning and service learning significantly increase youth's knowledge of leadership skills, such as decision-making, setting goals,

working with others and community service. This model more closely fits the combination of experiential learning and individual leadership projects which relate to providing opportunities for leadership. However, it did not look in depth at the leadership skills required of a young person failing to focus on communication skills and commitment to action.

The work of Kahn et al., (2009) outlined a number of key elements important for leadership including authentic opportunities, meeting needs, challenge, support and reflection. This model illuminated the necessity of a programme to have real opportunities for leadership something considered to be a crucial component. However, the model failed to illustrate the particular types of skills that someone faced with authentic leadership opportunities would need to deal with them.

Research by Zeldin and Camino (1999) developed a framework called CO-SAMM – Cause and Outcome, (collective action or having a mission), Skill and Action (skills and mastery), Membership and Modelling (connected and healthy leadership role models). This model looked more at the action and commitment to action aspects as well as having opportunities or causes to lead. It also looks at skill but is not explicit on the types of skills necessary.

An education model by Van Linden and Fertman (1998) summarised youth leadership in five dimensions: leadership knowledge, attitude, communication skills, decision making and stress management. They summarised three stages of youth leadership development as awareness, interaction and integration. This approach looks at the skills and attitudes necessary however does not explore the application of those skills.

Finally, research by Wang and Wang (2009) propose a model which incorporates individual and team leadership. Within the individual leadership are components such as self-confidence, learning skills and critical thinking, within team leadership are a sense of responsibility, inspiring and encouragement, interpersonal skills and decision-making. This approach focuses on skills and attitude, however fails to consider opportunity and action.

Many of these educational paradigms bring attention to the importance of skills development, with fewer focusing on opportunities to exercise those skills and the motivation required to achieve action. It is important that youth leadership programmes be framed in the context of theory, so that they are best placed to enable young people to meet the challenges of real leadership opportunities. A tentative conceptual model which brings together the components illustrated here and gaps identified will be presented later in this chapter.

## **2.5 Youth Leadership Programmes**

A meta-analysis of youth leadership development literature by Ricketts and Rudd (2002) highlights the lack of research and application of teaching adolescents leadership. Avolio et al., (2009) carried out a meta-analysis of adult leadership interventions and found that leadership interventions do impact

on a variety of outcomes with theories focused on behavioural change having the greater impact. A growing body of research indicates that there is value to youth participation in leadership programmes, however few have been proven, thus highlighting further the need for research in this area (Rickets & Rudd, 2002; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Min & Bin, 2010). Outlined next are a number of internationally evaluated youth leadership programmes. These include both qualitative and quantitative studies which have occurred which further brings attention to the lack of research available in this area, particularly quantitative. Each study will be dealt with individually.

Research describing the **Youth Leadership Institute** (Libby et al., 2006) indicates that it provides programmes which outline key concepts including community-based civic engagement, philanthropy, policy advocacy and action research. While the study does not illustrate any quantitative outcomes they call for additional research on leadership programmes to ensure effective leadership programmes.

Qualitative research was carried out on the **Facilitating Leadership in Youth programme** (Detzler et al., 2007) which works with young people who live in daily violence, discrimination and poverty. The research describes the programme which provides youth with year round support and services, caring and trusting relationships and gradually increases leadership opportunities by participating in decision making as well as facilitating meetings, speaking in public, mapping community resources, creating visual media, participating in the youth council and training other teens. They also outlined qualitative experiences from participants including details of how they benefited and what they were able to contribute to the programme including increased advocacy and influence over what happened in the centre and programme content.

The **Civic Leadership Institute** provides a three-week residential service-learning programme for academically gifted young people (Lee et al., 2008). The programme helps young people explore complex social issues that are faced by communities and society. The end of programme evaluations and narratives from 230 participants revealed positive perceptions of the programme, particularly the service projects. The participants felt that the coursework combined with the hands-on experiences enhanced their awareness of civic issues, increased their motivation to engage in social issues in their communities, and allowed them gain a new understanding and respect for diversity.

Three American leadership programmes were explored by Klau (2006) using Heifetz model of adaptive leadership (1994). Klau (2006) found that one four-day programme's constant focus on cheering undermined many of the espoused values of the programme. The programme also appeared to have a lack of clarity on what it meant by leadership and placed a strong emphasis on authority. He further illustrated that no instances of learning from group dynamics were evident, little emphasis on engaging participants emotionally and no formal opportunities to reflect on their actions were incorporated. Promisingly, he did highlight that the programme which engages thousands of youth annually may be improved through exposure to relevant research and best practice. The next programme he

evaluated was a four-day conference with a passionate conception of leadership, which provided the opportunity for small group discussion and debate, however, he highlighted that it did not address issues of ostracism within the group. He felt there was a focus on spiritual heroism which encouraged participants to experience leadership in a personal and adaptive way but there was little focus on group dynamics. However emotional challenge was evident as was reflective practice. The final programme Klau evaluated was found to have little clarity on what it meant by leadership, however, it did focus strongly on group processing, case-in-point learning and reflective practice in relation to race, religion and gender. Klau argued that while it was good to be aware of issues it did not necessarily facilitate translation into how those young people would act as leaders with this knowledge on return to their homes. Essentially, Klau's work warns against unstructured, shapeless leadership programmes that are not clear on their purpose.

A comparison study of 25 leadership programmes for 12-18 year olds involving 586 young people versus no leadership programme involving 747 young people in pre/post measures in Connecticut found that those involved in the leadership programmes had an improved sense of support from their local communities (Anderson et al., 2007). They also found enhanced social self-efficacy amongst males specifically. Furthermore, those involved in the programme initially scored higher than the comparison group on a variety of youth outcome measures. Those at lower level overall functioning were more likely than those who began the programme at a higher level of functioning to report positive changes. This raises two areas for consideration, the first being that those young people who self select to take part in leadership programmes may have higher skill levels than those who do not. Secondly, that those with lower functioning levels when exposed to leadership programmes may have a greater capacity to develop much needed skills illustrating the importance of accessibility and opportunity for young people.

A study of the **Chicano-Latino Youth Leadership Institute** which carries out a 2 day leadership institute, involved 205 participants in their pre/post research, the study revealed outcomes including increased levels of community service, improved peer-relationships and higher graduation rates than those of Chicano-Latino non-participants (Bloomberg et al., 2003). The results also demonstrated increased self-confidence, improved social and leadership skills, expanded sense of community responsibility and ownership, expanded relationships with positive adult and peer role models. This programme however was run over a very short duration.

The evaluation of **Youth Leadership Training Programme (YLTP)** in Tanzania explored the programmes concept, assumptions, approach to training and contents (Stiftung, 2003). The evaluation looked primarily at the implementation and modification of the programme with 17 young people (aged 21-35 years) over 18 months, it also included some qualitative data that indicated enhanced confidence, maturity, communication, critical thinking and ability to create a persuasive argument.

Qualitative research was carried out on the **Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL)** programme which employed a case study of two female teens over the course of three years in California



(Conner & Strobel, 2007). The programme uses social science research techniques to study an issue of concern and use their findings to formulate policy recommendations. The focus of the programme however, was not explicitly on leadership skills but focused on communication, interpersonal skills, analytic and critical reflection, and positive involvement in community. The study illustrated how young people diverge in their learning depending on their own unique strengths and preferences. It also highlights the importance of flexibility within a programme to ensure equal opportunities to participate at a higher level with more responsibility, positive reinforcement, self-reflection and goal setting.



Developing effective and ethical leaders in adulthood is a key focus of the **LeadNow** the leadership programme starts their work with 10-13 year olds to achieve this goal (Nelson, 2010). The programme carries out a Social Influence Survey (2009) to ensure they match the child to the programme appropriately and have found that those scoring lower opt out of the training after the initial module. Reports from parents and teachers, as well as repeated social influence survey indicate a change in self-image. Young people were beginning to see themselves as leaders demonstrating increased positive peer influence and improved verbal responses. This programme is however for a younger audience than the programme being studied here.

A number of evaluated youth leadership programmes were identified by **Child Trends** (2009). These include; Leadership Excellence (2004), Futures for Children (2009) and Project Venture (2002). **Leadership Excellence** is for 95 young African-Americans aged 6-13 year olds who experience multiple barriers. The evaluation yielded satisfaction rates which increased for parents but decreased for the young participants over the course of the programme. Improvements in seven developmental assets including; success at school, sense of self, ability to communicate, ability to learn new things, ability to connect with adults, ability to work with others and ability to stay safe, increased for parents but decreased for participants.

Native Americans from elementary to high school are involved in **Futures for Children** (2009). Annual reports from Futures for Children indicate that 95% of participants graduate from high school, typically 30% of Native Americans tend to drop out of high school. Also 35-40% of participants continue to college or higher learning.

In **Project Excel** African American youth (mean age 13.3 years) were randomly assigned to a leadership or life skills course which involved 65 young (Lewis et al., 2006). The findings indicate that those involved in the leadership course gained in terms of communal world views, individualism, school

connectedness, motivation to achieve and social change activities over time when compared with the comparison group. The limitations of this study were the short time frame, one semester, and no follow-up to determine if these were sustainable changes.

**LEAD (leadership, education, achievement and development)** involved 146 young African Americans in an intervention using expressive art versus a comparison group. The findings indicate that protective factors, behavioural self-control, self-esteem and resilience increased for the intervention group over the comparison (Shelton, 2009). However this programme's focus was on the prevention of youth offending behaviour and failed to discuss or evaluate the leadership aspect of the programme, which places a question over its focus on leadership.

The focus of **Project Venture** (2002 cited in Child Trends 2009) is on preventing substance abuse, developing peer relationships and group skills among high-risk American Indian youth and other at risk youth through outdoors experiential activities, adventure camps, community-oriented service learning and classroom-based problem solving activities. This study involved 2000 young people randomly assigned to treatment or control groups involving baseline, post, 12-month and 18-month follow-up assessment. Findings indicate that, compared with a control group, participants in the programme first initiated substance use at an older age, significantly reduced lifetime alcohol and tobacco use, inhalant use, marijuana and other illegal drug use. Programme participants also demonstrated less depression and aggressive behaviour, improved school attendance and improved internal locus of control and resiliency. Despite this being targeted as a leadership programme it did not yield any information or outcomes in relation to leadership acquisition.

Unfortunately, as can be seen here with the exception of the study from Tanzania, most of the research is American with little available other international research in this area. The evidence thus far supports leadership programmes as being very worthwhile. However, as can be seen there is limited quantitative data to support the acquisition of leadership skills revealing a gap in the research. Notably none of those outlined carried out longitudinal research with the exception of Project Venture which failed to look at leadership acquisition.

## **2.6 Supporting Youth People in Becoming Leaders**

When considering how to support young people in becoming leaders three distinct areas emerged from the literature namely; leadership skills, environmental conditions and action. Each of which will be discussed next.

### **2.6.1.1 Developing Leadership Skills**

Skills and competency development are fundamental to the belief that leaders can be made (van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Northouse, 2004). In the context of skills, concepts such as social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation, and insight and knowledge will be explored.

### **2.6.1.1.1 Social and Emotional Intelligence**

Research shows that a leader's emotional resonance with others is a better predictor of effective executive leadership than their general intelligence (Hernez-Broome, 2004; Goleman et al., 2002). Emotional intelligence in leaders involves; self awareness - understanding strengths and weakness, self regulation - being in control over your emotions, motivation - using inner drive to accomplish tasks, empathy - understanding another person's point of view and social skills - relating well to others (Goleman, 2006b). Boyatzis and Goleman (2001) built on these aspects, outlining four components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Similarly, Roberts (2009) also highlights that social and emotional competence is a critical component to youth leadership. In many ways to be capable of leading other people one must know themselves well, they must know their own strengths as well as their weakness. In so doing, they can build on their strengths and maximise their potential while also enabling other people, strong in areas they are weak, to contribute and receive recognition for it (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Self-control and self-awareness helps reduce the chance of developing cognitive distortions such as taking things personally, mindreading or magnify situations (Department of Human Services, 2008). Having self-control and self-management means that youth can understand when things are not working and know how to deal with them appropriately (Covey 1989, 1991). Mumford et al., (2000) also highlighted the importance of social judgement skills such that it is important to understand situations and respond appropriately. Young leaders must have a strong ability to relate to others, this will help them in ensuring their cause or vision is relevant to the people they lead (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Carnegie (1936) illustrates that the number one way of getting people around to your way of thinking is by relating to people. He demonstrates how people are more open to new ideas and sometimes doing things they would never consider if at first a person spends time relating to them, is interested in them and understands them. Kouzes and Posner (2007) highlight that leaders need to understand their followers, including their hopes and dreams, enabling them better enlist their support towards a common ideal. Ultimately, what this means is that the leader must spend time on personal development and building an awareness of how they are in their interactions with others as well as how they relate their vision to others.

### **2.6.1.1.2 Collaboration**

Being able to work with other people in a way that ensures that everyone feels there is fair and just recognition of their time and commitment as well as their ideas is something that is vital to sustaining an effective team (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). In any establishing team the group dynamics of forming, norming, storming, performing and adjourning apply (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). As the team comes together there is the initial settling period, followed by a phase where the team normalise to one another, this is then followed by a stage of uncertainty as people try to find their roles within the group, once established the group can then move on to contributing meaningfully and once complete reviewing and recognising the work that was done. As part of any group process there are times of conflict and disagreement, the role of the leader is to enable the team work well together particularly under conditions where there are differences of opinion. The leader requires skills in



conflict resolution, team building, problem solving and decision making (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; Boyd, 2001; Mumford, 2000). Covey (1989) highlights the importance of teamwork in finding solutions to problems by bringing people together which can produce better results than each person could individually. All of these skills help the team to work cohesively together towards their common goal. By having a leader who is sensitive to the challenges of enabling different personalities to work together as well as recognising the contribution of each team member, mean that the team can then work well despite challenges that it faces (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

#### **2.6.1.1.3 Articulation**

Being able to share a vision with others to gain their support requires good communication skills both oral and written (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This means that the leader must be able to develop a convincing argument which encourages others to support their ideas. Covey (1991) highlights further the pivotal role communication skills play in leadership in their ability to get their point across clearly and effectively. Gardner (1987) drew attention to the fact that communication skills are probably the most pivotal skill to have in leadership as it is the 'all purpose instrument of leadership' as this enables them to share ideas and influence others. Being able to communicate effectively with other people means that the leader needs to have a clear vision and know how to communicate this effectively to others (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). For example, Dr. King's 'I have a dream' speech communicated a vision by enabling people to see and feel how their own interests and aspirations were aligned to the vision he illustrated (cited in Shriberg et al., 2005). His speech illuminated an ideal world worth working towards. This enabled others to share his vision of the future and generated and action necessary for change. Articulating a vision is vital to enlisting the commitment of others. It is also what enables a road map be created, 'If you don't know where you are going, you'll probably end up somewhere else' – Campbell (1974). This highlights further, the importance of clarity in communication of the end goal. Furthermore, a person with a great vision who is unable to communicate it is not going to be effective in gaining support for their cause. Similarly, a person who has great communication skills but no vision is not going to have the road map to where they want to go. Exposure to a multitude of experiences where young people get to practice their communication skills helps to shape the brain for good communication skills into adulthood (Begley, 2000; Giedd, 1999). Harnessing these skills early in adolescent development enable young people overcome the challenges of speaking in public, gain confidence in their opinion and contribute to society.

#### **2.6.1.1.4 Insight and Knowledge**

Developing knowledge of a particular subject matter is important in leadership. To be able to lead people effectively it is necessary to be able to demonstrate some level of adeptness in the particular area (Shriberg et al., 2005). Being able to think critically about a topic requires that there is a good understanding of the topic. Trust and confidence in the leader are essential for the team to perform and this is highly related to the leader's knowledge (Politis, 2003). Mumford et al., (2000) also highlight that knowledge is a core skill to leadership, this is strongly linked to being able to problem solve which forms part of what can be considered technical skills outlined by Katz (1955). Within the context of insight and knowledge it is also important for a leader to work within an ethical frame of reference (Gardner, 1995). Ethics in leadership are an important aspect of knowledge, as to have a good knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in leadership requires a level of moral judgement which can only come from the insight into the consequences of decisions (Northouse, 2004, p.302). Ethical leaders strive for fairness, take on responsibility, fulfil commitments, serve others and show courage by standing up for what is right (Zauderer, 1992). Ethics in leadership means that leaders model their actions on solid ethical principles incorporating honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity are considered the foundation of trust between leaders and followers (Daft, 2011).

#### **2.6.1.2 Environmental Conditions**

When considering leadership the environmental context in which it occurs is important. Situational Theory illustrates that different situations may call for different types of engagement (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

##### **2.6.1.2.1 Authentic Opportunities**

Participation of young people can be either authentic and genuine or merely tokenistic as illustrated by Hart (1992). Using a 'Ladder of Participation' he describes how young people can either be at the top levels of the ladder i.e. youth completely initiate action and lead, or youth share in the decision making with adults, compared to at the lower levels where young people are involved in activities in a tokenistic way, they are decorated or manipulated to make organisations 'seem' like they are doing the 'right thing'. Galdwell (2008) highlights how people who gain access to opportunity at a young age succeed by virtue of their exposure to practice which develops their skills. He describes how the circumstances in Bill Gates life meant that he had access to opportunity which enabled him to build up his technology skill set from a very early age. As well as this he highlights that it was the opportunity and exposure that Mozart had from a young age that meant he had built up the skill to compose works of art by his early 20's. In a similar vein, young people are encouraged to seek out and seize the initiative by Kouzes & Posner (2007) to become effective leaders. Kahn et al., (2009) also highlights the importance of authentic opportunity, for young people to take on responsibility of leadership they need to be given genuine opportunities where they get to practice real leadership and learn. Buckingham and Clifton (2001, p.224) theorised that 'two assumptions guide the world's best leaders, firstly each person's talents are enduring and unique, and second each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength'.



This encourages young people to look to areas they are genuinely interested, where they can grow and stand a stronger chance of translating their interest into youth leadership.

Within the context of opportunity, having the opportunity to give beyond oneself is an important component of leadership. Work by Brendtro (2009) highlights that generosity is important for young people in their development and also in leadership. He highlights that without giving young people do not get the opportunity to see how they can contribute positively to others. In essence, it is this altruistic action that encourages young people to get involved in their communities. Giving, is thus an important part of leadership, particularly as much of leadership is giving time, ideas, support, commitment and attitude to enable others follow (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Generosity can also be seen as how people judge others, their tolerance, forgiveness and ability to understand others (Smith, 1997). Within the context of giving gratitude is also an important component. When it comes to gratitude, Kouzes & Posner (2007) highlight that recognising people's contributions is of the utmost importance. By giving personal recognition to team members it creates a sense of appreciation which is encouraging and motivates the team to commit to working towards the goal. Gratitude in leadership is important as often a simple thank you or recognition in front of others can yield the equivalent release of dopamine as a financial win-fall this activates the neural reward circuitry (Rock, 2009).

#### **2.6.1.2.2 Mentor Access**

When considering environmental conditions access to a mentor can be seen as an important component of this. Having access to a mentor for a leader can assist in helping them overcome challenges, doubts and inspire them to continue on their path (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Camino and Zeldin (2002b) outline the importance of youth-adult partnerships which confer further benefits to human capital. As well as this they argue that there is a complex set of skills, behaviours, actions and attitudes to be developed which are best nurtured through hands on learning between youth and adults. Some of the support conveyed by mentors is covered through social support. However, having access to a mentor and guide can also be a significant contributor in particular as they share their wisdom, support and expertise (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Ellen & Gary, 2003). A component of this is receiving which is being open to receiving support, help and advice when necessary (Unchino, 2009).

#### **2.6.1.3 Action**

Commitment to action involves motivating others and mastering the leaders skill set. Action is an important element as people can have the skills necessary and the opportunities to exercise them, however unless they take action there can be no leadership.

##### **2.6.1.3.1 Motivating**

Motivating others refers to forces either internal or external to a person that stimulate enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action (Draft, 2011, p.200). Motivating others is of particular importance to a leader, particularly if they are to achieve their goal. Kouzes & Posner (1995) highlight

that leadership is an 'affair of the heart', it requires passionate commitment so the goal can be achieved. Without engaging people in the belief that something is worth working towards it will be difficult to mobilise followers. A key part of motivating others is also inspiring them. Inspiring others involves persuading them to pursue a shared vision (Shriberg, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Inspiring and motivating others is a difficult task, it requires good communication skills but more than this it requires a belief that the cause is worth working towards (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). For leaders to motivate others, they need to have an understanding of the needs of those they are trying to lead (Shriberg et al., 2005). Belief that the efforts of the team are not in vain, that they will accrue some greater benefit is needed to ensure the team weather challenges that invariably arise in working towards a shared goal. Coyle (2009) highlights that igniting a passion is a key component to engaging someone in wanting to go further with something. This, he argues can be as simple as seeing what someone else does, hearing about something or doing something that sparks an interest which leads to commitment (Coyle, 2009).

Further to this, meaning and purpose can help to fuel a team member's motivation (Frankl, 1985; Gardner, 1990; Covey, 1991). Frankl's (1985) emphasis on meaning as a driving factor in behaviour cannot be understated. As he illustrates for many in World War II having a sense of meaning or purpose was the difference between surviving and dying. Having meaning, he believes, maintained levels of humanity and dignity as well as helped to inspire others to survive against the odds. He illustrates this further with this quote 'he who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how' (Nietzsche cited in Frankl, 1985, p.97). Similarly, for any leadership cause whether it is one that faces severe adversity or one that looks at community or social change, to inspire others into action requires creating a vision that has meaning and purpose, and appeals to the values of others (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Within this is the need to be a good role model, so that the actions of the leader are worthy of following and that the leader is trustworthy as seen by setting a good example (Zeldin & Camino, 1999). All of which help determine whether a follower is motivated to give their time, energy and commitment to the leaders cause.

#### **2.6.1.3.2 Mastering**

Having the ability to stick at something until one has mastered it requires persistence, reflection, an ability to learn from mistakes and commitment (Coyle, 2009). Coyle (2009) takes this further by highlighting that for a person to gain proficiency in any area they need the equivalent of 10,000 hours of application or 'deep practice' in that area which leads to them mastering that skill set. When considering people proficient in their field for example, an athlete, musician or scientist to be adept requires persistence, commitment and critical reflection (Coyle, 2009). Roberts (2009) refers to determination and its relevance to leadership in that determination enables a person to meet and overcome challenges, which can be frequent for leaders. Great leaders do not give up, they have persistence and determination that enables them to push on through any challenge. Churchill is noted to have given the shortest speech to a group of school students simply and powerfully – '*Never, never, never, never give up*' (cited in Shriberg et al., 2005, p.145). Mastering involves this level of persistence and commitment, it requires the ability to stick at something despite it being difficult and it also requires the person having the ability to reflect on what



is being done so they can learn how to do it better (Brendtro, 2009; Gardner, 1995). The importance of reflection is once again reiterated by Kouzes & Posner (2007) as they highlight the need to learn from experience by conducting post and pre mortems which encourages critical analysis and improvement, and ultimately the ability to master a new skill set.

## 2.7 Gender Issues in Leadership

Despite the unacceptability of overt gender discrimination and growing awareness that females are capable leaders, females remain underrepresented in positions of leadership (Agar 2004, Brown 2005). Rosselli and Taylor (1997) highlight that youth leadership education for young females is critical to develop leadership skills, particularly as unlike their male peers they often attribute success to external forces rather than themselves. Brown and Gilligan (1992) identify early adolescence as a crossroads in female's lives displaying disconnection, reduced self-confidence and a drop in self-esteem. Gilligan (1981) highlights in her study of moral development that females come from a care perspective and focus on interpersonal relations of care, responsibility and interdependence, while males have a justice perspective focusing on abstract rights and separateness. These differing perspectives can have implications in terms of leadership decision making. These findings highlight the benefit of leadership exposure for young females to encourage them to see themselves in leadership roles as well as to enable them to develop the requisite skills to challenge stereotypes and overcome barriers to take up these roles. Female leaders also bring with them a different way of working with people that is beneficial in decision making and also promote equality.

Gender discrimination is still evident with attitudes of others in preventing females moving to senior management roles, often referred to as 'the glass ceiling' which illustrates that females may climb only so far in a company and not beyond (Morrison et al., 1987). Oakley (2000) found that females tended to be excluded from informal networks, lacked mentors, were considered less career driven than their male counterparts and tended to avoid corporate life in favour of entrepreneurship. Discrimination in particular towards females when advancing to leadership roles is still evident. A study by Ryan and Haslam (2005) indicates that female leaders are unequally represented in organisations that have experienced a consistent pattern of poor performance. Females are more likely to be promoted to lead units that are in difficulty, female leaders are also more likely to be exposed to unfair criticism and to be held responsible



for negative events that occurred before their appointment. Ryan and Haslam (2007) extended the 'glass ceiling' metaphor, coining a new phenomenon where females find themselves on a 'glass cliff' where their leadership positions tend to be associated with greater risk of failure than their male counterparts. A lack of formal and informal supports, absence of role models, mentoring and exclusion from professional networks, increased tokenism, isolation, alienation and prejudice all contribute to these occurrences (Ryan et al., 2007).

## 2.8 Adversity

Moving from a deficit model of working, towards an asset's based approach yields potential benefits for marginalised young people and those experiencing adversity. Research by Bennis and Thomas (2002, p.39) argue that it is the way that people deal with adversity that enables them to inspire confidence, loyalty and hard work in other people. Their study found that 'the most reliable indicator and predictor of true leadership was in an individual's ability to find meaning in negative events and to learn from even the most trying circumstances.' The experience of adversity, whether resulting in internalising or externalising behaviour can have a profound effect on well-being, mental health and ability to do well in life as discussed in the section on adolescent development. Bennis and Thomas (2002, p.40) believe that 'the skills required to overcome adversity are the same ones as the skills required to make for extraordinary leaders.' As such leadership can provide young people experiencing adversity with the opportunity to effect change and influence their surroundings as well as offer respite from their own personal hardship (Cotterell, 1996).

### 2.8.1 Externalising (Acting Out) Behaviours

Externalising behaviour problems manifest in an outward behaviour and reflect the person negatively acting on the external environment (Campbell et al., 2000). While acting out and risk taking are normal in adolescence, some young people experience difficulties such as drug/alcohol addiction, problems with the law and aggression. The European Schools Project on Alcohol and Drugs (2007) results for Irish young people aged 15-17 years revealed 78% drank alcohol in the last 12 months, 47% were drunk in the previous 12 months, 23% used cigarettes in the last 30 days, 20% used cannabis in their lifetime, 10% used other drugs and 15% used inhalants in their lifetime. Ireland is comparable to Europe on many of these scores, however exceeds Europe on drunkenness. Smoking, drinking and taking drugs have a pleasurable aspect, reduce tension, relieve boredom and help some people escape their reality (Ksir et al., 2006). This behaviour can become maladaptive leading to drug dependence and exposure to serious or fatal consequences can often be overlooked (Hales, 2006). Risk factors in alcohol or drug dependence include genetic factors, family influences, peer relations and personal characteristics (Jang, 2005). Conduct disorder and hyperactivity such as ADHD are also externalising behaviour problems and are prevalent in 5% and 2% of young Irish children and adolescents, respectively (Irish College of Psychiatrists, 2005).

Research by Hayes and O'Reilly (2007) involving 30 young offenders found over 50% were addicted to drugs, 20% had intellectual disability and 83% had 'at least one psychiatric disorder'. The report also

found that the majority did not receive treatment for any of those disorders. In the USA 10% of young people aged 10-18 years are arrested each year (Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention, 1998), of which 8 out of 10 cases of juvenile delinquency involve males (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Some predictors or risk factors for delinquency include; low self-control, low parental monitoring, authority conflict, acts of aggression, cognitive distortions, being male, low educational expectations, older sibling delinquency, peer influence, low socioeconomic status and high crime neighbourhood (Santrock, 2007). In Ireland the number of young people referred to Garda Youth Diversion Programmes was 21,941 in 2007 for 27,853 incidents (Annual Report of the Committee Appointed to Monitor the Effectiveness of the Diversion Programme, 2008). Theft, drink related offences, public order, minor assault, criminal damage, traffic offences, burglary and vehicle offences are the most common offences for which young people are referred (An Garda Síochána Annual Reports, 1999-2002). Masten (2001) and Masten and Reed (2002) found that a close relationship with parents, intellectual functioning and bonds to pro-social adults serve as protective in keeping adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviours and facilitate resilience. Youth externalising behaviour is clearly an issue in Ireland; however exploration of leadership in deviant populations is beyond the scope of this research.

### **2.8.2 Internalising (Somatic) Behaviours**

Internalising behavioural problems more centrally affect the young person's internal psychological environment and commonly manifest as withdrawal, anxiety and depressed behaviours (Campbell et al., 2000). Australian research indicates that 70% of health problems of adolescents are due to mental health problems and substance use disorders (McGorry, 2005). Approximately 20% of children and adolescents experience serious emotional distress; depression represents 2%, deliberate self-harm 1%, obsessive-compulsive disorder 1%, anorexia nervosa 0.5%, anxiety 5%, (Irish College of Psychiatrists, 2005). They also reported that as well as insufficient availability of services that only a minority of young people may actually be engaged in services to help them. Depression, anxiety, self-harm and eating disorders including obesity are a consequence of low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with self, lack of early interventions, lack of positive self-concept as well as many other variables including genetic, family life, diet etc., (Seroczynski et al., 2003, Yager 2005, Reachout, 2010). A study of 4,583 teenagers in Ireland, reveal a 9.1% lifetime history of deliberate self harm (Morey et al., 2008). Females (13.9%) more commonly self-harm than males (4.3%). Depression is also linked to an increase in suicidal ideation (Werth, 2004). The leading cause of death among young men aged 15-24 years old in Ireland is suicide (National Office for Suicide Prevention, 2007). Females attempt suicide more often however research shows that males are more likely to succeed because they tend to use more lethal means (National Centre for Health Statistics, 2002). An important consideration for youth experiencing mental health problems continues to be the presence of stigma which acts as a barrier to accessing help (Secker et al., 2001; Schrank & Slade, 2007). Internalising disorders are important to consider in adolescent development particularly as they can present as a barrier for young people to engage in opportunities due to low self-regard and prevent them from realising their full potential. Internal self-criticism and a lack of self-compassion can lead to dissatisfaction and a discontent which can prevent positive development and an inability to

contribute to their family, community and self. This research will use the adolescent well-being scale as a measure to identify young people with low and high levels of risk for emotional well-being issues. These young people will be tracked to explore how normative development and adversity relates to youth leadership, resilience and social support.

## **2.9 Distinctions between Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement**

All forms of youth leadership may be considered civic engagement, however not all civic engagement may be considered youth leadership. For example Haste and Hogan (2006) illustrate that there are three modes of civic engagement including voting, helping and making one's voice heard which those motivated to civic action engage in. They found that 75% of young British people are engaged in civic action illustrating that young people are eager to have their voices heard and participate in civic life. This figure would not translate over to the number of youth in positions of leadership. Similarly, Finlay & Flanagan (2009) look at four areas of civic engagement; voting, volunteering, civic media use and motivation to serve others. Camino and Zeldin (2002a) outline various pathways for young people to participate civically including public policy consultation, community coalitions, youth infusion in organisational decision making, youth organising initiatives and service learning. Youth leadership was defined earlier as 'learning, listening, dreaming and working together to unleash the potential of people's time, talent and treasure for the common good' (Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006, p.89). Leadership enables people work together to achieve a common goal. Civic engagement on the other hand can encompass all aspects of youth leadership which is ultimately about serving society. However, actions such as voting and volunteering do not necessarily constitute leadership.

## **2.10 Benefits of Youth Leadership to Community**

The benefits of youth leadership to civic engagement are enhanced community action and an awareness of how young people can affect change in their communities (Best & Dustan, 2008). These benefits Shugurensky (2003, p.12) argues are rich and encompass both social connection and related physical well-being. Anderson et al., (2006) found in their study that those who participated in youth leadership training were more likely than those who did not to feel an improved sense of support from their local communities. As well as this Dolan (2010) associated many positive benefits with civic engagement including: deepening existing relationships and accessing new ones, reciprocity of support, increase in self and external sources of esteem and respite from focusing on one's own difficulties.

Gardner (1987 cited in SRDC, 1996) recognises that young people are born into a society that is huge, impersonal and intricately organised. Far from calling them to leadership, it appears indifferent. This highlights that it is difficult for young people to feel that any action that they might take will affect change in their society which appears unwieldy. A report by Southern Rural Development Centre (1996) argues that we should see young people as both a resource and as actors in their community. They highlight that young people can make significant contributions, however if left out young people it can

mean that the capacity of the community to resolve its own problems is limited. By involving young people in leadership opportunities communities essentially breathe life into their resources. A call to action of young people as contributors to their environment has the potential not only to impact the community on a physical problem solving level, it also has the capacity to build social networks, social support and enhance the resilience of the young people involved (SRDC, 1996).

## **2.11 Resilience and Youth Leadership**

The amazing capacity of young people to adapt and recover from highly traumatic or stressful situations and thrive despite extremely deprived communities has led to the emergence of research in the field of resilience. Masten (2001, p.228) outlines resilience as 'good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development'. Resilience has also been defined as 'the quality that enables some young people to find fulfilment in their lives despite their disadvantaged backgrounds, the problems or adversity they may have undergone or the pressures they may experience' (Stein 2008, p.36). While much research has occurred in defining and conceptualising resilience and the components of risk and protective factors that contribute towards building resilience, little research has occurred connecting youth leadership and resilience. Undoubtedly however, the tremendous capacity to adapt to their circumstances and display resilience are important characteristics and processes for young leaders as they face the myriad of challenges that leaders face. The only relevant piece of research found in relation to resilience and youth leadership was a programme which focused on transform violence in young offenders to resilience, it found for one particular cohort that there was a 53% reduction in antisocial behaviour incidents after the programme (Broadwood & Fine, 2011) As an increasing focus is placed on strengths based and resilience-led practice there is the need to explore whether youth leadership, which is largely strengths based, conveys any connection with resilience. There have been a few brief articles targeted towards adults in relation to resilience and leadership. Kaufman (2006) outlines five steps to a more resilient leader; 1. Keeping your eye on the big picture, 2. Making time for reflection, 3. Learning to say no, 4. Deciding what really matters, 5. Aligning goals and activities. Adaptability to change as it arises as well as the ability to remain motivated when times are challenging appear to be useful in youth leadership, as well as resilience. As will be outlined in the chapter on youth leadership certain skills are necessary to be an effective leader these are comparable to many of the attributes deemed necessary to be resilient in the face of great difficulty (Bernard, 2004; Goleman, 2002).

## **2.12 Social Support and Youth Leadership**

As adolescents develop the amount, type and quality of social support required and available will vary particularly as they go through physical, sexual, emotional and intellectual changes (Pinkerton & Dolan 2007). When presented with opportunities to take on leadership roles social support can be very beneficial in supporting their ability to carry out tasks and overcome barriers as they progress. Critical to the success of a young leader is their ability to access support so that they do not become over burdened with their responsibilities. Conversely a leader who can access a plentiful supply of social support can



also access additional resources or support for their area of leadership by generating external support for the cause or project (Flynn & Staw, 2004). Also important to consider is the influence that a leader with or without social support has on those they lead. A study by Lyons and Schneider (2009) found that leadership style can impact stress outcomes. They found that transformational leadership was associated higher social support perceptions and enhanced task performance compared to the transactional conditions. They and Rock (2009) suggest that leader's who promote supportive relationships, are motivating, encourage autonomy, provide certainty, act in a way that promotes fairness and encourage reframing of stressful tasks may be more effective than traditional leaders. Sukanuma and Ura (2001)



examined the effects two types of support, instrumental and emotional on stress reactions in leadership situations. They found that instrumental support intensified recipients stress reactions, while emotional support reduced them. Instrumental acts include attempts to influence others and the success of this may be dependent on the social relationship with supporter.

As mentioned above youth leadership can be considered civic engagement, however, therefore the contribution civic engagement makes to social support will also be explored under this heading. Civic engagement can act as a source of social support for young people. Although the extent to which civic engagement enhances social support is largely unknown, Dolan (2010) highlights four benefits that can develop as a result of youth's engagement in civic activities. These include deepening existing relationships and assessing new ones, reciprocity of support, increase in self and external sources of esteem and respite from focusing on one's own difficulties. Youth involvement in peer mentoring and intergenerational mentoring are two clear ways of seeing how altruism and social support networks can be enhanced by this type of civic engagement (Philip, 2003; Flanagan & Nakesha, 2001). Flanagan and Nakesha (2001) also found that relationships improved in family and school, as well as hopefulness and self-efficacy as a result of civic engagement. Dolan (2010) outlines a conceptual model connecting social civic engagement with social support, resilience and well-being in youth. This model outlines how engagement in civic activities can enhance new or existing social relationships, as well as enable youth focus on contributing to others which in turn focuses their mind away from themselves and their problems, and can lead to recognition from others and build their capacity to be resilient. Promoting active citizenship among young people has the benefit of both improving communities and promoting the social, psychological and intellectual growth of the young person (Zaff et al, 2003; Johnson et al., 1998).

## **Summary**

This section explored the current available literature in relation to youth leadership with reference to some adult leadership theories. This comprised of investigating definitions of youth leadership, the theories and styles in relation to leadership, and current youth leadership education models. Youth leadership programmes which have undergone evaluation internationally were also discussed. This section also looked at the components necessary to develop young leaders namely; skills, environment and action. As well as this the influence of gender and adversity were explored. A distinction was made between civic engagement and youth leadership. Finally, this section linked resilience to youth leadership and social support to youth leadership. The following chapter will look at the research methods of this study.





## 3. Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to address the research questions of this study. This section outlines the rationale, aims and objectives of the study, as well as this, a chart is used to illustrate how the objectives are connected to the research tools. Following this, a description of how the study was designed will be presented, this includes exploring the research approaches available, outlining the research approach taken to meet the objectives of this study and details the instruments used for data collection. Finally, the implementation of the study will be presented this includes the sampling, ethical considerations, implementation process and the limitations of the methods chosen.

### 3.1 Section One: Rationale, Aim and Objectives

The rationale for this study is two-fold; one to satisfy the need to explore the ability of the programme to demonstrate that it can achieve its stated outcomes and two to add to the evidence-base in relation to the development of youth leadership programmes. Youth leadership as discussed in Chapter 2 is a growing area of interest for practitioners and researchers. Unlike adult leadership which has been well documented, youth leadership has surprisingly few examples of robust research which illustrate the outcomes of involvement. Evaluated youth leadership programmes are in the main qualitative and those which involve quantitative approaches fail to look at the longitudinal influence these programmes have (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Lee et al., 2008; Anderson et al., 2007). The potential of youth leadership to have a profound and lasting impact on a young person, their skills, their sense of self and their capacity to contribute meaningfully to their community is an area of untapped exploration, particularly in Ireland. Furthermore, whether involvement in the youth leadership programme confers any additional benefit to a young person's capacity for resilience or ability to access social support is largely unknown.

