Places to “Hang Around” (with Friends)

Many respondents also mentioned particular places where they go with friends to ‘hang around’.

Table 4: Locations where Respondents “Hang Around” Each Town

As Table 4 shows, 37.9% of the respondents told us that they “hang around” the town centres and streets. This applies particularly to the towns of Midleton (54.3%), Youghal (54%) and Cobh (40.8%) and less so for Carrigtwohill and Glanmire who spend time in Cork City/Mahon Point (42.4% and 39% respectively). This would be expected for geographical reasons as these latter locations are closer to them, more accessible and travel costs would be less.

We learn from the responses that 16.1% hang around at friend’s houses and the next most popular place is shops/shopping centres at 15.6%. Some 15.1% of the young people hang around communal public areas in their locality which they name. In relation to Youghal, the comments of 22.2% of respondents indicated that they hang around in a specific communal area in their locality such as “the strand”. As mentioned previously, over half (54%) indicated that they hang around in the town centre or the streets of Youghal.

For example: “We walk around the streets or go into greenpark but it’s cold and boring, cafes close at 6 pm and there is no toilet facilities, you can’t go anywhere for even a hot drink or a chat.” Some 50.8% of the Youghal respondents said that they hang around Perks Amusement Arcade.

Of note, in relation to Midleton is the high number of respondents who mentioned Fat Alberts, the local pool hall (32.8%) which we found was no longer open at the validation stage. Some 22.4% of Midleton respondents mentioned McDonald’s as a place to hang around. Sports facilities are places to hang around for 10.4% of respondents in our survey. For Glanmire, this figure was higher at 22.7%.

What Respondents’ Want in Their Town for Young People in the Future

In responding to this question many gave a ‘wish list’ of the facilities and activities what they would like to see in the future for their area.

Table 5 What Respondents want in their Town for Young People in the Future
Recreational Facilities

As Table 5 shows, 35.6% of all respondents want more recreational facilities. These include a cinema, leisure centre/amusement arcade (including bowling, games hall etc.), pool hall and a number of other facilities such as a public park, restaurants/cafés and skate parks. In Cobh, 70.9% fall into this overall category and the majority (65.2%) say they want a cinema in their town. A cinema is also named by 58% of respondents in both Carrigtwohill and Glanmire.

Sports Facilities

Some 24.1% of all the respondents wanted the provision of sports facilities such as playing pitches/stadium, a sports complex, baseball, gym facilities (Cobh) and a swimming pool. Of the respondents in this category in Midleton (23.1%) and Carrigtwohill (22.1%), the majority indicated that they wanted a public swimming pool (60.1% and 61.3% respectively).

“I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. A coffee shop.

“Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

Of the 34.9% of respondents from the Glanmire schools who wanted sports facilities, 40.0% indicated that they wanted a swimming pool. Of the respondents in this category in Midleton (23.1%) and Carrigtwohill (22.1%), the majority indicated that they wanted a public swimming pool (60.1% and 61.3% respectively).

“I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. A coffee shop.

“Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

Of the 34.9% of respondents from the Glanmire schools who wanted sports facilities, 40.0% indicated that they wanted a swimming pool. Of the respondents in this category in Midleton (23.1%) and Carrigtwohill (22.1%), the majority indicated that they wanted a public swimming pool (60.1% and 61.3% respectively).

“I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. A coffee shop.

“Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

A Place to Hang Around

Some 22.9% of all the respondents expressed the need for a place to hang around. In Youghal, however the figure is much higher than for the respondents in the other areas. When asked what they want in the future, 51.9% name a place to hang around, with over half naming specifically a Youth Café, (unlike the other areas, only 3.9% of them name recreational facilities of any kind).

“Somewhere we go into to sit down and talk a café, listen to music, big enough for big groups, cheap, buy snacks, tea

coffee, hot-choco “ a café for teenagers only/youth club/secret club, movies, chairs, music, coffee or tea, a place to get away, music live etc.” “just some where to go where everyone can meet up and hang out, karaoke, open mic night, discos and a disco in da station”

In Cobh the figure is low at 9.3%. Somewhere to hang out relax and have a laugh is frequently referred to as a place without “drink.” The comments of 20.1% of respondents from the Midleton schools and youth project indicated that in the future they would like to see some place for young people to hang around.

“a place for us to go with our friends, to have fun and where we wont get kicked out” “Maybe a disco place. A place where you can go to chill out and relax but still have fun” “I would like to see a permanent venue for alcohol-free social activities for young people”

Some 22.8% of the respondents in Carrigtownhill wanted to see a place to hang around. As one respondent said: “Somewhere to go with light and heat to meet up with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets.”

