

# youth work: a model for effective practice

Guidance for Part-Time  
Workers and Volunteers

# 3 core principles

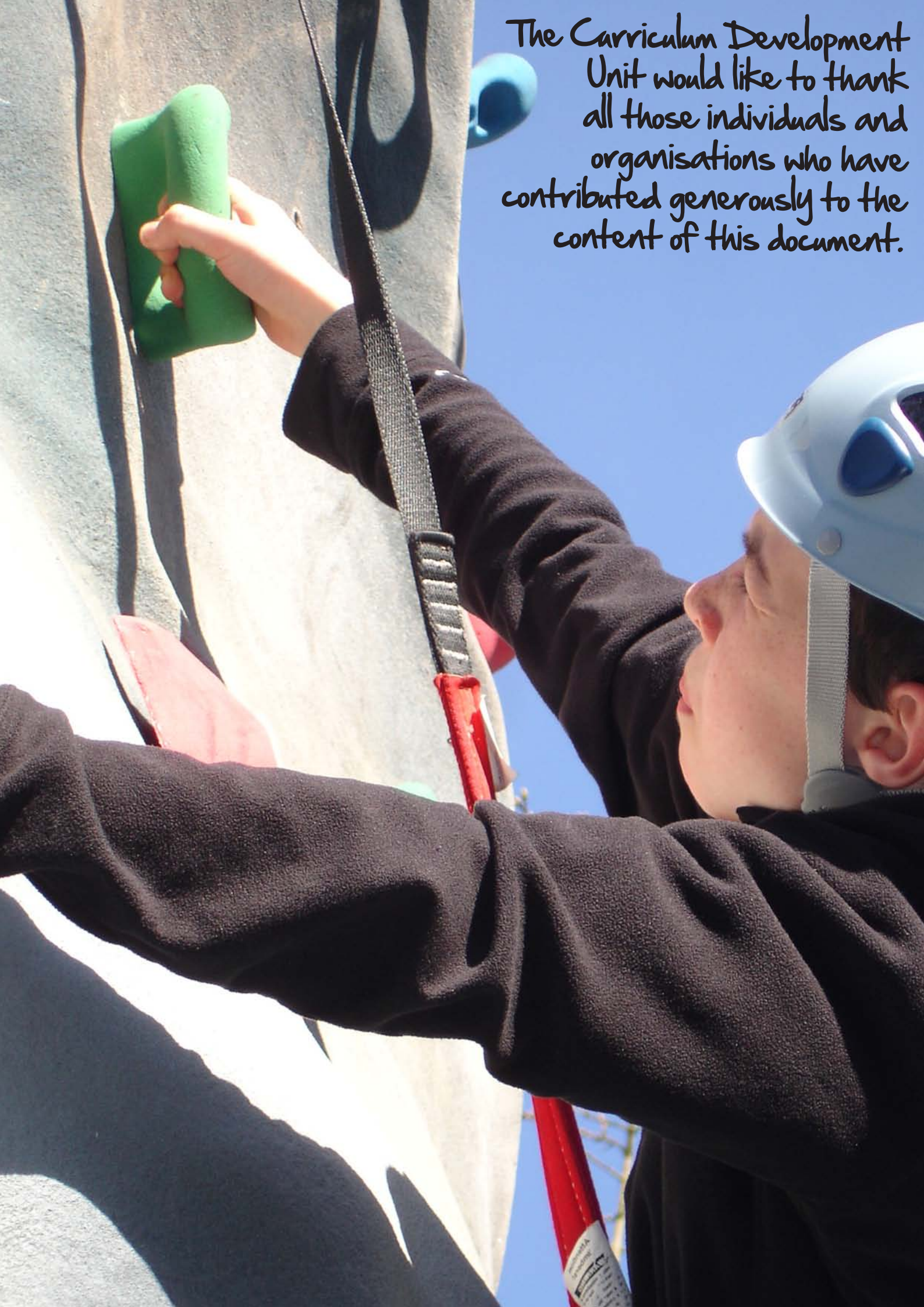
Preparing  
Young  
People for  
Participation

Promoting  
Acceptance  
and  
Understanding  
of Others

Testing and  
Exploring  
Values  
and Beliefs



The Curriculum Development Unit would like to thank all those individuals and organisations who have contributed generously to the content of this document.