The need is growing to ensure that programmes young people are involved in demonstrate their outcomes at funder levels. As well as this, practitioners want to ensure that the time they spend working with young people can yield results. As such the opportunity to explore the capacity of the youth

leadership programme to achieve its goals and to contribute further to increasing a young person's resilience and social support is timely. Working in an evidence-based/informed way has become increasingly the focus of youth development work in Ireland. However, to-date there is a lack of research pertaining to what constitutes effective practice in youth leadership in Ireland.

### **3.1.1 Aim & Objectives**

The aim of this study was to explore the outcomes of a youth leadership programme amongst a cohort of young people engaged in the Foróige youth leadership programme and compare them to a comparison group of young people not engaged in the youth leadership programme, over the course of the programme and beyond for a further six months. This study will also explore whether the leadership programme accrues any additional benefit in terms of contribution to youth resilience and social support.

The research objectives are five-fold:

1. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).
2. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.
3. To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.
4. To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in the youth leadership programme and again in light of having received a youth leadership programme.
5. To identify key messages for practice, policy and research in light of this study.

#### **3.1.1.1 Matching Research Tools & Objectives**

Matching the objectives of the study to the sources of data and methodological tools is outlined in the table below, the assessment tools will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

**Table 3.1 Linking Assessment Methodology to Study Objectives**

Objective	Source	Assessment Tool/Methodology
1. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).	Young people	Child and Youth Resilience Measure Adolescent Well-being scale Empathy Leadership Life Skills Social Provision Scale Leadership scale developed by researcher
2. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.	Young people	Same assessment tools as baseline analysis Compare leadership group over time Compare comparison group over time
3. To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.	Young people Facilitators Young people	Compare leadership group to the comparison group for pre, post & follow-up results Focus group Photo-voice/Interviews
4. To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in the youth leadership programme and again in light of having received a youth leadership programme.	Highest risk 15 & lowest risk 15 young people	Interviews Quantitative data from questionnaires
5. To identify key messages for practice, policy and research in light of this study.	Facilitators Young people	Focus groups & Interviews Quantitative data – multiple regressions

### 3.2 Section Two: Designing the Study

Using both the positivist (quantitative) and naturalist (qualitative) approach is a method called triangulation. Cohen et al., (2008, p.141) describes triangulation as ‘the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour’. This approach he continues ‘attempts to map out the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint’. The use of triangulation strengthens both paradigms and counterbalances any weaknesses

from one particular approach (Robson, 2011). Exclusive reliance on one method may bias the researchers picture of a particular reality being investigated and give a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour (Lin, 1976; Cohen et al., 2008). As such the choice to use a mixed methods approach should limit researcher bias and promote confidence in the findings. The more the methods contrast with each other the greater the confidence that can be expected (Cohen et al., 2008). The tools used include questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and photo-voice for data collection.

### **3.2.1 Quasi-Experimental Design**

When considering what research design to use, the researcher explored the option of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) approach which is considered to be the gold standard and one of the more robust approaches in the positivist paradigm. This approach is considered one of the most effective ways of assessing whether or not an intervention is effective. However, the RCT approach has been critiqued as not being appropriate for dealing with complex social issues, it is expensive, not always feasible, can result in disaffection in the control group because of their non-selection for the intervention and in some instances can be considered unethical to 'not give an intervention to a person in need' (Robson, 2011). Upon reflection the researcher chose to use a quasi-experimental design. The purpose of this approach is to test the existence of a causal relationship between two or more variables (Bickman & Rog, 2009). This approach is used as randomisation is not feasible in this study. The quasi-experimental design used in this study includes a comparison group which are matched to the intervention group with regard to age, gender and geographical location (Cohen et al., 2008; Robson, 2011). The benefits of quasi-experimental design are that it provides an approximation to the experimental design and supports causal inferences (Robson, 2011). This approach does provide an opportunity to reduce uncertainty between specific causal relationships. It is a stronger approach than post-test only design as it generates data to compare pre and post so changes occurring may be attributed to the intervention (Cohen et al., 2008; Robson, 2011). It is also a stronger approach than the one group pre-test-post-test as the use of a similarly matched comparison group or non-equivalent group enables comparison and improves researcher confidence in results (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2008). This approach yields greater certainty that the results are attributed to the intervention and not to other events occurring in the lives of the participants than the other designs, however is not as robust as the randomised controlled trial approach (Robson, 2011). A limitation of the quasi-experimental approach is that there is the potential for bias when creating the comparison group, this group may not then give an accurate estimation of what things would have been without the intervention (Robson, 2011). The equivalence of groups can be strengthened by matching, however, where this is not possible the samples should be from the same population or samples that are as alike as possible (Kerlinger, 1970).

### **3.2.2 Quantitative Research**

This study is primarily concerned with measuring self-perception of leadership skills, resilience and social support. As such the quantitative approach is considered an unbiased way of gathering

participant responses to standard questions and enable the researcher quantify how a large number of young people perceive themselves. Quantitative research is a systematic, empirical way of investigating properties and their relationships with other variables, it utilises statistics to delineate relationships and theories (Cohen et al., 2008). This approach employed the use of standard measures to form a questionnaire which captured data at three different time points. This data then enables the researcher to measure the difference in self-perceived score and to determine the impact of youth leadership programme involvement.

***Quantitative research is utilised predominantly in the positivistic approach as it is concerned primarily with measuring variables, deducing relationships and yielding generalisable results (Cohen et al., 2000, p.9).***

In the context of this study, pre-questionnaires were administered to measure initial perception of leadership skills, social support and resilience. The questionnaire generates data through the use of a Likert scale (Likert, 1932) this enables the researcher to compute the perceived change over the course of the study. The results also feed into the qualitative phase by informing the questions asked.

### **3.2.3 Qualitative Research**

Further to the quantitative approach this study employs a qualitative approach. As the research is concerned with young people and their experiences, which can be difficult to quantify, the researcher believed it was important to use a qualitative approach to ensure nothing was left out and the programme was observed from another angle. Without a qualitative approach the research would lack the capacity to understand what is happening from the young participant's perspective and how their involvement in the programme is impacting on their world. Qualitative research sets out to answer 'what is going on and why it is going on' (De Vaus, 1996, p.11). Qualitative research is often carried out through interviews or observations which enable the researcher gain a perspective from the participants world view.

***To help us understand social phenomena in natural settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of all the participants (Pope & Mays, 1995, p.42).***

The drawbacks to qualitative research are its subjective nature. This subjective nature of values, attitudes and perceptions, when used alone, may result in bias and misrepresentation of the data. However, in the context of a mixed method approach using a qualitative approach adds another angle and promotes confidence in the findings. The world of young people is complex and dynamic which can be interpreted and experienced in many different ways. The qualitative research approach enables the researcher to gain greater insight into the participant's perspective and provides a more whole picture of what is happening. It requires the researcher to explore the participant's perceptions and to carry out thematic analysis to understand what is happening for those involved.

### 3.2.4 Research Tools

The researcher considered a wide range of tools when deciding how best to achieve the research objectives. As discussed above after exploring the positivist and naturalist approaches and the benefits of using triangulation the researcher chose to use questionnaires with young people, focus groups with programme facilitators, interviews with high and low risk youth and photo-voice to depict their leadership journeys. Each of these tools will be discussed individually in detail next.

#### 3.2.4.1 Questionnaire

When considering the objectives of this study and the opportunity to engage a large number of participants, the questionnaire was considered the most appropriate tool due to its relative ease of use. The questionnaire is essentially a list of questions set to specific individuals who respond. Kumar (1999) highlighted that it was important to ensure questions are clear, easy to understand and are not ambiguous. It is important that questionnaires protect against the potential for misunderstanding as the reply will be of little value (Grix, 2001). The benefit of using a questionnaire is that it is a quick way of collecting information which can also afford the respondent anonymity. As well as this, there are a number of other advantages of closed questions including; being easier to code and analyse (De Vaus, 1996). Closed questions do not however enable respondents to elaborate and there is a risk of misunderstanding or that the categories may even limit the participant's response (Oppenheim, 1992: p.115). Therefore, De Vaus (1996) recommends providing many alternative responses so that respondents have greater choices. Open questions can lead to irrelevant data and take too long to analyse. Closed and structured questionnaires were chosen for this study to enable patterns be observed and comparisons to be made. The reliability, anonymity (honesty) and economic value (low cost in time and money) of the questionnaire adds to its advantages (Cohen et al., 2003). Disadvantages however, are that misunderstandings can emerge, literacy issues may leave people out and often there is too low a percentage of returns (Cohen et al., 2003). In light of these potential disadvantages the questionnaire was piloted beforehand to ensure that potential misunderstandings were minimised. Youth workers were also encouraged to read the questionnaire to young people where literacy was an issue.

#### 3.2.4.2 Questionnaire Design

In the designing the questionnaire a number of standardised measures were used as will be outlined here (See Appendix D: Questionnaire).

Section I included demographics such as gender, date-of-birth, geographical location, ethnicity, average grade in school, academic level in school, year at school and living arrangements with parents. Collating this kind of information enables correlations to be made between different demographics and other components of the study.

Section II included the **Child and Youth Resilience Measure** (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2009). The advantages of this tool are that it has been used extensively in resilience research and has undergone validity and

reliability testing (Liebenberg et al., 2012). This measure contains 28 items, 19 of which were deemed appropriate to this study and included in this questionnaire. The measure is relatively easy to score with all answers on a likert scale. Numeric codes were used to relate to the answers given (Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, Always = 5). Five is the strongest indicator of resilience. Limitations include that it restricts the respondent to answering only these questions and may miss other important components of resilience as perceived by the young person.

Another tool used in this section was a short 3-item measure on **Empathy** and a 3-item measure on **Self-Awareness** (Constantine & Benard, 2001). These measures are simple and explore the respondents' perception of their capacity for empathy and self-awareness. They are short which could be seen as a limitation to these measures. These measures are simple to score using a likert scale from 1-5 similar to the resilience measure. These measures were reliability and validity tested (Constantine & Benard, 2001).

To identify young people experiencing adversity the **Adolescent Well-being scale** (Birleson, 1980) was used. This tool is an 18-item scale which is scored from 0-2 (Most of the time=0, Sometimes=1, Never=2) some of the questions on this scale are reversed which requires care to be taken when scoring. The benefits of this tool are that it indicates that a score of over 13 is indicative of depression and as such enables the researcher to determine which young people may be having difficulty coping or experiencing adversity. A disadvantage to this measure is that it asks some sensitive questions which may be off putting to the respondent. Reliability and validity testing has occurred with this measure (Birleson, 1980; Fundudis et al., 1991).

Section III includes the **Life Skills** measure (Perkins, 2001). This tool looks at skills such as decision making, critical thinking, communication, team work, goal setting and problem solving which are considered important skills for a young leader. Each item on this scale is scored on a likert scale 1-5 with 5 being the highest score. The advantage of this scale is that it has been used frequently and is relatively straight forward. Limitations include that it may leave aspects of youth leadership out. Reliability and validity testing has occurred with this measure (Mincemoyer & Perkins, 2005).

**Leadership Skills** developed by the researcher. This tool contains 11-items which look at opportunities to be a leader, ability to motivate others, self-control, conflict resolution, expectations of self and ability to reflect critically. This tool was developed by the researcher as she felt the other tools did not answer all the questions the researcher had in relation to youth leadership and the conceptual model outlined in Chapter 2. A five point likert scale was used for this measure also. A disadvantage of this tool is that it has not been used or tested previously, however an advantage is that it asks questions that the other tools did not.

Section IV includes the **Social Provision Scale** (Dolan, 2006). This tool asks questions of four sources of support namely; friends, parents, siblings and other adults. It also looks at the four types of support namely; concrete, emotional, esteem and advice. The advantage of this tool is that you can look across the dimensions to determine the influence the source of support or type of support has across the respondent



population. It is scored from 1-3 with 3 being the highest score (No=1, Sometimes=2, Yes=3). This tool has undergone reliability and validity testing. A limitation, as with other tools, is that it may not cover all aspects of social support. This measure has undergone reliability and validity testing (Zaki, 2009).

### **3.2.4.3 Measures**

On reviewing the literature in relation to youth leadership, resilience and social support literature, both standardised tested measures and measures developed specifically for this study were used to develop the survey. The survey therefore, contained reliable and valid measures. Reliability in quantitative research relates to 'dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents' (Cohen et al., 2008, p.146). In the main, reliability focuses on precision and accuracy, aspiring to be able to generalise results for other populations, i.e. if the research were repeated with a group of similar people then similar results should be found. Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores were computed for each of the scales in the survey, this was to measure how consistent items were in measuring a particular conceptual area. A higher Cronbach's alpha score indicates that the scale is internally consistent and that the items fit well together. The majority of scales indicated a high score. However, some of the standardised measures on types of support indicated a lower score. A decision was made to proceed with the lower scoring scales as these are established standardised measures. For constructed scales, on the basis of previous research and literature conceptually similar variables were brought together into a composite score for both the leadership skills and the community involvement indexes. In these cases the reliability and fit of these items was tested using Cronbach's alpha, factor analysis, and a review of bivariate correlations was carried out among the items. A decision was taken to keep all items in both these indexes. Where standardised measures were employed from other researchers factor analysis was not conducted, however Cronbach's alpha was assessed.

#### **3.2.4.3.1 Respondents Characteristics**

Characteristics such as gender (male/female), date-of-birth, self-perception as a leader (yes/no), geographical location (Countryside, Town, City), year at school (1st-6th/not in school/college), academic level in school (Honours/Ordinary/Foundation), average grade in school, ethnicity and living arrangements with parents.

#### **3.2.4.3.2 Resilience 1 Measure**

Nine items adopted from Ungar & Liebenberg (2009) Child and Youth Resilience Measure.

- 1) I cooperate with people around me. 2) I try to finish what I start. 3) People think that I am fun to be with. 4) I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent. 5) I am aware of my own strengths. 6) Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me. 7) I think it is important to serve my community. 8) I feel supported by my friends. 9) My friends will stand by me in difficult times.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.689.

### **3.2.4.3.3 Understanding Self Measure**

This scale adopts 3 items from Constantine & Benard (2001).

- 1) There is purpose to my life. 2) I understand my moods and feelings. 3) I understand why I do what I do.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.662.

### **3.2.4.3.4 Resilience 2 Measure**

This item adopts 10 items from Ungar & Liebenberg (2009) Child and Youth Resilience Measure.

- 1) I have people I look up to. 2) I know how to behave in different social situations. 3) I am given opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly. 4) I know where I go in my community to get help. 5) I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others). 6) I am proud of my cultural background. 7) I am treated fairly in my community. 8) I participate in organised religious activities. 9) I enjoy my community's traditions 10) I am proud to be a citizen of Ireland.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.768.

### **3.2.4.3.5 Empathy Measure**

The three items in this scale are adopted from Constantine & Benard (2001) to assess empathy.

- 1) I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt. 2) I try to understand what other people feel and think. 3) I try to understand what other people go through.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.795.

### **3.2.4.3.6 Adolescent Well-being Measure**

This scale has 18 items adopted from Birlleson (1980) members were asked to respond to the following statements.

- 1) I look forward to things as much as I used to. 2) I sleep very well. 3) I feel like crying. 4) I like going out. 5) I feel like leaving home. 6) I get stomach aches/cramps. 7) I have lots of energy. 8) I enjoy my food. 9) I can stick up for myself. 10) I think life isn't worth living. 11) I am good at things I do. 12) I enjoy the things I do as much as I used to. 13) I like talking to my friends and family. 14) I have horrible dreams. 15) I feel very lonely. 16) I am easily cheered up. 17) I feel so sad I hardly bear it. 18) I feel very bored.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.791.

## **Community Involvement**

The community involvement measure adopted items from Ungar & Liebenberg (2009) Child and Youth Resilience Measure (item 1), the researcher developed item 2 and item 3.

- 1) I think it is important to serve my community 2) In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your community. 3) Helping others is important to me

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.619.

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### **3.2.4.3.7 Life Skills Measure**

The life skills measure (Perkins, 2001) had 6 submeasures including decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work and problem solving.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.918.

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### **3.2.4.3.8 Decision Making**

This subscale includes 4 items, respondents were asked what they would do when they have a decision to make.

- 1) I look for information to help me understand the problem. 2) I think before making a choice. 3) I consider the risks of a choice before making a decision. 4) I think about all the information I have about the different choices

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.819.

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### **3.2.4.3.9 Critical thinking**

The 5 items in this scale asked respondents about how they think.

- 1) I can easily express my thoughts on a problem. 2) I usually have more than one source of information before making a decision. 3) I compare ideas when thinking about a topic. 4) I keep my mind open to different ideas when planning to make a decision. 5) I am able to tell the best way of handling a problem

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.795.

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### **3.2.4.3.10 Communication Skills**

This subscale includes 6 items which ask about the respondents' communication.

- 1) I try to keep eye contact. 2) I recognise when two people are trying to say the same thing, but in different ways. 3) I try to see the other person's point of view. 4) I change the way I talk to someone based on my relationship with them (i.e. friend, parent, teacher etc). 5) I organise thoughts in my head before speaking. 6) I make sure I understand what another person is saying before I respond

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.703.

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#### **3.2.4.3.11 Goal setting**

There are four items in this subscale which focus on statements in relation to goal setting.

- 1) I look at the steps needed to achieve the goal. 2) I think about how and when I want to achieve it. 3) After setting a goal, I break goals down into steps so I can check my progress. 4) Both positive and negative feedback helps me work towards my goal

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.800.

#### **3.2.4.3.12 Team Work**

This subscale includes three items focusing on team work.

- 1) I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine. 2) I enjoy working together with other people my age. 3) I stand up for myself without putting others down

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.636.

#### **3.2.4.3.13 Problem solving**

The problem solving subscale includes 5 items.

- 1) I first figure out exactly what the problem is. 2) I try to determine what caused it. 3) I do what I have done in the past to solve it. 4) I compare each possible solution with the others to find the best one. 5) After selecting a solution, I think about it for a while before putting it into action.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.787.

#### **3.2.4.3.14 Leadership Skills**

The leadership skills scale was developed by the researcher and includes 11 items.

- 1) I am determined when I have a goal in mind. 2) I reflect on what I have achieved. 3) I consider myself to have good self-control in difficult situations. 4) I am known for inspiring other people to action. 5) People follow my lead easily. 6) I have high expectations of myself. 7) I know how to access opportunities to be a leader. 8) I am known for resolving conflicts. 9) I try to do the right thing 10) I am grateful for things in my life .11) Helping others is important to me

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.846.

#### **3.2.4.3.15 Social Support**

The social provision scale (Dolan, 2006) includes 8 subscales; friendship support, parental support, sibling support, adult support, concrete support, esteem support, emotional support and advice support.

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.863.

#### **3.2.4.3.16 Friendship Support**

Four items on social support are included in this scale.

- 1) Are there friends you can depend on to help you? 2) Do your relationships with your friends provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness? 3) Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your friends. 4) Is there a friend you could trust to turn to for advice?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.710.

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#### **3.2.4.3.17 Parent Support**

The parental support subscale includes 4 items.

- 1) Can you depend on your parent(s)/guardian to help you? 2) Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your parents? 3) Could you turn to your parent(s)/guardian for advice? 4) Do your relationships with your parent(s)/guardian(s) provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.859.

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#### **3.2.4.3.18 Sibling Support**

Four items assessing sibling support were adopted for this subscale.

- 1) Can you depend on your brother(s)/sister(s) to help you? 2) Do your relationships with your brother(s)/sister(s) provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness? 3) Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by your brother(s)/sister(s)? 4) Could you turn to your brother(s)/sister(s) for advice?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.876.

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#### **3.2.4.3.19 Adult Support**

The adult support subscale included four items.

- 1) Can you depend on other adult(s) (e.g. sport coach, family friend) you know to help you, if you really need it? 2) Does your relationship with this adult provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness? 3) Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by this adult? 4) Could you turn to another adult for advice?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.849.

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#### **3.2.4.3.20 Concrete Support**

The subscale for concrete support included four items.

- 1) Are there friends you can depend on to help you? 2) Can you depend on your parent(s)/guardian to

help you? 3) Can you depend on your brother(s)/sister(s) to help you? 4) Can you depend on other adult(s) (e.g. sport coach, family friend) you know to help you, if you really need it?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.555.

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#### **3.2.4.3.21 Emotional Support**

Emotional Support was assessed using four items.

- 1) Do your relationships with your friends provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?
- 2) Do your relationships with your parent(s)/guardian(s) provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?
- 3) Do your relationships with your brother(s)/sister(s) provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?
- 4) Does your relationship with this adult provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.598.

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#### **3.2.4.3.22 Esteem Support**

- 1) Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your friends?
- 2) Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your parents?
- 3) Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by your brother(s)/sister(s)?
- 4) Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by this adult?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.613.

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#### **3.2.4.3.23 Advice Support**

Four items in relation to advice support were adopted for this subscale.

- 1) Is there a friend you could trust to turn to for advice?
- 2) Could you turn to your parent(s)/guardian for advice?
- 3) Could you turn to your brother(s)/sister(s) for advice?
- 4) Could you turn to another adult for advice?

The Cronbach's alpha score was: 0.495. While the score is lower than was hoped for, this is an established scale and the decision was taken to proceed with it.

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#### **3.2.4.4 Focus Groups**

For the researcher, to considering the views and observations of the programme facilitators was an important component. Questionnaires and interviews were considered however focus groups were thought to be more appropriate and less time consuming. The focus group enabled the researcher look in detail at what the facilitator's experience of the programme was, challenges that arose, how the young people developed and any recommendations they had for future development. Focus groups are useful ways of engaging multiple people's opinions on a topic. They are defined as 'a form

of group interview that capitalises on communication between the participants in order to generate data' (Kitzinger 1995, p.1). The benefits of focus groups 'lies in the insights that they can provide into the dynamic effects of interaction between people and the way this can affect how views are formed and changed' (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.161). The focus group is particularly appropriate in studies of participants' perceptions and experiences. The focus group highlights what people think and reveals how they think (Kitzinger, 1995). The researcher's role is to act as a moderator or facilitator and less of an interviewer (Punch, 2000). Focus groups are quick, reliable and give a good range and depth of information. It allows people to explore a topic in a group discussion and enables the facilitator assess reactions, experience or suggestions to the topic. One disadvantage is that they can be hard to analyse. A semi-structured topic guide for the focus group was developed with the collaboration of two youth workers. In the transcripts participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

#### **3.2.4.5 Interview**

Interviews were considered the most appropriate tool to use to provide a safe space for the young people from the high and low risk groups to elaborate on their experiences of the programme. Using a focus group could potentially be too exposing for a young person and the questionnaire as already described has its limitations in looking in depth at what is happening. Interviews afford greater depth to be explored between the participant and the researcher in a safe space. The interview has been defined as 'a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [sic] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation' (Cannell & Kahn, 1968, p.527). Advantages of interviews are that they allow for greater depth than with other methods of data collection, as well as this any misunderstandings can be rectified to ensure the participant understands what is being asked (Cohen et al., 2003). A disadvantage is that they are time consuming, expensive, and prone to subjectivity and potential bias on the part of the interviewer (Cohen et al, 2003). Tuckman (1972) describes interviews as giving access to what is inside the person's head. It then enables the researcher measure what the person knows, their attitudes and their values. The interviews were semi-structured in design. This enables the researcher to cover relevant topics with all interviewees, enabling in turn comprehensive data to be collected and comparability of responses. This approach reduces interviewer bias by the use of similar questions in each interview but also allows for flexibility should other important topics arise.

#### **3.2.4.6 Photo-voice**

Finally, as part of the data collection methods used, the researcher felt that including a creative and visual component would enable further understanding and illuminate the reality of the young leaders' journey. This aspect shares with the researcher a very personal story of the journey through the programme in a creative illustration which in some ways tells more than words can. Photo-voice is a creative opportunity of enabling young people a medium to express themselves, and offer some insight



into their lives. Typically this approach employs youth taking pictures of things in their lives. However a slight adaptation of this approach was taken in that young people were asked to share their leadership journey by drawing a picture. This approach can be particularly useful for those with low levels of literacy.

***Photo-voice is a method by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique (Wang & Burris, 1997, p.369).***

This was considered a simple and effective technique to further back-up the other tools, and thus increases reliability and trustworthiness of the findings. The drawings selected were considered good illustrations of the journeys the participants underwent which further highlight the challenges and achievements they experienced.

### **3.3 Section Three: Implementing the Design**

Overseeing the implementation of this study was an advisory committee of academics. In describing the implementation of the study design this falls into five categories. Sampling will be discussed first. This will be followed by ethical considerations and then how the research tools were implemented will be explored. Following this details on how the data was collected, which occurred over three time points, time one at baseline, time two post intervention and time three at six months follow-up after the intervention finished. Finally, the methods used to analyse the data generated by the study will be discussed.

#### **3.3.1 Sampling**

Outlined below are the details of how the samples were selected for each aspect of the study.

##### **3.3.1.1 Quantitative Sampling**

###### ***Leadership Group***

The study population included young people aged 16-18 years old across Ireland involved in Foróige's Leadership Programme. Fortunately for this study, the sample of convenience was a full population sample for one academic year also called a census approach. A total of 431 young people were recruited to the study, of whom 267 young people (163 female, 104 male) were involved in the leadership programme and 164 young people (100 female, 64 male) formed part of the comparison group. This approach means that it is possible to avoid all errors associated with sampling as everybody in the population was surveyed (Robson, 2011, p.238). Using a census approach ensures there is representativeness from all participants in the leadership programme for one academic year of the study. It also enables the researcher to gain a good overall view of a population group. As well as this, it involves young people from all aspects of Irish life, in particular minority or disadvantaged groups who are involved in the leadership programme.

## **Comparison Group**

The comparison group of young people i.e. those not involved in the leadership programme were randomly selected on the basis of similarity of age, gender and geographical location with the leadership group. This sampling approach is known as stratification and helps with ensuring equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups (Robson, 2011). Stratification involves dividing the population into a number of groups where they share particular characteristics e.g. demographic information such as age or gender (Robson, 2011). Block stratification design divides the participants into subgroups or blocks e.g. gender; male or female such that the variability within the blocks is less than the variability between the blocks. This design reduces variability and produces better estimate of effects. The facilitators of the programme locally were responsible for selecting the comparison group as they knew young people locally who matched the criteria for selection i.e. young people were from the same age group, same gender, same geographical location and from a same setting. Facilitator's recruited the comparison group by considering the criteria as outlined, invited young people who fit the criteria to an information session where they gave them information on the purpose of the study and a short advertisement (see Appendix B & C). Where the facilitator was delivering the programme in a project they selected young people who were also engaged in their projects meeting the same criteria. Where the facilitator was delivering the programme in a club setting, the comparison group were also selected from within the club. Where the facilitator was delivering the programme in the school the comparison group was selected from within the school. This was to ensure that the leadership and comparison groups were from as similar environments and as alike as possible. The comparison group included 164 young people (100 female, 64 male) at time one.

### **3.3.1.2 Qualitative Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the interviews and photo-voice. To 'purposefully select informants' is to select participants that will provide the most useful information to answer the research question (Creswell 1994, p.148), that is those with the highest and lowest adolescent well-being scores i.e. those most and least at risk were interviewed to add depth to the research in terms of perceived social support, resilience and leadership skills. Facilitators were selected using a census approach for the year of the study. All facilitators involved in the leadership programme were invited to take part in one of five focus groups. Four of these focus groups were held regionally and one was held as a teleconference. This was to ensure all facilitators were offered the opportunity to participate, from all geographical areas, and included both staff and volunteers perspectives.

### **3.3.2 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was sought from the National University of Ireland, Galway Research Ethics Committee. The objective of the Research Ethics Committee is to safeguard the health, welfare and rights of human participants and researchers in research studies. The ethical principle of 'do no harm' was adhered to in this study. The ethics application process involved completion of an application form, submission of the

aims and objectives of the study, an outline of the tools for the study, sample information and permission forms for the parents/guardians, young people and facilitators as well as the advertisements to recruit the comparison group. Upon reviewing the application the Research Ethics Committee granted full ethical approval for the study.

### **3.3.2.1 Informed Consent**

Information leaflets and consent forms were developed and distributed to intended research participants to ensure that participants were in a position to give informed consent to taking part in the study. Consent is defined as 'compliance in or approval of what is done or proposed by another' (Webster, 1996, p.97). Morse and Field (1995, p.62) describe three different levels of consent required when research is being conducted; with special populations such as school children, hospital patients or prison inmates. The first level of consent is from the organisation where the research will take place, the second is from the parent or guardian of the participants and the third is the consent of the participant (Appendix C). It is vital that participants feel that their identity is protected. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity are of paramount importance, with the exception of areas of concern with regard to Children First Guidelines (DOHC, 1999; DCYA, 2011). Each participant of the interviews and focus groups were given a pseudonym to protect their identity, while participants of the questionnaires were given codes. Every effort has been made to ensure that no participant is identifiable in the research.

### **3.3.2.2 Negotiating Access**

The researcher works within the organisation involved in the study, negotiating access was done through a conversation with the Assistant CEO of Foróige. A number of participants participated through secondary schools. The schools were contacted and invited to participate in the study in September 2010. The schools and projects were forwarded information sheets which outlined the purpose of the study, the student status of the researcher and the commitment to anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process (Appendix A). Further contact was made to arrange to conduct the research. The comparison group were recruited with the help of an advertisement (Appendix B).

### **3.3.3 Data Collection**

Once all the schools and projects involved consented to the study the consent forms and questionnaires were distributed to the facilitators. Parental and participant consent was sought for the questionnaires and interviews, included here were also information sheets pertaining to the research (Appendix C). Facilitators administered the questionnaires when consent forms were returned. The researcher has experience of facilitating groups, and ensured a safe environment for discussion of sensitive topics occurred during interviews and focus groups. The researcher highlighted prior to each interview that information received would be treated with the strictest of confidentiality, with the exception of Child Protection issues in line with Children First Guidelines (DOHC, 1999; DCYA, 2011). The researcher also highlighted that participants anonymity would be protected so that anything discussed would not be identified to themselves.

**Table 3.2 Table outlining the phases of the study**

Phase I	Designing the research tools
Phase II	Time One data collection
Phase III	Time Two data collection
Phase IV	Time Three data collection

### 3.3.3.1 Time One Data Collection

#### **Questionnaires**

At time one the questionnaires were sent to the facilitators of the programme to administer to the participants. The youth workers administered and collected the questionnaires and returned them to the researcher. Youth workers were encouraged to separate participants to guarantee accurate individual completion. As per the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2004) youth workers were encouraged to provide information to participants both written and verbally as required to support low literacy level respondents. Respondents received thank you cards for their participation. Questionnaires were discarded when there was obvious contamination. Any that were questionable were cross checked with the supervisor. All participants involved in the leadership programme between September 2010 and May 2011 were invited to take part in the leadership research. The leadership programme delivery coincided with academic year therefore the majority of groups commenced the programme between the beginning of September and early November. Facilitators were asked to select the comparison group sample to match the following criteria: similar age, gender and from the same geographical location. This was to ensure that as few variations as possible occurred between the groups. The comparison group were involved in Foróige projects where the facilitators were running the leadership programme in the projects. Other young people in the comparison group came from schools where Foróige staff or volunteers were running the leadership programme in a school. This meant that the leadership youth were compared to as similarly matched young people as possible. This is a quasi-experimental study design to enable the researcher establish the impact on the leadership programme on young people's leadership skills, resilience and social support, relative to peers who do not experience the leadership programme. It must be stressed at this point that a randomised controlled trial would be neither desirable nor feasible for this study at this time.

Time one data collection occurred between September 15th and November 15th, the longer time period for data collection was necessary due to the fact that some of the groups did not get started on the leadership programme until early November. All groups completed the time one questionnaires within the first few weeks of commencing the programme. A total of 431 young people were recruited to the study, of whom 267 young people were involved in the leadership programme and 164 young people formed part of the comparison group. A total of 319 young people commenced the leadership programme in 2010, however due to either being absent on the day of the baseline analysis or choosing not to take part in the study (n=3) the study actually recruited 267 young people from the leadership programme yielding a response rate of 81.19%.

## **Interviews**

Young people who had the highest and lowest adolescent well-being scores in the baseline questionnaire were invited to take part in interviews to track their perceptions of their leadership skills, resilience and social support over the course of the programme. A score of over 13 on the adolescent well-being scale is an indicator of risk for depression and as such was thought to be useful to identify young people experiencing adversity. Those with a score over 13 were invited to interview as they were considered 'high risk' and young people who scored in the 0-4 range were considered to be 'low risk' and were also invited to interview. Information and consent forms were given to parents/guardians and participants to sign to ensure they consented to the interviews. Information sheets also acknowledged that they could opt out at any stage. Thirty young people were invited to take part in the interviews. Due to unavailability on the days of interview a total of 22 participants (7 male and 15 female; aged 15-18 years, 11 high risk; 1 male, 10 female and 11 low risk; 6 male, 5 female) took part in the interviews. The interviews were approximately 30 minutes, recorded with a digital MP3 recorder and participants received thank you cards for their involvement. The interviews took place between the early December and early January, due to weather conditions such as snow this hampered a more timely collection of the time one interview data.

### **3.3.3.2 Time Two Data Collection**

#### **Questionnaire**

Time two data collection for the questionnaires commenced between the 2nd and 20th of May. As with time one the questionnaires were distributed to the facilitators who then invited the same participants as time one to take part. At time two there were 283 respondents to the questionnaires, of whom 184 young people were from the leadership group and 99 young people were from the comparison group. This yielded a response rate at time two of 67.7% between time one and time two.

#### **Interviews**

Time two interviews took place between the 6th and 17th of June. The same young people were contacted for involvement in the interviews as time one. At this time 21 young people were available at time two for interview. The other participant was unavailable due to summer holidays.

#### **Focus Groups**

Five focus groups were carried out with 23 programme facilitators (5 males, 18 females; 6 Foróige volunteers and 17 Foróige staff) in June 2011 after the programme finished. Information and consent forms were given to all participants. The focus groups were 45-50 minutes, recorded with a digital MP3 recorder and participants received refreshments for their involvement. One focus group took place over teleconference due to geographical constraints in getting the group together. The researcher also highlighted that participants anonymity would be protected so that anything discussed would not be identified to themselves.

### ***Photo-Voice***

All participants who went on to complete module three of the leadership programme (n=117) were asked to illustrate a picture of their leadership journey and outline what it meant to them as part of their reflective journal. Of these 17 participants' (7 male, 10 female, 16-18 years) pictures were selected to be part of the study. The pictures chosen represent a wide range of the experiences of the young people involved in the programme, permission was sought to include their drawings.

### **3.3.3.3 Time Three Data Collection**

#### ***Questionnaire***

Time three data collection for the questionnaires commenced between 1st December 2011 and 1st March 2012. Once again the questionnaires were distributed to the facilitators who then invited the research respondents to partake in completing the questionnaires for the final time. At time three there were 195 respondents to the questionnaires, of whom 140 young people were from the leadership group and 45 young people were from the comparison group. This yielded a response rate at time three of 68.9% between time two and time three and a response rate of 46.6% between time one and time three.

#### ***Interview***

Time three interviews were carried out between December 13th 2011 and January 16th 2012. A smaller cohort was selected from the initial group interviewed as similar themes began to emerge in the analysis of the data from time two yielding data saturation. With this knowledge in mind, the researcher decided to have fewer interviews and go more in depth with them. A smaller cohort was then selected to include both low and high risk young people. The qualitative collection at this point included 6 young people (5 female, 1 male; 4 high risk, 2 low risk).

### **3.3.4 Data analysis**

On completion of the data collection data analysis commenced. As quantitative and qualitative approaches were used quantitative and qualitative data analysis was employed, each will be dealt with separately here.

#### **3.3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis**

The statistical package for social sciences, SPSS, was used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. This package measured and assessed the relationship between different variables. Numeric codes were used for the closed questions (Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, Always = 5). Data was initially entered into excel, from here it was exported into SPSS. The data was cleaned to ensure that any errors were picked up and explored. Initials and dates of birth were double checked to ensure that the young people could be matched between the different time points. Following on from this, description and frequency analysis were run. Boxplots were run to identify outliers, explore and remove as necessary. Cross tabulation with the use of chi squared tests, where <0.05 is considered significant, was used to deduce the significance of relationships between different variables. ANOVA's



were run to determine significant difference between the averages of different groups, where  $<0.05$  is considered significant. Paired T-tests were run on matched data between the different time points, where  $<0.05$  is considered significant. Mixed Between within-Analysis of Variance was also run to explore the differences between the groups over time.

### Missing Data

For all analysis, variables were analysed to determine the level of missing data. In cases where there was extreme missing data the variable was removed. When calculating summative scores attention was given to the possibility of missing data and computed scores were only carried out where sufficient data existed for a case. In general, there was minimal missing data in this study.

#### 3.3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

NVivo was used to analyse data collected from the focus groups and interviews. This package assisted with coding of the themes emerging from the qualitative research. Data collected from focus groups and interviews was transcribed, analysed and emergent themes identified. Coding is important in qualitative analysis as it helps to make sense of the data.

***Coding is how you define what the data you are analysing is about. It involves identifying and recording one or more passages... they are then linked with a name for that idea – the code. Thus all the text... that is about the same thing or exemplifies the same thing is coded to the same name (Gibbs, 2007, p.38)***

Qualitative analysis as highlighted by Robson (2011) can be considered constant comparison analysis because the process of coding involves comparing each new chunk of data with previous codes, so similar chunks will be labelled with the same code. Coding involves 'grouping initial codes into a smaller number of themes, which help with organising the data into major themes, sub-themes and lay the foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data' (Robson, 2011, p.475). As highlighted by Burnard (1991) qualitative data analysis is to establish a detailed and systematic recording of themes and link them together in a category system. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.173) lay out guidelines to qualitative analysis including: 'familiarity with the transcript, isolation of general units of meaning, relate general units of meaning to the research focus, examine patterns and themes extracted'. It is clear that thematic coding is central to qualitative data analysis. Advantages of this form of analysis include that it is flexible and can be used with all types of qualitative analysis, it is also relatively easy to use compared with other more theoretical approaches, it is accessible and can be communicated without major difficulties and provides a method of summarising key features of large amounts of qualitative data (Robson, 2011). Disadvantages are that the flexibility of the method mean that the data can be broad and it may be difficult to narrow the focus, thematic coding is often limited to description or exploration with little attempt at interpretation (Robson, 2011).

Data analysis for the qualitative strand involved getting the data transcribed. This was followed by reading the data and generating the initial overarching codes. As extracts of the data were coded additional codes emerged. All the data was coded in a systematic fashion which involved determining which code was the most appropriate place for the data and ensuring that data of similar content were coded under the same heading. This provided the opportunity to put some content under different themes, and also enabled the researcher reassess codes if necessary. The result of this form of analysis yielded a thematic map of the qualitative research which in turn enabled the researcher to analyse and interpret the patterns emerging in the data.