“Joint youths cafes mean different things to different people in different areas. This depends on what young people know about the youth cafe idea. In Yougahal, an Area Youth Project had just started up at the time that the questionnaires were being issued to young people. There was a lot of talk among young people about what youth cafes were and how they worked and how young people would be implicitly involved. Questionnaires were administered and administered by the youth worker, not teachers to all groups, including school groups. Could this have influenced the responses? In another area it may not mean that much. More often than not it is a generic term for a place to hang out. In this case group, people became more informed. Thus those who were involved and later in the validation groups had more information.

This is how the Midleton validation group described a youth cafe:

“away from adults” “don’t like adult dominated appearance of place for young people“ “a place to go where they will stay out of trouble and where they will have fun” “the film” (for the conference) showed it all whats happening, a true picture, and what’s wanted.

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of activity and hanging around”.

“Many young people seem to prefer a less structured activity, where you can relax and talk. “One of the biggest benefits of a youth cafe is providing young people with a safe place to gather, where they are not seen as a nuisance by adults”

Night time Activities

18.8% of all the respondents said that they wanted night time activities such as late night clubs for those under eighteen, live bands, “open mic” (microphone) nights, nightclubs and teenage discos. However, in Youghal and Midleton the numbers are substantially higher at 30% and 32.2% respectively. Of the 32.2% of respondents from the Midleton schools and youth project who indicated that they would like to see more night time activities for young people in their area, most (58.8%) indicated that they would like to see discos at nighttide. For example:

“i’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if its raining and more discos and events to keep us off the streets “i would like to see a night club for people over 18 because they need somewhere to socialize. Also perhaps non alcoholic discos and clubs for young people underage” “I would like to see some form of disco on as least every second week from the ages 16-18, and another disco from the ages of 12-14” “because when you have young people have nothing else to do the go drinking” “More discos and maybe some live bands nights”

Other

As well as naming other activities they wanted (such as community events, concerts and festivals) some respondents made a range of comments which are included in the “other” category. These provide further insights into what is important for these groups. These could be grouped into themes as follows: safety (“safer places to go”); better public transport (“there are no buses later on at night like”); the costs of activities (“some sports facilities”, “youth activities with no cost” and “cinema with discounts for teenagers”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in the home” and “somewhere to escape home”).

The validation groups chose quotes that really stood out for them from the survey and they made the following comments:

“...someone should do something about it” was one response to question 1 in the survey. However, the validation group in Midleton commented that they do not agree with this “joint effort between adults and youth… should try to get something up and running….don’t agree that it should be only adults”

The Glanmire validation group responded as follows to the quotation by a respondent “anything at all” in answer to question three “Things are so bad here that anything at all will do”.

In Carrigtownhill: “All we want is something small, people ask for something small cause they think thats all they’ll get” “what we want is simple”.

The validation group felt that this was the best quote: “Somewhere to go to with friends and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”.

The following quotations were chosen by the members of the Youghal validation group. “(This says all our problems- after it there is nothing to do)”

“No, there’s nowhere to go in the evenings or at night young people are out on the streets with nowhere to go. Punks kick you out at nine and after, young girls are left alone in the dark, its dangerous and cold”

“We walk around the streets or go into Gneapark but its cold and boring, cafes close at 6pm and there is no toilet facilities, you cant go anywhere for ever a hot drink or a chat”

They also picked out quotes about adults’ attitudes towards young people.

“Shops in town, (Youghal), are keeping an eye on young people: “Things are so bad here that anything at all will do””

“Taking up street space”

“The group is seen as a problem”

The next session will present the youth conference that followed on from the exploratory survey.
THE CONFERENCE:

Exit the Street: A Place of Our Own

The conference was held in Midleton, East Cork and was attended by 250 people. Of these, 130 participants were young people from the second level schools, Youthreach and Area Youth Projects. Exit the Street was part of a consultation process that placed local young people at its core and heard directly from them about their views, their issues and their needs. A total of 12 presentations were made by young people using creative methods such as film, drama and poster presentations. Conference workshops involved the conference participants working in smaller groups to identify options and follow-up actions. The conference was attended by Teachers, Parents, Youth Workers (both paid and voluntary), representatives of community groups, youth service providers and their managers, politicians and health service providers.

The Planning Process and Organisation of the Conference

A key element in planning the conference was the setting up of an organising committee that comprised of representatives of organisations in East Cork who had an interest and a role to play in meeting the needs of young people in the area. This Committee brought ideas, feelings, opinions, information, useful contacts and decision-making skills from young people through those who worked closely with them in the community. This enabled both adults and young people together to have a creative input into this Youth Conference with the common goal of promoting the wellbeing of young people.