## Contents

Page

### Background Information

What is the purpose of this resource?	2
Who is this resource for?	3
Using the resource	3
What is Youth Work?	4

### Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice

Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice	8
The Central Theme	10
Core Values	11
Involving Children and Young People in Designing and Delivering Youth Work	12
Curriculum and Programme Development Cycle	13

### The Three Core Principles

Preparing Young People for Participation	16
Promoting Acceptance and Understanding of Others	29
Testing and Exploring Values and Beliefs	37

### Monitoring and Evaluation

What is Monitoring and Evaluation?	48
Why Evaluate?	49
Who Needs to be Involved in Monitoring & Evaluation	50
Some Useful Questions for Thinking About Your Work	51

### Appendix

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	54
--	----

## Introduction

### What is the purpose of this resource?



This resource has been developed by the Curriculum Development Unit in response to requests from youth workers for a practical guide that would further clarify the core principles identified in *Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice*. It will also help and give ideas as to how to put the Three Core Principles into practice when working with young people. It is aimed at supporting youth workers to identify and create opportunities to engage with young people in discussions and activities, taking account of the Three Core Principles in their practice.

This resource provides guidance on how youth workers can use the Three Core Principles to support youth work practice at all levels across the youth sector.

The resource includes:

1. Background information on each of the core principles
2. Exercises for work with young people<sup>1</sup>
3. A CD with further resources and exercises<sup>2</sup>
4. Organisational/unit training posters



<sup>1</sup> Two sample exercises are included under each core principle

<sup>2</sup> For more information and resources see enclosed CD and CDU website [www.youthworkni.org.uk](http://www.youthworkni.org.uk)



## Who is this resource for?

The resource is aimed at volunteers and part-time youth workers. It can also be used by those involved in the delivery of youth work practice at every level in the youth sector, including:

- Young people in a leadership role
- Full-time youth workers
- Managers
- Management committees

## Using the resource

- Please use the resource in a way that suits your situation
- It is acknowledged that youth work settings are diverse
- It should not be assumed that all young people will want to contribute to decision-making or be involved in all activities



**Youth workers are encouraged to use the resource to develop their practice and to use it as a tool that can be shaped or adapted to suit the needs, age, interest and ability of the young people in their context.**

## What is youth work?

Youth work is a distinctly educational process that happens in a non-formal environment. It seeks to go beyond where young people start, to widen horizons, promote participation and invite social commitment, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them. National Occupational Standards (NOS)<sup>3</sup>

### What is the purpose of youth work?

The key purpose of youth work is to:

“Enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential” (NOS<sup>3</sup>)

### What makes youth work distinct?

- It is based on the needs of young people
- Young people are central to the planning and delivery of youth work
- Young people choose to be involved (voluntary commitment)
- Youth workers value young people for who they are now
- It is founded on a relational and associational way of working with young people
- Youth Work recognises young people as a partner in the learning process
- Youth work complements formal education, promoting young people's access to learning opportunities which enable them to fulfill their potential

<sup>3</sup> National Occupational Standards describe the knowledge and skills needed to perform a job role or work task. They provide a benchmark of good practice as they explain what needs to be done. It is best to think of the standards as a tool which you can refer to and use sections of the standards or the full version.

Achievement

Learning

Fun

Development

### Who does youth work?

- Full-time youth workers
- Part-time youth workers
- Volunteers
- Young people in a range of ways including; as senior members, young leaders, peer mentors and peer researchers


### Youth work – how is it connected?

- Youth work recognises that young people are part of a wider community and society including; family, school, peers and community
- Youth work happens in different settings and through a wide range of organisations and partnerships
- Youth work has a significant contribution to make in many aspects of young people's lives including; education, health, employment, citizenship, housing etc









# Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice

# 8 youth work: a model for effective practice

This resource is grounded in Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice<sup>4</sup> There are four key elements to this Model:

## 1. The Central Theme:

- Personal and Social Development of Young People

## 2. Supported by Three Core Principles:

- Preparing Young People for Participation
- Promoting Acceptance and Understanding of Others
- Testing Values and Beliefs

## 3. Underpinned by Core Principles:

- Equity
- Diversity
- Interdependence

## 4. Planned and delivered using the Curriculum and Programme

### Development Cycle:

While this resource will focus on the Three Core Principles it is useful to remind ourselves briefly of the central theme, the core values and the curriculum and programme development cycle of Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice.