### **3.3.5 Insider Research Influence**

As the researcher manages Foróige's Best Practice Unit which has responsibility for developing the youth leadership programme her personal involvement is high. Insider research can be considered a strength on the basis that the person has intimate knowledge of the area which can be advantageous in leading to increased honesty in the information gathered (Robson, 2011). As the person has an in-depth view of how things work, they can understand aspects of the project that others might miss (Robson, 2011). However, this can also be considered a weakness as they are too close to the project and may contribute to bias. This closeness may result in the researcher being overly committed to the programme and only focus on the positives and fail to be objective (Cohen et al., 2003). Bias is considered 'a systematic or persistent tendency to make errors in the same direction, that is, to overstate or understate the true value of an attribute' (Lansing et al., 1961 cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.281). Cohen and Manion state that 'the sources of bias are characteristics of the interviewer, the respondent and substantive content of the questions' (1994, p.282). By being transparent, Cohen et al., (2003) consider that the reader can therefore construct their own perspective which is just as valid. The knowledge that the insider has can be considered an advantage as it could be argued may lead to an increase in depth, honesty and fidelity of the information garnered (Robson, 2011). The researcher reflected on her role as researcher and her position within the organisation. She remained constantly aware of her position and took care not to introduce bias throughout the research. To mitigate against any form of bias the researcher consulted regularly with her supervisor and advisory committee to ensure she always took an objective unbiased view point. To further reduce bias the researcher recorded the focus groups and interviews, then analysed them some time after they were completed ensuring a more reflective view point of occurrences. The researcher was ever conscious of her position and sought to maintain a critical, factual approach to her analysis of the data.

### 3.3.6 Limitations

While every endeavour has been made to reduce limitations in this study, invariably some limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **The Questionnaire** – while efforts were made to ensure the questionnaire was accessible for young people and broken up sufficiently to keep them engaged; the length of the questionnaire was disconcerting to a small number of respondents. This was particularly the case for the comparison group, some of whom did not complete the questionnaire in its totality. As this was only for a small number of respondents it is anticipated that it will not affect the quality of response.
2. **Study Length & Retention** – the length of the study and the fact that it spanned almost two academic years may have impacted on the retention rate. As some young people had moved on or were no longer engaged in the youth project, programme facilitators found it difficult to track down the respondents to include them in the follow portion of the study. This was particularly true for the comparison group, who by virtue of the fact that they were not engaged in the programme meant they had no incentive to stay. For this group once they moved into another year in school became difficult for the facilitators to find them. For an adolescent 18 months is a lifetime, so much happens, in future studies perhaps more incentives to remain involved including being put in a draw for prizes if they complete all time points may increase the retention rate, particularly of comparison groups.
3. **Self-Selection** - another point of consideration is the self-selecting nature of participants into the leadership programme this may mean that the leadership participants were already of a mindset that places them in a better position than the comparison group. Every attempt was made to take this into consideration during the analysis phase. However, beyond carrying out a randomised controlled trial the decision to get involved in a programme of this nature may well affect the young persons' motivations to remain with the programme and their ensuing outcomes.
4. **Logistics** - logistically limiting factors included giving the facilitators the control to recruit the comparison group and administer the questionnaires. As such the researcher had less control over ensuring the group maintained contact and were traceable. Due to the size of the study and the national involvement of young people it was necessary to involve others from a purely logistical perspective. However, the drop off in the comparison group was substantial and despite originally thinking that involvement of the facilitators would strengthen the ability to recall the comparison group over the three time points perhaps use of incentives may have retained a greater number of the comparison group. Due to logistics also all young people did not complete the questionnaire directly before they began the programme, this may have implications in the findings. As well as this, due to the delay in getting the questionnaires returned from the facilitators this resulted in a delay in selecting the high and low risk groups. It was closer to the end of module one that the interviewer had the opportunity to interview these participants and thus may not reflect accurately their baseline perceptions etc., However, the researcher is confident that the experience of the young people over the time period investigated is merited.

- 5. Sample Size** –the sample size in this study was small and may have hindered things from appearing significant which were. Future research is needed ideally with more cases to further examine the influence of the programme.

## **Summary**

This chapter describes the methodology designed and implemented to address the overarching aim and objectives of this study. Firstly, this chapter sets forth the rationale, aim and objectives of the study including presenting a table to link the objectives to the research tools. Secondly, the chapter looks at how the study was designed including the development of the research tools which involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thirdly, issues in relation to how the study was implemented are explored these include ethical considerations, data collection and methods of analysis. Finally, the main limitations experienced by the study are addressed. The following chapter will outline the research context to this study.



## 4. Youth Leadership Programme

### Introduction

The following Chapter will outline a description of the service provider – Foróige the organisation with whom the leadership programme was developed. This chapter will give a detailed outline of the leadership programme, its content, how it was developed and detail the settings in which the leadership programme takes place.

### 4.1 Description of the Service Provider – Foróige

As mentioned above Foróige (*Irish for Youth Development*) is the organisation with which the Leadership for Life programme was developed and is run. Foróige began in 1952 and today serves 64,000 young people annually in a range of youth work services from local youth clubs to more specific youth projects. Young people aged 12-18 years are eligible to join Foróige's which run themselves by electing a youth committee who determine the activities of the club. Foróige youth services and projects involve young people in the 10-20 year old category. Foróige's purpose is 'to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society'. Foróige also works with young people experiencing adversity whether through poverty, social exclusion, early school-leaving, substance use, youth crime, minority groups, poor school attainment etc., Foróige operates a number of programmes such as the Big Brothers Big Sister Programme, Youth Citizenship, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Pro-social behaviour programmes as well as the Youth Leadership programme core to this study. Foróige's philosophy is that each person has unique qualities and attributes, that they are creative, that they can take responsibility, that they are interdependent with others, that they can make a difference in the world, that they have influence and that they can learn from every situation.

### 4.2 Foróige Leadership for Life Programme

The Leadership for Life programme was developed by Foróige's Best Practice Unit in 2009. The opportunity to develop the programme was the result of funding from The Atlantic Philanthropies.

The funding provided the capacity to develop the programme based on practice wisdom from within the organisation and research on international literature that was available. The programme has been developed as a way of exploring vision and passion, and to enable young people to develop key skills such as planning, decision making, critical thinking, goal setting and problem solving that are core to leadership. The leadership programme defines leadership as facilitating change and development of the individual and society through use of core social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, collaboration, empathy and relationship building (Foróige, 2010a, 2010b). The programme being researched is a three module, 80 hour youth leadership programme that is offered to young people aged 16-18 years which consists of facilitated youth leadership content, individual reflection, self-directed learning, team research and a community action project. The programme contains experiential activities that are explored in groups as well as practical work and opportunities for leadership in each module. Outlined below are the learning outcomes and content for each module.

### **Learning Outcomes for Module One**

Upon completion of module one of the leadership programme participants can expect to be able to:

- Understand key concepts and characteristics of good leadership.
- Identify their personal strengths and motivations that inspire them to become leaders.
- Clarify and develop their personal values.
- Develop a clear vision of what they would like to achieve as a leader.
- Practice communication skills such as listening and presenting.
- Practice problem solving and critical thinking skills as part of a group.
- Set clear goals and develop action plans to achieve them.
- Communicate their leadership action plan to others.
- Reflect on their learning via learning journals.

**Content for Module One** includes 15 one hour facilitated learning experiences including 15 sessions on:

- 1. Introduction to the programme & participants** – introduces participants to the programme content, sets a group contract and offers the participants the opportunity to get to know each other and what they are committing to and the concept of leadership and leaders.
- 2. Introduction to leadership** – participants gain an understanding of the concept of leadership, what it means to them. Participants gain an understanding of the differences and similarities between them.
- 3. Understanding leadership** – participants understand the influence of power, famous leaders and skills to be an effective leader.



4. **Team building and critical thinking** – Team building and group critical thinking activities where participants begin to emerge as leaders. The importance of critical thinking and taking on leadership roles is made.
5. **Communication skills I** – participants understand the importance of communication skills and how these link to leadership.
6. **Communication skills II** – participants understand the importance of listening and contribution. Participants also learn about presentation skills. The connection between communication skills and leadership is made.
7. **Team problem solving** – team problem solving activity which enables participants to take on greater roles as leaders. Problem solving linked to leadership.
8. **Self awareness** – activities in relation to enhancing self-awareness, young people connect with what's important in their lives and become aware of what is important in other people's lives. Self-awareness linked to leadership development.
9. **Values** – further activities explore participant's values and what is important in their life and how their values inform the decisions they make. Values also linked into leadership decisions.
10. **Community needs analysis** – participants envisage their community and how what they would like to improve. Young people consider how they can make an impact in their community and this is connected to leadership.
11. **Global visions** – a global perspective is taken when the participants are engaged in a philanthropic activity where they can make change on a global level. Participants need to argue for and debate for their particular change.
12. **Personal vision and goal setting** – participants explore their own lives and what contribution they would like to make. They develop a personal vision and link this to how they intend to be young leaders.
13. **Action planning** – participants develop a concrete action plan to achieve their goal by setting SMART goals and considering what will strengthen and act as a barrier to their goal.
14. **Presentations** – participants present their plan to their peers and ask their peers for support, analysis and feedback in realising their goal.
15. **Evaluation** – participants evaluate their participation on module one and the module itself. They consider where what they have learned and how they intend to take this forward.

Module 1 also involves 15 hours of self-directed learning and personal reflection outside of group time.

## Learning Outcomes for Module Two

On completion of module two participants will be able to:

- Understand and critique different leadership styles
- Develop a greater understanding of their style of leadership.
- Explore the challenges and difficulties of leadership.
- Organise and plan a team project.
- Understand and use the Logic Model for planning.
- Research local/national/global issues.
- Develop and articulate constructive arguments.
- Practice problem solving and team building exercises.
- Understand the value of critical thinking to solve problems.
- Explain and apply methods of conflict resolution.
- Reflect on their learning via learning journals.

**Content for Module Two** includes 15 one hour facilitated learning experiences including 15 sessions on:

1. **Understanding leadership** – participants explore their concept of leadership now and their progress on their personal leadership goal.
2. **Research skills** – participants are introduced to research methods and begin preparation for their team research project. The importance of research in leadership is considered.
3. **Planning using the logic model** – participants are introduced to the logic model as a tool for planning their team research project. Planning and project management are linked to leadership
4. **Leadership styles** - participants are introduced to a leadership style assessment and engage in a team activity to explore each others' styles of leadership. For the team research project leadership is rotated and different styles of leadership are critiqued.
5. **Self awareness and values** – this session focuses on further self-awareness and refining their values as leaders
6. **Team Research Project** – this session offers the participants practical assistance with their team research projects.
7. **Communication skills** – participants understand further the importance of clear communication and the importance of being aware of emotions and how these can be communicated as a leader

- 8. Conflict Resolution** – participants explore conflict followed by role plays to resolve conflict situations in customer service. Participants consider the importance of conflict resolution as a leader.
- 9. Debating** – participants explore their comfort zones and what it is like to move beyond them through impromptu debating.
- 10. Team Research Project** – participants spend this session resolving any issues that are emerging on their team research project with the facilitators and their peers.
- 11. Who Leads?** – participants' explore their attitudes, values, stereotyping and how these can inform their decisions consciously and unconsciously. This is then linked to leadership decisions.
- 12. Critical thinking** – participants spend time exploring critical thinking statements and stretch their ability to analyse statements from the media.
- 13. Team research project** – participants spend this session resolving any issues that are emerging on their team research project with the facilitators and their peers.
- 14. Presentations** – teams present their research projects to their peers and external agencies working in the topic area that they are interested in.
- 15. Evaluation** – participants evaluate their participation on module two and the module itself. They consider where what they have learned and how they intend to take this forward into their community action project.

Module 2 also involves 15 hours of self-directed learning and a group research project completed outside of group time.

### Learning Outcomes for Module Three

On completion of module three participants will be able to:

- Apply their learning and demonstrate leadership skills through a practical community based project
- Plan and organise an individual community action project
- Evaluate their project and present a portfolio of their experience
- Reflect on their learning via learning journals

**Module 3:** Is the culmination of the programme and enables the participants to focus on their own individual community leadership action project. The community action projects are an opportunity for young people to exercise leadership in their community, and put their skills into practice. The facilitator's role is to support participants in selecting and carrying out an appropriate action project, but it is not

to organise this for them. They meet regularly with their facilitator and peers for support and to explore any challenges arising. This module includes a personal 20 hour community action project. Participants must articulate a plan for their community action project i.e. what they intend to do, why they intend to do it, who it will benefit, what resources they intend to use, what activities will be involved and what the outcome of the project will be. Participants carry out a logic model and when they are ready initiate their community project and need to carry out the following to complete their module 3.



*Community Action Project – from concept to completion the participants engage in their own personal leadership project in their communities.*

*Reflective Journal and Portfolio – participants complete a journal and portfolio to outline what they did and their learning from the project.*

Some examples of community action projects include:

1. One young leader set up a camogie team (*Irish team game*) for younger girls at her local GAA club. While she was undertaking module two she was working on this goal – meeting with her coach and club officials, and beginning recruitment by visiting local schools and talking to the pupils. Her team research project for module two looked at healthy behaviour and exercise. For her community action project she continued recruiting for an under 11 camogie team for her club, and organised and ran a training camp for the girls she had recruited. She is continuing to coach the team in her spare time.
2. Another leadership goal in module one was to fundraise and travel to Zambia with the Alan Kerins Project. Working as part of a team, he set fundraising goals, and took the lead in organising events himself to help reach the team fundraising target. For module two his group researched issues of poverty and youth in Zambia, and the work of Alan Kerins Projects to address these. For his community action project, he travelled to Zambia with Alan Kerins projects, where he worked with local young people, learned about the culture and challenges youth in Africa experience and shared his own challenges. He came back inspired to continue to raise funds for Zambia and he reported being incredibly appreciative of all he had.
3. Another individual leadership goal was to get a new garbage bin put into the local village, this participant felt there was a lot of litter. Her research in the early stages of carrying out this goal suggested that there would be significant opposition to her plan, as local businesses did not want the bin near their premises. For her community action project, she organised for her local club to improve the garden for residents of a local nursing home. They met with the residents and managers of the home, raised money to buy flowers, planted a garden and organised for a local handyman to repair the broken bench.

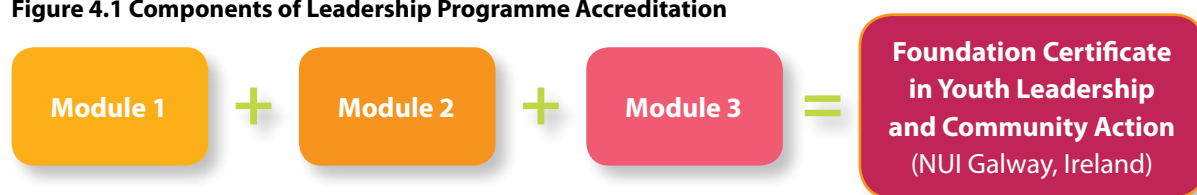
### 4.3 Programme Delivery

The programme is delivered by trained Foróige staff and volunteers who receive two days training to run the programme. The training includes an overview of the theoretical underpinnings, the logic model to the programme, an understanding of leadership theory, an outline of the Foundation Certificate and what it involves, grading of the participants work, models of programme delivery and facilitation on the content of the programme. Facilitators are either Foróige staff or Foróige volunteers selected on the basis of experience, facilitation skills, enthusiasm and recommendations from managers in the case of staff and Regional Youth officers in the case of volunteers. The programme recommends that 2 facilitators run the programme together over the course of one academic year. Facilitators meet for 30 minutes to prepare for the session and a further 15 minutes after the session to evaluate how it went. Facilitators are provided with support from their managers, regional youth officers and Foróige's Best Practice Unit. The programme is delivered in three settings; the Foróige club led by volunteers, Foróige projects led by staff and volunteers and schools led by Foróige staff and volunteers. Exploring the setting in which the programme is delivered i.e. community versus school is beyond the scope of this research however could be considered for a future study.

### 4.4 Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action

The entire three modules (see figure 4.3) lead to a qualification of Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action from the National University of Ireland, Galway. This is the first of its kind in Ireland for young people in this age group. The Foundation Certificate is offered in association with the UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement who acts as the university examiner for the programme. The participants are assessed through continuous assessment and to attain the award the young participants must submit work on each module of the programme including a personal reflective journal, workbook, team research project and individual community action project portfolio. The facilitators grade the young peoples' participation on the programme, their attendance, their presentations and workbooks, team projects and community projects. Each student receives feedback on their performance and the work is graded further by staff in the Best Practice Unit to ensure consistency and bell-shaped curve in terms of grades across the country. Finally, NUI Galway review the participants work and participants either pass or fail the course the results of which are put forward to the exams board.. The Foundation Certificate is a level 6 certification and awards young people 15 ECT's (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) which can be used in a related discipline. In receiving this award it offers young people the opportunity to graduate from a National University amongst other graduates from degree programmes, masters and higher degrees which for some may help generate a self-belief in their capacity to access third level education. The Foundation Certificate is recognition for the first time from a third level institute of youth work in a formal capacity and is attractive for young people due to the recognition of the content that they cover and the work they put into the programme. For those young people involved in the leadership programme in 2011/2012 111 young people graduated from the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action.

**Figure 4.1 Components of Leadership Programme Accreditation**

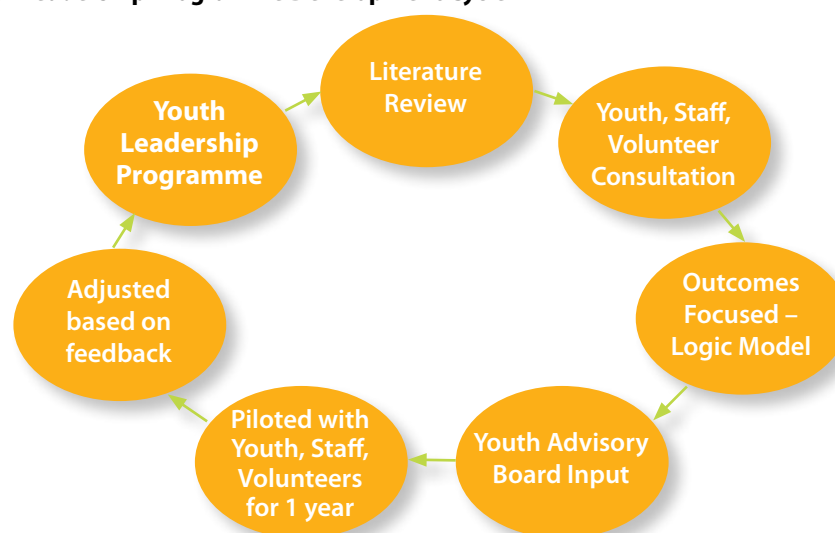


## 4.5 Foróige Leadership Programme Development

The youth leadership programme evaluated here was developed from a process that involved extensive literature review, consultation with youth, staff and volunteers to ensure it is needs-led, developed based on available international evidence and in an outcomes focused manner with a logic model to illustrate the desired outcomes of the programme. The programme was then piloted and adjusted based on feedback.

A literature review was carried out by the Child and Family Research Centre to inform the development of the leadership programme. Foróige's Best Practice Unit also completed an extensive literature search to inform the core components necessary for leadership development. Initially, module one was developed with a working group including staff and volunteers. Expected outcomes were drawn up and experiential activities developed to meet these outcomes. The programme was piloted with young people on the Best Practice Unit Youth Advisory Board. Feedback was received and the programme was amended as required. A similar approach was taken for module two bearing in mind a spiral curriculum so as to ensure the material in module one was built upon. Module three was brought about to enable young people to have the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills in their community. See figure 4.2 for an illustration of the programme development cycle for the leadership programme.

**Figure 4.2 Youth Leadership Programme Development Cycle**



## 4.6 Foróige Leadership Programme Logic Model

The logic model in figure 4.4 illustrates how the programme activities link to the expected outcomes for the young participants. As can be seen their involvement in experiential activities and the various projects are anticipated to lead to improved communication skills, improved critical thinking, the ability



to collaborate with peers on tasks, lead to improved sense of self-awareness as well as enhanced sense of their own leadership style, enhanced sense of ability to contribute to their community as well as feeling more supported and more resilient.

The leadership programme aims:

- To enable young people to develop the skills, inspiration, vision, confidence, and action plans to be effective leaders.
- To empower young people to make a positive difference to their society through the practice of effective leadership.

**Figure 4.3 Youth Leadership Programme Logic Model**

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Foróige Ethos & Values Staff Volunteers Leadership programme: Workbooks & Manual Best Practice Unit & Manager Support Budget NUIG Accreditation & Support	Active experiential learning modules including weekly self-reflection journal Communication skills Critical thinking Self-awareness Values clarification Team work Leadership Styles Problem solving Goal setting Peer support Guest speakers Individual projects Conflict Resolution Debating Team projects with rotating leadership Presentations in front of peers Individual Community Action Project	300 Young people involved in a One Year Youth Leadership programme	Young people demonstrate: Improved communication skills Improved critical thinking Improved self-awareness Improved ability to collaborate on tasks Improved leadership skills as well as awareness of own leadership style Improved problem solving and coping strategies Improved planning and goal setting Improved ability to resolve conflicts Improved presentation skills and increased sense of self-confidence	Young people demonstrate an improved positive sense of self and ability to contribute to community Young people take an active leadership role in their community Young person feels connected to their community and recognised for their contribution to same Young person feels more supported Young person displays improved resilience to life's challenges	Young people demonstrate enhanced ability to seek out and seize leadership opportunities Young people are articulate about their goals and can attain them Young people are resilient and supported in their leadership roles Young people are consciously and actively involved in their development and that of society

## **4.7 Leadership Programme Setting**

The leadership programme is delivered by trained Foróige staff or volunteers in a number of different contexts which will be outlined here. Foróige staff deliver the programme in youth projects such as Neighbourhood Youth Projects, Youth Development Projects, Garda Youth Diversion Projects and Youth Services. Foróige staff also deliver the programme in a number of school settings. In both the community setting and the school setting staff have volunteers to co-facilitate the programme with them. In the majority of cases staff run the programme once a week for between 1-1.5 hours. Foróige volunteers deliver the leadership programme either in conjunction with a staff person as part of a project or school or on their own with the support of either project staff or Regional Youth Officers in the youth club setting. The support that staff provide to volunteers in general is practical in the form of photocopying or availing of premises, as well as this they provide guidance to volunteers delivering the programme. In some cases, a number of Foróige clubs have come together to run the programme as they have had insufficient young people interested in the programme in their area but by bringing other clubs together have generated sufficient interest to run the programme. In some cases, the volunteers run the programme over a number of Saturdays throughout the year or one evening a week. All Foróige staff and volunteers have been Garda Vetted, reference checked and undergone recruitment processes to be in the position they are in. Additional to this, the Leadership for Life programme recruits staff and volunteers with an interest in running the programme, with prior experience of facilitation and who are committed to running the programme over the duration of one year. The Leadership for Life programme also runs through a five day international conference which offers young people the opportunity to take part in either module one or two. Young people involved in the conference were not invited to take part in the study as most would only get the opportunity to complete one of the modules.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this Chapter was to provide information on the programme and the provider for this research. Initially it described the organisation in which the programme was developed, Foróige. Following on from this it outlined a detailed description of the Leadership for Life programme focusing on its origins, structure, expected outcomes, and development. Finally, the setting in which the leadership programme is run is described. The next chapter will deal with the findings of the research.



## 5. Research Findings

### Introduction

This Chapter focuses on presenting the findings of the research carried out to meet the objectives of this study. In Section 5.2, a brief description of the characteristics of the sample is presented. Sections 5.3 addresses objective 1 and presents the baseline findings of the study at time one. Section 5.4 speaks to objective 2 and presents the findings from the data at time one, two and three for the leadership and comparison groups separately. Section 5.5 addresses objective 3 and presents a comparative analysis for the leadership and comparison groups at time one, two and three. Section 5.6 addresses objective 4 and examines the impact of the programme on young people in both the high and low adolescent-well being groups. Finally, objective 5 is addressed by Section 5.7 this will be further elaborated on in Chapter 6.

### 5.1 Sample Characteristics

As described in Chapter Three, a quasi-experimental design was taken using a mixed methods approach to explore the connection between youth leadership, resilience and social support. The data required to address the research objectives was collected from young people using questionnaires, interviews, photovoice and from programme facilitators using focus groups. Five measures including 24 sub-measures were administered to the young people at three time points through questionnaire format. The study explored the impact of a youth leadership programme on 267 young people involved in the leadership programme and compared them to a group of 164 young people of similar age, gender and geographical location who were not involved in the leadership programme.

Details of the number of participants involved in the questionnaire data collection over the three time points is outlined in Table 5.1. At time one (T1), 267 young people were involved in the leadership group and 164 were involved in the comparison group, this dropped to 184 and 99 at time 2 and dropped further again at time 3 to 140 and 45 young people, respectively. This indicates a 52% retention rate for the leadership group and a 27% retention rate for the comparison group. More young people were sought for the comparison group, however challenges occurred in achieving similar numbers to the leadership group. Retention was low due to length of the study and facilitators found it difficult to locate

participants, particularly in the comparison group, in the following school year. Having no incentives may also have affected retention rates.

**Table 5.1 Number of Participants and Retention Rate across the Study**

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	% retention
Leadership	267	184	140	52%
Comparison	164	99	45	27%

This analysis consisted of exploring the demographic data for the leadership and comparison groups, and comparing them to each other at time one. In terms of mean age both groups were very similar, the leadership group had an average age of 16.9 years while the comparison group had a mean age of 17 years.

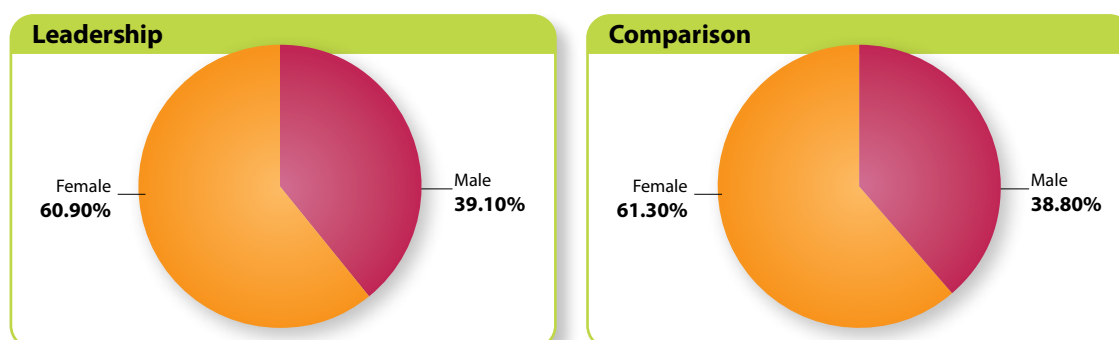
**Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics for Leadership versus Comparison Groups**

Demographic Characteristics		Leadership T1	Comparison T1	Chi Square
Mean Age		16.9	17	
Age				
	16	34.2%	30.0%	–
	17	45.5%	43.8%	
	18	20.3%	26.3%	
County				
	Carlow	.4%	.0%	–
	Donegal	15.7%	11.6%	
	Dublin	26.2%	25.6%	
	Galway	30%	37.2%	
	Kilkenny	2.6%	1.8%	
	Leitrim	3.0%	.6%	
	Limerick	2.6%	3.7%	
	Longford	3.7%	.0%	
	Mayo	3.7%	5.5%	
	Sligo	7.5%	9.1%	
	Tipperary	4.5%	4.3%	
	Waterford	0%	.6%	

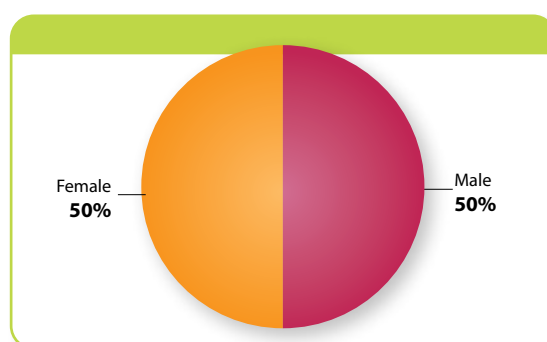
\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

Males and females were very similar with 39.1% male (n=104) and 60.9% female (n=163) in the leadership group and 38.8% male (n=64) and 61.3% female (n=101) in the comparison group as seen in figure 5.1, which is slightly different to the overall population of Foróige (figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.1 Gender**

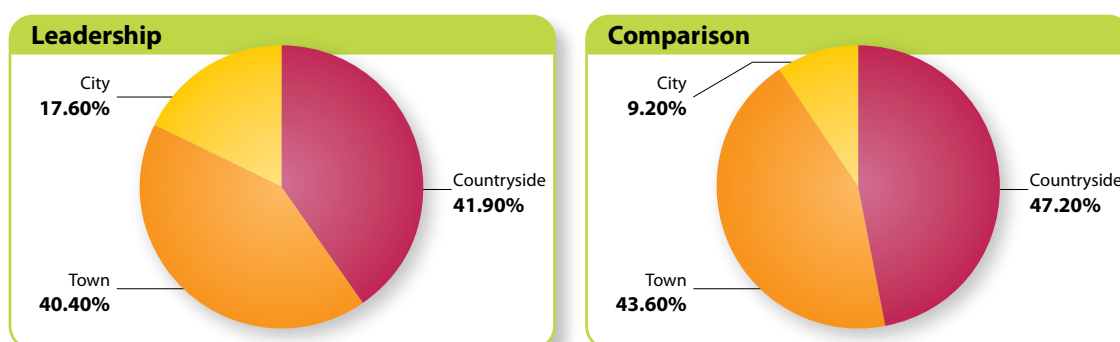


**Figure 5.2 Foróige Total Population Gender**



Break down by area (countryside, town, city) was also similar between the groups with no statistically significant difference evident as per figure 5.3.

**Figure 5.3 Geographical Area**



Both groups demonstrated similar for academic level and average grades as seen in table 5.3, with no statistical difference observed between them. Chi squared was  $X^2 (1, n=421)=.500, p=.779, \phi=.034$  for level. Chi squared was  $X^2 (1, n=423)=9.851, p=.087, \phi=.151$  for average grades.

**Table 5.3 School Level & Grades for Leadership versus Comparison**

Demographic Characteristics		Leadership Group T1	Comparison Group T1	Chi Square
Level				—
	Honours	76.4%	73.4%	
	Ordinary	22.1%	24.7%	
	Foundation	1.5%	1.9%	
Average Grades				—
	A	9.5%	7.5%	
	B	57.6%	46.0%	
	C	29.4%	42.2%	
	D	3.1%	3.1%	
	E	.4%	.6%	
	F	.0%	.6%	

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

The ethnicity between both groups was very similar, as well as this the ethnicity of the participants in this study was similar to that of the total population for Foróige in 2011 (see Appendix E). The living

arrangements were also very similar between the two groups (see Appendix F). In terms of perception of self as a leader there was a similar self-perception between both groups at time one as to their perceived leadership ability (table 5.4).

**Table 5.4 Leadership Self-Perception for Leadership vs Comparison Group**

Characteristics	Leadership Group T1	Comparison Group T1	Chi Square
Do you see yourself as a leader?			–
Yes	51.1%	51.6%	
No	47.4%	45.3%	

## Summary

- A total of 431 young people took part in the leadership research at time one including leadership programme participants (n=267) and a comparison group (n=164) of young people of similar age, gender and geographical location.
- Both groups were very similar in that there was no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of age, school grade, academic level taken, ethnicity, area or living arrangements.
- For the quantitative data the retention rate was 52% for the leadership group and 27% for the comparison group over the entire study.

## 5.2 Findings at Baseline: Objective 1

**To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).**

### Introduction

The following section presents the baseline data collected at time one (T1) on the perceived resilience, social support and leadership skills of young participants for the leadership and comparison groups. A one-way between-group analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) was performed to establish the difference between the leadership and comparison groups at time one. Mean scores are presented in the tables. For all analysis variables were analysed to determine the level of missing data. In cases where there was extreme missing data the variable was removed. When calculating summative scores attention was given to the possibility of missing data and only computed scores for cases where sufficient data existed.

The results indicate that the leadership group were statistically significantly higher than the comparison group at time one on the following measures *communication skills, team work, leadership skills and community involvement* (table 5.5). Sibling support appears to be the weakest source of support across both groups. Eta squared from Cohen (1988: 284-7) interprets eta squared as .01 = small effect, .06= moderate effect, .14= large effect.



**Table 5.5 Baseline Measures of Mean Scores for Leadership versus Comparison Groups**

Quantitative Measures	Leadership Group T1	Comparison Group T1	Significance	Eta Squared
Adolescent Well-being	8.56	9.05		
Resilience1	35.39	35.08		
Understand Self	11.85	11.90		
Resilience2	38.06	37.73		
Empathy	12.43	12.22		
Decision Making	14.89	14.66		
Critical Thinking	18.12	17.45		
Communication Skills	23.10	22.35	F=4.302*	.01
Goal Setting	14.74	14.33		
Team Work	12.06	11.66	F=4.110*	.009
Problem Solving	18.86	18.39	+	
Life Skills ^	101.25	98.36	+	
Leadership Skills <sup>1</sup>	41.69	40.27	F=3.850*	.009
Friend Support	11.07	10.98		
Parental Support	10.58	10.03	+	
Sibling Support	9.26	9.21		
Adult Support	9.77	9.92		
Total Social support^^	40.27	39.67		
Concrete	10.20	10.01		
Emotional	10.24	9.96	+	
Esteem	9.79	9.62		
Advice	10.00	10.07		
Community	10.91	10.43	F=4.739*	.030
Resilience Total	73.16	72.13		

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

While not the primary focus of this study some interesting findings in respect of gender and also in relation to self-perception as a leader emerged (see appendix G for Gender and appendix H for Self-perception and Grade):

<sup>1</sup>Leadership skills measure was a cumulative score. This decision was based on an exploratory factor analysis. The data gathered through this survey were factor analyzed using principal axis factoring with a varimax rotation. In addition, seven alternate models were also run using different factoring and rotation models. The criteria established in advance of the selection of factor items were: a factor loading of .35 or higher; at least a .10 difference between the item's loading with its factors and each of the other factors, and interpretability (Kim and Mueller, 1978). Review of factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1.0 and subsequent analysis of scree test plots indicated that either a one, or at best two, factor solution would be most appropriate since the scree test had distinct and obvious breaks at these points (Kim and Mueller, 1978). The majority of analysis models identified a one factor solution. Based on these findings, and the desire to include all of the items into a single scale, the decision was made to use a one factor solution.

- Males scored significantly lower on adolescent well-being scale than females, indicating males have a more positive sense of self than females, in both the leadership and comparison group.
- Females scored higher on empathy and resilience than males in the leadership group, and females scored significantly higher on empathy in the comparison group than males.
- Self-perception as a leader yielded significantly more positive outcomes on 12 of the measures for the leadership group and on 13 of the measures for the comparison group
- Getting higher average grades in school yielded significantly more positive outcomes for 9 of the measures for the leadership group and 4 of the measures for the comparison group.

## Summary at Time One

**Leadership Skills:** In general what can be said about the leadership and comparison population is that the leadership group are significantly stronger on communication skills, team work, leadership skills and community involvement than the comparison group.

**Resilience & Social Support:** There was no significant difference between the leadership and comparison groups with respect to resilience and social support.

**Gender:** The males also score statistically significantly lower on the adolescent well-being scale than females in both groups, indicating a lower sense of overall well-being than males. Females score statistically significantly higher than males on empathy for both groups while males score higher than females on understanding themselves in the comparison group. Other interesting findings indicate that 'thinking you are a leader' tends to lead to better outcomes as well as having higher grades.

## 5.3 Findings at Programme Completion and Follow-up: Objective 2

**To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.**

### Introduction

For this section both the leadership and comparison group will be explored at across all three time points to determine if there are any significant differences arising across time. Mean scores are presented in the tables.

### **Comparison Group T1 (baseline) versus Comparison Group T2 (post-intervention)**

A paired T-test was carried out to evaluate the impact of time on the comparison group. There was a statistically significant decrease for the comparison group between time one and time two for *resilience 1, friendship support, sibling support, total social support, esteem support and advice support* (See Appendix: I)

### Comparison Group Time 2 versus Time 3 (follow-up), and Time 1 versus Time 3

A paired T-test was carried out to evaluate the impact of time on the comparison group between time one and time three, and time two and time three. There was a statistically significant increase in sibling support between time two and time three, which saw this score return to baseline levels. *Community involvement* significantly decreased between time one and time three for the comparison group. (See Appendix: J)

### Leadership Group T1 (baseline) versus Leadership Group T2 (post-intervention)

A paired T-test was carried out to evaluate the impact of time on the leadership group. There was a statistically significant increase between time one and time two on *resilience 2, decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills, sibling support and community involvement*, see table 5.6.

**Table 5.6 Paired T test Means Scores for Measures for Leadership Time 1 versus Time 2**

Quantitative Measures	Leadership Group T1	Leadership Group T2	Significance	Eta Squared
Adolescent Well-being	8.62	8.18		
Resilience1	35.1	34.98		
Understand Self	11.69	11.98		
Resilience2	38.02	38.81	T=-2.118*	.02
Empathy	12.35	12.40		
Decision Making	14.98	15.50	T=-2.468*	.02
Critical Thinking	18.19	18.76	T=-2.435*	.03
Communication Skills	22.96	23.25		
Goal Setting	14.58	14.80		
Team Work	11.90	11.74		
Problem Solving	18.88	19.07		
Life Skills ^	101.23	103.14	T=-2.461*	.032
Leadership Skills	41.24	42.10	T=-2.048*	.022
Friend Support	11.04	11.12		
Parental Support	10.62	10.77		
Sibling Support	9.27	9.56	T=-1.958*	.02
Adult Support	9.70	9.94		
Total Social support^^	39.89	40.57		
Concrete	10.10	10.33		
Emotional	10.14	10.30		
Esteem	9.69	9.79		
Advice	9.94	10.13		
Community	10.86	11.27	T=-2.136*	.02
Resilience Total	72.92	73.79		

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

### Leadership Group Time 2 (post-intervention) versus Time 3 (follow-up)

A paired T-test was carried out to evaluate the impact of time on the leadership group between time two and time three. Statistically significant increases were seen for *Resilience 1, Empathy, Critical thinking, Goal setting, Team work, Leadership skills, Life skills* between time two and three for the leadership group (table 5.7).

### Leadership Group Time 1 (baseline) versus Time 3 (follow-up)

Between time one and time three paired T-tests were carried out to explore whether there was any difference for the leadership group. Statistically significant increases were seen for *Resilience 1, Resilience 2, Empathy, Decision making, Critical thinking, Communication skills, Goal setting, Problem solving, Leadership skills, Sibling Support, Life skills, Community Involvement, Resilience Total* (table 5.7).