Initially there were three representations from each of the three main urban centres in the area. Cobh, Midleton and Youghal. This expanded to include Carrigtwohill, The Cork Traveller Group and at a later stage it was broadened to include Glanmire. The Organising Committee started with nine community members, the manager of the LSOIP Programme (ECAD) and the consultant working for ECAD with responsibility for the planning of the conference. The group grew to include 16 members (Appendix 7) and met to make decisions on all aspects of the conference.

In addition to all of the above, members individually and in smaller groups took on a number of responsibilities and roles. The Youth Workers involved themselves directly with schools and with Transition Year students and their Co-ordinators, both in consulting young people about their needs and in preparing the presentation of their views to the conference. The degree of involvement varied depending on need, take-up and time available. This helped Youth Workers to forge new links with young people through schools. Relationships with the Health Service Executive (HSE) were further developed and resulted in a chairperson for the event and also professional public relations support through the Communications Office of the HSE.

CREATEXIVE EXPRESSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS

The following creative methods were used by the young people in their presentation to the Conference:

Films (5) ■ Drama/Role-play (2) ■ PowerPoint (3) ■ Poster Presentations (2)

Some groups as well as being involved in the above made sculpture (1), drawings (1), maps (2), photography (2) and undertook project work (3). Young people included music in many of the presentations.

Film: What is Youghal like for Young People?
Young People from Lomto Secondary School and Colaiste Eoin together with members of Youghal Area Youths Project presented their 8 minute Film. What is Youghal like for Young People? In it they talked to young people and adults and looked at their town through the eyes of a young person.

Drama Presentation: St Mary’s High School
A Drama Presentation from St Mary’s High School Midleton followed. In this “freeze frame” where the action was frozen, as in a video, to allow the audience to really see what is going on, we had two spaces: the first Now, nowhere to go and the second; A Vision for the Future.

Role play: Colaiste Mairé Cobh
A short role play and PowerPoint presentation from Colaiste Mairé, Cobh gave us a look at the town of Cobh through the eyes of some of its young people. At the places they can now go, where they can now hang out.

All three of these first presentations expressed a clear message about the lack of facilities for them in each of their home towns.

PowerPoint Presentation: Midleton College
A PowerPoint Presentation from Midleton College Transition Year students gave a breakdown on what they do in their leisure time, listing what is available to them and what they would like to see happening in the future.

Film: Youthreach Youghal
A short Film from Youthreach Youghal expressed their feelings of being neglected through interviews with young people from their project and a look at the town of Youghal. It focused first on its beautiful public gardens and sculptures and then on the abject lack of places for young people to simply be without being asked to move along.

Film: St Coleman’s Community College
This was followed by a film about alcohol and young people made by 6th year students at St. Coleman’s Community College, Midleton. This film dramatically shows what young people can get up to in a secluded well known area in Midleton town when there is nowhere else to go and nothing else to do for kicks.

Drama As Gaeilge
Finally in this sequence a short presentation, a Drama As Gaeilge from Colaiste an Pharaigh, Glanmire focused on the issue of alcohol and driving demonstrating these young people’s awareness of this issue in the community.

In all of these presentations, the issues that affect young people are focused on and attention is drawn to the lack of alternatives which are available for the young population in East Cork.

Film: Carrigwohill
Students from St. Aloysius Girls Secondary School, Carrigwohill together with the local Youth Project expressed their views on what is an offer for young people in their town, with its burgeoning population, presented through the medium of film.
Three young people from Midleton who are involved in a community based Peer Support Education Programme explained how they had arrived to their present focus on setting up a Youth Cafe in Midleton. Each of them described their experience of suicide and how it affected them as young people in this community. They described the help they get from being involved in the Programme, how it affected them as young people in this community. They delivered a PowerPoint presentation and made a map of facilities in Glanmire and the problems which arose because of move on, with no alternatives provided.

A representative of the Peer Support Education Programme spoke about their aspiration to create a space in Glanmire and the problems which arose because of the lack of facilities in Glanmire and the problem of depression and suicide amongst young people.

Peer Support Education Programme

A representative of the Peer Support Education Programme spoke about their aspiration to create a space in Glanmire and the problems which arose because of move on, with no alternatives provided.

Poster Presentation

Finally the young people in the Midleton Youth Project presented their poster. The content and verbal description described the void that exists for young people in terms of leisure and the alternatives which they find to fill this void. This was a powerful final statement from young people to the conference about the lack of facilities.

The conference presentations addressed a range of themes: alcohol, alcohol and driving, depression, suicide, isolation, neglect of young people and being seen as a 'problem' and a lack of alternatives. The issue of suicide came up in two of the presentations, the first through a film from a Midleton school and the second through the presentation from the Peer Support Education Group. It focused on action taken by a group of young friends affected directly by suicide. What emerged was their willingness and ability to describe both their experiences and their feelings and what they gained from peer support (Appendix 2).