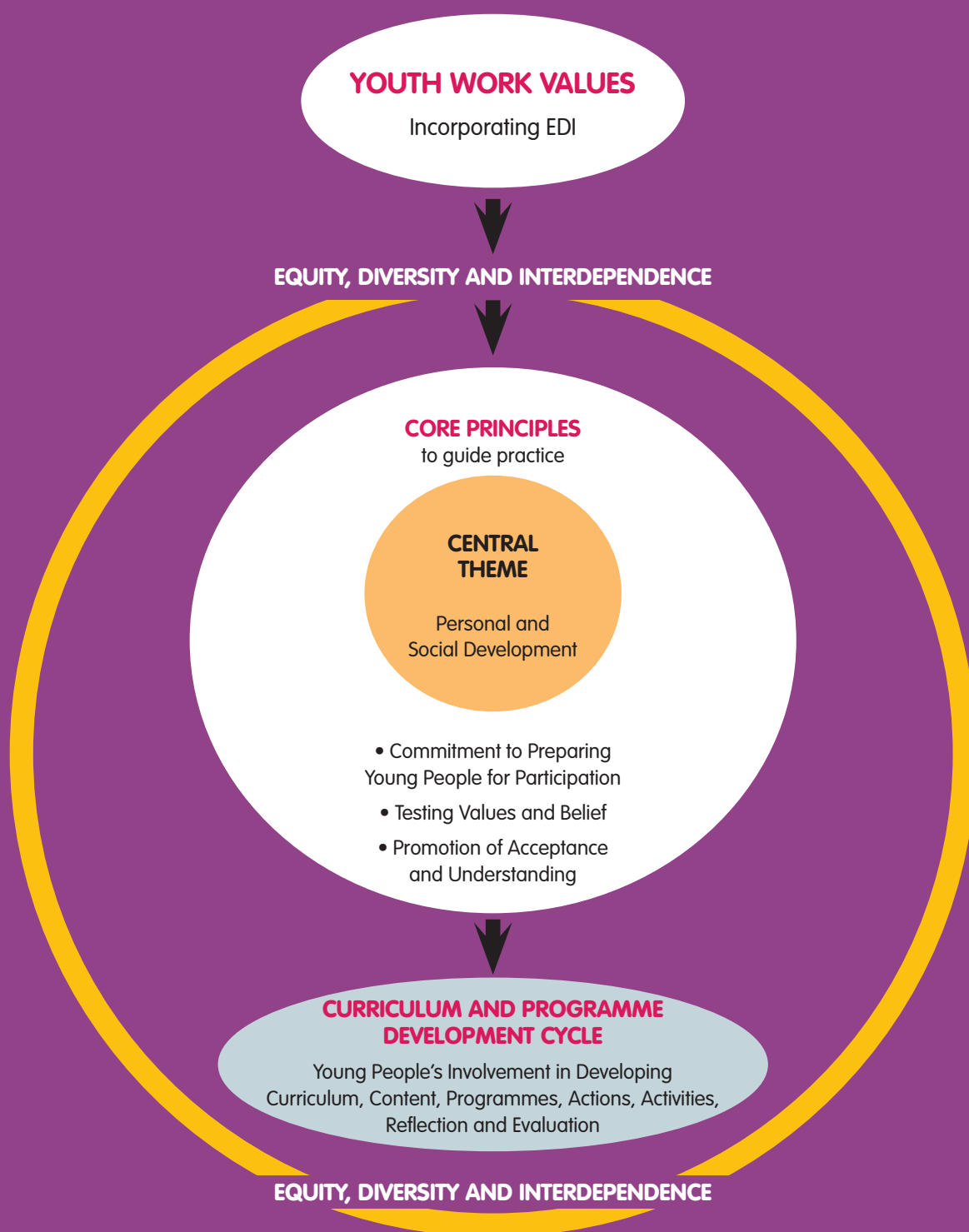
There is an increased emphasis on the connection between the non-formal youth work curriculum and the formal school curriculum. Included in the CD is 'The Big Picture' of the formal school curriculum at Key Stage 1 and 2 and Key Stage 3.

---

<sup>4</sup>Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice (updated 2003) Department of Education. Available from Curriculum Development Unit or for download at [www.youthworkni.org.uk](http://www.youthworkni.org.uk)



The **central theme, three core principles and values**, around which it is recommended youth work should be planned, implemented and evaluated is presented below:



## The Central Theme

### Personal and Social Development

Youth work is concerned with the personal and social development of young people. The Three Core Principles are a vehicle through which to achieve this.

Personal and social development is about the young person gaining knowledge, understanding and awareness of him/herself as an individual and as an active participant in relationships with others. The relationship between the youth worker and the young person is a key factor in this process. Youth workers respond to young people with skilled interventions and carefully planned programmes to help them to...