**Table 5.7 Paired T test Mean Scores for Measures for Leadership T1 versus T3; and T2 Versus T3**

Quantitative Measures	Leadership Group T1	Leadership Group T2	Leadership Group T3	Significance T1 v T3	Eta squ	Significance T2 v T3	Eta squ
Adolescent Well-being	8.64	8.29	8.42				
Resilience1	<b>34.87</b>	<b>35.11</b>	<b>36.06</b>	T=-3.567***	.085	T=-2.743**	.05
Understand Self	11.74	12.02	11.87				
Resilience2	<b>37.86</b>	38.85	<b>38.86</b>	T=-2.325*	.03		
Empathy	<b>12.42</b>	<b>12.42</b>	<b>12.92</b>	T=-2.506*	.044	T=-3.174**	.068
Decision Making	<b>15.05</b>	15.66	<b>15.89</b>	T=-3.268***	.071		
Critical Thinking	<b>18.30</b>	<b>18.69</b>	<b>19.34</b>	T=-4.060***	.10	T=-2.894**	.057
Communication Skills	<b>22.95</b>	23.44	<b>23.74</b>	T=-2.608**	.046		
Goal Setting	<b>14.55</b>	<b>14.77</b>	<b>15.34</b>	T=-2.908**	.058	T=-2.440*	.041
Team Work	11.88	11.71	12.12			T=-2.482*	.042
Problem Solving	18.88	19.63	19.25				
Life Skills ^	<b>101.42</b>	<b>103.51</b>	<b>106.06</b>	T=-4.402***	.12	T=-2.762**	.052
Leadership Skills	<b>41.48</b>	<b>42.50</b>	<b>43.73</b>	T=-4.581***	.13	T=-3.367***	.075
Friend Support	11.08	11.14	11.09				
Parental Support	10.47	10.68	10.67				
Sibling Support	<b>9.18</b>	9.36	<b>9.58</b>	T=-2.407*	.042		
Adult Support	9.60	9.83	9.96				
Total SocialSupports^^	40.03	40.69	40.65				
Concrete	10.11	10.41	10.29				
Emotional	10.22	10.36	10.29				
Esteem	9.73	9.76	9.97				
Advice	9.97	10.15	10.10				
Community	<b>10.86</b>	11.27	<b>11.36</b>	T=-2.777***	.05		
Resilience Total	<b>72.46</b>	73.96	<b>74.92</b>	T=-3.533***	.08		

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

While not the primary focus of this study some interesting findings in respect of gender emerged using paired T test (see appendix K & L for details):

- Males significantly improved over time on resilience, empathy, decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills, leadership skills, resilience total and concrete support.
- Females significantly improved over time on resilience, critical thinking, team work, life skills, leadership skills, parental support, sibling support, social support, concrete support, esteem support, community involvement and resilience total.

### **Summary of Findings between Time one, two and three**

#### ***Social support:***

- The participants in the comparison group significantly decreased on a number of social support measures between time one and time two. However, their scores remained quite sustained for the paired-T tests across all three time points with the exception of an increase in sibling support at time three which returned sibling support to its original levels at baseline.
- The leadership group demonstrated a significant increase in *sibling support* between time one and time two as well as between time one and time three.
- Males significantly improved over time on concrete support.
- Females significantly improve over time on parental support, sibling support, social support, concrete support and esteem support.

#### ***Resilience:***

- The leadership group significantly increased on *resilience 2* between time one and time two.
- Between time one and time three the leadership group garnered statistically significant increases in *resilience 1, resilience 2 and resilience total*.
- Males significantly improved over time on *resilience 2 and resilience total*.
- Females significantly improved over time on *resilience 1, resilience 2 and resilience total*.

#### ***Leadership Skills:***

- The leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement* between time one and time two.
- Between time one and time three there were statistically significant increases in *empathy, decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement*.
- Males significantly improved over time on empathy, decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills and leadership skills.

- Females significantly improved over time on critical thinking, team work, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement.

These results indicate that the leadership programme appears to have a significant benefit to those young people partaking in it.

## 5.4 Leadership versus Comparison Group Findings: Objective 3

**To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.**

### Introduction

This section explores the emerging differences between the leadership group and the comparison group. Young people for whom there was matched data sets available at the time points are included in the analysis. Mean scores are presented in the tables.

#### **Leadership Group T1 (baseline) versus Comparison Group T1 (baseline)**

One-way ANOVA for leadership versus comparison at time one, for only those young people with time two data, indicates a statistically significant difference for *advice support* with the comparison group scoring significantly higher than the leadership group at time one,  $F(1, 281)=4.208$ ,  $p=.041$ , eta squared=.01 (see table 5.8).

#### **Leadership T2 (post-intervention) versus Comparison T2(post-intervention)**

One way ANOVA for leadership versus comparison at time two indicates significant improvement in the leadership group on the following variables; *goal setting*  $F(1, 281)=3.926$ ,  $p=.041$ , eta squared=.013, *leadership skills*  $F(1, 281)=7.608$ ,  $p=.006$ , eta squared=.027, *sibling support*  $F(1, 285)=8.803$ ,  $p=.003$ , eta squared=.032, *total social support*  $F(1, 280)=5.577$ ,  $p=.019$ , eta squared=.019, *esteem support*  $F(1, 279)=5.703$ ,  $p=.018$ , eta squared=.019 and *community involvement*  $F(1, 281)=12.917$ ,  $p<.000$ , eta squared=.045, (see table 5.8).

#### **Leadership Group T3 (follow-up) versus Comparison Group T3 (follow-up)**

One-way ANOVA for leadership versus comparison at time three indicates significant improvement in the leadership group on the following variables; *resilience 1*  $F(1, 182)=4.487$ ,  $p=0.36$ , eta squared=0.02, *resilience 2*  $F(1, 182)=12.553$ ,  $p=.001$ , eta squared=.06, *empathy*  $F(1, 182)=9.276$ ,  $p=.03$ , eta squared=.05, *critical thinking*  $F(1, 183)=10.157$ ,  $p=.002$ , eta squared=.055, *communication skills*  $F(1, 183)=7.526$ ,  $p=.007$ , eta squared=.04, *goal setting*  $F(1, 183)=11.546$ ,  $p=.001$ , eta squared=.06, *team work*  $F(1, 183)=5.506$ ,  $p=.020$ , eta squared=.029, *problem solving*  $F(1, 183)=13.683$ ,  $p<.000$ , eta squared=.07, *emotional support*  $F(1, 182)=5.391$ ,  $p=.021$ , eta squared=.021, *community involvement*  $F(1, 183)=13.285$ ,  $p<.000$ , eta squared=.07, and *Resilience Total*  $F(1, 182)=10.482$ ,  $p=.001$ , eta squared=.057 (see table 5.8). See Appendix O for Graphs illustrating the changes between the groups over time.

**Table 5.8 ANOVA's Mean Scores for Leadership versus Comparison Group over time**

Quantitative Measures	L-Ship Gp T1	Comp Gp T1	Sig	L-ship Gp T2	Comp G T2	Sig	L-Ship Gp T3	Comp Gp T3	Sig
Adolescent Well-being	8.61	8.67		8.19	9.05		8.41	9.09	
Resilience1	35.10	35.76		34.98	34.74		36.06	34.57	*
Understand Self	11.69	11.94		11.98	11.76		11.87	11.45	+
Resilience2	38.02	38.39		38.80	38.06		38.86	35.68	***
Empathy	12.35	11.90		12.40	12.09		12.92	11.95	**
Decision Making	14.98	14.85		15.50	14.97		15.89	14.78	+
Critical Thinking	18.19	17.92		18.76	18.12		19.34	17.64	**
Communication Skills	22.96	22.70		23.25	22.53	+	23.74	22.04	**
Goal Setting	14.58	14.57		14.80	14.06	*	15.34	13.60	***
Team Work	11.90	11.73		11.74	11.60	+	12.12	11.33	*
Problem Solving	18.88	18.79		19.07	18.15	+	19.63	17.64	***
Life Skills ^	101.23	100.20		103.14	99.45	*	106.06	97.04	+
Leadership Skills	41.24	41.19		42.10	40.01	**	43.73	39.82	+
Friend Support	11.04	11.11		11.13	10.65	+	11.09	10.89	
Parental Support	10.62	10.22		10.78	9.90	+	10.67	9.68	+
Sibling Support	9.16	9.44		9.51	8.52	**	9.56	9.13	
Adult Support	9.67	9.98		9.94	9.75		9.96	9.75	
Total Social support^^	39.8	40.57		40.57	38.58	*	40.65	38.61	
Concrete	10.10	10.32		10.33	10.00		10.29	9.89	
Emotional	10.14	10.11		10.30	9.77	+	10.29	9.61	*
Esteem	9.69	9.77		9.79	9.21	*	9.97	9.25	+
Advice	9.94	10.36	*	10.13	9.88		10.10	9.86	
Community	10.86	10.47		11.20	10.19	***	11.36	9.93	***
Resilience Total	72.92	74.16		73.79	72.45		74.92	70.25	***

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

A Chi-square test indicated that there was no significant difference between the leadership and comparison groups in terms of leadership self-perception at time one. At time two and time three there were statistically significantly more young people who believed themselves to be leaders in the leadership group than in the comparison group,  $X^2(1, n=283)=13.025, p<.000, \phi=.223$  and  $X^2(1, n=185)=11.483, p=.001, \phi=.264$ , respectively, see table 5.9.



**Table 5.9 Leadership Self-Perception for both Groups over time**

Characteristics	Leader Gp T1	Comp Gp T1	Chi Sq	Leader Gp T2	Comp Gp T2	Chi Square	Leader Gp T3	Comp Gp T3	Chi Sq
Self-perception as a Leader			-			F=14.038***			F=12.911***
Yes	43.5%	39.2%		78.4%	57.1%		83.6%	57.8%	
No	55.4%	59.8%		21.6%	42.9%		16.4%	42.2%	

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

In addition some interesting findings in respect of gender emerged using one-way ANOVA comparing leadership and comparison groups (see appendix M & N for details):

- At time one there was no significant difference between groups for males, however at time two the leadership group were significantly increased on problem solving, sibling support, social support.
- At time three for males in the leadership group they were significantly greater on problem solving and parental support than comparison group respondents.
- For females when compared to the comparison group there was no significant difference at time one. At time two however females were significantly stronger on well-being, resilience II, leadership skills, parental support and community involvement in the leadership group than the comparison group.
- At time three females in the leadership group were significantly stronger than the comparison group on adolescent well-being, understanding themselves, resilience II, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving, life skills, concrete support, emotional support, community involvement and resilience total.

## Summary

### Social Support

- At time one, for participants with paired data, the comparison group were significantly higher on *advice support* than the leadership group, all other variables were similar between the groups.
- At time two the leadership group were statistically significantly improved over the comparison group on *sibling support, esteem support and total social support*.
- At time three the leadership group were significantly improved over the comparison group on *emotional support*.

- For males at time two the leadership group were significantly increased on *problem solving, sibling support and social support*. At time three males in the leadership group reported significantly *parental support* than comparison group.
- At time two leadership females reported significantly stronger *parental support* than the comparison group. At time three leadership females had significantly stronger *concrete support and emotional support* than the comparison group.

### **Resilience**

- At time three the leadership group were statistically significantly improved over the comparison group on measures of *resilience 1, resilience 2 and resilience total*.
- At time two females had significantly stronger on *resilience 2* in the leadership group than the comparison group. At time three females in the leadership group had significantly stronger than the comparison group *resilience 2 and resilience total*.

### **Leadership Skills**

- At time two the leadership group were statistically significantly improved over the comparison group on *goal setting, leadership skills and community involvement*.
- At time three the leadership group were statistically significantly improved over the comparison group on *empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving and community involvement*.
- For males at time two the leadership group demonstrated a significant increase in *problem solving*. At time three for males in the leadership group they were significantly stronger on *problem solving* than comparison group.
- At time two females were significantly stronger on *well-being, leadership skills and community involvement* in the leadership group than the comparison group. At time three females in the leadership group were significantly stronger than the comparison group on *adolescent well-being, understanding themselves, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving, life skills and community involvement*.

Significantly more young people in the leadership group perceived themselves as leaders at time two and three than in the comparison group.

### **Photo-voice**

Using a visual approach, the young people were asked to depict their leadership journey. The pictures illustrated here have been chosen to illuminate some of the learning and the journey's experienced by the young people involved in the leadership programme.

Figure 5.4 illustrates the emergence of a butterfly from a cocoon. The young person describes feeling that they have emerged from a lack of confidence, like the small caterpillar, to be the confident leader they are now.

**Figure 5.4 Butterfly Picture**

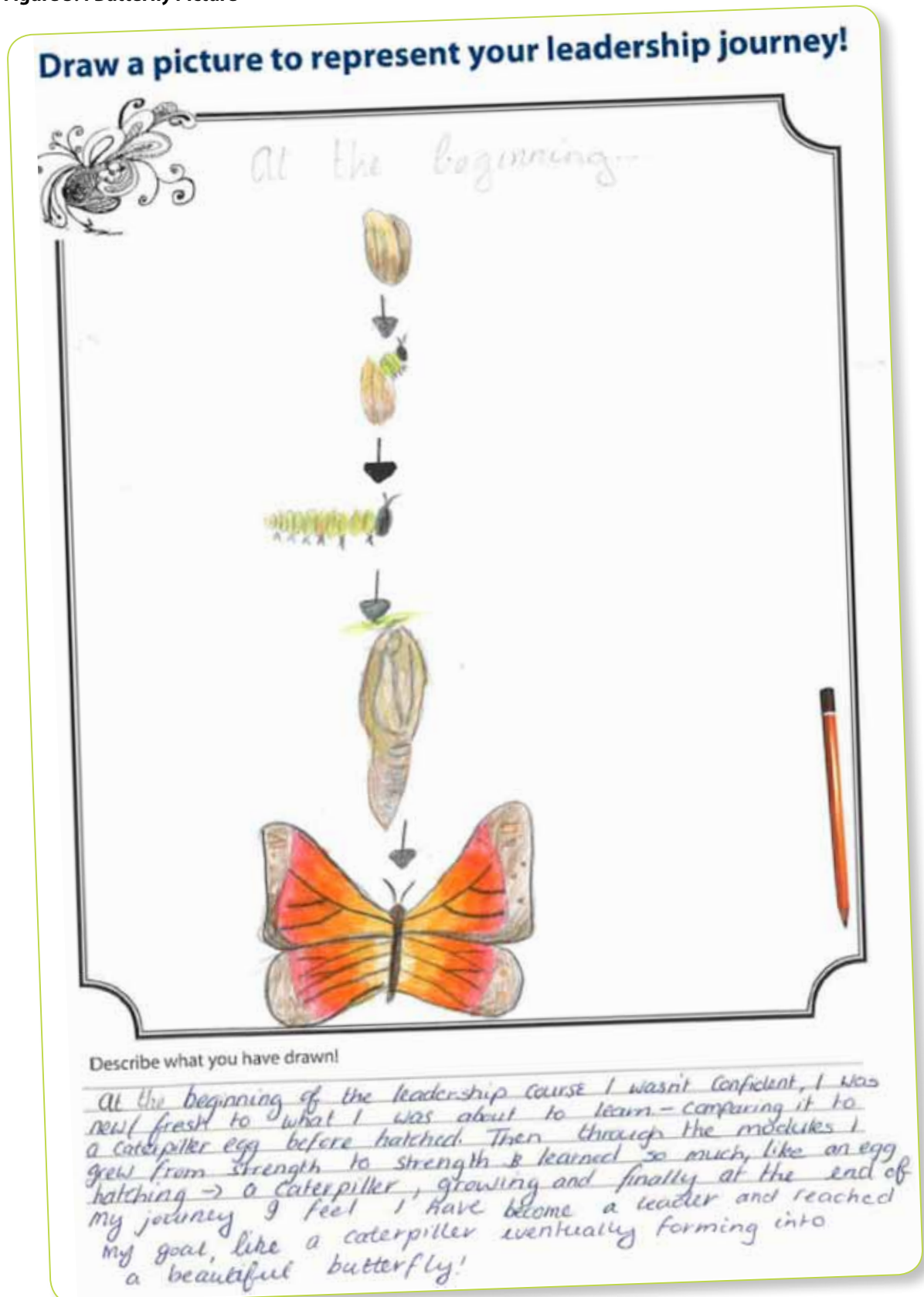


Figure 5.5 depicts how the leadership journey for this young person started with knowing very little about leadership. They illustrate a 'small leadership' which grows and continues to grow for them as they progress on their journey as a leader.

**Figure 5.5 Leadership Picture**



Figure 5.6 illustrates how the young person feels they went from being shy and isolated, hidden like a turtle inside his shell before the programme. After the leadership programme the young person feels more confident, social and feels they have the skills for leadership.

**Figure 5.6 Turtle Picture**

**Draw a picture to represent your leadership journey!**

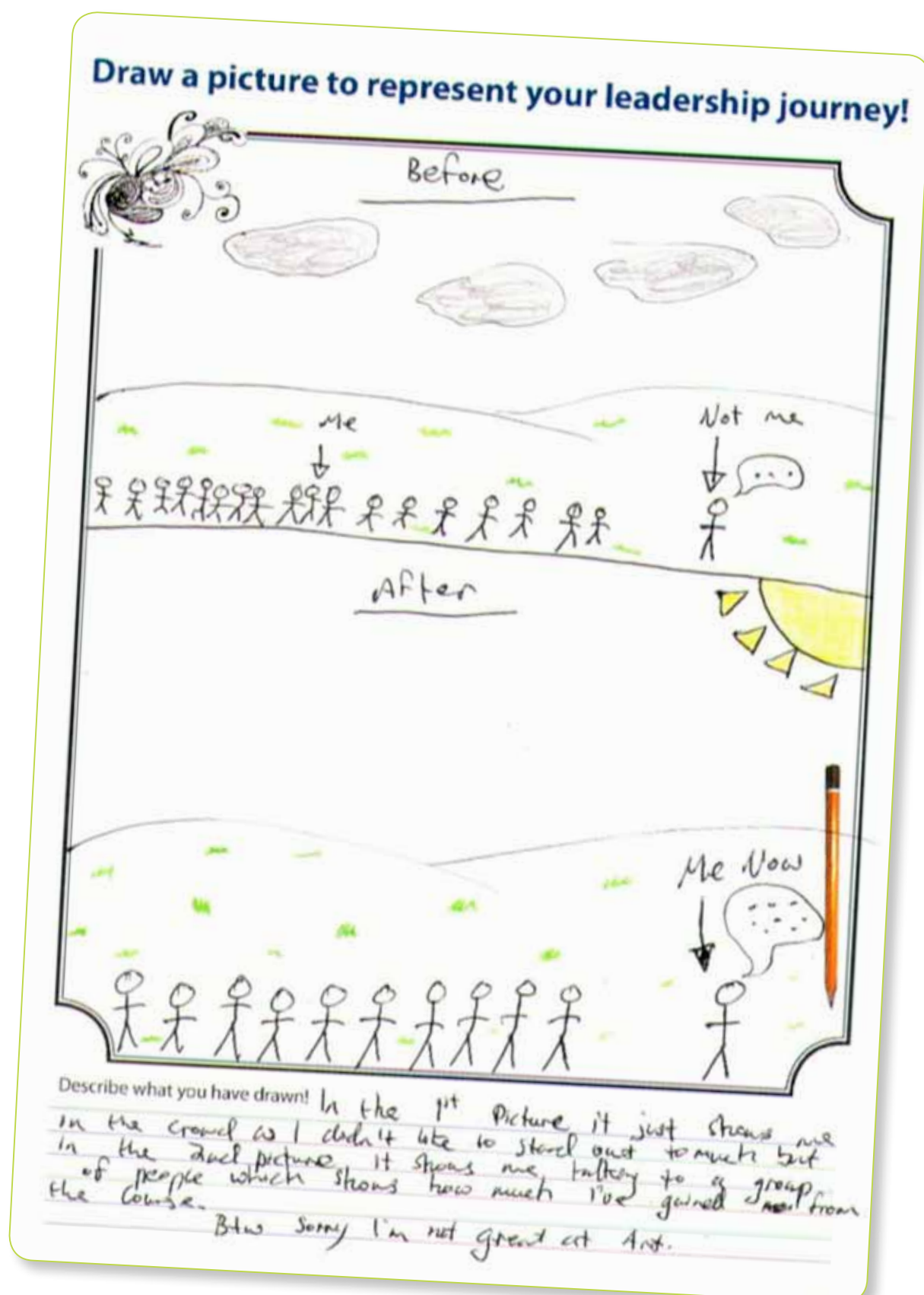
Describe what you have drawn!

*Before starting this programme I was very shy and isolated (and) but (since) over the course of the programme I've become more confident and social. This helped better my communication and overall (helps) leadership skills.*



Figure 5.7 illustrates how the young person has transformed from being one person in a crowd listening to others, to being the person who is talking to the group and leading them.

**Figure 5.7 Leading the Crowd Picture**



## Summary

The photo-voice pictures graphically depict the individual journeys of the participants, breathing life into the research. They capture vividly the changes that the young people feel they have experienced over the course of the leadership programme. They bring attention to the impact the programme has had on their sense of self, their growth and their transformation. The illustrations tell the story of the young people going from shyness to confidence and taking on leadership opportunities and stepping out from the crowd as well as growing into leadership roles.

## Facilitator's Observations

Facilitators were afforded the opportunity to explore their perceptions of the programme and changes they perceived to have occurred for the participants through the use of focus groups. A total of 23 programme facilitators participated in five focus groups. The changes facilitators observed in the participants and how they believe the young people benefited from the programme are explored in this section (See Appendix P for emerging focus group themes). In terms of skills development, the facilitators reported that the young people demonstrated enhanced skills in a number of areas. Those mentioned the most across the focus groups included: communication skills, presentation skills, reflective skills, research skills, team work and self-awareness. As well as these, many reported that they could observe very distinct improvements in the young people's confidence.

***The year accelerated their learning even from public speaking. They'll all say themselves their confidence, they're a tight group now as a team but are even able to articulate their own emotions, feelings and their thoughts much better now, much clearer than before from the beginning. [FG1]***

Facilitators also reported that the participant's support networks grew from their involvement in the youth leadership programme. They perceived that the participants had gained additional friends, and had enhanced their ability to access other supports as a result of their engagement in the programme. Facilitators highlighted that they had gained additional opportunities to build relationships with the young people, and similarly the participants had more opportunities to understand each other. During the leadership group other issues arose and facilitators described being able to deal with these in meaningful ways. For some, they felt that it gave them a more rich understanding of the needs of the young people they were working with as well as opportunities to address these needs.

***Even your own relationships with them... you don't know when in life they might need somebody and you might be just the person [FG5]***

Community involvement was also seen as an integral aspect of the programme. From the facilitators perspective the programme brought with it an important connection between the young people and



their communities. There was a sense of pride from the facilitators for the work that the young people did and the recognition that they got from their communities for it. As well as this, there was a large degree of respect and support from the communities for the young people who did get involved locally.

*I think when the young people felt that they were actually being listened to within the community, that it motivated them to keep working, actually see we could change something so I think it's important they see that themselves you know? [FG2]*

## 5.5 Youth Leadership for Low and High Risk Young People: Objective 4

To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in a youth leadership programme and again in light of having received the youth leadership programme.

Involved in this aspect of the study are a selection of young people who scored either high or low on the adolescent well-being scale. The adolescent well-being scale is a measure for depression and scores of over 13 indicate the respondent may have symptoms of depression. Young people with scores of over 13 were considered high risk and invited to interview. As well as this, young people with low scores, between 0-4, were considered low risk and also invited to interview. These young people were tracked over the course of the programme to explore what their experience was and how this related to their perception of their leadership skills, resilience and social support. This section presents both the quantitative and qualitative data for the young people in the high and low risk groups.

### 5.5.1 Quantitative Strand

In the leadership group at time one, 12.0% of young people could be considered high risk as indicated by the adolescent well-being scale see table 5.10. Low risk young people ranged from 0-4 on the adolescent well-being scale (n=16) and high risk young people scored over 13 on the same scale (n=22).

**Table 5.10 Percentage Youth in Risk categories for the Leadership group**

Characteristics	Leadership T1			Comparison T1		
	Adolescent WB			Adolescent WB		
	Low Risk (0-3)	Middle Risk (4-12)	High Risk (Over 13)	Low Risk (0-3)	Middle Risk (4-12)	High Risk (Over 13)
Percentage	8.7%	78.8%	12.0%	9.1%	74.7%	16.2%
Number	(n=16)	(n=145)	(n=22)	(n=9)	(n=74)	(n=16)

A Chi-square test indicated that both the high and low risk groups were similar for the leadership group in terms of gender break down  $\chi^2 (1, n=38) = 2.538, p=.103, \phi=.258$ , see table 5.11. A Chi-square test indicated that both the high and low risks groups are similar in terms of gender break down for the comparison group  $\chi^2 (1, n=25) = 3.222, p=.097, \phi=.359$ .

**Table 5.11 Percentage Gender in high and low risk groups**

Characteristics	Leadership T1					Comparison T1				
	Adolescent WB					Adolescent WB				
	Low Risk		High Risk		Sig	Low Risk		High Risk		Sig
Gender	M	F	M	F	-	M	F	M	F	-
Percentage	62.5%	37.5%	36.4%	63.6%		44.4%	55.6%	12.5%	87.5%	
Number	(n=10)	(n=6)	(n=8)	(n=14)		(n=4)	(n=5)	(n=2)	(n=14)	

As table 5.12 indicates a Chi-square test revealed that the low risk group perceived themselves as leaders statistically significantly more than the high risk young people at both time one  $X^2(1, n=33)=9.512, p=.009$   $\phi=.537$  and time two  $X^2(1, n=33)=4.733, p=.009, \phi=-.457$ . No statistically significant difference was observed for leadership self-perception at time three,  $X^2(1, n=33)=.306, p=.269, \phi=-.236$ , indicating that the high risk group were just as likely to see themselves as leaders as the low risk group at this time point.

**Table 5.12 Leadership Self Perception for Leadership Low & High Risk Groups**

Characteristics	LeadershipT1			LeadershipT2			LeadershipT3		
	Adolescent WB			Adolescent WB			Adolescent WB		
	Low	High	Chi-Square	Low	High	Sig	Low	High	Sig
Self-perception as a leader			F=12.457**			F=6.240*			-
Yes	62.5%	9.1%		100%	68.2%		90.9%	81.3%	
No	37.5%	86.4%		0%	31.8%		9.1%	14.8%	

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

As table 5.13 indicates a Chi-square test revealed that for the comparison group the low risk group perceived themselves as leaders more than the high risk young people however this was not significant at time one  $X^2(1, n=25)=.968, p=.325, \phi=-.280$ . The difference was significant at time two  $X^2(1, n=25)=5.531, p=.006, \phi=-.554$  and not significant at time three,  $X^2(1, n=18)=2.240, p=.134, \phi=-.556$ .

**Table 5.13 Leadership Self Perception for Comparison Low & High Risk Groups**

Characteristics	Comparison T1			Comparison T2			Comparison T3		
	Adolescent WB			Adolescent WB			Adolescent WB		
	Low	High	Chi-Square	Low	High	Sig	Low	High	Sig
Self-perception as a leader			-			F=5.531**			-
Yes	66.7%	37.5%		88.9%	31.2%		100%	44.4%	
No	33.3%	62.5%		11.1%	68.8%		0%	55.6%	

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Paired T-Tests

Bearing in mind the small number involved in this analysis, paired T-tests indicate that for the low risk group there were statistically significant increases in adolescent well-being score, indicating a reduction in subjective well-being, this could be considered regression to the mean. Statistically significant improvements were noted for team work between time one and time three for this group (see Appendix: Q).

For the high risk group statistically significant improvements were noted for adolescent well-being, see table 5.13 for mean scores. As well as statistically significant improvements were observed for decision making, critical thinking, parental support, sibling support, total social support and advice support between time one and time two. Statistically significant improvements were maintained for adolescent well-being at time three. Goal setting and leadership skills saw statistically significant improvements between time one and time three. These changes may be attributed to the programme alternatively could also be seen as regression to the mean. Decreasing trends were observed in a number of areas of social support; however, these were not statistically significant.

**Table 5.14 Paired T test Mean Scores for Survey Measures for High risk Group**

Quantitative Measures	T1	T2	T3	Significance T1 v T2	Significance T1 v T3	Significance T2 v T3
Adolescent WB	<b>17.18</b>	<b>12.59</b>	<b>14.94</b>	**	*	
Resilience1	31.95	32.45	33.13	+		
Understand Self	10.36	11.05	10.25	+		
Resilience2	34.27	34.91	35.38	+		
Empathy	12.14	12.45	13.25			
Decision Making	<b>13.77</b>	<b>15.45</b>	15.56	**		
Critical Thinking	16.09	17.82	18.56	*		
Communication Skills	21.27	21.64	22.00			
Goal Setting	<b>13.09</b>	13.32	<b>14.50</b>		*	
Team Work	10.95	11.05	11.00	+		
Problem Solving	18.32	18.09	18.63			
Life Skills ^	93.50	97.36	100.25	+		
Leadership Skills	<b>37.18</b>	<b>37.86</b>	<b>41.25</b>	+	**	*
Friend Support	10.27	10.64	10.27			
Parental Support	<b>9.14</b>	<b>10.05</b>	8.81	*		
Sibling Support	<b>8.52</b>	<b>9.52</b>	8.50	*		
Adult Support	8.82	9.41	9.38			
Tot-Soc Supports^^	<b>36.36</b>	<b>39.18</b>	36.31	*		
Concrete	9.45	9.95	9.13			
Emotional	9.14	9.86	9.25			
Esteem	8.95	9.50	8.88			
Advice	<b>8.82</b>	<b>9.86</b>	9.06	*		
Community	10.00	10.45	10.81			
Resilience Total	66.23	67.36	68.50			

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

There was a statistically significant decrease in the low risk cohort of the comparison group for adolescent well-being, problem solving, understanding self, friendship support, parental support and sibling support between time one and time two. A further statistically significant decrease was noted for problem solving between time one and time three for this group, no other statistically significant changes emerged see appendix R.

A significant decrease was noted for the high risk cohort from the comparison group in resilience and community involvement from time one to time two. A statistically significant decrease was seen in adult support and a statistically significant increase was observed in goal setting from time two to time three for the high risk comparison group, no other statistically significant changes emerged, see appendix S.

A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was carried out which demonstrated similar patterns as the above analysis.

A mixed between-within subject's analysis of variance was also carried out which revealed similar patterns as the above analysis. The low risk group scored significantly higher than the high risk group on most variables at time one. However, the high risk group scored higher in terms of empathy than the low risk group (see Appendix T for Graphs of low, middle and high risk groups). Over time the high risk group improved on the majority of measures, while the low risk group continued to remain stable and substantially higher than the high risk group.

### **Summary of Quantitative Findings for High and Low risk Youth**

The high risk group were significantly less likely to see themselves as leaders at time one. However, by time three there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, indicating that the high risk young people saw themselves as leaders just as much as the low risk group.

The findings indicate that the low risk group increase significantly on team work, while the high risk group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in adolescent well-being, decision making, critical thinking, friendship support, sibling support, total social support and advice support between time one and time two, and adolescent well-being, goal setting and leadership skills between time one and time three.

## **5.5.2 Qualitative Strand**

### **Introduction**

This section will present the young people's perceptions of their leadership skills, resilience and social support over the course of the leadership programme. Young people from the high and low risk groups were invited to take part in interviews at three time points. The rationale for this was to explore whether adversity and subjective well-being had an impact on the acquisition of leadership skills, resilience and social support over the course of the leadership programme and 6 months after the programme was completed. All names have been altered to protect the identity of the young people and pseudonyms have been used.

### ***Demographics:***

As outlined above, young people with the highest (risk) scores and lowest (risk) scores on the adolescent well-being scale were invited to interview. Thirty young people were invited to interview at time one with twenty two youth being available (7 male, 15 females aged 16-18 years; 11 high risk- 1 male, 10 female; 11 low risk - 6 male, 5 female). As indicated in the quantitative analysis earlier more females were involved in the youth leadership programme at the outset. As well as this significantly more females scored in the high

risk category which is similarly reflected in the gender breakdown at interview for the high risk group. The first time point for interview data collection was three months into the leadership programme. This was due to needing all questionnaires to be returned to allocate youth to high and low risk groups.

At time two there were 21 young people (10 low risk; 11 high risk) included in the interviews. The second data collection was after the youth leadership programme was complete.

At time three there were six young people (2 low risk; 4 high 'risk) included in the interviews, seven young people were invited to interview at time three with one young person being unavailable. A smaller number of interviewees were selected at time three as data saturation was occurring. The third data collection occurred 6 months after the programme was completed.

### **Findings**

Interviews carried out at time one were exploratory. They were used to ascertain what the young people felt about leadership, the skills required to be a leader and the skills they felt they had. The interviews also explored the young people's perception of their social support and their sense of their own resilience. For ease of presentation these will be dealt with sequentially and include the three time points. Social support will be dealt with first, followed by resilience and finally leadership.

### **Social Support**

When interviewing the young people with respect to their perceived social support, the young people described forms of support which can be grouped into the classifications used within the social support measure. These classifications include sources of support and types of support. As well as this young people's perception of change in their social support over time was explored. See Appendix U for table of support classifications and references to them.

### **Sources of support**

#### **Friends**

In the interviews, peers were highlighted as critical in terms of support by the low risk participants (n=10). They play a pivotal role in the participant's lives, and engaged with them on almost round the clock contact through school, texting, social networking etc., Participants highlighted that sometimes it was easier to talk to their friends than their family. They reported that their peers had a similar frame of reference for their life for example what was happening at school, in the community and all the other relationships and issues that surrounded their life. For the high risk group friends were also very important (n=7). When talking about their friends this group referred to how they made them smile and were there for them to help them through the everyday ups and downs they experienced. This group reported relying on friends for advice and support when they were down.

***I've great friends. They always make me smile when things are bad, or they have a way of making it seem smaller like it doesn't really matter [Sile]***

## **Parents**

Most young people in the low risk group (n=9) indicated that their parents were a crucial positive and encouraging support in their lives. The participants highlighted the importance their parents had played in giving them a solid foundation of values but also how instrumental their parents were in helping them to take on different opportunities. For some, they felt their parents gave them a strong basis which enabled them to take steps beyond themselves and their family to contribute to the wider community.

***They [parents] give you more confidence to do what you're doing like... it's good to have someone behind you thinking that you will do well. [Sarah]***

For the high risk group they highlighted their parents most frequently as sources of support to them (n=10). They illustrated how their parents were important in encouraging them, giving advice and helping them through difficult times. One young person also illuminated that without the level of support she got from her parents she could see how other young people would turn to negative things to get the support they needed.

## **Siblings**

Siblings were considered to play an important role in the support network of some young people in the low risk group (n=5). Despite siblings being referred to less than the other supports, those who did mention them, they deemed them as vital supports. In the main siblings were relied on for encouragement, advice, mentoring and guiding, particularly where the sibling was older. Where siblings were younger there was the sense that they had a responsibility to look after the younger sibling and act as a role model. Siblings weren't mentioned in as positive a light as much as by the high risk group (n=2), however by time two participants in this group did report that they were having less fights with their siblings.

***Myself and my sister we used to fight, now I just kind of step back and don't just say things on the spur of the moment any more. [Alison]***

## **Other Adults**

For the low risk group other adults played a positive role in their lives (n=7), some of these were in the form of extended family, youth workers, coaches and teachers. They helped to encourage them when they needed it or offer advice. Other adults weren't mentioned as much as by the high risk group (n=3).

## **Types of Support**

Young people described forms of support which can be grouped into the classification of types of support used in the social support measure, these include esteem, emotional, concrete and advice.

### **Esteem Support**

When it came to the category of esteem support the participants in the low risk group reported that their support network helped them to believe in themselves. They encouraged them when they need it and motivated them when they found things difficult, for example school, sports or community involvement. They helped them with problems or challenges by bolstering them to believe that they could overcome them. Esteem support resonated most frequently at time one (n=10) with participants referring to being motivated and encouraged by their family and friends regularly as well as been recognised for their contribution to others. Esteem support was illuminated through the belief parents instilled in their young people that they could take on anything, that they were in control of what they did in their lives, they encouraged and pushed their children beyond their self-imposed boundaries as well as played down events young people perceived as catastrophes. Feedback from adult mentors also played a crucial role in the esteem support of young people with some young people getting a good degree of recognition on the basis of their sports, school work or other areas that they excelled at.

***Mum encourages me every time I play football – embarrassing sometimes, she pushes me the extra bit, makes you push forward and encourages you to do better. [Michael]***

For the high risk group they did not refer to esteem (n=3) or how much their parents and peers valued them as much as their counterparts (n=10) at time one. By time three however all young people interviewed in this group referred to things that resonated with the category of esteem support, such as being recognised for their contribution to others and seeing that others supported them to believe in themselves. The emphasis on support that can be categorised as esteem support appeared to have grown for this group.

***Then dancing and all, if I quit that she'd [mum] kill me because she knows I like it and all that kind of stuff, so yeah. They support everything that I do, yeah, they're real supportive in that way. [Alison]***

At time three all participants in both groups felt that there were people in their lives that encouraged them to put their effort and energy into things that they liked. As well as this parents encouraged them when they knew they enjoyed things and sometimes wanted to give up. All participants felt that their parents were proud of them for their achievements, especially the graduation from NUI Galway for the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action. As well as that, they felt that their friends could see a change in them over the year.

***Yeah my mam and dad recognise how much I have changed in the last year because last year I was very shy, but now I'm outgoing.... mam was pure proud when we graduated down in Galway. She was like I'm so proud of you. It was a great day. [Seamus]***



### **Emotional Support**

In terms of emotional support the low risk participants (n=5) highlighted that their support network listened to them, helped them through challenges and problems that they encountered. They described how their support network sometimes shared similar experiences that they had gone through and helped them to deal with these challenges by making the challenge seem smaller. At time two emotional support did not feature as prominently for this group (n=4) as the high risk group (n=9). It was still there however, the main focus for the low risk group appeared to be in relation to esteem support. For the high risk group they highlighted how important it was to have people there for them that helped them through difficult times. Most of the young people (n=9) in this group described how it was just really nice to be able to share their problems and have someone listen to them, and not judge them. They talked about how it was easier once the problem was out and not just bottled up in their heads. They reported how valuable it was for them to have someone understand and help them to get a handle on understanding why they felt the way they did. As mentioned above, this group appeared to discuss things that had a stronger focus in the category of emotional support than esteem support at time two.

***It's really good like. If I talk she listens and it helps me with a problem. [Karen]***

At time three all participants in both groups felt that there were people there for them if they had to deal with difficult situations and that there was someone there for them to turn to if they were sad or upset.

### **Concrete Support**

Discussions which could be framed in the context of concrete support were mentioned less frequently than other types of support by both the low and high risk groups. The high risk group did mention that they would have liked to have had more support in this area, for example financial needs or practical things like someone taking care of them if they were sick. When probed further at time three participants reported that if it wasn't for the practical support that their parents gave they would be unable to engage in the things they love. In fact, for some, they felt they may not have even found out the things they liked. These supports covered the financial costs of sports or dance, the transport of getting them to training or practice, supporting their fundraising efforts, helping them out if they got stuck on things and giving them jobs to earn extra money.

***My Dad is great at dropping me to places and picking me up and then with money you see I work as well so I wouldn't really need it but if I was stuck they would help me out. [Alison]***

Parents were also cited as helping out with school subjects which some of the participants found difficult.

### **Advice Support**

Advice was mentioned by many of the young people in the low risk group (n=6) as being particularly important when they had to make decisions about what to do. They found that a variety of people

including; parents, friends, siblings and other adults were important in guiding their choices. This group were readily willing to accept help when faced with a challenge and needing to find information. They realised that other people could help, and instead of struggling alone believed that seeking advice was the best way to resolve a problem. For the high risk they reported seeking advice from their friends or family in relation to decisions, problems or challenges (n=3). They found that when they listened to other people's experiences this helped them to make decisions as to what to do on a number of things. The young people considered their support networks invaluable in the context of having someone to bounce ideas off, listen, give their perspective and help them in making the best decisions.