Although we did not ask young people any questions about feelings of depression or suicide in the survey or conference, a number of unsought references were made to isolation, exclusion and not feeling a part of society. For example, “I stay at home because of feeling a part of society. For example, "I stay at home because of move on, with no alternatives provided.

A national survey on young people’s mental health specifically recommended the development of programmes similar to The GAF Café in Galway as a means of addressing isolation and promoting positive mental health amongst young people, particularly young males, particularly in our community (Hurley, May 2005), we must also take account of these expressed feelings. A national survey on young people’s mental health specifically recommended the development of programmes similar to The GAF Café in Galway as a means of addressing isolation and promoting positive mental health amongst young people, particularly young males, particularly in our community (Hurley, May 2005).

The issue of suicide came up in two of the presentations, the first through a film from a Midleton school and the second through the presentation from the Peer Support Education Group. It focused on action taken by a group of young friends affected directly by suicide. What emerged was their willingness and ability to describe both their experiences and their feelings and what they gained from peer support (Appendix 2).
Learning from the Irish Experience – The Gaf Youth Café in Galway

The second keynote speaker to the Conference was John Fitzmaurice Manager of the Gaf Youth Café in Galway – The Health Advice Café. He was joined by two members of the Youth Advisory Committee, Barry McDonagh and Ciara McGillicuddy who have been actively involved in the running of the Gaf for a number of years. John spoke about working in partnership with young people and they put forward ideas for design of the centre, activities and services. They gave a comprehensive picture of “what’s in it” for themselves as young people from fun to looking good on your CV!

Follow-On Activities and Developments since the Conference

This section will discuss some of the follow-on activities and continuing developments in the East Cork area for young people. The East Cork Youth Network (ECYN) has been involved in initiating and supporting this work. After the conference, the new groups became actively involved in setting up a youth café. At each stage, the key issues are described together with some of the choices that can be made.

YOUTH FILM PROJECT 2006

Many young people choose to use the medium of film to represent their views at the Youth Conference Exit The Street. To develop this interest further, East Cork Area Development initiated a film project. This gave young people access to knowledge and experience in filmmaking. It was delivered by ECAF, East Cork Youth Network and Cork Film Centre. The project was funded jointly by ECAF and the Arts Office of Cork County Council.

The overall aim was to build the confidence and skills of young people, and give them further opportunity to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas through the medium of film. Working with filmmakers and staff from Cork Film Centre and local youth groups, young people developed an innovative and exciting project. The project began in March 2006 with a series of one-day workshops for young people. These took place in six locations in East Cork throughout March and April, Youghal, Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Inch Kinlough and Glanmire. Workshops were designed for groups of up to eight participants. They demonstrated pre-production (script development, storyboarding, planning), production (use of camera, sound, basic lighting, directing actors), and post-production (editing and sound design). Participants made a short film on the day. All these involved were invited to submit a proposal for a longer film. The proposals ranged from Short Fiction to Documentary, Experimental and Music Video. Out of this came three substantial films ranging from seven minutes to thirty five minutes in length.

The film project went on through the summer and autumn months of 2006. It culminated in a celebration Gala Night where all the films were screened. This was hosted by Cork County Council at the County Hall, Cork. It involved approximately 150 young people and accompanying adults including youth workers, teachers, public representatives and parents. The Gala Event was a showcase for ten short films written, directed, filmed, edited and acted by the young people of East Cork. They included funny and serious films, dramas and documentaries and in some of them, for example “Alessa L’Isole”, “Broken Dreams” and “The Passenger”, young people raised some of the issues which affect their lives such as isolation and suicide.

Exit The Street

To develop this

The ten films were introduced by the young film makers themselves. On the night 114 young film makers were awarded certificates in recognition of their achievements. Plans are in place to also showcase these films locally in 2007.

The Youth Exchange Project

Through the conference, links were formed with the Prince’s Trust in Scotland. Highlands and Islands, a UK charity that helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives working. From conversations with this organisation it became apparent that young people had similar concerns and there were opportunities for sharing of practical and experiences. For example, The Prince’s Trust has successfully developed a network of youth cafés. Since the conference, a two way exchange of ideas and information has been developed for the benefit of young people in both geographical areas. This kind of transnational co-operation provides opportunities, not just for young people, youth workers and organisations, but also for the sharing of experience between communities as a whole.