- Experience enjoyment and achievement
- Sample activities and develop interests
- Build self-esteem and confidence
- Clarify personal attitudes, values and beliefs
- Develop identity and sense of independence
- Recognise, understand and respect difference
- Manage conflict and feelings
- Develop meaningful relationships
- Develop communication and social skills
- Identify and address inequalities
- Be involved in the community
- Acquire life skills and enhance employment prospects
- Develop respect for others



## Core Values

### Equity, Diversity and Interdependence

The values of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI) are at the heart of youth work. It is important that youth workers do not take EDI for granted in their work. Each youth work agency, organisation or group should regularly test their policies, procedures and practice against these Core Values.

Value	In other Words	Explanation
Equity 	Fairness	Often confused with equality. Equity means that everyone is treated fairly and justly according to their need
Diversity 	Acknowledging difference	Respecting the differences in our communities and seeing difference as something which benefits everyone
Interdependence 	Being connected	Interdependence focuses on how different lives interlink. It involves working together for a common good and acknowledging that we are connected and rely on one another





## Involving Children and Young People in Designing and Delivering Youth Work

Young people should have a say in what happens in their youth organisation. They should be able to make choices and decisions that affect their youth work experience. Involving children and young people in the design and delivery of youth work should be an everyday consideration for the youth worker, not a one off project. The activities and experiences offered should enable young people to:

- Become involved in the life and work of a group
- Work as members of a group, building meaningful and appropriate relationships with their peers and others
- Explore, clarify and test their values and beliefs as well as examine moral and spiritual issues in an accepting and non-threatening environment