***They're there to listen to me. They're there if I need advice, things like that. [Mary]***

At time three all participants in both groups felt that they had people to ask advice from. Whether it was what to take on the trip to Africa<sup>2</sup>, how to handle different situations, what to do in college or how to deal with the presentations they had to give, all felt that there were people there for them to access advice from. They also reported feeling that they had good advice to give in return.

***Mam always tells me whatever I do, do it for myself, don't be doing anything for other people, like don't do things because they want you to. Don't live for someone else, do what you want to do. [Alison]***

### **Supports Changed**

More young people in the high risk group (n=9) than the low risk group (n=6) felt that their supports had changed at time two. For those who reported that their supports had changed they described realising that they could access more supports through the people in the group. Some also reported feeling more comfortable discussing things with their parents and their friends, and as such were better able to access support. For others, they also felt that they had better resources for supporting themselves which meant that they had increased their own capacity for self-support. As well as having a better capacity to access supports, which may have always been there, they felt better able to identify them.

***I'm probably more independent now than I was, I don't rely on them that much. I'm a stronger person now, than I would have been before, not that they would not be there for me, I just don't need them as much. [Alison].***

***I think I can value it [support] better after the Leadership programme so I see it as more. [Theresa]***

<sup>2</sup> A number of young people fundraised for the Alan Kerins Projects as part of their community action project. This group raised money to engage in an intercultural immersion programme and met with young people in Zambia who were also completing the youth leadership programme. During this immersion trip they learned about life in Zambia for teenagers and shared their experiences of life in Ireland.

Other participants in the high risk group felt that the supports they had were the same as they were before the programme (n=2) and had not really changed.

### ***Other aspects***

Other aspects which emerged under social support which were less prominent were support when they did not want to do something as well as the quality of support they received which all participants felt was good. All participants rated the quality of support they received in the region of 7-10 on a 10 point scale. All participants felt that they could frequently access support particularly through the use of new media e.g. texting, social networking, internet, advice chat rooms etc., They also felt that their support was give and take in that they recognised that they had given ample support to friends, siblings, parents and external family as and when it was needed.

### ***Social Support Summary***

In terms of social support, the low risk group reported receiving more friendship support, adult support, sibling support and esteem support than their high risk counterparts. The high risk group appeared to receive more emotional support and this may be congruent with the fact that these young people experienced more traumatic life experiences, for example family deaths, depression etc., and as such required more emotional support. The esteem support of the high risk group did increase at the 6 month follow-up indicating that this group received recognition for their leadership within the community. Most notable is the fact that both groups felt that their supports changed over the course of the programme with the high risk group feeling that it changed the most (at time two).

### ***Resilience***

When the young people were interviewed about their resilience a number of themes emerged most notably their perception of their resilience, a lack of it, coping strategies, difficulty coping and being healthy (see Appendix V).

For the low risk group there were no reports of experiencing challenging situations which they felt they could not overcome, at time one. They reported that they bounced back easily if they had to, they could pick themselves up and move on from various challenges and not let the challenge get them down. They appeared to be very adaptable and described not giving up easily. Over the course of the following interviews they felt that people in their lives contributed to their ability to cope with life's challenges. Participants highlighted that their relationships with friends, parents, siblings and people in their community were key to dealing with difficulties. This group referred to coping strategies such as talking with family or friends, taking things one step at a time, listening to music, and facing things straight on. Examples of challenges they had overcome included dealing with arguments between friends, getting landed with most of the work on a team project and exams. At time three for one participant a big challenge occurred in her life around holding herself together during a serious parental illness.

For the high risk group they reported that things did not always go the way they planned, they dealt with these challenges by trying not to let it get them down and tried to remain largely positive (n=8).

They reported that time helps, particularly if something very bad happened and that it was important to keep that in mind. Others found it harder to move on from difficult challenges, they reported that if you had failed at something it would stay with you for a long time (n=3). For this group sensitivity was a factor, and being challenged or criticised was something they felt was very difficult for them to deal with. Participants also reported things that made it difficult to cope which included: family, friends, themselves and how they looked at things, school, exams, conflict situations, working with other people who have a different view to yourself, stress, pressure and falling out with friends. At time three when it came to challenges they had to overcome in the previous month many stressful events came up, from ending a relationship with a boyfriend, to parental illness, parental arguments, death of loved ones and exams. All these situations placed a lot of stress on the individuals through which they had to cope.

### ***Vignettes***

Vignettes were thought the most appropriate way to illustrate the participant's experiences in dealing with challenging situations and displaying resilience. These individuals were chosen because they typify the types of challenges the young people had to overcome in the high risk group.

#### ***Vignette 1: Natasha***

Natasha is 16 years old. She describes how she deals with challenges in her life. She describes how she used to cut herself to find relief from difficult situations. She talks about how she used to find that she was so frustrated that she didn't know how to deal with her feelings. She describes how she would punch walls to release her frustration. She is quite a shy girl when we met first and appears to be more confident, more self-assured now 8 months later. She has been attending counselling in the past year since she started the leadership programme. She talks about how she's not afraid to stand up for herself or to present her ideas in the group. She highlights that this was not always the case. She often felt that other people were looking at her, thinking she was stupid and shouldn't be up there. She felt embarrassed by what she was saying and thought that other people might judge her and was worried about what they might think of her.

Eight months later she is still somewhat cautious and still somewhat uncertain, but she sees more good qualities in herself. She sees that she can contribute and that her voice is as important as others. She realises that she is not there yet, but she is just as valuable and important as others. She appears to have grown in her confidence, and self-belief. She tells me she is not cutting anymore and has found positive alternative ways of dealing with her frustrations. Natasha also describes how her parents are considering splitting up. She realises that it is not what she wants but it might be for the best. She utilises the support of her sister to deal with this, she feels she has good support from her sister and knows she can talk to the counsellor now too.

She has been on a long journey, more than many of the young people on the leadership programme. Natasha had an Adolescent Well-being score of 30 at time one, by far the highest on the programme, at time three it had reduced in a positive direction to 25. This number is still considered very high, however

is a substantial improvement. Her involvement in the leadership programme appears to have accrued some positive benefits for her as well as the counselling. She illustrates that through her use of social support, leadership and counselling she has developed positive ways of coping and resilience against life's stressors. Something she ultimately believes enhances her ability to take leadership of her own life.

### ***Vignette 2: Helen***

Helen is 16 years old. She is very shy. The ends of her jumper are frayed from pulling at them too much. She looks down at the ground and as we proceed with the interview her answers are peppered with prolonged 'Mmmm's' and many 'I don't knows'. She looks at the floor or out the window when she doesn't have the answer to a question. She is profoundly quiet, she answers in one liners and the interview is incredibly short. When asked does she like to work with others, she answers *'Sometimes it's easier on my own than in groups'*. She has started the leadership programme because she wants to contribute to her community and sees this as a way of increasing her skills.

At time two when we meet she is still quite shy, her answers are a bit longer and there are still a few 'I don't knows' when posed with questions. She does seem more relaxed and describes how she feels she is more confident now after the leadership programme. She says she enjoyed presenting her project and finds it easier to talk to her friends. She talks about how she will generally try to do things on her own until she knows she can't resolve it - *'Because you can't always rely on people, they have their problems too, so you have to sort it out yourself and get your own way around it.'* She sees herself as putting other people out if she needs their support so she tries to deal with things herself and finds listening to music helps.

At time three when I meet her it is like meeting a different girl. Now she was in fifth year and completed her community action project during the summer. She graduated from NUI Galway in the autumn with the Foundation Certificate and appears much more confident. She held her head up and made good eye contact. Her sentences were long and she had no problem sharing her opinion. She backed up her statements with examples, without being prompted and spoke about how she really enjoyed the programme and felt she got a lot out of it, particularly confidence and the ability to speak in front of a group. She talks about how she has taken on additional leadership roles supervising the younger children in her local girl guides something that she didn't feel she had the confidence to do before. She says now she can talk to the younger guides and share her experience and give them advice, something she hadn't done before. She goes on to talk about how she has changed over the past year. She says she moved from being afraid of talking to her Aunts and Uncles. She describes that her mother used to answer their questions as she was too shy. Now over a year later she feels confident enough to speak to her relatives, even initiating the conversation if necessary. More importantly, is that she believes she has an opinion worth sharing.

***I used to be really shy around my granny, aunts and uncles, my mum used to answer for me if they asked a question...I have no problem talking to them now, if they don't talk to me first, I wouldn't have any problem starting the conversation.***

She goes on to talk about being so shy that she relied on her parents to take her everywhere. She says she was even afraid to walk down the road past a dog that lived there, but now over a year later she is able to do it on her own. She admits it is still sometimes scary but is proud of overcoming that barrier to her independence.

Helen's story describes how she has not only grown and developed personally through her experience of the leadership programme, but her capacity to contribute to her community has been augmented as seen through her contribution to the girl guides and her community project. Her adolescent well-being score was 17 at time one and it was 8 at time three, this indicates a substantial positive decrease in the score yielding a measurable improvement in perceived well-being.

### ***Resilience Summary***

In terms of resilience it appears that the young people in the high risk group were exposed to more situations requiring resilience such as death of a loved one, family separation, self-harming, depression, chronic shyness to name but a few. The capacity of the young people to overcome their challenges by developing appropriate coping strategies, believing in the value of their voice and linking with supports helped them to deal with these situations and move successfully beyond them.

### ***Skills Development***

Within the context of skills a number of subthemes were recurrent over the three time points including leadership, communication, team work, conflict resolution and problem solving, social and emotional intelligence, and drive or action (see Appendix W).

### ***Leadership Skills***

For the low risk group they described their approach to leadership as guiding their team mates and encouraging them to achieve something together. They talked about motivating others, helping team mates get along, solving problems and resolving disagreements. As the course progressed they reported that they were more willing to put themselves forward for leadership positions and actively sought leadership opportunities. Some took on leadership roles within the community sharing a particular strength they had with others for example, holding a football summer camp for younger people in their area. For others, they learned valuable skills in believing they could take on leadership roles and actively sought to exercise their skills.

For the high risk group their perception of leadership was around standing up for what they believed in and listening to others to make sure that everyone's views were taken on board. They felt that a leader's role was to bring people together, to guide them and help them to solve problems. They did not feel that the leader was any different to others on the team, but did have more responsibility. Three young people interviewed from this cohort said they found themselves in both leadership and follower roles, while seven reported being more comfortable in follower roles at time one. Some seemed to feel more secure in these positions. They said it was easier to go along with the majority than to try to stand out

from the crowd. There was, for some, a sense of discomfort that their opinions, if voiced, would not be taken well and a lack of confidence was evident. They reported that if someone else would be better than them they would prefer the security of staying in the shadows. However, some did say that if the leader was pushy or not nice they would not like it and would find it hard to advocate for changing the leader. This was not the case for all in this group as some were eager to take on leadership roles.

At time two the young people in this group felt that their leadership skills had improved immensely and in such a way that they felt more likely to see and take on leadership roles (n=7). They described how they had taken the lead on their team projects, how they had gotten people to rally together to achieve a goal and how they felt that other people listened to their opinion. At time three for participants in both groups they reported that they were in stronger positions after being involved in the leadership programme. Some of the young people described this as a profound change. One girl commented: *I'd say yea definitely, I wouldn't have had any leadership skills at all at the start and now I just have.* [Diane-L].

### **Leadership Skill Summary**

At time one the low risk group were taking on more leadership roles than the high risk group. By time two the high risk group were taking on more leadership roles within and beyond the youth leadership programme, indicating their increase in confidence in pursuing these roles. The growth in application of leadership skills was evident from both groups, as both cohorts were engaging in meaningful leadership opportunities within their communities. Most notable was the fact that the high risk group began to see themselves as leaders more and to put themselves forward for more leadership roles.

### **Communication skills**

Many young people in the low risk group illustrated that they had strong communication skills including the ability to communicate comfortably in public such as giving a presentation, listening, challenging others and speaking with people in authority. Participants reported that their opinion mattered this was particularly true when they listened to the opinions of others, they believed their opinions were just as valid. They described that if something arose that they did not agree with, even if it they found it difficult to challenge they would. As time progressed they felt they were more assertive in how they dealt with others. They had developed an ability to get their point across in a way that was respectful but also meant that they were true to themselves. They felt that their presentation skills had also improved through the range of presentations and debates they had been involved in as part of the programme.

Counter to this many young people in the high risk group (n=8), reported being uncomfortable speaking in public. For some, this was down to feeling that others would judge their opinions, disagree with them or think they were stupid. They did report finding it difficult to talk to authority and challenge others. At time two most young people (n=8) felt that their communication skills had improved, mainly through the group discussion, team work, presentations and debates. The participants reported that they had more opportunities to express themselves, which meant they became more comfortable



communicating with other people from peers to people in authority to experts. Some still found it quite nerve wracking, however reported feeling that their communication skills had improved a lot from their first attempt at presenting.

***All the stuff about listening and getting to know your type of communication style, your way of kind of carrying yourself in a conversation or in anything... It's taught all of us more about ourselves and then helped us to sort of maximise the way we would communicate. A lot on communications, I've learnt a lot from that part of it. [Karen]***

### **Communication Summary**

The low risk group felt they had good communication skills to start with and were not afraid to speak out on matters affecting them. They also reported improvements in their communication skills over the course of the programme. The high risk group on the other hand reported being less comfortable speaking in public and with their communication skills in general. They described how they believed their communication skills, presentation skills, ability to speak in public and challenge others improved over the course of the programme.

### **Team Work**

Most young people in the low risk group enjoyed working as part of a team (n=9), in fact many found it easier than working alone as it shared the workload. Being part of a team meant that many of different people could contribute to reaching the goal. This meant that they were more confident about making decisions when other opinions fed into the process. This in general resulted in them being better able to reach their goal. For many they found team work easier and less stressful from individual work where all the responsibility lay on them. This group did however also acknowledge that team work was not always easy and saw problems and conflicts arise which needed to be dealt with.

Many of the participants in the high risk group were in favour of team work as it shared the load (n=7), some also preferred to work on their own (n=3). For those who preferred to work alone there was a fear of conflict arising within the group. As well as this, the pressure of having to express themselves which could potentially lead to being judged meant that it was easier for them to be self-reliant. For this small number of young people they reported that team members could be more of a hindrance than a help, they might let them down and they would have to take on all the work. As time progressed participants in this group did acknowledge, similar to the other group, that they expected the team work to be easier than it was. Disagreements did arise and some people had to take on more work while others did not contribute as much. However, participants did report that these situations gave them opportunities to exercise their assertiveness, problem solving, conflict resolution, engage their peers in accountability and as such draw out their leadership skills. By time three this group could see more of the benefits to team work as it generated more support, shared the load, encouraged them to exercise their leadership skills and generated more ideas.

***Difficult kind of trying to work with people that maybe you don't have the same view as, but that's not necessarily a bad thing... okay, well we'll try compromise... We have to see it from all points of view, if someone very closed minded it makes it difficult. [Lauren]***

### **Team Work Summary**

The low risk group all appeared to prefer team work than individual work at time one, some outlined the challenges it could bring however unanimously they would select this approach over working individually. The high risk group initially were more sceptical of team work and some found it easier to work alone than work with others. As the programme progressed the high risk group continued to see some of the pitfalls of team work but could also see more of the benefits. By time three all participants in both groups felt that team work was a good way of working as it increased the ideas and confidence in the end goal.

### **Conflict Resolution & Problem Solving**

There was a lot of similarity between how both groups dealt with conflict resolution and problem solving. Firstly, they described how important it was to ensure everyone remained calm or that you worked towards establishing calm. After this it was seen as very important to enable each side have their story heard and for people to be given the opportunity to respond. It was clear that some felt that everyone has a right to their opinion but unanimously they reported that there were better ways of resolving conflict than fighting. The groups described how it was important to look at the options including the advantages and disadvantages of the various options. It was felt that if conflict arose on a team project that it was important to resolve it to enable the team to continue working to reach their goal. The groups highlighted that it was important to talk about the conflict or problems that arose and come up with a plan to resolve them. One person outlined how someone not pulling their weight that the whole team pulled together when it was highlighted. This he reported helped the team to be stronger as they addressed the issues facing them and realised the importance of having a plan and everybody's contribution to the project.

***I'd be like – Oh here – what's the story like, we're working as a team, this isn't on like, it's not like an individual game, it's a cooperative like. [Seamus]***

At time three all participants in both groups saw problem solving as a key skill that they as leaders had developed. They broke it down into; what is the issue, did they have all the information, keeping calm or relaxed, helping come up with options, or seek additional advice and support from other people if necessary, then make a decision based on the information they had at hand. Whatever way the young people approached solving problems it required and making an informed decision by having a plan.

### **Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving Summary**

Both groups appear to have a good sense of how to deal with conflict and problems. As well as this both felt that they had gotten good exposure to situations that required their problem solving and conflict resolution skills. This suggests they had realised the importance of having a plan by gathering information, coming up with options and making a decision. Added to this was listening to both sides for conflict resolution to find a solution.

### **Social & Emotional Intelligence**

Both groups reported having a good degree of empathy and ability to relate to others. This was evident from their ability to understand the needs of others, interpret what it would feel like to be in a difficult situation and demonstrate compassion. There was however, a notable difference between the groups in terms of their self-awareness, self-control and self-confidence, with the low risk group reporting having more than their high risk counterparts at the outset. The high risk group did grow most notably in confidence over the course of the programme.

In the context of social and emotional intelligence, the low risk group described being able to respond to friends in need and having a strong degree of self-awareness which they admitted was dependent on the situation. Furthermore, they reported having self-control which enabled them to deal with their own emotions such as anger and frustration. As well as this, confidence was reported regularly as being pivotal to their ability to take on leadership roles, which they also described as having grown over the course of the programme.

For the high risk group, self-control and self-confidence were far less prominent at the outset, with some young people noting that they did not feel confident at all. By time two and three it was evident that the high risk group's confidence had improved with many noting that they felt more confident now as a result of their participation in the programme. Some highlighted how they had developed greater friendships, felt more capable of challenging others and speaking in public. They also felt stronger about challenging how self-critical they were as well as seeing the good in themselves and valuing their strengths within the team. They described how they had really gotten to know the other young people on the programme and felt they had a stronger connection and sense of self-worth which enhanced their self-confidence.

***Oh definitely made me less self-conscious and you know? Better with people than I used to be, and yeah, more confident. [Theresa]***

### **Social Skills**

Something that emerged in time three that did not appear before was an improvement in social skills which was most notable for the high risk group. The participants emphasised that through the leadership programme they felt their social skills with others had improved. They reported being more

chatty and comfortable in social situations. They believed that their interactions were better, they could be themselves and ultimately this helped them feel good about themselves.

***I'm way better at talking to people now. [Theresa]***

For one participant she reported being more confident speaking with her relatives and even comfortable enough to initiate conversations, which she had not done previously. She described a substantial shift in her ability to interact with others and improvement in her social skills. She reported a clear sense of relief at being able to engage in conversations with her relatives which left her feeling happy and content in her own skin.

***I have no problem talking to them, if they don't talk to me first, I would not have any problem starting the conversation... I would never have done that before... It feels weird; I was never like that before, it feels better, that I'm able to do it. [Helen]***

### **Social & Emotional Intelligence Summary**

The low risk group, at time one, reported having a good degree of self-awareness, self-control and self-confidence, particularly in their interactions with others. The high risk group on the other hand reported being less confident and having less self-control, which they reported improved over the course of the programme.

### **Sense of Achievement & Self-Belief**

When asked what they were most proud of, many reported that it was graduating from NUI Galway after having completed the course. For others, it was completing their community action project. They had participated meaningfully in their communities resulting in a strong sense of pride and accomplishment. They had faced challenges and overcome them, and as a result had increased their sense of self-belief as young leaders. This sense of achievement and self-belief came about through setting realistic goals and then going on to achieve them.

***Yeah. Step by step, like when you say 10,000 Euros it sounds so much but when you say 1,000 euro in seven months - that we could do. [Karen]***

### **Environmental Conditions**

#### **Authentic Opportunity**

One core aspect that enabled both groups to demonstrate their leadership skills was their involvement in real opportunities for leadership. For both groups, participating in these authentic leadership opportunities was critical to enabling them practice, apply and further develop their skills. For the low risk group this

came in many forms for example, helping an uncle out on the election campaign, training the under 8 football team, being the captain of the under 16 team, being school prefect etc., They were able to see that by taking on responsibility in their communities they gained opportunities to build their skill set, network with others, and apply their leadership skills. The high risk group mentioned opportunities like getting involved in clubs such as drama, dance, Foróige, or singing at a Christmas concert etc., as real opportunities that they were engaged in that helped them exercise their leadership skills.

At time three of the six participants interviewed five continue to be active youth leaders in their community and one was intending to consider another project when her leaving certificate was complete. Of the remaining five; one is an active leader in his local youth café, another gives her time to sharing her skills in dance with younger people and wants to focus her efforts on getting into dance college. Another young person who went to Africa has plans to return in the near future and wants to continue to fundraise for orphans in Zambia. Another young person plans to take on additional supervisory and leadership roles in her local Girl Guides. One young person wants to become a Foróige volunteer to share what she has learned with others.

### Giving

Something which came out strongly for both groups was generosity or giving (n=10, n=10). Both groups emphasised the importance of giving both personally and as a leader. The span of giving encompassed four categories; giving time, ideas, recognition and reward. Firstly, participants saw that it was important for a leader to be able to give their time, listen genuinely to their team mates and take their input on board. Secondly, sharing ideas was considered an important aspect of generosity; if a person was really invested in the group they would not keep their ideas to themselves and look for individual recognition but instead they would share the idea for the benefit of the entire group and this would then help everyone to achieve greater things.

***If you are going to take the place of a leader of a group you have to be generous with time and listen, if you weren't able to take on board what other people were saying then you wouldn't be a very good leader. Especially knowing what your team need from you as well and that people know you have time for them. It doesn't always have to be money. [Karen]***

Next came, recognition. This was in relation to being able to appreciate their team's contribution and not take all the credit for the work done. Without acknowledging their team mate's participation it was unlikely that the team members would want to continue to contribute to the work. Gratitude as small as saying a 'thank you' was considered to have a lot of mileage.

***I love when people appreciate you, if I do even a little bit of work and if someone says thanks it means so much cuz people just go oh yea she did that. If someone says thanks it is really good, it shows that people appreciate your effort. Because I am very appreciative of people. I always say thanks and get that back. [Diane]***

Finally, reward was seen as important component, whether this was in the format of public praise or a celebration of achievements. Reward enabled team members to see that there was a value placed on their contribution which in turn impacted on the motivation of members to contribute to the group. The participants also highlighted that generosity was reciprocal, that if you were generous to others then the likelihood was that they would be generous in return. While mentoring did not arise directly in relation to the youth leadership programme during the interviews, the young people did indicate that they got a lot of support during the programme and outlined other people they considered mentors and guides for example coaches, teachers, youth workers and relatives. Having a mentor or guide gave them the opportunity to receive support.

### **Action**

For action subthemes such as persistence, meaning and motivation emerged most frequently. Furthermore, being a role model was also reported as important.

### **Persistence**

Persistence emerged as critical to both groups in terms of achieving their goals and they reported that giving up early would not get them to where they wanted to go. For the low risk group persistence was an important part of who they were (n=10). There was a great sense of satisfaction when they achieved their goal and overcame barriers that got in the way. They were very aware that if they gave up too early it meant they would not accomplish anything and this enabled them focus on seeing things through.

***If you get knocked down once and don't get up again then you're not really a leader, you have to take the falls. [Diane]***

Young people in the high risk group reported that persistence was important in a leader. They thought it was important not to give up, particularly if they failed at something once. They highlighted that persistence helped to encourage them particularly, the first time they tried something and to endure through those initial doubts, challenges and barriers. They did however highlight that a person needed to know when to give up if there was no point in proceeding. Especially, if it caused stress or prevented a person from ending something that was going nowhere. Furthermore, they brought attention to the fact that just the right level of persistence was important, not so much that they would annoy others, but sufficient that they could overcome obstacles. This group were more cautious of being too persistent something the other group did not mention.

### **Motivating**

Motivating others also resonated with the participants as it was seen as especially important when trying to create a team to work towards a goal. Without the ability to motivate the team participants felt that it they would not be able to reach their goal. Both groups were aware of the importance of engaging team

members on their team project, some called this inspiring others. The low risk group saw this as integral to being a good leader, as a person could not really lead if their team were not too interested in being a part of what they were trying to do.

Young people in the high risk group found it harder to motivate others. They highlighted that it did not matter how enthusiastic or motivated they might be that it did not always result in them motivating others. They put it down to that they may not be interested, may not want to listen or just have other things that they would prefer to do. This ultimately made it very difficult and the young people recognised that they needed to be committed and good at getting others to buy into their ideas to be good leaders. They highlighted that sometimes in some situations it was impossible to motivate others and that needed to come from themselves. What it came down to was; *'encouraging the team to want to do it rather than pushing them into it'* [Alison]. Others saw that a key aspect of motivating others was to stand out from the crowd, be different, speak to another agenda and to encourage others to follow you *'Yes I think I inspire and motivate other people, I'm definitely not a sheep and other people do follow me'* [Sile].

### Meaning

As the young people explored their motivations behind being a leader, meaning was something which had particular resonance with them. This was especially so when considering that they were going to invest their time and potentially other people's time into a project. Both groups described how important it was to have meaning behind why they were completing a particular project. This they described was what drove their motivation to complete the project. *'If it didn't have meaning then why do it?'* [Alf]. Young people saw that unless there was a greater reason behind what they were doing that it was pointless and they could be spending their time doing something else. The participants reported that with meaning came respect for themselves, their time and their effort. Participants described that if there was a reason, then it kept them motivated to *'push on through'* [Alf]. Without meaning or purpose it was unlikely they would achieve what they set out to.

***Yes. It drives you doesn't it? To have something in it that means something to you. Without it you wouldn't be doing it really, you'd just be sitting there hating your life, not caring. [Theresa]***

### Role Models

At time one when asked, the low risk group (n=9) were slightly more likely to see themselves as role models than the high risk group (n=7). What impacted whether young people perceived themselves as role models was whether they felt other people saw them as role models. In cases where other people did see them as role models it strengthened their belief in themselves. More young people in the high risk group did not see themselves as role models, or believe that others would, with four young people declaring that they were not role models (n=4). Some saw their strengths as not necessarily strengths that others would want to look up to.



***No, I just don't see myself as a good role model so I can't see other people thinking I am  
[Hannah]***

As the programme progressed more young people could see themselves as leaders and thought that they had useful skills and ideas to share. For the high risk group they were more likely to see themselves as role models at time two than time one.

### **Other Areas**

Other themes that emerged but which were less prominent included: critical thinking, decision making, being democratic, gratitude, increased maturity, continual development, calmness, dedication, independence, being open, people skills, looking at things from different perspectives, risk taking and understanding community needs.

### **Leadership Summary**

The above components largely map onto the tentative conceptual model that was presented in Chapter 2 and illustrates how these areas had particular resonance with the young people on their youth leadership journey. The results above indicate that the high and low risk youth were often at different points in their capabilities, however also illustrates that the high risk youth grew a lot in terms of skill set and capacity to take on leadership roles. Overall, the young people reported that they garnered particular benefits from their involvement in the youth leadership programme when tracked over the course of the programme and at 6 months follow-up. These benefits were seen in their personal development and development as young leaders. As well as this, it was apparent from their interactions with their communities that their communities benefit from their leadership. The participants reported that they gained many skills and attributes including assertiveness, communication skills, confidence, social skills, problem solving ability, leadership skills, seizing leadership opportunities, taking on responsibility, maturing, improving presentation skills, a growth in the ability to work with others, the ability to set and achieve a goal, enhanced resilience, improved perception of social support and enhanced sense of continual development.

### **Connecting Youth Leadership, Resilience & Social Support**

It would appear from the above narrative that the young people involved in the youth leadership programme perceived an enhanced capacity to access and utilise social support. For some, the leadership programme offered them additional supports in the form of new friends, youth workers and community members. As well as this, due to their active involvement in their communities they garnered greater recognition from people around them thus enhancing their esteem support. Accounts from the participants indicate that their capacity to deal with challenges and their ensuing resilience to life's stressors appeared enhanced. Furthermore, as indicated above the youth leadership programme enhanced other skills such as leadership, communication, team working capabilities etc., This indicates that there may indeed be a link between involvement in the youth leadership programme and its capacity to enhance resilience and improve perceptions of social support.

## Summary

These interviews highlight the contrasting changes that occurred in participants' worlds. There is evidently both personal growth taking place and an increase in leadership capacity for both cohorts. The interviews demonstrate that while the low risk group may start off in a stronger place than the high risk group, both groups benefit substantially from being involved in the leadership programme. While the young people in the low risk group do indeed start higher on skills and while their qualitative accounts are that they have improved further on these various components, quantitatively in the main they maintain their skill level. On the other hand, the young people in the high risk group quantitatively started significantly lower than their low risk counterparts but increased on the majority of measures. As well as this, the interviews have illuminated how the leadership programme has positively affected their ability to communicate, their confidence, social skills, capacity for resilience, and their ability to access social support. This group may indeed have started lower than the low risk group however, they have gained skills and abilities that have helped them overcome potentially greater barriers than their counterparts would have experienced. Quantitatively it is evident that the high risk youth did in fact gain greater degrees of skills than their low risk counterparts.

## 5.6 Findings in Relation to Objective 5

**To identify key messages for practice, policy and research in light of this study.**

### 5.6.1 Qualitative Strand

To help inform what fits well for practice, policy and research five focus groups were carried out with 23 programme facilitators (17 Foróige staff, 6 Foróige volunteers). As well as this, aspects from the young people's interviews which fit well will be drawn on here.

#### **Programme Administration**

Within the administration of the programme some points must be highlighted which may help with the future roll out of youth leadership programmes.

#### **Application Process**

A number of facilitators used an application or interview process to ensure that they had people who knew what they were signing up to at the beginning of the programme. For those that did not use an application process some of their participants did not fully grasp why they were doing the programme and what they wanted to get out of it. For these facilitators they could really see the benefit of using an application the following year. Some facilitators who did use an application form noted that they were able to gauge the participant's potential commitment to the programme. *'They don't necessarily have to be coming with a lot of skill. They just needed to be coming willing to learn and eager to participate'* [FG1]. Facilitators assured the researcher that the application process used was not a way of selecting elite young people but as a way of gauging their expectations of the programme, their interest and commitment. Two facilitators highlighted that despite using an application form they had taken on one

young girl in one case and two boys in the other case who did not complete the application form. They later found that they were not suitable to the programme, were generally disruptive to the others and did not appreciate that there had been a process that others had gone through to get there, two of whom dropped out. By virtue of completing the application form it was felt that the facilitator would have a better sense of the participant's commitment and thus ensure that the facilitator made the best selection possible.

### **Schools Environment**

For some people who facilitated in the school environment they felt that the schools were a barrier to enabling the young people to see the facilitators as equals. Facilitators reported that it took the young people several weeks to relax into the leadership programme and stop seeing them as 'teachers' and to see them as facilitators. Others reported that while it was a challenge it gave them a captive audience and they had very good attendance, with the exception other school business arising e.g. work placements and speakers coming to the school. As such, the environment was seen as critically important for good learning to happen. One facilitator suggested that *'even within the school environment if you change the seating around, you're sitting in circles it still takes them quite a while to adapt and adjust'* [FG2]. Therefore, it is important that the facilitator takes time to consider the environment and ways to maximise the participation of the young people and their adjustment to working in a style different to typical classroom learning.

### **More Time**

Suggestions from the young people included having more time for leadership. They felt that more time would enable them get more involved and take on more opportunities. They reported that once a week was too little and that sometimes they had forgotten to do things in between. They suggested having more frequent meetings because they really enjoyed the programme. They reported that it gave them an opportunity to express themselves in a way that they typically did not get to in their school or community environment. Their experience of the programme was that it enabled them to see their potential and as such they wanted more of the positive re-enforcement.

***More time, maybe twice a week because we died for it, we really wanted Leadership every week we loved it. It always brought us closer together each week. [Diane- Youth from low risk group]***

Other young people felt that it was a shame that their peers missed a few sessions. For one young person she described how not everyone made it every week. She felt that this was disruptive and that the others missed out on really important things. She would have liked if there were more sessions closer together and that then more people might have made it every week. The facilitators also thought that more opportunities to engage the young people would be beneficial but also realised that this would be difficult given their other work priorities.

### ***Programme Integrity***

All young people interviewed at time two were asked about programme integrity. They were asked 'did the programme run as it was meant to i.e. once a week for one hour? Were all the topics outlined covered?' All participants reported that the leadership programme ran as expected, some programmes ranged from one hour to one hour 30 minutes. One young person said that their facilitator fitted the programme into class time which was 40 minutes and thought that it was too rushed. They would have liked more time to process the contents of the programme better. When the facilitators were asked about their integrity to the programme content, they responded that they found the programme very easy to follow and that the content was very good so there was no need to amend or develop supplementary sessions. Some facilitators and young people found module two challenged them more and moved them out of their comfort zones. Module two included components on; presenting, debating, project management and a team research project. The focus of this module was to enable the young people implement their skills and think critically. One facilitator felt that the logic model was very challenging for him and he did not feel comfortable facilitating it with young people. Other facilitators however remarked that the young people found it very easy to use and useful to manage their projects. Some facilitators found particular activities difficult, such as the conflict resolution or the critical thinking activities. However, others found these quite useful and reported that they had a good grasp of them. Others participants and facilitators commented that it was this additional challenge which enabled the participants to learn new skills and implement the ones they had developed.

### ***Facilitators Benefits***

The facilitators reported that they also gained from their involvement in the programme. These benefits included gaining a better understanding of the young people they worked with, improved facilitation skills, enhanced confidence, a new lease of enthusiasm for working with young people, increased focus, organisation skills, reflection skills, improved relationships with young people and their co-facilitators, and learning from the programme content itself. Others who had facilitated it for a second time felt that it got easier the more they ran the programme. As well as this, they reported that they learned things from the programme at a deeper level. Overall, facilitators reported really enjoying the programme and described it as being a very positive way of engaging with young people around a very positive topic.

### ***Other Suggestions***

Other suggestions were made regarding the reflection questions being varied, additional guidance on the community action projects, having a good understanding of the grading requirements for NUI Galway, the cost of the foundation certificate and fundraising to cover it.

### ***Section Summary***

This section explored the perception of young people, staff and volunteers to programme implementation, integrity, challenges and suggestions for change, as well as the benefits to facilitators.

### 5.6.2 Connecting Youth Leadership, Resilience & Social Support

This section explores, using multiple regression analysis, the connection between youth leadership, social support and resilience. Multivariate analysis is an approach used to describe or explain relationships between different phenomena (Tachnick & Fidell, 1996; Pallant, 2007). By including a number of variables and relationships, the multivariate models can help us to delineate the predictability of independent variables on one continuous dependent measure (Pallant, 2007; Tachnick & Fidell, 1996). This allows the research to explore the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, and control or adjust for the effect of other independent variables in the model. For the purpose of the multiple regressions, life skills and leadership skills were combined to give a new variable called *leadership skills total*. A standard multiple regression was used to assess the ability of demographic measures to predict levels of leadership skills. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

#### Time One: Model 1-3

As can be seen in table 5.14, the results of the multiple regression for model 1 indicates that 21.0% of the variance in leadership skills total is explained by leadership self-perception ( $\beta=.329$ ,  $p<.000$ ) and average grade ( $\beta=-.332$ ,  $p<.000$ ). Leadership self-perception was positively associated i.e. an increase in leadership self-perception leads to an increase in leadership skills. Grade was negatively associated i.e. lower grades had a lower leadership score. The results of the multiple regression for model 2 indicates that 23.9% of the variance in leadership skills total can be attributed to resilience ( $\beta=.443$ ,  $p<.000$ ). The results of the multiple regression for model 3 indicates that 31.1% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by empathy ( $\beta=.339$ ,  $p<.000$ ), understanding oneself ( $\beta=.280$ ,  $p<.000$ ) and adolescent well-being ( $\beta=.215$ ,  $p<.000$ ).

#### Time One: Model 4

Model 4 gives a more realistic world view. The results of the multiple regression for model 4 indicates that 44.0% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience ( $\beta=.270$ ,  $p<.000$ ), leadership self-perception ( $\beta=.215$ ,  $p<.000$ ), empathy ( $\beta=.249$ ,  $p<.000$ ), and understanding self ( $\beta=.162$ ,  $p=.007$ ).

#### Time Two: Model 1-3

The results of the multiple regression for model 1 indicate that 9.3% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by leader self-perception ( $\beta=.303$ ,  $p<.000$ ), as per table 5.14. The results of the multiple regression for model 2 indicates that 33.0% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience ( $\beta=.590$ ,  $p<.000$ ). The results of the multiple regression for model 3 indicates that 36.3% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by empathy ( $\beta=.492$ ,  $p<.000$ ), adolescent well-being ( $\beta=.349$ ,  $p<.000$ ) and understanding self ( $\beta=.185$ ,  $p<.005$ ).

### Time Two: Model 4

The results of the multiple regression for model 4 indicates that 46.4% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience (beta=.386,  $p<.000$ ), empathy (beta=.332,  $p<.000$ ), leader self-perception (beta=.158,  $p=.006$ ), and adolescent well-being (beta=.181,  $p=.008$ ).

### Time Three: Model 1-3

The results of the multiple regression for model 1 indicates that 8.8% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by leader self-perception (beta=.321,  $p<.000$ ). The results of the multiple regression for model 2 indicates that 31.3% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience (beta=.483,  $p<.000$ ). The results of the multiple regression for model 3 indicates that 23.7% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by empathy (beta=.335,  $p<.000$ ), understanding oneself (beta=.241,  $p=.002$ ) and adolescent well-being (beta=.158,  $p=.038$ ).

**Table 5.15 Multiple Regression Over Time**

	Time one				Time two				Time three			
Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	.082			.057	.103			.041	.000			.014
Gender	.002			-.073	.048			-.040	.076			-.027
Leader self-perception	<b>.329***</b>			<b>.213***</b>	<b>.303***</b>			<b>.158**</b>	<b>.321***</b>			<b>.181**</b>
Rural/Urban	.039			.022								
School Year	.035			-.028								
School Level	-.013			-.025								
Average Grade	<b>-.332***</b>			-.183								
Living arrangements	-.047			.030								
Social support		.098		.049		-.021		-.063		.136		.135
Resilience Total		<b>.443***</b>		<b>.270***</b>		<b>.590***</b>		<b>.386***</b>		<b>.483***</b>		<b>.319***</b>
Adolescent Well-being			<b>.215***</b>	.062			<b>.349***</b>	<b>.181**</b>			<b>.158*</b>	.013
Empathy			<b>.339***</b>	<b>.249***</b>			<b>.492***</b>	<b>.332***</b>			<b>.335***</b>	<b>.225***</b>
Understanding self			<b>.280***</b>	<b>.162**</b>			<b>.185**</b>	.045			<b>.241**</b>	.123
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.210	.239	.311	.440	.093	.330	.363	.464	.088	.313	.237	.386
F value	8.575	42.766	16.095	15.365	7.605	49.833	38.213	21.874	6.709	42.410	19.486	14.911
Cases	256	264	263	256	193	198	196	193	177	182	179	177

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

### Time Three: Model 4

The results of the multiple regression for model 4 indicates that 38.6% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience (beta=.319,  $p<.000$ ), leader self-perception (beta=.181,  $p=.004$ ) and empathy (beta=.225,  $p<.000$ ).