In April 2006, ECAF, in conjunction with the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN), organised a study visit by young people and adults to Scotland to examine youth cafés, their structures, functions, organisational make-up and management. A group of ten people, youth workers and young people, representing the East Cork area spent three days in the Highlands of Scotland looking at youth cafés and discussing the design of an ongoing programme. This visit was supported by HSE, Youghal Youth Committee, Cobh Youth Services and ECAF. In late November, Bill Anderson, Area Manager of the Prince’s Trust in Scotland, visited young people from Cobh Youth Services who were attending a Comhairle na nOg regional meeting. In Youghal he took part in a SKIT gathering and was available to give information to young people on youth cafés. His interest was to get a better understanding of where this Exchange could go in order to meet the needs of communities in both areas.
Scotland and Ireland. This would help both in planning and in funding applications. More recently young people in Scotland have expressed an interest in learning about groups like the Medlen Peer Support Group and their initiatives in preventing suicide. This is a follow up from the initial planning visit which involved the representatives from that Group.

Out of this project, the ECYN with the support of ECAD envisages that young people in East Cork will have the opportunity to see first hand some of the best examples of youth café provision in Europe, and enable them to incorporate the ideas they gain from this project into the design and operation of youth projects that will be delivered in their area. This project is in its infancy and will need resources.

East Cork Skit

(SKIT an East Cork, particularly Youghal slang word for Fun ‘Craic’ and pronounced SKIT)

The first East Cork Skit Day was the idea of Youth Workers, Nicole Lucy of the Youghal Area Youth Project, and Liam Guiney of Cobh Youth Services. It was conceived by the East Cork Youth Network with support from ECAD. Both Nicole and Liam were participants on The Advance Planning/Study Visit for the Youth Exchange Youghal Area Youth Project, and Liam Guiney of Cobh Youth Services. It was for Fun ‘Craic’ (SKIT an East Cork, particularly Youghal slang word)

“...a beach party, there was a BBQ, DJ, inflatable toys and sumo suits. It was a laugh.” (Luke, 14).

“What a day...we mixed with a lot of people, the DJ was great and the food was lovely” (Steven, 14).

What is a youth exchange?

A youth exchange project (LEARGAS) brings together groups of young people from different backgrounds from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other’s countries and cultures. Exchanges between Programme countries can be bilateral, unilateral or multilateral. They must take place in one of the Programme countries involved in the project. Exchanges do not necessarily imply reciprocity, i.e. the sending group need not become the host group in a second phase of the project. In fact, a separate application must be submitted for the second phase. In some cases multilateral exchanges can be thematic, i.e. the entire exchange group moves through several countries during the activity.

Both the young people who participated and the members of the East Cork Youth Network wanted to continue to build on the contacts and relationships developed through this Skit day.

Following this event, a gathering of 10 young people representing the different areas in East Cork took place. Members of the ECYN SKIT Working group and Bill Anderson of The Prince’s Trust in Scotland also attended this gathering. The event was hosted by Youghal Area Youth Project on Friday 24th November 2006 in Ballycotton. The day was a celebration of workers and volunteers got together on Ballynamona Beach outside Ballycotton in East Cork. The day was a celebration of the East Cork Youth Network’s birthday and the launch of the East Cork Skit. The event was to look at the usefulness of setting up a representative group of young people to exchange ideas and represent the views of East Cork young people to adults. Their work might involve organising informal gatherings like the skit day, developing youth exchange links and ultimately developing youth cafés in East Cork towns. At this meeting young people talked about their ideas. They asked questions. They heard about youth developments in Scotland. They heard about how the new ECYN works. One proposal at the meeting was that a youth council or ‘Rep’ group would be set up in East Cork. It was suggested that this proposal would be taken back to each area. If there was enthusiasm for the idea then it would be fully supported by the ECYN in whatever way was deemed appropriate. So far the response is positive. This is a first step. There is a need now for resources in both time and money for the ECYN to carry out plans to support this initiative.

Summary of activities

It is clear that the “East Cork Youth Rep Group” is a good idea. The work which must be done if this is to proceed must be named, quantified and supported. These initiatives need to be nurtured over time. There is potential here to extend this conversation to include young people from East Cork talking directly to young people from the Highlands of Scotland, initially through the modern technology which young people are comfortable with such as email and video conference. Later through visiting each others places they can learn more and communicate face to face. All of these initiatives are interlinked. They come from the conference. They are interdependent and need to develop together. However, there is a need for young people to become more proactive in their roles in all of these activities and developments. Young people need the structures, the information, the skills and confidence to drive the agenda. All of this takes a commitment of time and resources.

“there is ironing out to be done…we need to get young people to liaise directly...with the purpose being to develop youth cafés we need to come back with nominees from each area, two is not enough and we need to ensure gender balance” (Quote from youth worker at network meeting.)

Area Developments in Relation to Youth Cafés

The following are contributions from Youth Workers in each of the areas which give up-to-date information on developments...