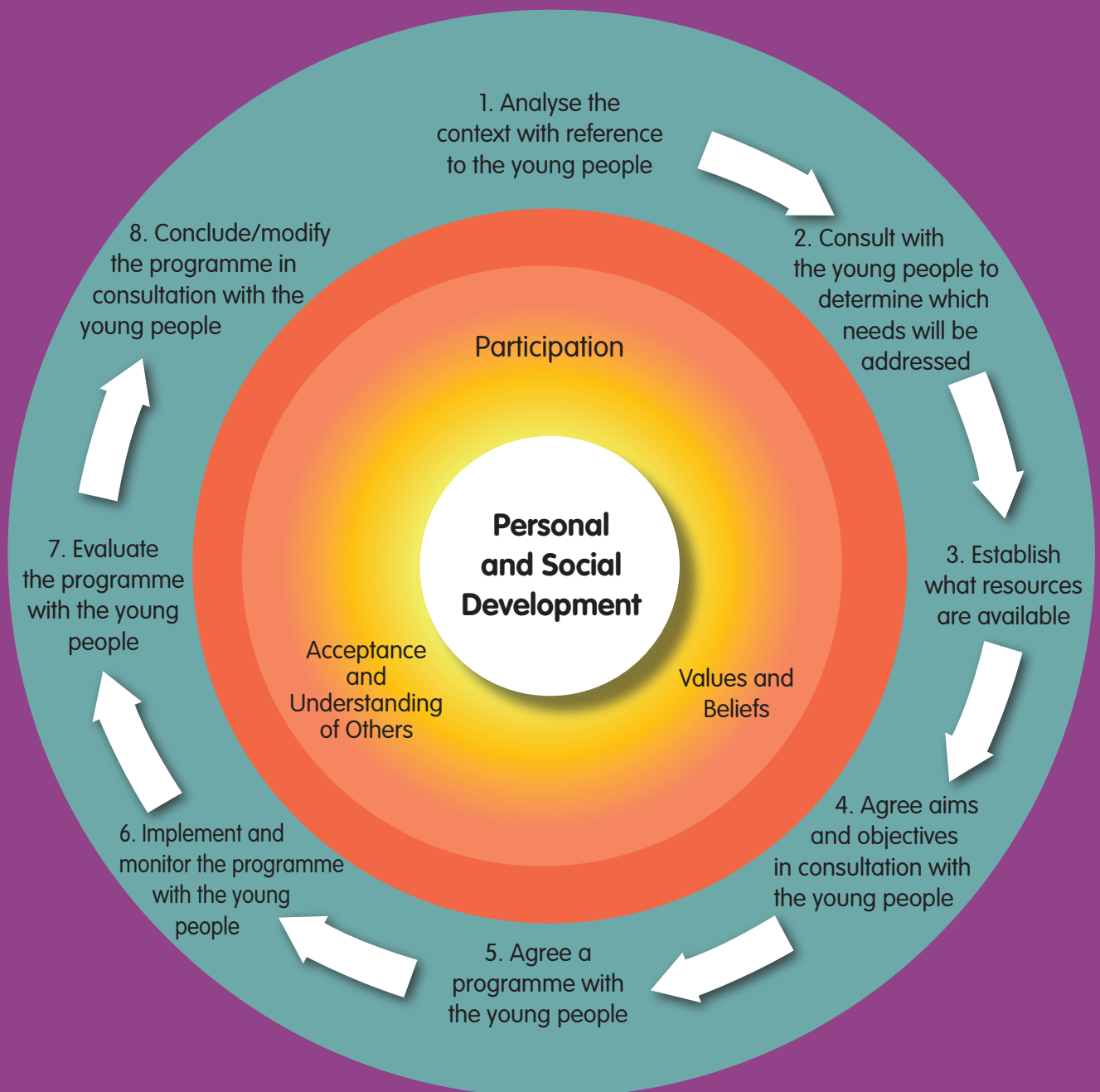


The Curriculum and Programme Development Cycle sets out a series of steps, for involving children and young people in the design and delivery of youth work. As well as working through the Programme Development Cycle youth workers need to take time at regular intervals to think about their youth work practice in order to offer the best service to young people.

Thinking about youth work practice helps those involved in youth work to examine what they are doing in a systematic and purposeful way and to use the learning to improve their work.

## Curriculum and Programme Development Cycle


Including young people at the beginning of the development cycle will contribute to a more meaningful experience for them











# The 3 Core Principles

**Shown by:**

- Recognising and nurturing the strengths, abilities and interests of young people
- Young people expecting to have a say and to be involved
- Young people working in partnership with adults in decision-making
- Meaningful participation
- Young people having a range of opportunities to get involved in decision-making in a way they choose (voluntary participation)
- Adults believing in and willing to engage with young people
- Young people having the opportunity to progress in their decision-making in and beyond their youth work setting

# Preparing Young People

**Role of the youth worker:**

- To build positive relationships with young people
- To be an advocate for young people's participation
- To value the role and contribution that young people make to the design, delivery and evaluation of youth work
- To support young people to participate in decision-making
- To challenge views and behaviours which undermine young people's participation
- To respect young people's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- To be a positive role model for young people

### Practical examples:

- Young people getting involved in the design and delivery of programmes, events and other opportunities in their youth work setting
- Young people involved in choosing, planning and delivering activities, programmes etc.
- Young people engaged as members of committees and/or the management structure
- Young people in leadership roles
- Young people involved in organising and running day-to-day activities, programmes etc in their own youth work setting
- Young people getting involved in decision-making in and beyond their local community

# for Participation

### Potential benefits to young people:

- Young people grow more confident
- Young people gain the skills and experience to express their views and opinions
- Young people become more involved in their local community and wider society
- Young people have opportunities to make decisions and shape current and future services that are important to them
- Young people are taken seriously, have responsibility and are listened to
- Young people learn new skills
- Young people make a difference



### Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice states:

Participation is a key element of the youth work process. It is a way of thinking and working which facilitates joint decision-making by young people and youth workers and promotes personal and social development.

Participation involves:

- Valuing children and young people as individuals able to articulate their needs and interests as well as being actively involved in the design and delivery of their own projects
- Young people not only taking part in activities but having a say in what is provided, how things are run and very often organising and running programmes themselves

### Participation

It is recognised that 'taking part' is essential to youth work practice, however in this resource participation is understood as young people becoming more involved in decision-making at a level that suits them.



The common goal of participation is to create opportunities for young people to be more involved in leading their organisation. This involves moving away from situations where young people are recipients of services towards a situation where they can (if they wish) express their views, make a meaningful contribution to activities and decisions and exert power in a democratic and responsible way.



Two models of Participation are included on the CD. They may be helpful in gaining a greater understanding of the different stages of participation.

### A fully participative approach will involve:

- An inclusive way of working where all young people have opportunities, in line with their age, ability and interests, to take the initiative and share responsibilities in matters such as:
  - Policy making
  - Planning and implementing programmes
  - Management and organisation of facilities
  - Decision-making on aspects of the finances in their setting
- Preparation with and ongoing support for young people
- Young people having positive experiences of participation including democratic involvement in decision-making within their own group

A positive experience of participation can generate a confidence and a belief among young people that they can make a difference, and may encourage them to become actively involved in their local community and beyond.