### Model 5: Reduced Overall Model – Over time

Model 5 is a reduced overall model, this incorporated systematically deleting variables that were far from significance yielding a final reduced model see table 5.15. Time one: The results of the multiple regressions for model 5 indicate that 42.9% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by leadership self-perception (beta=.217,  $p<.000$ ), average grade (beta=-.201,  $p<.000$ ), resilience (beta=.254,  $p<.000$ ), empathy (beta=.248,  $p<.000$ ) and understanding self (beta=.203,  $p<.000$ ). Average grade had a negative effect in that a lower grade indicated lower leadership skills.

**Time two:** The results of the multiple regression for model 5 indicates that 46.8% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience (beta=.381,  $p<.000$ ), empathy (beta=.324,  $p<.000$ ) leader self-perception (beta=.159,  $p=.005$ ) and adolescent well-being (beta=.188,  $p=.003$ ).

**Time three:** The results of the multiple regression for model 5 indicates that 39.6% of the variance in leadership skills total can be explained by resilience (beta=.316,  $p<.000$ ), empathy (beta=.218,  $p<.000$ ), leadership self-perception (beta=.184,  $p=.003$ ), social support (beta=.135,  $p=.054$ ) and understanding self (beta=.133,  $p=.045$ ).

**Table 5.15 Reduced Overall Model Multiple Regression**

Variable	Time 1 Model 5	Time 2 Model 5	Time 3 Model 5
Age			
Gender	-.086		
Leader self-perception	.217***	.159**	.184**
Rural/Urban			
School Year			
School Level			
Average Grade	-.201***		
Living arrangements			
Social support			.135*
Resilience Total	.254***	.381***	.316***
Adolescent Well-being		.188**	
Empathy	.248***	.324***	.218***
Understanding self	.203***		.133*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.429	.468	.396
F value	33.024	43.474	24.117
Cases	256	193	177

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

### Section Summary

This section highlights the interrelationship between resilience, adolescent well-being, empathy, social support and understanding yourself with youth leadership skills development. It also highlights that resilience and empathy are the strongest predictors of leadership skills. Furthermore, self-perception as a leader has a strong correlation with leadership skills. Grade also demonstrated a negative correlation



with leadership skills, as grade decreases so does leadership skills. The findings here will be used to inform practice, policy and researcher in terms of new directions in programme content and highlight important relationships in the development of youth leadership.

### Summary of Key Findings

<b>431 young people</b>	267 Leadership youth and 164 Comparison youth
<b>Retention</b>	52% Leadership group and 27% Comparison group
<b>Time 1</b>	Leadership group are significantly stronger on <i>communication skills, team work, leadership skills and community involvement</i> than the comparison group at time one.
<b>Leadership Group Time 1-3</b>	Leadership group increased statistically significantly on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sibling support and resilience.</i></li> <li>• <i>Decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement</i> at time two, and furthermore on <i>empathy, communication skills and goal setting</i> at time three.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership versus Comparison Group T1</b>	When missing cases at time two were adjusted for, the comparison group were significantly higher on <i>advice support</i> than the leadership group at time one, while all other measures were similar.
<b>Leadership versus Comparison T1-3</b>	Leadership group were statistically significantly improved over the comparison group on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sibling support, esteem support, total social support at time two, and furthermore on emotional support by time three.</i></li> <li>• All measures of <i>resilience.</i></li> <li>• <i>Goal setting, leadership skills and community involvement at time two and at time three further increases were seen in empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, team work and problem solving.</i></li> </ul>
<b>High &amp; Low risk Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk group were significantly less likely to see themselves as leaders at time one. By time three there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, indicating that the high risk young people saw themselves as leaders just as much as the low risk group.</li> <li>• Low risk group increase significantly on team work and decrease adolescent well-being, while the high risk group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in <i>adolescent well-being scale, decision making, critical thinking, friendship support, sibling support, total social support and advice support</i> between time one and time two, and <i>adolescent well-being, goal setting and leadership skills</i> at time three.</li> </ul>
<b>Connecting Youth Leadership with Resilience &amp; Social Support</b>	A connection was found between resilience, adolescent well-being, empathy, social support and understanding yourself and youth leadership skills development. Multiple regressions also highlighted that resilience and empathy are the strongest predictors of leadership skills. Self-perception as a leader has a strong correlation with youth leadership skills, as does grade.

## **5.7 Summary**

This Chapter has presented the findings of the research in relation to the five objectives of this study. The first section outlined the demographics of the sample population indicating a strong degree of similarity between the leadership and comparison groups. The next section looked at the baseline data from both groups and revealed that the initial leadership group was stronger than the comparison group on a number of variables. The following section, explored how both groups fared over the three time points. This analysis revealed that the comparison group decreased on a number of variables while the leadership group improved statistically significantly on a number of measures. The next section compared the leadership group directly to the comparison group. When adjusting for cases lost it revealed that the comparison and leadership groups were similar at time one, except the comparison group perceived significantly greater advice support. Over time the leadership group improved statistically significantly when compared to the comparison group in terms of leadership skills, resilience and social support. The next section looked more closely at a subset of the participants categorised in low and high risk groups for adolescent well-being. The findings here reveal that while the high risk group start substantially lower than the low risk group they make statistically significant improvements which are backed up with qualitative reports of their experience. Finally, key messages for policy, practice and research are explored by way of qualitative findings from facilitators and young people as well as carrying out multiple regression analysis. These findings will be further discussed in Chapter 6.



## 6. Discussion

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the research findings in relation to the objectives of the study. Each objective of the study will be discussed in light of the literature. Messages for policy, practice and research will be presented in parallel to each objective. This discussion will highlight what has been learned from this study and how these findings can inform further work in the area of youth leadership, resilience and social support for policy, practice and research.

Firstly, the research findings in relation to Objective 1-3 will be discussed. Then a discussion of the results in relation to Objectives 4 and 5 will be dealt with separately.

### 6.1 Discussion of the Findings in Relation to Objectives 1-3

The research objectives are reiterated below before progressing further:

1. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).
2. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.
3. To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.

**Objectives 1-3: *Establishing the leadership skills, resilience and social support of young people in an intervention group and comparison group at three time points to determine whether the ensuing intervention, a youth leadership programme, impacted leadership skills, resilience and social support.***

For ease of discussion, Objectives 1-3 will be discussed collectively. This decision was based on two reasons. Firstly, Objective 1 and 2 explore the same factors (leadership skills, resilience and social support) but do so at different time points (baseline, post-intervention and 6 months follow-up). Secondly, Objective 3 focuses on comparing the two groups over the research time points to determine if there is a difference and so fits into this section.

After reviewing the findings thoroughly, the researcher identified three key findings which will be elaborated on, these are: 1) the youth leadership programme appears effective in increasing and sustaining leadership skills over time 2) youth leadership programme involvement appears to increase young people's capacity for resilience 3) youth leadership programme involvement appears to improve perceived social support.

### ***1. The youth leadership programme appears effective in increasing and sustaining leadership skills over time***

Youth leadership development is a growing area of interest among those who work with adolescents (Kahn et al., 2007; Anderson et al., 2007). Young people today play a pivotal role in their communities, providing much needed social capital, energy and innovation which help contribute to solving the problems of communities they live in (SRDC, 1996). As such leadership development in the adolescent population is an important area of consideration. Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004) highlight that opportunities for youth leadership must be framed not only to develop skills and knowledge, but in the application of these skills in authentic ways. Youth can contribute to their communities in a positive way or unfortunately be considered part of the problem, as was seen in the England Riots 2011. During that unrest young people in cities across England took part in rioting, looting and destruction due to anger with police after a young man was shot dead (Lewis et al., 2011). Conversely to this, young people can also be seen as change makers and activists for example in Egypt and Libya over the same time period as they fought for reform, institutional change and democracy (Mohyeldin, 2011). Whether young people are viewed as leaders or villains depends on the situation and their response to it. Youth leadership programmes can facilitate the development of human capital, build community social capital and enable youth contribute to their communities (Beaulieu et al., 1990).

The focus of this youth leadership programme has been on facilitating young people to develop skills which they can use to contribute towards their communities. While there is a growing body of literature pertaining to youth leadership, a meta-analysis carried out by Ricketts and Rudd (2002) found that very few leadership programmes were proven. Furthermore, as can be seen by the youth leadership studies outlined in Chapter 4, there has been limited quantitative research, particularly beyond completion of the programme.

In this study, when the leadership group were examined over time, one-way Paired T-Tests found that the leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement between time one (baseline) and time two (post-intervention). Further statistically significant increases were seen in empathy, communication skills and

goal setting at time three (6 months follow-up). This suggests that the benefits accrued were maintained and enhanced as the young people continued to garner benefits beyond the life of the programme. This reveals that the youth leadership programme may confer positive benefits for the participants. It must also be noted that between time two and time three the leadership group completed their community project (6 months prior) and graduated from the National University of Ireland, Galway (3 months prior) to the completion of the survey. This, along with qualitative findings, suggests that once the young people were put on a youth leadership path including self-belief as a leader, they continued to use their leadership skills, seize opportunities within their communities and gain positively. These findings have similar resonance with the quantitative study by Bloomberg et al., (2003) which found that young people demonstrated improved social skills, leadership skills, and an expanded sense of community responsibility.

In terms of qualitative data, participants reported being better able to communicate. For some this was a dramatic change going from being quite shy to being more assertive.

***Just I can get my point across a lot easier now. I can just communicate better... if you can't talk to people, you can't lead [Theresa]***

The young people also reported that they had gained the ability to lead people, found it easier to work as a team and share the responsibility. They described having improved presentation skills, the ability to resolve conflicts and finding the solutions to problems. As well as this, they felt they were more active in their communities. Furthermore, social and emotional skills such as empathy, relating to others, self-awareness, confidence and self-control were believed to have improved over the course of the study. These findings echo those of Stiftung's qualitative study (2003) which found young people reported an improvement in confidence, maturity, communication, critical thinking and ability to create a persuasive argument. In the Foróige leadership programme participants perceived an improvement in their leadership skills, their ability to communicate, presentation skills, confidence and access to leadership opportunities.

***I realised, I have to do things for myself, like school and college I could not let people do everything for me. I realise it is all for myself. I realised I have to take action, myself. [Alison]***

When considering the comparison group's quantitative findings over time (Paired T-Test), there was no significant change in leadership skills. However, community involvement did significantly decrease compared to time one. This may be due to the awareness they had of the leadership group being involved in the community and by comparison perceived that they were less involved in their communities.

The results above highlight that the comparison group did not improve over the course of the study with respect to their leadership skills. However, the leadership group improved statistically significantly

on a number of measures of leadership skills, community involvement and empathy. This suggests that involvement in the youth leadership programme may confer positive benefits in developing skills, exposure to leadership opportunities and engagement in the community.

When comparing the leadership group directly to the comparison group, the findings from the one-way ANOVA analysis in this study indicate that both groups were very similar at time one, when adjusted for lost cases. One exception was that the comparison group were statistically significantly higher on advice support than the leadership group at time one. When considering the entire population at time one, the leadership group were significantly stronger than the comparison group. This may be explained, in part, by some of the lower scoring cohort from the comparison group not returning at time two. When this was adjusted both groups demonstrated a greater degree of similarity.

At time two the leadership group demonstrated statistically significant improvements over the comparison group for goal setting, leadership skills and community involvement. In addition, at time three the leadership group demonstrated further statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, team work and problem solving. It must be noted that the retention rate of the comparison group was lower at time three which may be due to the lack of incentives and long time period of the study. The difference between the groups does suggest that the increases observed in the leadership group may be attributed, in part, to the youth leadership programme as the groups were similarly matched in terms of age, gender and geographical location.

In the quantitative study carried out by Anderson et al., (2007) they found that their leadership group started off at a higher point than the comparison group on a number of the measures. This is similar to the initial findings of this study at time one. However, in this study when adjusted for lost cases both groups had a stronger degree of similarity at the starting point. A point to consider is that young people involved in youth leadership programmes may do better than those not involved, due to self-selection.

Another interesting finding is that seeing yourself as a leader appears to be linked with better outcomes. This suggests that self-belief plays an important role in youth leadership development which concurs with Bandura's (1977b, 1997) view that self-belief and self-efficacy are key attributes to being able to carry something through to action, which often determines how well a person does in life. This finding is comparable to research by Nelson (2010) who found that young people were beginning to see themselves as leaders.

## ***2 Youth leadership programme involvement appears to increase young people's capacity for resilience***

Resilience is seen as the ability to overcome serious threats or challenges which enable the person to 'bounce back' and maintain their health and well-being (Ungar, 2004; Benard, 2006). A person's capacity for resilience can depend on their exposure to risk and protective factors. Exposure to a disproportionate number of risk factors can overwhelm a person and limit their capacity for resilience

(Arthur et al., 2002). Conversely, having abundant protective factors can buffer against the stresses of everyday life and traumatic experiences (Arthur et al., 2002; Hjemdal et al., 2006). When considered in the context of youth leadership development, resilience can be seen as an important component for young leaders particularly as young leaders are likely to encounter many challenges (Broadwood & Fine, 2011; Goleman, 2002). If a young leader is resilient they should be better able to face challenges they encounter and overcome them. On the otherhand, if a young person is resilient they may have a greater capacity to demonstrate leadership.

In the context of this study, improvements in resilience were statistically significant for the leadership participants over time as measured by Paired T-Tests. Improvements in resilience 2 and resilience total were statistically significant at time two. While all measures of resilience; resilience 1, resilience 2, and resilience total were statistically significant at time three. The comparison group on the other hand decreased significantly on resilience 1 between time one and time two, however this returned to baseline levels at time three. This indicates that involvement in the youth leadership programme may confer positive benefits in terms of youth's capacity for resilience and ability to deal with challenges that occur. This may be connected to participants' perception of improvements in critical thinking, problem solving, conflict resolution and communication skills.

When considering how the leadership group compared directly to the comparison group, the findings from one-way ANOVA analysis revealed that the leadership group demonstrated statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on resilience 1, resilience 2 and resilience total between time one and time three. This indicates that the leadership programme when compared to no-intervention contributes towards positive benefits to its participants in terms of youth's capacity for resilience. These findings are similar to the increase in protective factors Shelton (2009) found, which led to an increase in resilience of youth who participated in a leadership programme. Broadwood & Fine (2011) also found that by engaging young offenders in youth leadership which set out to contribute to their resilience it also had the effect of reducing their offending. This suggests that youth leadership may have further benefits to society.

Qualitative descriptions of the young people's experiences illustrated the difficult situations they had been through and how they coped with them. Strategies that were employed to cope with challenges included; talking to other people, getting a different perspective, listening to music, reading a book, drawing, drama, science, going for walks and watching films. As Rutter (1981) points out, core to success in dealing with challenges is how the person adapts and responds to the situation. In this case the strategies outlined helped the youth deal with the challenges they face which can be considered to fit Masten et al., (1990) perception of resilience as preventative or responsive.

***I just sit in my room, probably have a little cry, listen to music and just think about it and then I'd go talk to someone and get their opinion, then just try sort it out like. [Sile]***



The young people also highlighted in the latter part of the study that they felt that they were more independent now. They reported they had greater personal reserves to draw from and resolve their own issues. These may have come, in part, from the focus on problem solving, team work and conflict resolution within the programme.

### ***3) Youth leadership programme involvement appears to improve perceived social support***

Social support leads to the belief that they are cared for and loved, esteemed and valued, and belong to a network of communication and mutual obligations (Cobb, 1976, p.300). Steinberg (2001, p.7) highlights that adolescents 'are remarkably adaptable and resilient in the face of normative challenges, particularly if they have the support of one or more caring adults'. Having a network of supports offers young people the sense that they belong and that they are loved, something that Maslow (1934) highlighted as central to positive development. Whether received or perceived, social support conveys a benefit to overall health as it acts as a positive buffer to the effects of everyday stress as well as times when there is no stress (Uchino, 2009).

When carrying out Paired T-Tests the research found statistically significant improvements in sibling support for the leadership group between time one and two, which was maintained at time three. Dolan (2003) noted that siblings can be a serious cause of stress in young people's lives and found that young people perceive their siblings as a poor source of support. This lack of perceived support can be seen in the results of this study which found that the average score for sibling support was substantially lower than that of friend, parent and other adult support at time one. The significant increase in sibling support may be linked to an improved ability to communicate, deal with conflict and solve problems. This may in turn have helped the participants cope with sibling challenges and see them more as a support than previously. Something which is particularly beneficial as sibling relationships can be some of the closest and most enduring relationships people have throughout their lives (Gilligan, 2009; Edwards et al., 2006).

The young participants in the comparison group however, significantly decreased in friendship support, sibling support, total social support, esteem support and advice support as analysed with paired T-tests between time one and time two. As the young people in both groups were from the same area, leadership involvement may have impacted on friend's spare time, having less time to spend with each other and thus resulted in a perception of reduced support. The lack of intervention this group received may lead to a reduced sense of support, particularly if they were in close proximity to the leadership group. This may have impacted their awareness of what they were 'not' involved in. By time three however, the comparison group scores returned to baseline levels. This may be as a result of those scoring quite low at time two not returning at time three, indeed as they had no intervention they had less of an incentive to return.

When comparing the leadership group directly to the comparison group using one-way ANOVA analysis, findings indicate that the comparison group were significantly higher on advice support than the leadership group. At time two however, the leadership group demonstrated statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on sibling support, total social support and esteem

support. At time three the leadership group maintained statistically significant improvements over the comparison group in emotional support. As mentioned previously, the improvements in sibling support may be due to the accumulation of problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Furthermore, the fact that the young people were completing a leadership course and graduating from NUI Galway may have also impacted the increase seen in esteem support as they may have received additional attention from family and friends. The quantitative study carried out by Anderson et al., study (2007) did reveal that participants perceived an improved sense of support from their local communities, something which was not assessed by this study. However, this may be considered similar in some ways to the improved sense of support participants in the Foróige leadership programme felt they could access.

From the qualitative aspect of this research, there was a strong emphasis on social support being core to the young people's ability to deal with challenges and also their self-belief. Parents and friends were seen as strong sources of support including building supports which could be categorised into the types of support described by Cutrona (2000) which are esteem, advice, emotional and concrete support.

***Mum encourages me every time I play football – embarrassing sometimes, she pushes me the extra bit, makes you push forward and encourages you to do better. [Michael]***

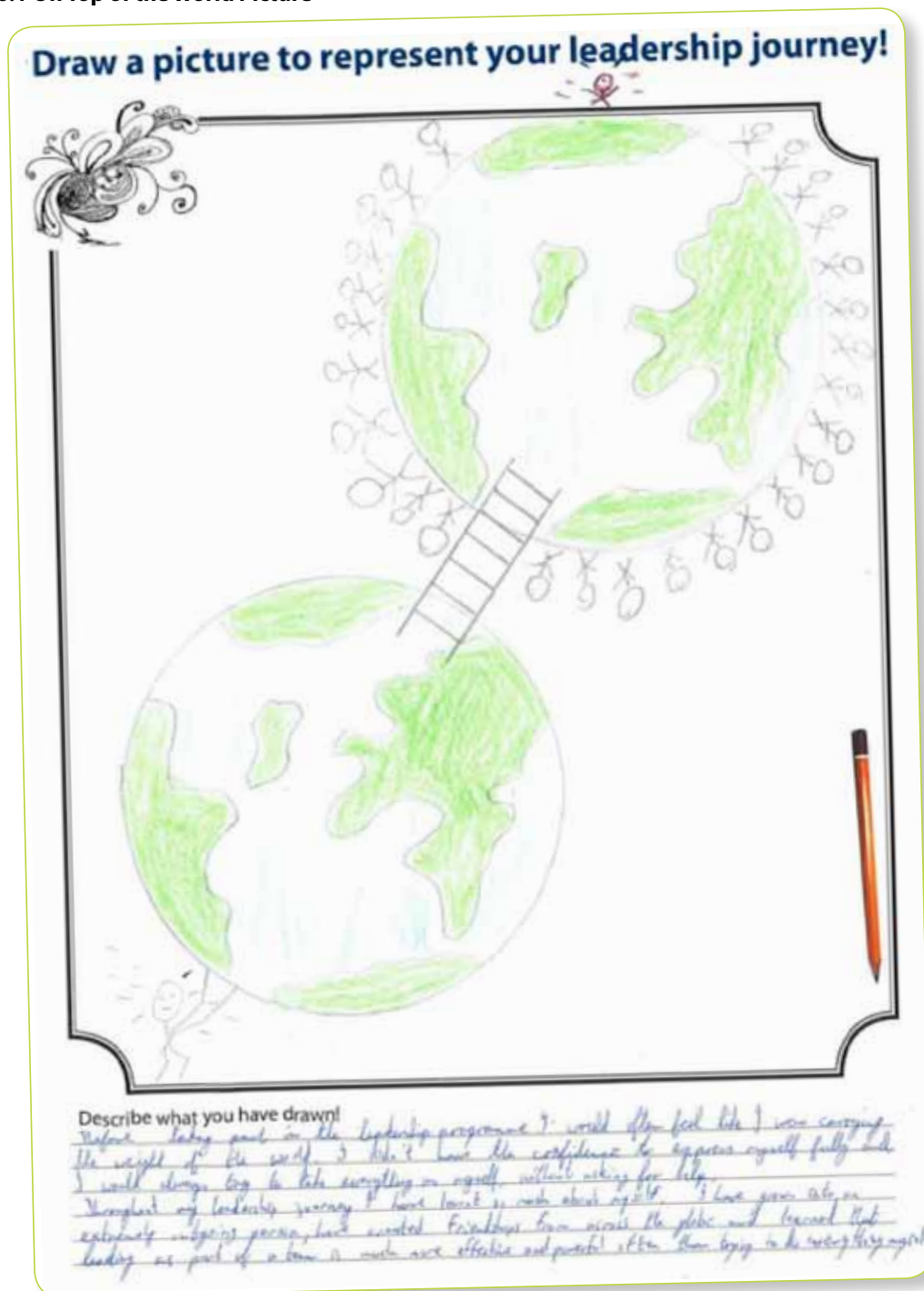
Similar to the quantitative findings, siblings did not feature as frequently as other sources of support. However, where they did feature, for some they were perceived as a very valuable asset and for others as the programme progressed they felt that the dynamic with their siblings had improved.

***Myself and my sister we used to fight, now I just kind of step back and don't just say things on the spur of the moment any more. [Alison]***

As with the quantitative findings, these findings suggest that the leadership programme may confer some benefit in helping buffer young people against the stresses associated with siblings and help them to develop appropriate coping and even tap into siblings as being more of a support. Greater positive sibling support as Branje et al., (2004) finds leads to lower levels of internalising and externalising problems.

An illustration of how young people perceived greater social support comes from figure 6.1. The picture brings to light how this young person went from feeling alone, with 'literally' the world on his shoulders. He reported that he did not have the confidence to express himself properly and always felt he had to take everything on himself without asking for help. After the leadership programme however, he depicts himself as surrounded by others who are supporting him in achieving his goal. He has learned that leading as part of a team is much more powerful and effective than going it alone. This has resonance with the Anderson et al., study (2007) which found that participants perceived an improved sense of support from their local communities.

**Figure 6.1 On Top of the World Picture**



#### **4) Gender Differences Emerge in Benefits Accrued from the Youth Leadership Programme**

Females continue to be under represented in positions of leadership globally despite the unacceptability of gender discrimination (Agar, 2004; Brown, 2005). Research by Rosselli and Taylor (1997) highlight that for females to begin seeing themselves as leaders and taking up more opportunities as leaders they need to develop leadership skills at a young age. In this study 60.9% of the participants were female which indicates that more young females are getting involved in youth leadership opportunities. This trend towards enhanced female participation and interest in youth leadership requires further support and encouragement to ensure that these interested young females have the requisite skill set and access to opportunity to take on leadership roles as they emerge.

When considering the results of this study at time one, the emerging differences highlighted that *males* score lower on the adolescent well-being scale indicating a *positive sense of self*. Females, on the other hand, score higher in terms of *empathy and resilience total* at baseline this is similar to Gilligan's (1981) findings where females tend to focus more on a care perspective or on interpersonal relations of care, while males focus more on a justice perspective, abstract rights and separateness. Males improved statistically significantly over time on *decision making, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills, leadership skills, resilience total and concrete support*. Females on the other hand improved statistically significantly over time on *resilience 1, critical thinking, team work, life skills, leadership skills, parental support, sibling support, social support, concrete support, esteem support, community involvement and resilience total*. As can be seen here females appear to gain more in terms of social support than males do from involvement in the leadership programme. This is an important consideration, particularly when some research indicates that it may well be the lack of support that act as a barrier to females taking up leadership roles (Ryan et al., 2007). Therefore, increased support may yield increased female leadership role acquisition. However, another important consideration is why females gained more in terms of support from the programme than males.

When comparing the leadership and comparison group at time one there was no significant difference between groups for males, however at time two the male leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *problem solving, sibling support, social support*. At time three for males in the leadership group they were significantly stronger on *problem solving and parental support* than comparison group respondents. This indicates that the males may have improved the most on problem solving and social support when compared to the comparison group.

For leadership females when compared to the comparison group there was no significant difference at time one. At time two however females in the leadership demonstrated a statistically significant improvement on *adolescent well-being, resilience 2, leadership skills, parental support and community involvement* when compared to the comparison group. At time three females in the leadership group demonstrated a statistically significant improvement on *adolescent well-being, understanding themselves, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving, life skills, concrete support, emotional support, community involvement and resilience total* when compared to the comparison group. It would appear that the females accrued greater benefits from involvement in the youth leadership programme than the comparison group who received no intervention. If females are to overcome experiences such as glass ceiling and glass cliff where they are put in impossible situations then they need additional supports, knowledge and skills to do so (Ryan et al., 2007).

Other interesting findings include that having a self-perception of being a leader appears to lead to better outcomes as well as having higher grades. Indicating that self-belief may play an important role in youth leadership development which would concur with Bandura (1977) view that self-belief/self-efficacy is a key attribute to being able to carry something through to action, which often determines how well a person does in life.

## 6.2 Objective 4

**To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in a youth leadership programme and again in light of having received the youth leadership programme.**

Adolescence is a time of change and uncertainty, as illustrated in Chapter 2. Young people can gain crucial life skills to help them successfully navigate through the myriad of challenges they face in *becoming* an adult (Santrock, 2007). They may also face challenges which can be overwhelming and test their capacity to withstand adversity (Cicchetti & Toth, 2006; Barry et al., 2005). Normative adolescent development offers youth the landscape to acquire a multitude of skills and abilities. The adolescents who endure adversity, on the other hand, may experience mental, emotional or psychological dysfunction if they cannot cope with the stressors they experience (Cicchetti & Toth, 2006). Adolescent problems can be described as internalising where they turn their thoughts inward e.g. anxiety or depression, or externalising when problems are turned outward e.g. juvenile delinquency (Cicchetti & Toth, 2006).

This research used the adolescent well-being scale as an identifier for youth experiencing emotional distress and poor well-being. In this study, approximately 12% of young people involved in the leadership programme scored above 13 on the adolescent well-being scale which indicates symptoms of depression. This appears to be lower than the national average of 20% of Irish youth who experience serious emotional distress found by the Irish College of Psychiatrists (2005). It is also lower than the findings of the My World Study (Dooley et al., 2012) which found that as many as 1 in 3 young people aged (12-25 years) experience emotional distress at some point in their adolescence. This substantial difference may be because the 12% does not reflect an entire developmental period like the My World study instead it reflects one point in time. The difference may also be due to less young people who experience emotional distress putting themselves forward for a youth leadership programme. An important consideration therefore, is the impact the youth leadership programmes can have for those youth who experience poor well-being. High risk young people reported experiencing more traumatic life events than the low risk group.

***a) High and low risk youth significantly improve in leadership self-belief, with the most substantial improvement for the high risk group.***

As mentioned earlier self-belief and self-efficacy are key attributes considered by Bandura (1977b) in enabling people to see something through to action. This study found that young people in both the low and high risk groups demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in leadership self-perception over the course of the study. The most marked change occurred within the high risk group where only 9.1% considered themselves to be leaders at time one, compared to the low risk group where 62.5% considered themselves as leaders. By time three in the high risk group 81.3% considered themselves as leaders compared with 90.9% of the low risk group, with no significant difference between the groups. This indicates that the high risk young people went from mainly not seeing themselves as leaders to seeing themselves as leaders just as much as the low risk group. Self-belief is a powerful concept which Eden (1993) described may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy effect. This effect can create others to have expectations,



in this case to behave as young leaders. This in turn encourages the person to have expectations of themselves and a desire to meet those expectations creating a snowball effect (Eden, 1993). This finding was also backed up by the qualitative findings, where participants reported gaining confidence to take on leadership roles where they would not have done so before.

***b) Youth leadership appears effective for high risk youth but sustained engagement may be needed to embed improvements in social support***

In society and service provision, sometimes when a young person displays signs of emotional distress e.g. depression, anxiety, self-harming etc., unintentional restrictions may be placed upon them by well intending professionals. These good intentions may further exclude youth from activities which could support them through their difficulties (Schrank & Slade, 2007). Stigma associated with mental health problems can create barriers to education, training and employment (Secker et al., 2001).

Looking at the high risk group first, paired T-tests indicate that statistically significant improvements in adolescent well-being occurred. This group demonstrated statistically significant increases in decision making, critical thinking, sibling support, parental support, total social support and advice support between time one and time two. Statistically significant improvements in leadership skills and goal setting were observed at time three. Positive trends were noted over time for resilience, communication skills, team work, problem solving, life skills and community involvement. These positive movements may be linked to the programme alternatively may also be due to regression to the mean. However, the perception of the supports from friends, parents and siblings as well as esteem support and total social support, returned to baseline levels at time three. This may be due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, the young people in the leadership programme may have received more attention from their sources of support because they were involved in the leadership programme. Secondly, they may have had access to more supports from being involved in the programme. This group may need further programme engagement or community linkages to sustain social support improvements so they are not transient. It must also be noted that the numbers involved in this aspect of the study are very low so results should be interpreted with caution. These results suggest that the young people in the high risk group do benefit significantly from their involvement in youth leadership, despite having reduced subjective well-being. Nevertheless, engaging these young people in other community activities may sustain the improvements in social support seen at time two. Noteworthy however, is the fact that the improvements in skills and resilience were maintained at time three despite a perceived reduction in support.



When considering the low risk group their paired T-tests indicate that their adolescent well-being significantly reduced. A phenomenon called regression to the mean may partly explain what is happening for these participants. By virtue of the fact that youth in the low risk group were so low on the scale starting out meant that the only place for them to go was up (Clarke & Clarke, 2003). Alternatively, it may be the case that the young people's critical thinking and analytical ability improved and thus they question more their subjective well-being. The paired T-test also revealed that this group increased significantly on team work. For many of the other measures there were positive trends or very slight fluctuations. This indicates that for the low risk group they largely maintained where they were on the measures.

Paired-T tests for the low risk comparison group showed that there was a statistically significant decrease on the adolescent well-being, problem solving, understanding self, friendship support, parental support and sibling support measures between time one and time two. Additionally, a statistically significant decrease in score was observed for the high risk comparison group for resilience and community involvement between time one and two and adult support between time two and three, while goal setting significantly increased between time two and time three. These findings suggest that young people involved in the leadership programme accrue positive benefits from their involvement in the programme, compared to youth not involved, who remain the same on a number of the measures used or appear to decrease on others.

Overall, these findings from this study are comparable to the study by Anderson et al., (2007) who explored how low and high functioning youth did in their leadership programme evaluation. They found that those who began the group at lower overall functioning were more likely than youth who began the programme at a higher level of functioning to report positive changes. In this study similarly, the high risk youth started at a substantially lower level than the low risk group, but the high risk group improved on more measures than the low risk group.

The qualitative findings provide further evidence that the high risk participants gain a substantial benefit from their involvement in the leadership programme particularly in their ability to take the lead, communicate, work in teams, resolve conflict and solve problems. In initial interviews with the high risk group they appeared to be quieter, shyer, had more challenges and traumatic events to deal with. As the interviews progressed it became obvious that all the young people involved in the interviews were benefiting at some level from the leadership programme. It was not obvious that social support had reduced for the high risk group at time three however, some reported feeling more independent and not needing as much support now as they had before.

***I'm probably more independent now than I was, I don't rely on them that much. I'm a stronger person now, than I would have been before, not that they would not be there for me, I just don't need them as much. [Alison].***

When considering the social and emotional intelligence of participants, social skills was something which came to the fore for the high risk group indicating that the leadership programme may have



contributed towards their ability to engage with their peers, family and others. Comparably, Bloomberg et al., (2003) also found that social skills improved for their cohort when involved in youth leadership. While Roberts (2009) and Goleman (2006a) also see social skills as an important aspect of leadership. Furthermore, confidence was cited regularly as having improved for both groups in the Foróige leadership programme, notably however the high risk group reported lower confidence starting out but described a substantial improvement over the duration of the programme. This is similar to findings by Stiftung (2003) who through qualitative research found that participants in that study improved in confidence over the course of their leadership involvement. The confidence that young people reported to have gained in the Foróige study were in presentations, public speaking and communication. Considering this in light of neuroscience research, which indicates that exposure to experiences that enhance skills in adolescence can lead to the development of new neuronal pathways is promising for future leadership programme development (Giedd, 1999; Begley, 2000). These pathways if reinforced through practice can result in long term benefits for participants in terms of skills that contribute both personally and economically to their development.

***Oh definitely made me less self-conscious and better with people than I used to be, and yeah, more confident... I'm way better at talking to people now [Theresa].***

As would be expected, the low risk group were most comfortable in considering themselves as role models, whereas for the high risk group this did not fit as comfortably with them initially.

***No, I just don't see myself as a good role model so I can't see other people thinking I am [Mary].***

As the programme progressed the participants got more comfortable with taking on leadership roles as well as seeing themselves as leaders and role models. This is further backed up by figure 6.2. This picture illustrates how one young person described growing from a small seed full of the potential into a small tree and then slowly into a bigger tree revealing that their journey is ongoing and the tree (and themselves) will grow bigger. It also draws attention to how she feels if she does something inspiring then other people might also do the same. This is fitting with both Kouzes & Posner's (2007) view of inspiring others to greatness.

Figure 6.2 Seed to Tree Picture



When it came to resilience the stories garnered from the young participants, particularly the high risk youth, indicated many experiences of adversity in their lives. This potentially links to this group's lower perception of well-being as they had greater challenges to deal with than the low risk group. Similar to the risk factor research which highlights excessive exposure to too many risk factors may impact their ability to cope (Arthur et al., 2002). Over time it became clear that the young people involved in the research were in fact gaining benefits beyond leadership skills, which could help them, deal with life's challenges such as resilience and access to social support.

Furthermore, for this subset of the study, some participants reported that their social support had improved. Youth in the high risk group were more likely to indicate that their social support had improved than the low risk group, this is similar to the quantitative findings at time two. Having ample esteem support was more frequently cited by the low risk group, while emotional support was more frequently cited by the high risk group. This may be to do with the fact that the high risk group had more to deal with and as such required more emotional support. For the low risk group they were typically involved in more leadership roles prior to the programme and thus may have received more recognition. Sibling support also appeared to have improved with the high risk group describing less fights and better approaches to dealing with their siblings. Siblings, as mentioned earlier, can be a source of stress for adolescents (Dolan, 2003). Other adults were not mentioned as frequently by the high risk group. This group were not engaged in as many community activities as the low risk counterparts and this could have limited their exposure to other adults for support. The adult support that low risk youth experienced, may have enabled them gain a different perspective on their talents and contributed to their overall esteem support.

***They [parents] just care for you and they'll help you with a problem. Just love and care, you know. They'll be there for you when you're upset...they're always there for you... just supporting you. [Seamus]***

### 6.3 Discussion of Key Factors Informing Practice, Policy & Research

**Identify key factors to inform practice, policy and research in relation to future directions of youth leadership.**

As seen in Chapter 2 some programmes called youth leadership can have a variety of focuses which not necessarily all emphasise becoming leaders. For example, programmes that focused heavily on personal development, others focused on prevention of youth offending behaviour, while others focus on the prevention of drugs and alcohol use with little focus on actually engaging in or evaluating leadership (Project Venture, 2002; Shelton, 2009; Klau, 2006). Many programmes which have undergone evaluation demonstrate positive qualitative reports (Detzler et al., 2007, Lee et al., 2008, Stiftung 2003, Conner & Strobel 2007) however there is limited quantitative research particularly over a longer period available (Anderson et al., 2007; Bloomberg et al., 2003).

When considering influencing future practice important lessons can be learned from the programme facilitators and participants. As was highlighted, having a proper application procedure which enables young people put forward their interest and commitment to the programme ensures that everyone gets the best out of the programme. Further to this, it may be worth considering targeting youth who would not typically see themselves as leaders, particularly those who are more marginalised or who experience adversity. Paying attention to the environment is a key component to ensuring the group settles into the process, this is particularly important for those delivering youth leadership in schools.

This has resonance with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) emphasis on the importance of context. The fact that young people and facilitators called for more time indicates a strong level of satisfaction and a desire for additional engagement. This can be considered a particular strength to the programme as at times it can be difficult to engage older adolescents (DES, 2003). Having resources that were comprehensive, user-friendly, and accompanied by adequate training and support appeared to ensure that fidelity to the programme was high. Finally, the additional benefits that facilitators gained from their involvement should be noted, particularly their perception of gaining an enhanced skill set and better linkages with the young people which meant they could access support easier.

In considering implications for practice, policy and research this research also explored what additional factors also predict leadership capacity. This was to explore whether youth leadership involvement had any part to play in offering additional benefits to youth in terms of their capacity for resilience or their access to social support. The research using multiple regressions illuminated the interconnectedness of these components with youth leadership as will be discussed further below. A number of measures were statistically significant in predicting leadership skills across time and these included: leadership self-perception, average grade, resilience, adolescent well-being, empathy and understanding oneself. At time three social support also emerged as statistically significant.