Carrigtwohill

“The Carrigtwohill Area Youth Project recently received €8000 from the NB Better Ireland Awards as well as new note computers and printers. This funding will help to establish a drop in space for young people in Carrigtwohill. The space will be provided by the Carrigtwohill Community Council, supported by the Carrigtwohill Family Resource Centre and Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The project will be managed by Foróige. This project began in 2000 when a group of transition year students from the local secondary school St. Alphonsus and a group of young people from the Carrigtwohill Area Youth Project undertook research on the needs of young people in the area. This research was part of a wider research project in East Cork commissioned by East Cork Area Development. It highlighted the need for a drop in space in Carrigtwohill. Having received this funding and the support of the organisations mentioned above, the Youth Project is now working with a group of transition year students in setting up this space. The initiative will form part of their project for the Young Social Innovator Awards. The group will be part of the management committee for the space and will be involved in all aspects of its establishment from designing it, to managing it and...
agreeing on mission statements and policies and procedures. This is a very exciting project for the area and is a first step towards establishing a Youth Café” (Linda Monaghan, Youth Worker).

Cobh

Cobh Youth Services successfully applied for €300,000 to the Department of the Environment. This money was specifically to upgrade facilities where establishing youth cafés in existing premises. “Cobh Youth Services will operate out of its new refurbished Youth Centre and Youth Café in the next few weeks” (Catherine O Connor, Youth Worker).

Midleton

In Midleton, the Peer Support Education Project have made strides in putting together the following proposal for a Youth Health Café for 13–18 year olds because of an ongoing awareness in the local community of the need to address issues facing young people. In 2003, the Southern Health Board Peer Support Education Initiative started and is on-going. In 2005, East Cork Area Development (ECAD) surveyed transition year students. The findings were noted and research trips were organized to The Gaff, Galway and Mallow Youth Café.

The Mission statement:
The Midleton Youth Health Café project works in partnership with young people to support them in the development of their good health and well-being in a drug and alcohol free environment. The aims are as follows:

I Provide a safe adolescent friendly place for young people to meet and interact
I Improve young people’s awareness of good health practice and health related issues
I Allow young people the opportunity to benefit from roles of responsibility
I Offer direct access to health information with links to all existing provider agencies
I Enhance the community by providing a desirable and important service

Youghal

“At the moment we, Youghal Area Youth Project, have secured our funding €162,000 for a youth café in Youghal for the next two years and we are looking to include the cafe in the League of the Cross Hall when it is newly refurbished and managed by Cumann na nIodhrain, Youghal Community Development Project” (Nicola Lucey, Youth Worker)

Glanmire

Glanmire Youth Council was established after young people from the area expressed their frustration on a ‘Prime Time Special’ that was shown on RTÉ highlighting the high level of anti-social behaviour in the area. They felt that certain aspects of the programme were taken out of context, and that the circumstances that led to this behaviour was not given adequate consideration. The group aim to reflect the views of their peers and are keen to show the strengths of youth as well as acknowledge the problems that exist. The council, after much consultation and research strongly feel that a Youth Café is the most appropriate way to highlight the strengths and talents of youth as well as a practical and positive ways of reducing anti-social behaviour. The Youth Council and Glanmire Film Club have collaborated (through the East Cork Youth Film Project 2006) highlighting some of the problems that youth face in their community. It is based on the real life experiences of the young people. Glanmire Area Community Association has also undertaken to assist the Youth Council in exploring the possibilities of providing a suitable location for a Youth Café. Several options are currently being considered and discussions are ongoing with local political representatives. (Brian O’Toole, Youth Worker)
Young people themselves made references to being misunderstood by parents and other adults. As one young person expressed, “I am not allowed to go out because I am not allowed to hang around” and another, “you cant socialise outside school cause your parents don’t allow. Parents don’t understand.” In the validation groups, young people referred to the negative attitudes by adults in their communities in general to “hanging around.” As discussed by Hall, Coffey and Williamson (1999) “young people’s occupation of public space undoubtedly attracts attention; it has been a historically recurrent source of adult concern and in as contentious today as ever” (1999, p. 505). Researchers such as O’Kearney and Keily (1998, p.25) note that young people “are frequently negatively perceived because of how they congregate, usually in groups and in highly visible public places.” As expressed in our study, “the group is seen as a problem” and “taking up street space.” While we concede that adult concerns may stem from protective/over-zealous and fears about safety, perhaps adults could learn more about this important activity, “hanging around.” It is evident from the young people in our work that they feel that they are seen as a danger, a threat or a hindrance. The question for us as a society is, “do we not want our young people to be on the street and in public areas, where do we want them to be?”

As well as the need to create places for young people to call their own that are as they describe “safe, warm….friendly”, we need to include them in our work. When we do this, we make our communities better and safer places to live in for all of us and this gives young people a message. It lets us know that they are important people in our communities, that they are listened to and that we follow through on what they say. Although we did not ask specifically about drinking alcohol, young people tell us that as they are concerned. They told us that they drink alcohol because they are bored, “…..just nothing else to do”, “because of peer pressure and because they are looking for excitement. Some of them are uncomfortable around drinking, around which this happens and the dangers they face in dark secluded and out of the way places.

As one young person expressed, “No, there nowhere to go in the evenings or at night people are out on the streets with nowhere to go. Perks kick you out at nine or after. young girls are left alone in the evenings, its dangerous. And another “We walk around the streets or go into Garrypark but its cold and boring, cafes close at 5pm and there is no toilet facilities, you can’t go anywhere for even a hot drink or a chat.” Others expressed concern for those in the younger age groups when discussing underage drinking in a validation group “12 years is important age for something to do…..youre very vulnerable”. Sometimes they expressed feelings of shame “…..I’m ashamed to hang around with them when they are drinking”. We must learn from their openness.

In general, young people tell us that East Cork is a good place to live if you “are into sports”. This is very positive, though we noted when reading the feedback from the survey and hearing what young people said at the conference that the converse is also true; if you are not into sport there are few facilities.

There is need for a broadening of sports and recreational facilities to include public swimming pools and leisure centres, pool halls and cinemas in all our East Cork towns.

If youth cafés are to be successful we must acknowledge (like young people do) that they are not a panacea for all problems. If communities proceed with this unrealistic expectation, youth cafés will disappoint and are doomed to failure. The challenge to us all is to learn so that young people can take their place in determining what and how of youth cafés so that adults learn that this is not a youth club in a different setting with a new name. This is about adults letting go and allowing young people to make decisions and take appropriate responsibility. At the conference, young people identified action they could take.
They are enabled to do this with the support and backing of government through policy and funding; local councils through planning for public spaces; the support of community through planning and provision of space; the support of youth workers, teachers and their organisations; and most importantly, the support of parents.

The more informed we are, the better our youth cafés will be. Exchanging information and experiences with other groups such as the Prince’s Trust is positive and has more potential. In tandem with this, young people in Scotland have tentatively shown an interest in the response of one East Cork community to suicide prevention. Programmes such as the East Cork Youth Film Project have developed confidence, promoted leadership skills and an interest in the arts.

Ultimately this is a story about East Cork young people and their communities. Parts of the story are very positive. In an effort to accentuate the positive, we must not eliminate the negatives and the issues that are of great concern to young people and to all of the people in our communities. It is a story in which we all play a part and have a role in determining what happens.

Finally, as expressed by Edwards and Hatch, “The range and quality of services and activities provided for *(and with) young people is important not just for young people and the community as a whole. When young people have safe places to play in and ‘hang out’, well maintained and affordable facilities to use; activities to take part in; good quality support services to turn to and good school to go to, then their communities are also likely to feel safe vibrant and supportive for everyone” (December, 2003, p.9). This represents the kind of holistic approach where everybody is involved if young people are valued and active and a part of what is going on. If we can apply this to our communities, we will all benefit.

**our insertion**

**Recommendations**

Based on the responses of young people and on our learning from this process we make the following recommendations:

**Recommendation One**

Meet the needs of young people for recreational facilities. Our work highlights the urgent need for action at local and policy level.

1. Develop more recreational facilities in the East Cork area in particular public swimming pools (Midleton) cinema (Cobh) and youth café type facilities (Carigtwohill, Cobh, Glanmire, Midleton, Youghal).

2. Progress the work which is already happening in the five named towns in setting up youth café type facilities and in doing so further address the needs of young people as outlined in the report for safe, youth friendly and alcohol free places to go.

3. Access funding from Government sources. Lobby Government to follow through on commitments already made to resource recreational facilities for young people including those named above. Resources are also needed to support the process of involving young people in developing these facilities.

4. Develop policy at local government level to protect public spaces so that there is space for recreational facilities to be developed for young people in all our towns.

**Recommendation Two**

Further develop networks for and with young people in East Cork.

1. Support the continued development of existing structures such as the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN).

2. Continue to support young people in developing a structure or structures which give them a representative voice, like the ‘Rep’ group. Look to models such as Donegal Youth Council and Comhairle na nÓg.

3. Encourage the development of peer-support and common interest groups in East Cork. In developing networks we create structures that encourage and enable further and continued consultation and facilitate links to other groups and programmes.

**Recommendation Three**

Forge links between schools, Youghal Youthreach Centre and community projects including youth cafés. All are working towards the well-being of young people.