These findings indicate the potentially powerful relationship these variables have in relation to youth leadership. Self-perception of oneself as a leader is important in enhancing leadership skills, therefore greater efforts at a practice level need to be explored as to how to incorporate self-belief into leadership programmes. Resilience is an important contributor to leadership skills, indicating that as youth gain resilience their capacity for leadership will be enhanced. Furthermore, as youth gain skills and coping strategies through leadership these appear to contribute to enhanced resilience. Adolescent well-being is a factor in predicting leadership skills, therefore enabling youth to cultivate positive well-being sets the stage for one's capacity as a leader. Empathy and understanding oneself also came to the fore as being significantly related to leadership development. This is particularly noteworthy when considering the contribution that young leaders can make in the lives of others when in leadership roles, as well as their own personal development. Social support also featured as being a significant contributor to youth leadership. This suggests that increased social support can lead to increased leadership capacity.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this Chapter was to elaborate on the research findings in relation to the objectives of this study in light of the available literature in this area. In the first section a discussion took place which addressed objectives 1-3 of the study. This discussion placed the findings in the context of other research and highlighted that the young people in the leadership group demonstrated enhanced leadership skills, resilience and social support. The second section of the discussion looked at how a subset of the leadership group fared, namely those in a high and low risk groups. This discussion drew out how the high risk group appeared to benefit substantially more than the low risk group from their involvement. The third section of the discussion began exploring messages for policy, practice and research which will be expanded on in the recommendation section of chapter 7. The following chapter will bring together the conclusions of this study and make a set of policy, practice and research recommendations to inform future work.



## 7. Conclusion

### Introduction

This Chapter serves the purpose of concluding the research carried out. The first part revisits the overall aim and objectives of the study. The next section, briefly outlines how the study was conducted. The following section outlines the key findings of the study. The next section puts forward a set of recommendations for practice, policy and research. The chapter then provides some concluding remarks from the study.

### 7.1 Aim & Objectives Revisited

The aim of this study was to explore the outcomes of a youth leadership programme amongst a cohort of young people engaged in the Foróige youth leadership programme and compare them to a comparison group of young people not engaged in the youth leadership programme, over the course of the programme and beyond for a further six months. This study will also explore whether the leadership programme accrues any additional benefit in terms of contribution to youth resilience and social support.

The five objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support among a set of young people, including those who are about to participate in a youth leadership programme and a comparison group who will not take part in the programme (time one).
2. To establish the levels of leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support on completion of the youth leadership programme (time two) and at six months follow-up (time three) in respect of both groups.
3. To establish the difference in leadership skills, resilience and perceived social support between each group at the three time points.

4. To track the changes among those identified with initial lowest and highest perceived well-being prior to participation in a youth leadership programme and again in light of having received the youth leadership programme.
5. To identify key messages for practice, policy and research in light of this study.

## 7.2 Methodology

This study involved a mixed-methodology approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative components. The research employed a quasi-experimental design involving young people who received the Foróige Leadership for Life programme and a comparison group who did not. Under the quantitative strand of the research questionnaires were collected at three time points over an eighteen month time period. The study focused on 267 young people who were involved in the leadership programme and a comparison group of 164 respondents. Standardised measures of Life skills, Leadership skills, Resilience, Social Support and Empathy were utilised. The qualitative strand of the research involved interviews with 22 participants at three time points categorised as high and low risk of well-being issues. As well as this, five focus groups with 23 programme facilitators including Foróige staff and volunteers was carried out after the programme was completed.

## 7.3 Key Research Findings from the Study

As discussed in Chapter 6, the study yielded a number of core findings. These are revisited and can be grouped under five headings.

### ***1. The youth leadership programme appears effective in increasing and sustaining leadership skills over time***

The young people involved in the youth leadership programme demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in decision making, critical thinking, life skills, leadership skills and community involvement between time one and time two. Furthermore, the benefits were maintained and built upon between time one and time three, as youth demonstrated statistically significant increases for empathy, communication skills and goal setting. This suggests that programme participants improved over the course of the leadership programme and beyond.

When comparing the leadership group directly to the comparison group, the leadership group demonstrated statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on goal setting, leadership skills and community involvement at time two. At time three the leadership group demonstrated further statistically significant improvements over the comparison group on empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, team work and problem solving. These findings indicate that the youth leadership programme involvement may increase, sustain and grow the leadership skills of the young people involved when compared to a cohort of youth who receive no intervention.



## **2. Youth leadership programme involvement appears to increase resilience**

Young people involved in the youth leadership programme demonstrate statistically significant increases on all measures of resilience when compared to the comparison group. The comparison group demonstrate no statistically significant change over the three time points. Resilience is an important component for young people, which helps them navigate and overcome challenges effectively both day to day and in more traumatic events ensuring they 'bounce back' from them.

## **3. Youth leadership programme involvement appears to improve social support**

The youth leadership programme participants demonstrated statistically significant improvements in perceived sibling support over time. This indicates that young people involved in the leadership programme may gain additional skills to enable them to source more support from siblings or to help them deal with challenges in sibling relationships better. The leadership group also demonstrated enhanced emotional support when compared to the comparison group.

## **4. Self-Perception as a Leader improves for high & low risk youth over time**

Seeing yourself as a leader improves for both high and low risk groups over time. The high risk group improve the most on this measure coming from a baseline of 9.1% believing they are leaders to 81.3% at follow-up. While there was a significant difference between the groups at time one, by time three there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of self-belief. This suggests that belief in ones' own capacity for leadership is significantly improved over the course of the programme. The very nature of this change in self-belief can result in a youth seeing more opportunities to use their skills and take on leadership roles.

## **5. Youth leadership is effective for high risk youth but sustained engagement may be needed to enable further advancements in social support**

When this study looked at how high and low risk youth fared when it came to leadership skills, resilience and social support, it became evident that the high risk leadership group started at a significantly lower skill level than the low risk leadership group. The high risk leadership group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in adolescent well-being, decision making, critical thinking, sibling support, parental support, total social support and advice support between time one and time two. At time three further statistically significant improvements were seen in leadership skill and goal setting. Positive trends were noted over time for resilience, communication skills, team work, problem solving, life skills and community involvement. However, many of the supports from friends, parents and siblings as well as esteem support and total social support, returned to baseline levels at time three. Therefore, high risk leadership youth may need additional longer-term involvement to sustain social support increases. Additionally, as the low and high risk comparison groups significantly decreased on a number of measures this may suggest that the positive benefits accrued within the leadership low and high risk groups may arise from their involvement in the leadership programme.



## 6. Gender Differences Emerge in Benefits Accrued from the Youth Leadership Programme

When it comes to gender the males involved in the research demonstrated enhanced well-being when compared to the females, while females on the other hand demonstrate enhanced empathy and resilience over males. This indicates that males tend to feel better about themselves, while females tend to empathise more with other people. When carrying out Paired-T tests results indicate that both males and females benefit from their engagement in the programme with females appearing to gain more in terms of support. Males improved significantly over time on *decision making, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, life skills, leadership skills, resilience total and concrete support*. Females on the other hand improved significantly over time on *resilience 1, critical thinking, team work, life skills, leadership skills, parental support, sibling support, social support, concrete support, esteem support, community involvement and resilience total*. This indicates that the leadership programme benefits both genders with females actually improving greatest in terms of supports, which when looking at the research the area of greatest need to improve females capacity to take on leadership roles i.e. their sense of support from others and belief that they can succeed (Morrison et al., 1987).



When compared to the comparison group males demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *problem solving, sibling support, social support*. While females demonstrated a statistically significant increase in *adolescent well-being, understanding themselves, resilience 2, empathy, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving, life skills, concrete support, emotional support, community involvement and resilience total*. It would appear that the females accrued greater benefits from involvement in the youth leadership programme than the comparison group.

## 7.4 Concluding Remarks

As can be seen from this study involvement in youth leadership programmes can add an important contribution to youth and their capacity to recognise themselves as leaders and change makers within their communities. Furthermore, this youth leadership programme appears to have a positive impact on the lives of young people beyond their acquisition of leadership skills in particular, in their capacity for resilience, and perception of social support.

Resilience emerged as linking strongly to youth leadership development. As resilience contributes to the young persons' ability to deal with and overcome challenges it adds to the capacity of youth to be leaders in their community, particularly, when considering At risk youth. This study indicates that young people in the high risk group benefit considerably when it comes to resilience as indicated through the

challenges they described and their reports of being better able to deal with them after the programme. The leadership programme offered youth the opportunity to explore situations of conflict and complex problems in a safe space and encouraged them to apply these new skills in other contexts. The exposure of young people to situations that encourage their independence and carefully support them as they take on new challenges enables them to learn skills which are clearly practical in other aspects of their lives.

Social support was also linked to leadership skills through the multiple regressions, however it was not as strong as the link with resilience. The qualitative strand brought to light how parents, friends, other adults and siblings were pivotal in their contribution to young people's ability to solve problems, put themselves forward for tasks, push them when they felt like giving up and praise them when they did well. Youth in the high risk group however, could benefit from further connections with community or additional programmes as their significant increases in social support seen at time two were not maintained at 6 months follow-up. Interestingly, however, was the improvement in perception of sibling support which may indicate that the skills acquired during the leadership programme confer a benefit to improving family dynamic among siblings. This could provide for youth a relatively un-tapped source of support which could well enhance adolescent well-being and capacity for resilience.

Further to this, high risk youth gained a positive outlet for their engagement in and connection to the community, which they reported enhanced their network of supports. This may have also have aided in giving them a broader view of the world seeing the challenges that others faced. This in turn may have helped them put their challenges into perspective making them easier to deal with. It appears that through developing the skills to lead others that these young people also gained the skills to lead their own lives in a positive way.

The leadership programme described here provided young people with opportunities to collaborate on team projects. One of these involved researching and compiling a report to share with their community on an issue important to them. This enabled them to develop their skills in working with others, critique various leadership styles, enhance their capacity to research, source information and understand different issues as well as present and share their work with others. These kinds of projects are less typically seen in the formal education system and yet when considering how people work in the real world are important capacities young people need to do well in the workforce and as such need to be cultivated.

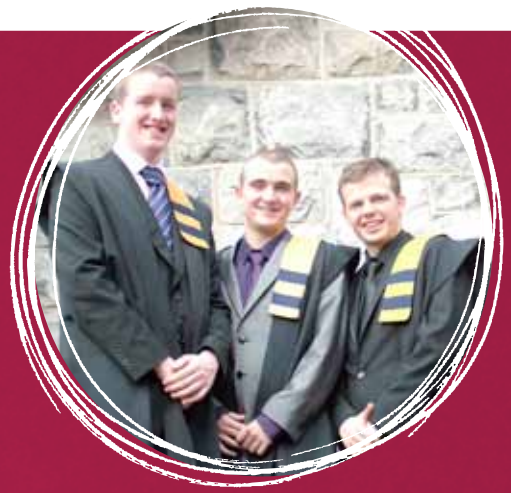
This study found that young people's sense of self-belief as young leaders, their confidence and their ability to communicate on many levels was enhanced. This placed them on a pathway where they can seek out and engage in further leadership opportunities. Additionally, their improvements in decision making, critical thinking, conflict resolution, problem solving and goal setting are skills which employers today actively seek. Moreover, increases in empathy and understanding themselves have knock-on positive contributions to society. Particularly, as youth become more aware of their capabilities, contribute to humanity and seek to engage in civic society.

This study corroborates with other researchers and adds to the argument that leadership can indeed be learned (van Linden & Fertman, 1989; Shriberg et al., 2005). Leadership is a set of learnable skills; in addition to these skills however is the need for the appropriate environment which includes genuine opportunities to practice leadership. Further to having the skills and the opportunity, it is the capacity for action that results in a young person 'becoming' a young leader. It is within this framework the author believes that young people can uncover their potential and enable extraordinary things be achieved.

If we as a society were to have higher expectations of all our youth, we would offer them more opportunities to participate in youth leadership initiatives and we would then reap greater rewards. Indeed not every young person will be interested or be in a position to take part in a youth leadership programme, however the snowball effect that can be created by enhancing the self-perception of one's capacities could substantially magnify the outcomes young people gain and the benefits to society.

The research findings presented here largely supports the tentative conceptual model depicted in Chapter 2. It highlights the interconnection of resilience and social support in the development of young leaders. Furthermore, the research indicates that the youth leadership programme appears to confer a benefit to both youth experiencing adversity and normative youth with the high risk young person gaining possibly more than low risk youth. Additional to this, the skills that youth developed as well as the provision of appropriate environments and the opportunity gained to practice leadership through action enabled young people in this programme to become young leaders.

This Chapter has revisited the core aim and objectives of this study. It reminds the reader of the methodology used in this research. The key findings from this study were then reiterated. Finally, a concluding discussion sums up this research. The next chapter setting forth a number of policy, practice and research implications.



## 8. Policy, Practice & Research Implications

### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the implications this research has on policy, practice and research detailing some recommendations for these areas.

### 8.1 Implications for Policy, Practice and Research

Objective 5 of this study was to make recommendations for future practice, policy and research. As mentioned previously, parallel to the rising interest in youth leadership is the growing need and desire of youth organisations to couch their programme development in evidence based/informed practice. This in some cases is to qualify for funding and demonstrate that money invested does yield positive outcomes and is value for money. Employing an evidence-based approach is further echoed in *The Agenda for Children's Services* (OMC, 2007). It is within this context that recommendations for practice, policy and research will be presented next.

#### 8.1.1 Policy Implications

Policy makers need to make resources available to support young people's access to youth leadership at both the programme and organisation level for a number of reasons:

- Youth leadership programme involvement improved leadership skills but it also appears to go further and enhance participants' capacity for resilience, community involvement, empathy, understanding self and social support. This can positively impact on a community's capacity to resolve their own problems but also adds to the human capital available in society.
- It is a short investment of one year in the lives of young people which sees the participants continue to garner benefits beyond the life of the programme and contribute to their communities.
- As well as this, having skills in goal setting, communication, critical thinking, team work, problem solving, being empathetic and leadership skills are very beneficial to employees, entrepreneurs and college students. For organisations who want to advance in increasingly competitive markets, having access to these skill sets are crucial to their survival and growth. Businesses could contribute, for example by sponsoring leadership programmes, making available staff to mentor young people, offering internships etc.,

- Policy makers need to explore embedding high quality youth leadership programmes within or parallel to the school curriculum to offer more youth opportunities, particularly those who may not traditionally see themselves as leaders.
- At risk youth benefit significantly from their involvement in youth leadership, therefore policy makers should look to youth leadership programmes as not just for the elite but as a opportunity for At risk youth to develop and gain respite from their adversity. For them to gain access, substantial provision is required which also highlights the importance of recruiting a portion of at risk youth.

The world that young people are growing up in now is faster paced and less traditional. All young people need to develop resilience at a young age, particularly if they are to be adaptable in the face of continual change so as to maintain their health, well-being, happiness, are economically stable and are effective leaders. Policy makers need to look at resilience as a necessity to all people including leaders and consider youth leadership programmes as a way of enabling resilience.

Policy makers need to realise that good leaders need a wide range of social support. Attention needs to be focused within schools and youth organisations as to how to build effective social support networks, particularly as communities face growing hardship in the face of economic uncertainty. For example, sponsoring mentoring programmes, adult-youth partnerships, encouraging government personnel to contribute time toward mentoring youth or youth leaders, supporting youth leadership programmes which increase youth's capacity for community involvement and community support.

When policy makers are investing in programmes for youth, greater accountability and emphasis in relation to evidence-based/informed practice are needed. As well as this, greater funding needs to be made available for organisations to develop evidence-based programmes within an Irish context. Furthermore, increased funding is required to rigorously evaluate programmes to ensure they result in positive outcomes for young people.

There is likely to be a need for further youth leadership initiatives in Ireland, ones that meet young people's needs after they leave youth organisations. Notably the young people involved in this study wanted to meet more than once a week to engage in this programme, however due to insufficient resources, personnel etc., it would be very difficult to extend this programme further without substantial investment of money, time and facilitators. It does however highlight the on the ground need and desire for youth leadership initiatives. Politicians would well take note to protect this area and see it as an area for growth which will benefit society in the immediate and long term, particularly when considering where to cut funding.

Sustainability is a key issue which emerges in the face of cut backs and the capacity of youth projects to be able to provide opportunities for young people. Programmes that demonstrate outcomes also need to have behind them suitably qualified staff and volunteers to implement them so they can achieve the desired outcomes. Youth work in Ireland is currently at risk of losing incredibly competent staff as a result of cut backs. Already many youth project staff work reduced hours and can just about deal with the challenges and needs that the young people are presented with. An increasingly overburdened Health Service Executive struggles to deal with the challenges presented to it and requires youth services

to provide increasingly targeted services for young people in need. This focus may reduce further the capacity of projects to be able to respond to the development needs of young people and force them to focus solely on youth with very high levels of need.

A continued lack of females in leadership positions nationally requires that policy makers ensure there are ample opportunities for females to engage in youth leadership and are further supported to become adult leaders. If we are to see more females in positions of power nationally and internationally then these opportunities are pivotal.

It needs to be a stated official policy directive that females are encouraged and supported in to leadership positions e.g. equality declaration, the introduction of quotas and equal opportunity to leadership positions including equality training within organisations human resource departments.

Mentorship opportunities to partner female youth leaders with female adult leaders and male adult leaders. It is important to involve females and develop further routes for them to take on specialised roles. Similarly this should be encouraged also for males.

### **8.1.2 Practice Implications**

Communities and schools need to find ways of involving youth as leaders by seeing them as resources and enabling them to contribute towards problem solving.

Communities and schools also need to support youth leadership programmes so that young people can enhance their skill set and significantly contribute to their communities, youth organisations and future employers.

When it comes to understanding oneself it is important for programmes to build in self-assessments e.g. personality tests etc., to ensure that the young people gain a better understanding of themselves and why they do what they do. Better understanding of oneself will lead to better leaders.

The community action project enabled youth to exercise their skills. Therefore future youth leadership programmes should require that young people are involved in leading their own community action project, service learning or internship.

Core components of programmes could benefit from focusing on coping strategies, stress management, conflict resolution, mediation, and problem solving which will enable greater resilience. Within the curriculum every effort should be made to enable young people to apply their learning in their own lives at home and in the community. For example, scenarios in the programme could relate to life's challenges and more challenging aspects of being a leader while also incorporating application to one's own situations.

Building further support into programmes would be beneficial e.g. building in leadership mentoring roles that would support, mentor and guide the young person through their community project and future leadership opportunities. This may pave the way for previous completers of the programme to contribute back and support newer recruits through the process, bringing further leadership opportunities and responsibility to the leaders.





Engaging parents, siblings and other community adults to help provide technical support and human resource links to the young people involved may support young people further through their journey.

The fact that siblings score consistently lower than any other source of support in both the leadership and comparison group merits further consideration, particularly as a potential stressor which may affect adolescent well-being but also a potential untapped source of support for adolescents. This may well be an area for further exploration in the format of an initiative to help young people cultivate positive relationships with their siblings, something which could easily lead to reciprocal benefits in terms of support, resilience and health and well-being.

For high risk young people, youth leadership programme involvement can be a refuge for them from the challenges they are facing. The programme can confer benefits in terms of coping strategies, problem solving, social and emotional skills, resilience and social support which are beneficial to their personal lives and their lives as leaders. They could however benefit from further sustained linkage with the community or with additional programme involvement to maintain their social support improvements. Mentoring would be a good additional support to this group to ensure that the social support benefits accrued are sustained.

As young people in the high risk group improve significantly when involved in the programme it is important that when inviting young people to be part of youth leadership programmes that young people considered to be in a high risk group are offered the same opportunities to take part, as they may indeed benefit to a greater extent than their low risk counterparts.

Qualitatively esteem support appears to be a stronger source of support for low risk young people than high risk group, indicating that perhaps a greater emphasis on building young people's esteem support (support in terms of recognition for achievements) may be beneficial in helping high risk youth see themselves as leaders and engage in opportunities.

For programmes to increase leadership skills the people who get the most out of them are the ones that exhibit higher empathy, self-perception as a leader, resilience, adolescent well-being, social support and understanding self. If empathy can be facilitated within the programme results will be further enhanced, for example incorporating sensitivity training and diversity training will result in better leaders and result in them getting more out of the programme. Similarly, if young people can become more resilient this will also result in them becoming better leaders for example focusing on coping strategies, stress management, leadership mentoring, coaching etc., In addition to this if young people can understand themselves better this too will enhance their leadership skills. Therefore, incorporating personality tests, self-assessments and reflection are important. Finally, if young people gain greater supports their leadership skills will be enhanced; encouraging peer support, mentoring, parental involvement and community involvement would be beneficial.



Self-belief was an important component in predicting leadership skills, therefore it is advised that youth work take a closer look at self-belief and how to incorporate methods to increase the self-belief of young people. For example, affirmations, positive self-talk, cognitive labelling and reframing, cognitive behavioural therapy, formal recognition and the use of portfolios to record the impact they are making. These approaches can help to enable young people to reframe their thinking so that they begin to believe in themselves creating a positive reinforcing loop, something which does not just have implications for leadership but for just about every aspect of life.

When it comes to programme implementation, how a programme is implemented can be the difference between reaching the desired outcomes and failing. A well implemented intervention with less efficacy can outperform a more effective one that is poorly implemented (Lipsey cited in Blase et al., 2011). Adequate training and ongoing support are necessary to ensure that the facilitators are very comfortable with the content which will help to ensure proper implementation to occur.

Given the limited discourse on ethics in leadership throughout the research it may be an important component to consider for further leadership programme development. In light of the global financial crisis, it is clearly not sufficient to just develop young leaders. Importantly, young leaders need to be cultivated who base their decisions on an ethical framework which considers their broader impact on society.

This research also brings to light the importance of research to link back to practice so that better outcomes are achieved for young people. Therefore, practitioners should take note of the development process of the programme as it may have contributed towards the programmes ability to reveal positive outcomes for young people. Particularly, when developing other programmes ensuring that they research based, needs-led, employ a consultation process, include the voice of youth, use a pilot process and monitor and evaluate to improve the programme.

It is welcome to see so many females get involved in this youth leadership programme, indeed it is important to encourage young females to take up leadership opportunities and to support them in that. For females as seen in the literature often a lack of support can be why they don't put themselves forward for leadership roles (Ryan et al., 2007). As indicated by this research females do gain additional supports from their involvement and as such a recommendation here is to continue to involve females and develop further routes for them to take on specialised roles.

There are obvious benefits to both males and females from involvement in the youth leadership programme therefore efforts to continue involving both sexes in such programmes should be encouraged.

Different delivery methods may need to be explored to enhance males improvement in social support e.g. more male facilitators, more examples that are gender neutral. Facilitators need to be aware that young people are getting different outcomes based on gender, this may be due to examples being more relevant to one group and facilitators need to be cognisant of the impact of this.

The programme needs to be reviewed to ensure there is no gender bias, as well as this facilitators need to be aware that they are not introducing a gender bias.

Ensure that young leaders are exposed to a diverse range of leaders based on gender, race, religion and leader type during the programme.

Advanced pathways for young people who have completed the leadership programme could be developed in topic specific areas e.g. business, politics, arts, sports, entrepreneurship, technology, social entrepreneurship, social justice. The youth leadership programme could be considered a starting point from where the young people can branch out into further areas of expertise.

Additional partnerships between those delivering the programme and other organisations e.g. schools, community organisations to enable a broader reach of the programme which would include a wide range of participants nationally and internationally.

### **8.1.3 Research Implications**

There is the need for additional research in this area, first in different settings including diverse environments e.g. sole delivery in schools, different populations etc., Particularly if the programme was going to be implemented in a school setting by teachers instead of youth workers. As those who were implementing the programme in the schools found the group had difficulty adjusting to the new style of working.

A larger scale study would be beneficial to further elucidate the impact of the youth leadership programme.

Further longitudinal research would be beneficial to explore the impact over several years.

Further research in the area of other youth leadership programmes to explore other factors which may contribute to youth leadership development and enable a broader understanding of additional components which may be useful.

Additional research to explore the impact of the leadership programme in relation to youth with externalising behaviour. For example, a number of young people were involved in the programme from Garda Youth Diversion Projects and it would be interesting to explore whether their involvement in the programme contributed to their resilience, social support and positive leadership skills.

Further research into the area of high risk youth and the benefits they gain from involvement in youth leadership including a larger sample size.

Further research may need to be carried out to see why males and females benefit differently in certain areas from the youth leadership programme.

Further research could help to understand what could be done to ensure that all participants get the same results.



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## Appendices

Appendix A: Information Sheet

Appendix B: Advertisement

Appendix C: Parental Information Sheet & Consent Form

Appendix D: Questionnaire

Appendix E: Ethnicity & Living Arrangements

Appendix F: Living Arrangements

Appendix G: One-Way ANOVA Mean Score for Gender and Group

Appendix H: One way ANOVA Mean score for Leadership Self-perception and Grade

Appendix I: Paired T-test Mean score for Comparison Group T1 v T2

Appendix J: Paired T-test Mean Score for Comparison Group over Time (T2 v T3; T1 v T3)

Appendix K: Paired T Test Mean Scores for Gender over Time 1 versus Time 2

Appendix L: Paired T Test Mean Scores for Gender over Time 2 v Time 3 and Time 1 v Time 3

Appendix M: One-Way ANOVA Mean Score for Leadership Male v Comparison Male

Appendix N: One-Way ANOVA Mean Score for Leadership Female v Comparison Female

Appendix O: Mixed-Between within ANOVA for Leadership vs Comparison over Time

Appendix P: Focus group theme, sources and references

Appendix Q: Paired T test Mean Score for Low Risk Leadership Group

Appendix R: Paired T test Mean Score for Low Risk Comparison Group

Appendix S: Paired T test Mean Score for High Risk Comparison Group

Appendix T: Mixed-Between within ANOVA for Low, middle and high risk groups over time

Appendix U: Interview Themes - *Social Support*

Appendix V: Interview Themes *Resilience*

Appendix W: Interview Themes *Leadership*





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### **School/Project/Club Information Sheet**

**Study Title: An explorative study to establish the association between leadership skills, resilience and social support**

Foróige are carrying out a study on leadership in young people. As part of this research young people aged 15-18 years involved in Foróige and the Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life programme are being asked to take part. The purpose of the study is to determine the link between leadership, and resilience and social support.

- Participants in the Leadership programme will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in September 2010, May 2011 and November 2011.
- We also need a comparison group to take part in the research. These young people will need to be selected so that they have similar characteristics to the leadership group e.g. similar age, gender and geographical location. They will also fill out the questionnaire in September 2010, May 2011 and November 2011.
- One in ten young people involved will be asked to take part in an interview for a maximum of 30 minutes about their views on how they on how they have developed as leaders
- Young people involved will be completely anonymous and information obtained will be confidential. Young people taking part in the study may withdraw at any stage. No invasive questions will be asked.
- A two page sheet will be circulated to all those who take part in the study with information of the findings.

Young people are under no obligation to take part in this project. Data will be stored securely and anonymously and all publications from the project will be presented in a way that ensures no individual participant is identifiable. The findings from this research will be presented as part of a dissertation and possibly as conference papers and other academic publications. This research is covered by Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

If you have any questions about the research project please do not hesitate to contact the project researcher, *Sue Redmond*. *Best Practice Unit, Foróige, Block 12 D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12.*  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: [sue.redmond@Foroige.ie](mailto:sue.redmond@Foroige.ie)



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## YOUTH LEADERSHIP RESEARCH



**We want to hear from you!!!**

**Foróige are carrying out a study of *leadership* in young people. We would like to ask anyone aged 15-18 years old who are involved in Foróige to take part.**

The purpose of the study is to determine the link between leadership, resilience and social support. Resilience is the way people cope with stresses in their life. Being resilient means a person can deal with the up's and down's in life. The results of this study will greatly enhance our programme delivery.

- If you choose to take part you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in September 2010, May 2011 and November 2011.
- Young people involved will be completely anonymous and information obtained will be confidential.
- You can withdraw from the study at any stage.
- A two page sheet will be given to all those who take part in the study with information of the findings.

If you have any further questions about the research please do not hesitate to contact the project researcher, *Sue Redmond*, Best Practice Unit, Foróige, Block 12 D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12 Tel: Email: [sue.redmond@Foroige.ie](mailto:sue.redmond@Foroige.ie)



OÉ Gaillimh  
NUI Galway

**Parent Information Sheet and Consent Form for Questionnaire**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Study Title: An explorative study to establish the association between leadership skills, resilience and social support**

I am carrying out a study on leadership in young people. As part of this research young people aged 15-18 years involved in Foróige are being asked to take part. The purpose of the study is to determine the link between leadership, and resilience and social support. Resilience is the way people cope with stresses in their life. Being resilient means a person can deal with the up's and down's in life.

- If your child chooses to take part in the study they will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in September 2010, May 2011 and November 2011.
- Young people involved will be completely anonymous and information obtained will be confidential.
- If your child chooses to take part they may withdraw from the study at any stage.
- A two page sheet will be circulated to all those who take part in the study with information of the findings.
- No invasive questions will be asked.

Your child is under no obligation to take part in this project. Data will be stored securely and anonymously and all publications from the project will be presented in a way that ensures no individual participant is identifiable. The findings from this research will be presented as part of a dissertation and possibly as conference papers and other academic publications. This research is covered by Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

If you have any questions about the research project please do not hesitate to contact the project researcher, *Sue Redmond Best Practice Unit, Foróige, Block 12 D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12.*  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: [sue.redmond@foroice.ie](mailto:sue.redmond@foroice.ie)



OÉ Gaillimh  
NUI Galway

### Parental Consent Form for Questionnaire

**Title of Project:** An explorative study to establish the association between leadership skills, resilience and social support

Name of Researcher: Susan Redmond

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated \_\_\_\_\_ for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information ☐
3. I understand that my child/ward's participation is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without their legal rights being affected. ☐
4. I agree for my child/ward to take part in the above study ☐

Name of Parent/Guardian

Date:

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child/Ward

Date:

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



OÉ Gaillimh  
NUI Galway

### **Leadership Questionnaire**

**Welcome!**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Please ensure you read the information sheet again that is supplied with this questionnaire before completing the questionnaire. This questionnaire involves answering some questions. To make it easier, we have divided it up into four parts.

1. The first section asks some questions about you
2. The second section is about how you feel and behave
3. The third section asks questions about your leadership skills
4. The fourth section asks questions about you feel supported

*Thank you very much for taking part!*

*Please remember that everything you say is confidential. So, please be as honest as you can.*

*If there is anything that upsets you, please don't hesitate to tell us or one of the youth workers.*

## Section One- About You





Your Initials: first  middle  last

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/19\_\_\_\_

Gender (please tick)

Male ☐ Female ☐

1. Right now, do you see yourself as a leader? (circle one) Yes / No	
2. Are you doing the Foróige (Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life Programme)? (circle one) Yes / No If Yes Where? Club Project School	
3. Which County do you live in?	
4. What type of area do you live in? Please tick.	Countryside <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Year in school?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Not in school <input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/>
6. On average what level subjects do you take?	<input type="checkbox"/> Honours level <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary level <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation level (or Applied Junior/Leaving Cert)
7. What are your average grades in school?	<input type="checkbox"/> A (85-100%) <input type="checkbox"/> E (25-39%) <input type="checkbox"/> B (70-84%) <input type="checkbox"/> F (10-24%) <input type="checkbox"/> C (55-69%) <input type="checkbox"/> Not in school <input type="checkbox"/> D (40-54%)
8. Ethnic Background: Tick the one that best applies 	<b>White</b> <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Any other white background (please specify _____)  <b>Black or Black Irish</b> <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Any other black background (please specify _____)  <b>Asian or Asian Irish</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background (please specify _____)  <input type="checkbox"/> Other, including mixed background (please specify _____)
9. Your family: Check the line that best describes the adults living in your house right now. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother and Father <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Mother only <input type="checkbox"/> Mother and Stepfather <input type="checkbox"/> Father only <input type="checkbox"/> Father and Stepmother <input type="checkbox"/> Other relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Other: unrelated (please describe) _____



## **Section Two – How do you feel and behave**

**To what extent do the statements below describe you?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I cooperate with the people around me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I try to finish what I start	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. People think that I am fun to be with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am aware of my own strengths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I think it is important to serve my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I feel supported by my friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My friends will stand by me in difficult times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Self...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
10. There is purpose to my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I understand my moods and feelings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I understand why I do what I do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section Two

To what extent do the statements below describe you?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
13. I have people I look up to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I know how to behave in different social situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I am given opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I know where I go in my community to get help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I am proud of my cultural background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I am treated fairly in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I participate in organised religious activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I enjoy my community's traditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I am proud to be a citizen of Ireland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Others...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
23. I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I try to understand what other people feel and think	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I try to understand what other people go through	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Section Two :These questions are about how you feel you are doing in general**

	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
26. I look forward to things as much as I used to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I sleep very well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. I feel like crying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I like going out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I feel like leaving home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. I get stomach aches/cramps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I have lots of energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. I enjoy my food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. I can stick up for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. I think life isn't worth living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. I am good at things I do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. I enjoy the things I do as much as I used to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. I like talking to my friends and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. I have horrible dreams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. I feel very lonely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. I am easily cheered up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. I feel so sad I hardly bear it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. I feel very bored	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your community?**

44. Not at all active	Slightly active	Somewhat Active	Active	Very active
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section Three - Skills

**Instructions:** The following statements describe how you might communicate, solve problems, make decisions and achieve goals in everyday life. **Tick** ✓ the one that best fits how often you did what is described in the **last 30 days**.

When I have a decision to make...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I look for information to help me understand the problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I think before making a choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I consider the risks of a choice before making a decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I think about all the information I have about the different choices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



When I think...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
6. I can easily express my thoughts on a problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I usually have more than one source of information before making a decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I compare ideas when thinking about a topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I keep my mind open to different ideas when planning to make a decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I am able to tell the best way of handling a problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Section Three

When I communicate with others...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
11. I try to keep eye contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I recognise when two people are trying to say the same thing, but in different ways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I try to see the other person's point of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I change the way I talk to someone based on my relationship with them (i.e. friend, parent, teacher etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I organise thoughts in my head before speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I make sure I understand what another person is saying before I respond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



When setting a goal...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
17. I look at the steps needed to achieve the goal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I think about how and when I want to achieve it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. After setting a goal, I break goals down into steps so I can check my progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Both positive and negative feedback helps me work towards my goal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Others...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
21. I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I enjoy working together with other people my age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I stand up for myself without putting others down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section Three



When solving a problem...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
24. I first figure out exactly what the problem is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I try to determine what caused it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I do what I have done in the past to solve it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I compare each possible solution with the others to find the best one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. After selecting a solution, I think about it for a while before putting it into action	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Taking the lead...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
29. I am determined when I have a goal in mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I reflect on what I have achieved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. I consider myself to have good self-control in difficult situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I am known for inspiring other people to action	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. People follow my lead easily	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. I have high expectations of myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. I know how to access opportunities to be a leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. I am known for resolving conflicts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. I try to do the right thing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. I am grateful for things in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Helping others is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





## Section Four – How you feel supported

This section asks you about how well you can rely on your friends, parents/guardian, brother(s)/sister(s) and other adult(s).