**Recommendation Four**

Build confidence and skills (including leadership skills) of young people in a variety of ways.

1. Create opportunities for young people to follow through on their interests in music, drama, film and in the arts in general. In particular build on the success of the Film Project.

2. Encourage the Arts Council and Cork County Council Arts Office to continue and to increase their investment in the arts in East Cork for young people.
RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Ensure that facilities developed are inclusive of all young people living in East Cork.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

Sharing of information is needed. This can be facilitated by:

- Finding ways to provide feedback and updates on relevant developments to the larger population of young people in East Cork. This could be through schools, youth organisations and web sites that will keep young people informed and involved.
- A broadening of information to adults, including parents and teachers, such as putting reports like this in the public domain.
- Keeping information flowing.
- Providing a national web based information resource for young people that links with other agencies (local, national and international) as recommended by Dail na nOg (2006).
- The promotion of youth exchanges, including the Youth Exchange Project with Scotland, as a means of peer learning and mutual support.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Address the health awareness needs of young people.

- Provide information about:
  - Alcohol and Drug use and misuse
  - Sexual health
  - Emotional and Physical well-being
  - Social and Leadership skills
- Support the proposed development from the Peer Support Group for a Health Cafe in Midleton for young people.
- As young people raised concerns around drinking alcohol, establish a research brief to investigate the levels of young peoples’ engagement in underage and binge drinking in the East Cork area as a follow on to the exploratory survey. In doing this, we increase our understanding and develop strategies which involve young people.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

Encourage young people to be actively involved in their East Cork communities by creating opportunities for them to contribute:

- Involve them at a younger age.
- Encourage young people to take different roles so that they can tackle community issues, not just including those issues that concern them directly.
- View young people as a resource and consult with them.

RECOMMENDATION NINE

To mobilise all members of the East Cork community:

- Use contacts to gain support for this work with young people, in accessing buildings, getting funding, ……..
- To engage with public representatives asking them to support our call for greater investment in recreational facilities in the run up to the election.

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East Cork Area Development (December, 2006) Socio-economic and Demographic Analysis, ECAD, East Cork.


was established in East Cork Area Development (December, 2006) are special projects for Economic and Demographic Analysis, Bridge and includes Cobh, located on Great Island. More than one-County Waterford. The area stretches from Glanmire to Youghal Located in the eastern part of the county, East Cork is bordered on socio-educational projects, and local level of 500 Youth Clubs and Groups, 40 Youth Ireland’s largest youth work organisation to the challenges of a youth services in Ireland. The change symbolises a response by Federation, marks a fresh departure in the provision of voluntary youth organisations, youth wings of political parties, Irish language youth organisations, single issue and specialist groups promotes the development of services for all young people and are affiliated to national or regional youth organisations, Foróige, Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services and Ogra Chorcai are area and are funded by the Youth Affairs Section in the Department of Education and Science, through the local VEC. Foróige, Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services and Ogra Chorcai are 1962) to the provision of youth services to the young people of the great development programmes plus drop in nights where groups swimming, model making, soccer, pool and issue based secret weapons, street art may be interpreted as undesirable issues. The Pilot Programme commenced in June 2004. The Youth Project is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their area as well as nominations from both secondary schools; nominations from the various sports and leisure organisation in the area to form the Governing Council. The Governing Council is composed of 12 members, including the Chairperson, who are volunteers from various localities, nominated by the council of youth, elected by local youth. The members of the board are stewards and keepers of policy and practice that can contribute to their community.

FEDERAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

There is an informal group of members involved with the development of youth organisations in the area. Youghal FPC is affiliated to the Branch Accountant. Youghal Youth Committee also functions as a youth movement within the Rapid Implementation Team (S.1)
Adam Larter, 18, a long-standing member of the youth council, Townsend says they have about 60 young people in on a Friday night, but so far they have only been used as a deterrent.

The project came together when the owners of a wine bar, which has put in £5,000, and local businesses and community organisations have given grants or provided services.

The café has been funded by a variety of sources. The youth council was initially supported by the Community and Youth Development Office, but it has now been supported by local businesses and community organisations.

The council was interested in taking over the property because it was ideally placed in the centre of town to be the youth café. The council was interested in taking over the property because it was ideally placed in the centre of town to be the youth café.

A content analysis involves developing a coding system from the data. These codes are identified following an initial review of the data. Once categories or themes are confirmed, the next step is to code the data from the raw statements and identify codes or themes.

The most significant results of the open-ended questions are reported below.

To tempt young people, Barcode runs themed evenings. Friday night is party night, which usually starts at around 9 p.m. and finishes at around 2 a.m. As a result, this area has become a centre for young people to meet and enjoy a range of activities. The activities that young people enjoy the most are music and karaoke nights.

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