	No	Sometimes	Yes
1. Are there <u>friends</u> you can depend on to help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Do your relationships with your <u>friends</u> provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your <u>friends</u> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Is there a <u>friend</u> you could trust to turn to for advice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	No	Sometimes	Yes
5. Can you depend on your <u>parent(s)/guardian</u> to help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Do you feel your talents/abilities are recognised by your <u>parents</u> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Could you turn to your <u>parent(s)/guardian</u> for advice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Do your relationships with your <u>parent(s)/guardian(s)</u> provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	No	Sometimes	Yes
9. Can you depend on your <u>brother(s)/sister(s)</u> to help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Do your relationships with your <u>brother(s)/sister(s)</u> provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by your <u>brother(s)/sister(s)</u> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Could you turn to your <u>brother(s)/sister(s)</u> for advice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section Four

	No	Sometimes	Yes
13. Can you depend on <u>other adult(s)</u> (e.g. sport coach, family friend) you know to help you, if you really need it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Does your relationship with this <u>adult</u> provide you with a sense of acceptance and happiness?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Do you feel your talents and abilities are recognised by this <u>adult</u> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Could you turn to <u>another adult</u> for advice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

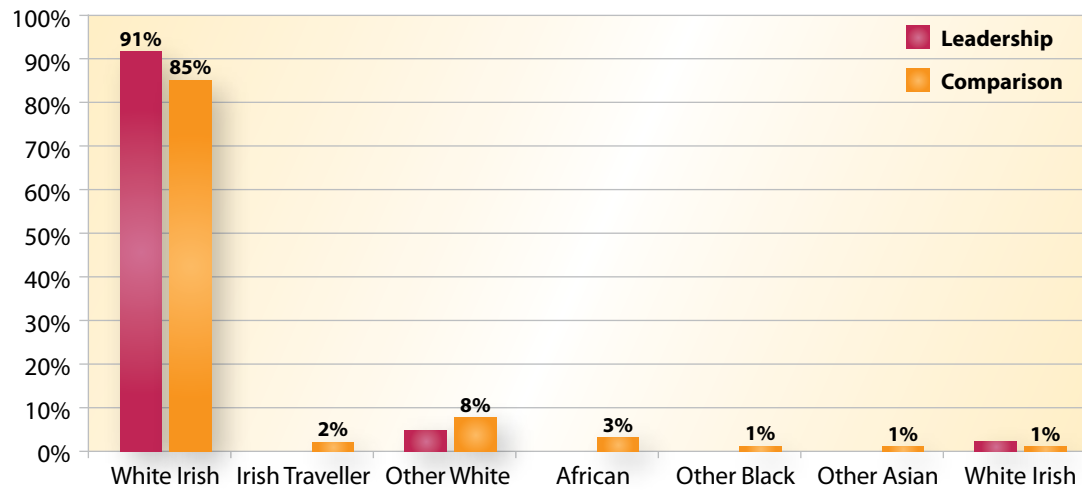


17. How long have you been in Foróige? \_\_\_\_\_ years
18. Have you been involved in another youth organisation (please name) \_\_\_\_\_  
For how many years? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you take part in any community or volunteer activities? (please circle one) YES or NO  
If YES, approximately how many groups or organisations are you involved with? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you have anything else you would like to add: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

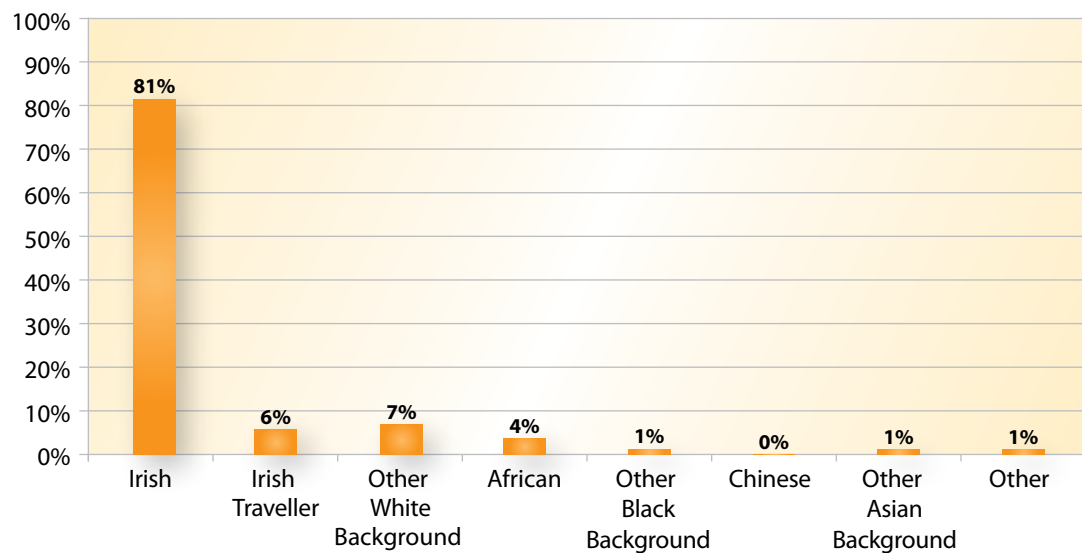
***Thanks for completing this survey!***

## Appendix E: Ethnicity & Living Arrangements

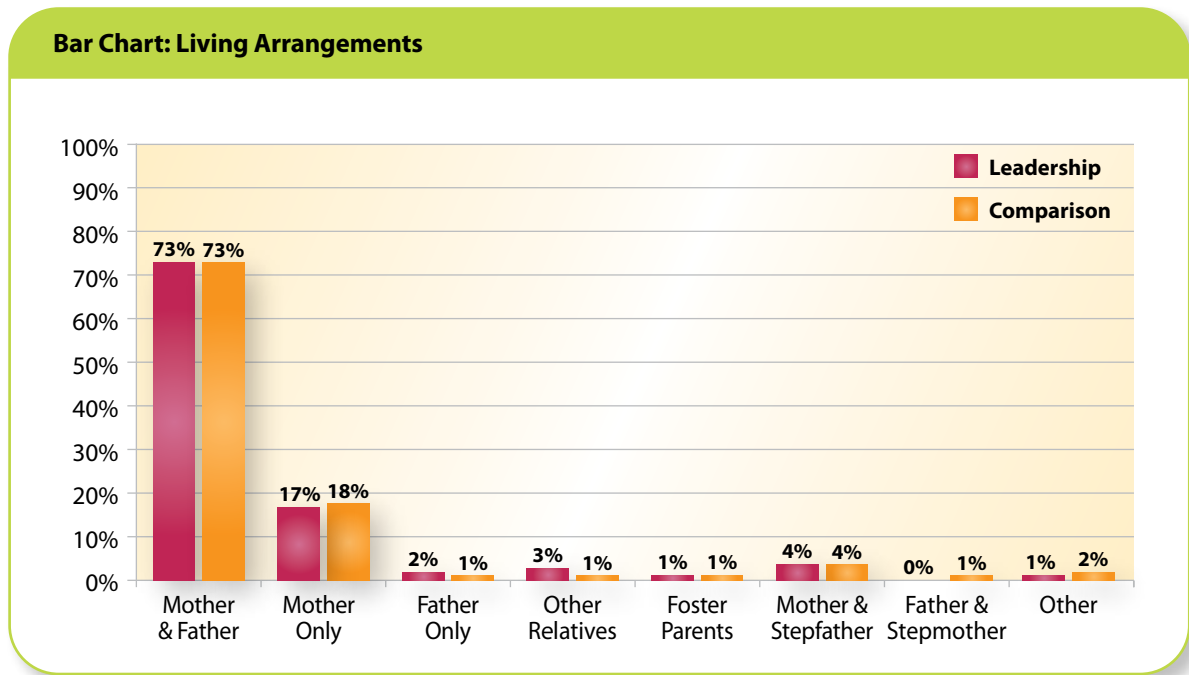
**Bar Chart: Ethnicity**



**Total population of Foróige ethnicity 2011**



Appendix F: Living Arrangements



## Appendix G: One-Way ANOVA Mean Score for Gender and Group

Measures	LeadershipT1			ComparisonT1		
	Gender			Gender		
	M	F	Sig	M	F	Sig
Adolescent WB	7.4	9.2	***	7.2	10.0	***
Resilience1	34.5	35.9	+	34.5	35.5	
Understand	12.1	11.6		12.5	11.5	**
Resilience2	37.6	38.3		37.8	37.6	
Empathy	11.8	12.7	***	11.6	12.5	*
Decision M	15.0	14.7		15.1	14.3	
Critical T	18.4	17.9		17.8	17.2	
Communication	23.0	23.1		22.5	22.3	
Goal Setting	14.9	14.6		14.8	14.1	
Team Work	12.2	11.9		11.7	11.6	
Problem	19.0	18.7		18.5	18.2	
Life Skills^	102	100		100	97.4	
Leadership	42.4	41.1		40.4	40.2	
Friend Support	11.1	11.0		10.7	11.1	
Parental Sup	10.6	10.5		9.85	10.1	
Sibling Support	8.9	9.5	+	8.9	9.3	
Adult Support	9.9	9.7		9.7	10.0	
Social Sup^^	40.1	40.3		38.5	40.2	
Concrete	10.0	10.2		9.6	10.2	+
Emotional	10.2	10.2		9.6	10.1	
Esteem	9.9	9.6		9.4	9.6	
Advice	9.8	10.0		9.8	10.1	
Community	10.7	11.0		10.2	10.6	
Resilience Tot	71.49	74.32	*	71.12	73.19	

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix H: One way ANOVA Mean score for Leadership Self-perception and Grade

Measures	LeadershipT1			ComparisonT1			LeadershipT1				ComparisonT1			
	Leader			Leader			Grades				Grades			
	Y	N	Sig	Y	N	Sig	A/B	C	D/E/F	Sig	A/B	C	D/E/F	Sig
Adolescent WB	7.4	9.4	***	8.1	9.9	*	8.1	8.9	12.2	**	8.6	9.6	10.6	
Resilience1	36.3	34.5	***	36.3	34.2	+	36.2	34.0	31.2	+	36.1	34.3	30.8	+
Understand	12.1	11.6		11.9	11.9		12.1	11.2	12.7	+	12.1	11.7	10.2	+
Resilience2	39.3	37.0	***	38.8	37		38.4	37.5	36.7		38.9	36.4	34.8	*
Empathy	12.5	12.2		12.5	11.9	+	12.7	11.8	11.5	**	12.4	11.9	12.3	
Decision M	14.9	14.7		14.9	14.4		15.6	13.3	13.7	***	15.6	13.5	12.1	+
Critical T	18.7	17.4	**	18.0	17.0		18.7	16.7	15.3	***	18.3	16.6	15.5	+
Communication	23.6	22.5	**	23.0	21.6	*	23.5	22.2	21.1	+	23.1	21.8	17.7	+
Goal Setting	15.4	14.1	***	14.9	13.8	*	15.0	14.2	14.1		14.8	13.8	11.8	+
Team Work	12.5	11.6	***	12.0	11.4		12.2	11.7	11.2		11.9	11.6	9.5	+
Problem	19.3	18.3	**	19.0	17.9		19.3	17.9	16.5	***	19.3	17.5	15.8	**
Life Skills^	104	98.3	***	101	96.1	*	103	96.4	92.1	***	102	94.6	82.7	+
Leadership	44.6	38.8	***	43.0	38.1	***	42.9	39.6	35.1	***	42.1	38.9	35.5	**
Friend Support	11.1	11.0		11.2	10.7	*	11.1	10.9	11.0		10.9	11.0	10.0	+
Parental Sup	10.6	10.5		10.3	9.7		10.6	10.4	10.3		10.1	9.8	9.7	
Sibling Support	9.4	9.2		8.7	9.6		9.3	9.0	10.3		9.2	9.1	8.4	
Adult Support	10.0	9.5		10.2	9.6	*	9.9	9.4	9.6	+	10.1	9.6	10.1	
Social Sup^^	40.8	39.7		41.4	38.1	**	40.6	39.5	41.3		40.3	38.7	38.2	
Depend	10.3	10.0		10.4	9.6	*	10.3	9.9	10.4		10.1	9.9	9.1	
Acceptance	10.4	10.0		10.4	9.5	**	10.3	10.1	10.3		10.1	9.7	9.8	
Recognise	9.9	9.6		10.1	9.1	+	9.8	9.6	10.0		9.8	9.2	9.5	
Advice	10.1	9.9		10.4	9.7	*	10.0	9.8	10.5		10.2	9.8	9.5	
Community	11.4	10.3	***	11.0	9.96	**	11.2	10.8	10.5	**	10.7	10.1	9.5	
Resilience Tot	75.6	71.0	***	74.6	70.3	*	74.9	71.0	68.0	**	74.6	70.3	60.7	***

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix I: Paired T-test Mean score for Comparison Group T1 v T2

Quantitative Measures	Comparison Group T1	Comparison Group T2	Significance	Eta Squared
Adolescent Well-being	8.67	9.05		
Resilience1	35.73	34.74	T=2.271*	.04
Understand Self	11.91	11.76		
Resilience2	38.39	38.06		
Empathy	11.90	12.09		
Decision Making	14.85	15.01		
Critical Thinking	17.92	18.15		
Communication Skills	22.70	22.58		
Goal Setting	14.57	14.08		
Team Work	11.73	11.63		
Problem Solving	18.79	18.23		
Life Skills ^	100.20	99.64		
Leadership Skills	41.19	40.02		
Friend Support	11.11	10.67	T=2.090*	.04
Parental Support	10.22	9.92		
Sibling Support	9.45	8.52	T=3.127**	.097
Adult Support	9.98	9.78		
Total Social support^^	40.57	38.64	T=2.720**	.07
Concrete	10.33	10.02		
Emotional	10.11	9.78		
Esteem	9.78	9.23	T=2.678**	.07
Advice	10.34	9.90	T=2.422*	.058
Community	10.47	10.19		
Resilience Total	74.16	72.45		

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001



## Appendix J: Paired T-test Mean Score for Comparison Group over Time (T2 v T3; T1 v T3)

Quantitative Measures	Comparison Group T1	Comparison Group T2	Comparison Group T3	Significance	Eta Square
Adolescent WB	8.96	8.77	9.08		
Resilience1	35.57	34.29	34.56		
Understand Self	11.84	11.36	11.45		
Resilience2	37.36	37.38	15.28		
Empathy	11.86	11.97	11.95		
Decision Making	15.32	15.28	14.77		
Critical Thinking	17.91	18.06	17.64		
Communication Skills	23.11	22.46	20.04		
Goal Setting	14.55	13.73	13.60		
Team Work	11.68	11.66	11.33		
Problem Solving	18.79	17.48	17.64		
Life Skills ^	101.61	98.71	97.04		
Leadership Skills	41.79	39.42	39.82		
Friend Support	10.88	10.27	10.88		
Parental Support	9.88	9.22	9.68		
Sibling Support	8.95	<b>8.12</b>	<b>9.12</b>	T=-2.386*	.13
Adult Support	9.81	9.86	9.75		
Total Social Supports^^	39.33	37.02	38.61		
Concrete	10.07	9.65	9.90		
Emotional	9.79	9.41	9.62		
Esteem	9.35	8.95	9.25		
Advice	10.12	9.63	9.86		
Community	<b>10.73</b>	10.26	<b>9.93</b>	T=2.170*	.098
Resilience Total	72.93	71.68	70.25		

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix K: Paired T Test Mean Scores for Gender over Time 1 versus Time 2

Measures						
	Male			Female		
	LT1	LT2	Sig	LT1	LT2	Sig
Adolescent WB	7.85	7.57		9.20	8.64	
Resilience1	34.35	34.58		35.65	35.28	
Understand	11.93	11.85		11.51	12.07	*
Resilience2	37.71	37.80		38.25	39.54	**
Empathy	11.69	11.98		12.82	12.69	
Decision M	14.87	15.78	**	15.07	15.30	
Critical T	18.12	18.82		18.23	18.72	
Communication	22.84	23.30		23.05	23.20	
Goal Setting	14.64	14.82		14.54	14.79	
Team Work	12.07	11.78		11.77	11.71	
Problem	18.75	19.15		18.9	19.01	
Life Skills^	101.07	103.6	*	101.34	102.77	
Leadership	41.58	41.70		41	42.4	*
Friend Support	11.03	11.15		11.04	11.10	
Parental Sup	10.71	10.87		10.54	10.70	
Sibling Support	9.04	9.41		9.45	9.68	
Adult Support	9.98	10.02		9.5	9.88	
Social Sup^^	40.11	40.65		39.72	40.51	
Concrete	10.12	10.28		10.09	10.37	
Emotional	10.141	10.28		10.15	10.32	
Esteem	9.91	10.05		9.52	9.61	
Advice	9.93	10.03		9.95	10.20	
Community	10.70	11.07		10.98	11.30	
Resilience Tot	71.58	72.38		73.90	74.83	

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix L: Paired T Test Mean Scores for Gender over Time 2 v Time 3 and Time 1 v Time 3

Measures										
	Male					Female				
	LT2	LT3	Sig2v3	LT1	Sig1v3	LT2	LT3	Sig2v3	LT1	Sig1v3
Adolescent WB	7.76	7.89		7.98		8.71	8.86		9.15	
Resilience1	34.84	35.58		34.32		35.33	36.45	*	35.31	**
Understand	11.75	11.80		11.78		12.23	11.92		11.71	
Resilience2	37.97	38.60		37.62	*	39.55	39.08		38.05	
Empathy	12.00	12.50	*	11.65	*	12.76	13.26	*	13.01	
Decision M	15.92	16.13		14.89	**	15.45	15.71		15.18	
Critical T	18.79	19.56	*	17.98	***	18.60	19.17		18.55	*
Communication	23.50	23.97		22.85	*	23.38	23.56		23.03	
Goal Setting	14.84	15.65	*	14.52	**	14.72	15.09		14.57	
Team Work	11.77	11.81		12.00		11.65	12.37	**	11.78	*
Problem	19.61	19.26		18.75		19.64	19.24		18.98	
Life Skills^	104.08	106.73		100.61	***	103.05	105.54	*	102.06	*
Leadership	42.10	43.63	*	41.69	*	42.82	43.81	*	41.32	***
Friend Support	11.15	10.97		11.07		11.14	11.19		11.09	
Parental Sup	10.92	10.67		10.62		10.49	10.67		10.36	*
Sibling Support	9.26	9.12		9.02		9.44	9.93	**	9.30	**
Adult Support	9.89	10.13		9.85		9.79	9.83		9.41	
Social Sup^^	40.85	39.79		40.16		40.55	41.33		39.92	**
Concrete	10.40	9.94	*	10.13		10.41	10.56		10.09	**
Emotional	10.34	10.06		10.15		10.38	10.47		10.28	
Esteem	10.08	9.94		9.94		9.51	10.00	**	9.56	*
Advice	10.03	9.85		9.95		10.24	10.29		9.99	
Community	11.13	11.03		10.60		11.38	11.62		11.08	*
Resilience Total	72.81	74.18		71.34	*	74.88	75.53		73.36	*

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix M: One-Way ANOVA Mean Score for Leadership Male v Comparison Male

Measures									
	Male			Male			Male		
	LT1	CT1	Sig	LT2	CT2	Sig	LT3	CT3	Sig
Adolescent WB	7.85	6.69		7.58	6.86	+	7.89	6.39	
Resilience1	34.35	35.22		34.58	34.19		35.58	34.29	
Understand	11.93	12.38		11.85	12.13		11.80	12.29	+
Resilience2	37.71	39.44		37.79	38.55		38.60	36.35	
Empathy	11.69	11.44		12.01	11.72	+	12.50	11.53	+
Decision M	14.87	15.75		15.78	15.44		16.13	15.06	+
Critical T	18.12	18.30		18.82	18.13		19.56	18.44	
Communication	22.84	22.77		23.30	22.27		23.97	22.44	
Goal Setting	14.64	14.88		14.82	14.44		15.65	13.89	+
Team Work	12.07	11.50		11.78	11.47	+	11.81	11.50	
Problem	18.75	18.91		19.12	17.86	*	19.61	17.44	*
Life Skills^	101.07	101.61		103.64	99.63		106.73	98.78	+
Leadership	41.58	40.37		41.61	40.19		43.63	40.89	
Friend Support	11.03	10.94		11.15	10.25	+	10.97	10.28	+
Parental Sup	10.71	10.16		10.87	9.65	+	10.67	9.67	*
Sibling Support	8.90	9.44	+	9.32	8.00	*	9.12	9.50	
Adult Support	9.91	9.91		10.02	9.82		10.13	9.67	
Social Sup^^	40.11	40.47		40.65	37.74	*	39.79	38.06	
Concrete	10.12	10.22		10.28	9.85		9.94	10.00	
Emotional	10.14	10.02		10.28	9.73	+	10.06	9.44	
Esteem	9.91	9.88		10.05	9.35		9.94	9.06	
Advice	9.93	10.33		10.03	9.62		9.85	9.56	
Community	10.70	10.13		11.07	10.72		11.03	9.89	
Resilience Tot	71.58	74.66		72.38	72.75		74.18	70.65	

^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix N: One-way ANOVA Mean Scores for Leadership Female and Comparison Female

Measures									
	Female			Female			Female		
	LT1	CT1	Sig	LT2	CT2	Sig	LT3	CT3	Sig
Adolescent WB	9.16	9.80		8.64	10.35	*	8.83	10.89	*
Resilience1	35.65	36.12		35.28	35.08		36.45	34.74	
Understand	11.51	11.70		12.07	11.55		11.92	10.93	*
Resilience2	38.25	37.79		39.54	37.79	*	39.08	35.26	**
Empathy	12.82	12.19		12.69	12.30		13.26	12.22	*
Decision M	15.07	14.32		15.30	14.70		15.71	14.59	
Critical T	18.23	17.73		18.72	18.12		19.17	17.11	*
Communication	23.05	22.73		23.20	22.69	+	23.56	21.78	*
Goal Setting	14.54	14.42		14.79	13.87	+	15.09	13.41	*
Team Work	11.77	11.91		11.71	11.67		12.37	11.22	**
Problem	18.98	18.72		19.02	18.35	+	19.64	17.78	**
Life Skills^	101.34	99.86		102.77	99.43		105.54	95.89	**
Leadership	41.00	41.67		42.47	39.88	**	43.81	39.11	+
Friend Support	11.05	11.21		11.11	10.87		11.19	11.31	
Parental Sup	10.55	10.26		10.71	10.04	*	10.67	9.69	+
Sibling Support	9.35	9.44		9.64	8.83	*	9.89	8.88	+
Adult Support	9.50	10.03		9.88	9.74		9.83	9.81	
Social Sup^^	39.72	40.63		40.51	39.06		41.33	39.00	
Concrete	10.09	10.39		10.37	10.08		10.56	9.81	*
Emotional	10.15	10.16		10.32	9.79		10.47	9.73	*
Esteem	9.52	9.70		9.61	9.14		10.00	9.38	
Advice	9.95	10.37		10.20	10.04		10.29	10.08	
Community	10.98	10.74		11.30	9.91	**	11.62	9.96	***
Resilience Tot	73.90	73.91		74.83	72.30		75.52	70.00	**

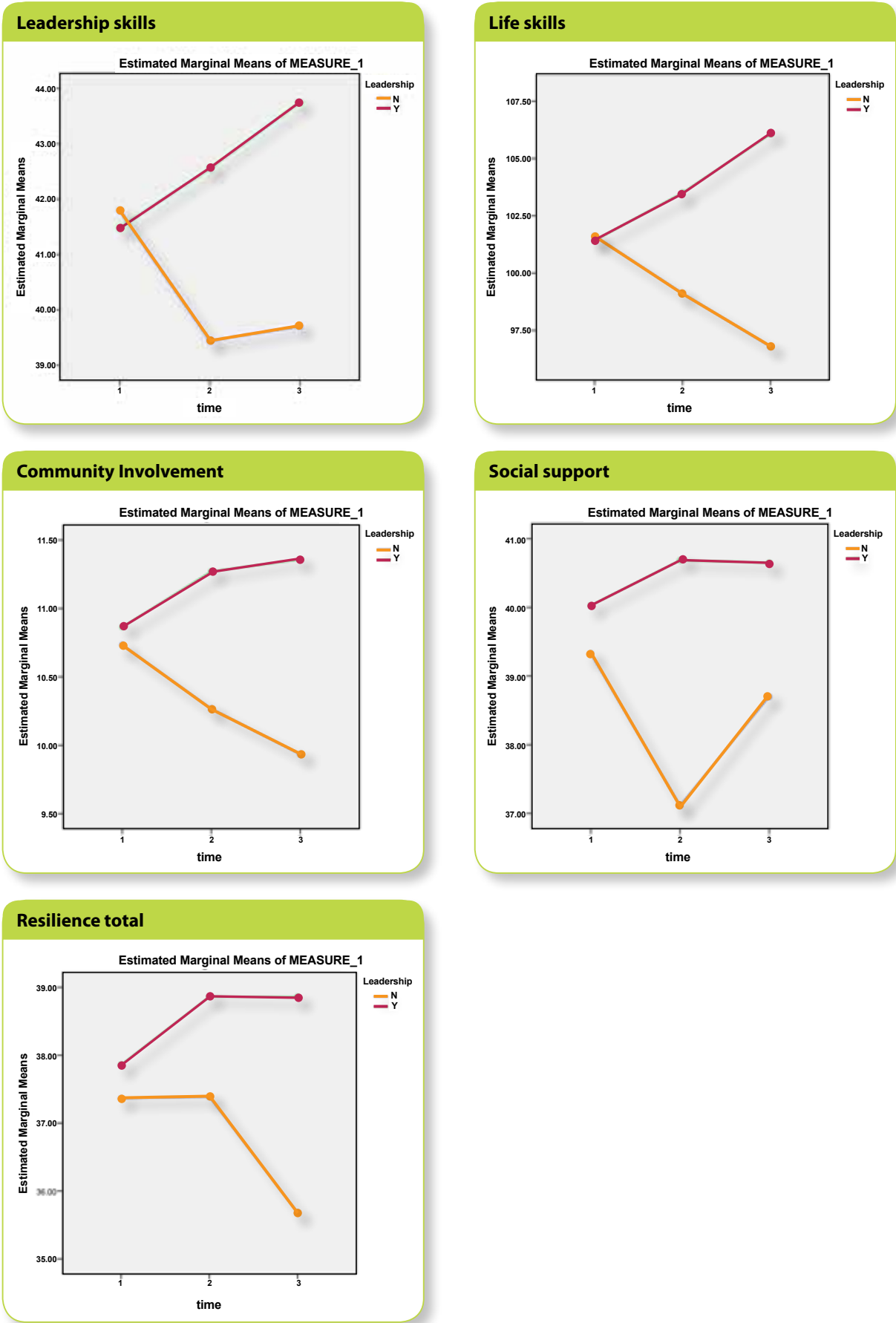
^ Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

+Levene's test for homogeneity  $p < .05$  null hypothesis rejected

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01, \*\*\*Significant at .001

**Appendix O: Leadership versus Comparison graphically represented over time Mixed-Between within ANOVA for Leadership vs Comparison over Time**



## Appendix P: Focus group theme, sources and references

Theme – Skills	Source	References
Leadership opportunity	n=1 focus group	2
Communication skills	n=4 focus groups	9
Commitment	n=1 focus group	5
Confidence	n=2 focus groups	5
Conflict resolution	n=2 focus groups	3
Leadership skills	n=2 focus groups	3
Learning	n=2 focus groups	3
Presentation skills	n=5 focus groups	17
Reflective skills	n=5 focus groups	13
Research skills	n=1 focus group	6
Responsibility	n=2 focus groups	2
Team work	n=5 focus groups	13
Self-awareness	n=3 focus groups	7
<b>Theme – social support</b>		
Social support	n=3 focus groups	6
<b>Theme – community involvement</b>		
Community involvement	n=3 focus groups	6



## Appendix Q: Paired T test Mean Score for Low Risk Leadership group

Quantitative Measures	T1	T2	T3	Significance T1 v T2	Significance T1 v T3	Significance T2 V T3
Adolescent Well-being	<b>2.27</b>	3.40	4.91	+	**	
Resilience1	39.64	38.63	39.09			
Understand Self	13.73	13.06	13.18			
Resilience2	43.27	43.00	42.55			
Empathy	12.09	12.44	12.27			
Decision Making	16.45	17.38	17.45	+		
Critical Thinking	20.45	20.63	21.73			
Communication Skills	24.82	24.13	25.18			
Goal Setting	16.45	16.06	17.09	+		
Team Work	<b>13.36</b>	13.00	<b>14.00</b>		*	
Problem Solving	19.55	19.81	19.27			
Life Skills ^	111.09	111.00	114.73	+		
Leadership Skills	47.27	45.88	48.36	+		+
Friend Support	11.73	11.31	11.82		+	
Parental Support	11.91	11.63	11.36			
Sibling Support	10.00	9.79	10.60		+	
Adult Support	10.64	10.13	10.55	+		
Tot-Social support^^	43.36	41.81	43.36	+	+	
Concrete	11.18	10.81	11.00		+	
Emotional	10.91	10.44	10.91	+	+	
Esteem	10.91	10.19	10.91	+		
Advice	10.36	10.38	10.55	+		
Community	12.27	12.25	12.64			+
Resilience Total	82.91	81.63	81.64			

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01,\*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix R: Paired T test Mean Scores for Low risk Comparison Group

Quantitative Measures	T1	T2	T3	Significance T1 v T2	Significance T1 v T3	Significance T2 V T3
Adolescent WB	<b>3.38</b>	<b>5.56</b>	5.11	*		
Resilience1	38.00	35.44	36.78			
Understand Self	<b>13.19</b>	<b>12.69</b>	12.78	*		
Resilience2	42.38	40.19	39.44			
Empathy	11.13	11.13	11.56			
Decision Making	16.38	16.06	15.00			
Critical Thinking	20.00	20.13	19.22			
Communication Skills	24.31	22.38	21.56			
Goal Setting	16.69	15.44	14.22			
Team Work	12.69	12.19	11.44			
Problem Solving	<b>20.44</b>	<b>17.69</b>	<b>16.78</b>	*	*	
Life Skills ^	110.50	103.88	98.22			
Leadership Skills	45.44	42.00	43.78			
Friend Support	<b>11.38</b>	<b>10.06</b>	10.00	*		
Parental Support	<b>11.13</b>	<b>10.25</b>	10.75	*		
Sibling Support	<b>11.13</b>	<b>9.31</b>	11.29	*		
Adult Support	10.00	10.38	10.75			
Tot-Soc Supports^^	43.63	40.00	41.38			
Concrete	11.00	9.94	11.13			
Emotional	10.94	10.19	10.50			
Esteem	<b>10.75</b>	<b>9.63</b>	9.25	*		
Advice	10.94	10.25	10.50			
Community	11.44	11.81	11.56			
Resilience Total	80.38	75.63	76.22			

^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01,\*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix S: Paired T test Mean Scores for High Risk Comparison Group

Quantitative Measures	T1	T2	T3	Significance T1 v T2	Significance T1 v T3	Significance T2 V T3
Adolescent WB	16.06	13.25	12.56			
Resilience1	<b>35.50</b>	<b>32.81</b>	33.44	*		
Understand Self	11.31	10.94	10.89			
Resilience2	36.69	36.44	36.00			
Empathy	12.38	11.81	12.22			
Decision Making	13.93	14.73	15.78			
Critical Thinking	16.53	17.40	17.78			
Communication Skills	23.47	22.40	23.56			
Goal Setting	13.60	<b>12.80</b>	<b>13.44</b>			*
Team Work	11.93	11.00	10.78			
Problem Solving	18.00	18.47	18.11			
Life Skills ^	97.47	96.80	99.44			
Leadership Skills	38.60	36.13	38.67			
Friend Support	10.40	10.00	10.44			
Parental Support	8.27	9.00	9.33			
Sibling Support	9.40	8.13	9.00			
Adult Support	9.47	<b>9.60</b>	<b>8.33</b>			*
Tot-Soc Supports^^	37.53	36.73	37.11			
Concrete	9.87	9.93	9.33			
Emotional	9.13	9.20	9.44			
Esteem	8.60	8.07	8.67			
Advice	9.93	9.53	9.67			
Community	<b>10.19</b>	<b>8.94</b>	9.11	*		
Resilience Total	72.19	69.25	69.44			

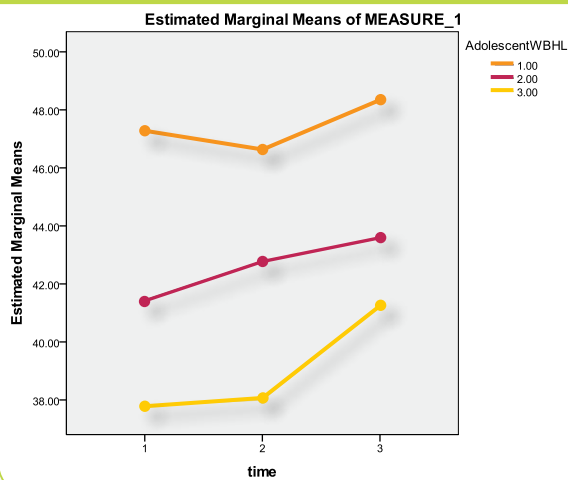
^Life skills calculated based on total decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, goal setting, team work, problem solving.

^^ Total social support calculated on total friend, parental, sibling and adult support.

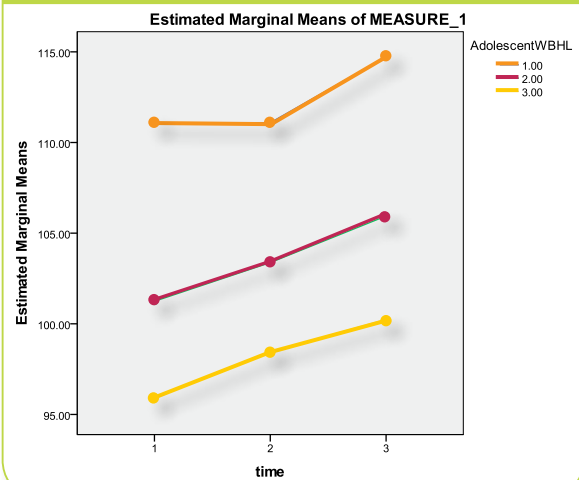
\*Significant at .05, \*\*Significant at .01,\*\*\*Significant at .001

## Appendix T: Mixed-Between within ANOVA for Low, middle and high risk groups over time

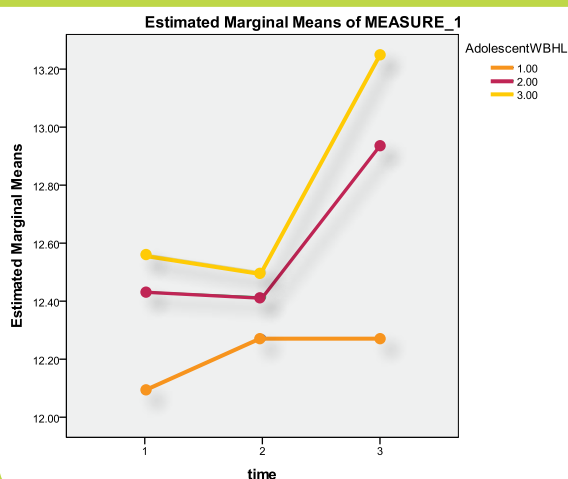
### Leadership skills



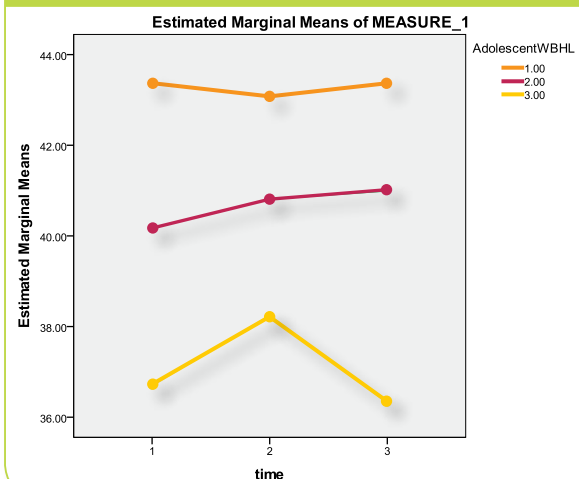
### Life skills



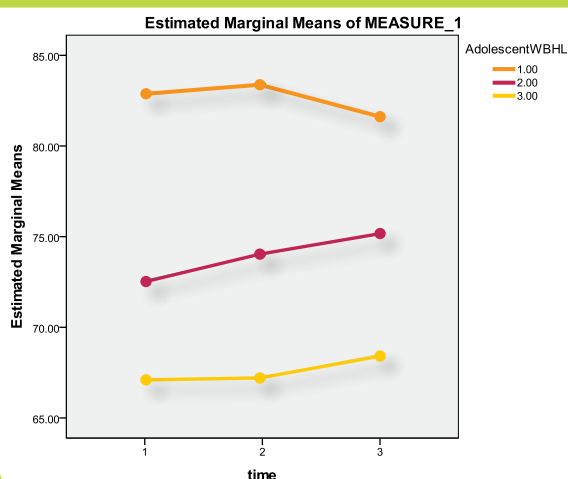
### Empathy (high risk group scored higher than the low risk group)



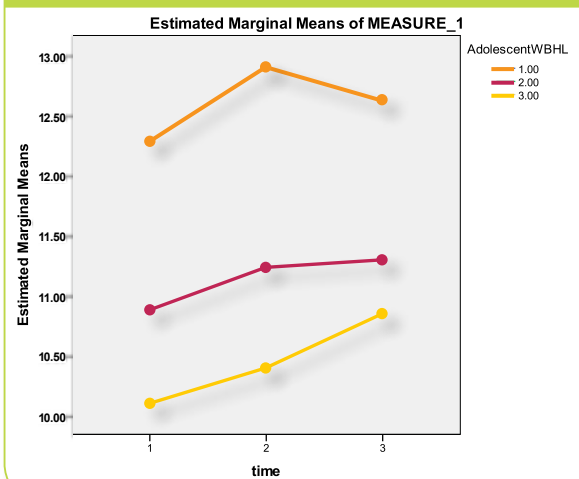
### Social support



### Resilience total



### Community involvement



## Appendix U: Interview Themes - *Social Support*

Theme	Subtheme	Low risk		High risk	
		Source	Reference	Source	Reference
<b>Social support</b>					
	Social support	n=10	33	n=10	25
	Parent	n=9	17	n=9	10
	Friends	n=10	14	n=7	8
	Adult	n=7	7	n=3	3
	Sibling	n=5	5	n=2	2
	Esteem	n=10	14	n=3	4
	Emotional	n=5	5	n=4	5
	Concrete	n=2	2	n=2	2
	Advice	n=6	7	n=3	3
	Leaders supports	n=6	7	n=4	4
<b>Time Two</b>					
	Social support	n=9	10	n=11	15
	Esteem	n=7	9	n=3	4
	Emotional	n=4	4	n=9	9
	Advice	n=2	2	n=3	3
	Concrete	n=1	1	n=4	4
	Quality of support	n=9	9	n=10	11
	Frequency of support	n=4	4	n=10	11
	Support different Yes	n=6	6	n=9	10
	Support different No	n=2	2	n=3	3
	Support Given	n=9	16	n=10	25
<b>Time Three</b>					
	Social support	n=2	10	n=5	7
	Esteem	n=2	2	n=4	4
	Emotional	n=1	2	n=4	5
	Advice	n=2	4	n=4	5
	Concrete	n=2	3	n=3	3
	Supports Changed	n=1	1	n=2	2
	Supports Unchanged	n=1	1	n=2	2

## Appendix V: Interview Themes - *Resilience*

Theme	Subtheme	Low risk		High risk		Total	
		Source	Reference	Source	Ref	Source	Ref
<b>Time One</b>							
	Resilience	n=9	29	n=8	16	n=16	27
	Lack resilience	n=0	0	n=3	3	n=3	3
<b>Time Two</b>							
	Resilience	n=8	8	n=10	11	n=16	17
	Coping Strategies	n=6	9	n=9	16	n=14	23
	Difficult to cope	n=4	5	n=11	12	n=17	20
	No difficulties coping	n=4	5				
	Being healthy	n=9	12	n=11	12	n=18	22
<b>Time Three</b>							
	Resilience	n=2	3	n=4	11	n=6	14

## Appendix W: Interview Themes - *Leadership*

Time one		Low risk		High risk	
Theme	Sub-theme	Source	Reference	Source	Reference
Leadership Skills	Leadership	n=11	70	n=11	57
	Communication	n=10	35	n=8	17
	Gratitude	n=10	32	n=10	28
	Perspective	n=7	8	n=10	18
	Assertive/Challenges	n=7	10	n=8	13
	Conflict Resolution	n=9	14	n=10	16
	Knowledge	n=9	17	n=9	18
	Team work	n=9	15	n=7	10
	Decision making	n=6	9	n=4	7
	Problem solving	n=6	8	n=6	7
	Vision	n=5	6	n=4	5
	Delegation	n=1	1	n=2	2
Social/Emotional Intelligence	Empathy	n=10	16	n=10	11
	Relate to others	n=8	11	n=6	8
	Self-awareness	n=8	15	n=8	16
	Confidence	n=6	9	n=3	3
	Self-control	n=5	7	n=1	1
Environment	Opportunity	n=8	19	n=8	15
Drive/Action	Meaning	n=10	15	n=10	17
	Persistence	n=10	17	n=10	14
	Generosity	n=10	23	n=10	18
	Motivation	n=9	25	n=7	13
	Role model	n=9	13	n=7	8
	Takes risks	n=4	4	n=7	8
Challenges	Public speaking hard	n=2	2	n=8	17
	Not a role model	n=1	1	n=4	7
	Not a leader	n=1	1	n=5	7
	Takes no risks	n=4	4	n=5	5
	Lack of confidence	n=1	1	n=3	7
	Lack of self awareness	n=1	1	n=1	1
	Lack of self-control	n=0	0	n=2	2
	Gives up	n=0	0	n=3	3
	Team work hard	n=0	0	n=3	4
Programme Benefits	Programme Benefits	n=9	29	n=8	21



Time two		Low risk		High risk	
Theme	Sub-theme	Source	Reference	Source	Reference
Skills	Leadership	n=9	9	n=7	16
	Assertiveness	n=6	9	n=3	4
	Communication	n=5	9	n=8	10
	Conflict resolution	n=1	2	n=2	3
	Democratic	n=2	2	n=4	4
	Listening	n=6	7	n=5	6
	Presentation skills	n=2	2	n=3	7
	Problem solving	n=2	3	n=1	1
	Team work	n=6	6	n=7	11
	Leader Yes	n=7	10	n=8	13
	Leader No			n=2	2
Environment	Access to Opportunity	n=3	3	n=2	2
Social/Emotional Intelligence	People skills	n=1	2	n=1	1
	Confidence	n=7	13	n=7	12
Programme Expectations	Exceeded expectations	n=6	10	n=5	8
	Met expectations	n=2	2	n=3	4
Parents Perspectives	Parents noticed a positive change	n=7	10	n=10	12

Time three		Low risk		High risk	
Theme	Sub-theme	Source	Reference	Source	Reference
Skills	Goal Achievement	n=2	4	n=3	6
	Communication skills	n=2	3	n=3	7
	Problem solving	n=2	7	n=4	7
	Leadership skills	n=2	4	n=2	6
	Team work	n=2	3	n=3	4
	Presentation skills	n=1	2	n=2	4
	Assertiveness	n=0	0	n=1	3
Environment	Leadership opportunity	n=2	4	n=4	14
Social/Emotional Intelligence	Confidence	n=2	9	n=4	19
	Social skills	n=2	2	n=3	14
	Maturity	n=1	1	n=3	5
Other	Continual development	n=2	2	n=3	3







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