#### The Right to Participate

Under the UNCRC Article 12 children and young people have the right to have a say in decisions that affect their lives in a way that is appropriate for them (see appendix 1).










# Exercises for work with young people



<b>Title</b>	<b>Drawing Participation</b>
<b>Size of Group</b>	Any
<b>Core Principle</b>	Participation
<b>Purpose</b>	To encourage people to discuss and create a common understanding of participation
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 30 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Large pieces of paper or flipchart Pens or markers
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the larger group into small groups of 3 or 4 young people.</li> <li>2. Ask the small groups to discuss what they think young people's participation is about. You can keep this very wide – family, school etc or more focused on your youth setting.</li> <li>3. Ask participants to draw their idea of participation.</li> <li>4. Stress that words are not to be included in the drawing.</li> <li>5. When the groups have finished they share their work with the other groups for discussion.</li> </ol>
<b>Handouts</b>	None
<b>Suggestions for Debriefing</b>	Some common comments that may arise from this exercise Participation is about: Working together, a process, helping, ownership, non-hierarchical, about people, enabling, facilitating change, being inclusive, creative, equality, respect for people, sharing, listening and being involved.
<b>Tips for facilitator</b>	<p>If you wish to have more comprehensive discussion relating to your setting consider the following statements or questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name some of the ways in which young people can participate in decision-making</li> <li>2. What are the benefits to young people participating in decision-making for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themselves</li> <li>• Their youth setting</li> <li>• The Community</li> <li>• Wider Society</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. What are the barriers to young people participating?</li> <li>4. Think of some solutions to the barriers or problems to young people getting involved in decision making</li> </ol>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Stepping Forward</b>
<b>Size of Group</b>	Between 6 and 15
<b>Core Principle</b>	Participation
<b>Purpose</b>	To explore some of the barriers to young people taking part and having their voice heard in relation to things that are important to them
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 40 minutes - 60 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	A large space Labels with names Role cards for each player Stepping forward statements
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute copies of the role cards to each person and ask them to read only their own card.</li> <li>2. Ask them to make a label showing their name and where they live and to attach it to themselves.</li> <li>3. Depending on the size of the group more than one person may have the same role.</li> <li>4. Ask them to think about who they are and where they live.</li> <li>5. Now ask people to stand in character at one end of the room.</li> <li>6. Ask the group to stand with their backs to the wall and use the full length of the room.</li> <li>7. Explain that you are going to call out statements.</li> <li>8. After each statement is read they must take a big step, a small step, or stay where they are depending on how easy it would be for them to participate in the activity.</li> <li>9. Take a big step if you can participate easily, a small step if you can do it with difficulty and don't move at all if you cannot participate.</li> <li>10. Emphasise that the aim of the exercise is to try and experience what life is like in character - it is not about reaching the end first. Now call out the first statement.</li> <li>11. Once everyone has responded, ask them to explain what they did and why.</li> <li>12. Choose more statements from the list, read them out and allow participants to make their move.</li> <li>13. When all the statements are read out start the debriefing.</li> </ol>



## 24 preparing young people for participation

	<p><b>Debrief</b></p> <p>Who got the furthest along? Why?</p> <p>How did you feel when you could not move?</p> <p>How did you feel when you were moving faster than other people?</p> <p>Who moved the shortest distance? Why?</p> <p>What can be done to make it easier for people who moved slowly?</p>
<b>Handouts</b>	Role Cards for each participant
<b>Suggestions for Debriefing</b>	<p>Ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to contribute</p> <p>Ensure that people have debriefed and arguments or tensions associated with the role are resolved/addressed before the end of the session</p>

## Stepping Forward

### Statements

A questionnaire is sent around primary and secondary schools about health issues – can you participate?
There is a meeting at the local library on Tuesday evening at 6pm about leisure facilities for young people – can you participate?
A survey is sent through the post for young people to express their views about drugs and alcohol – can you participate?
There is a workshop at the local college about transport in the area and it is based on photography – can you participate?
A drama company are touring schools in the area and running workshops about 'education is fun' – can you participate?
There is a meeting about a Northern Ireland Youth Assembly – can you participate?
You are asked on the street about your views on the health service – can you participate?
You are invited to a focus group between 7 – 9pm next Thursday evening about services available and needed for children in the area – can you participate?
A graffiti wall is drawn in your local library on young people's views on the area – can you participate?
There is a youth club 20mins from your home who are looking for new members – can you participate?

## Role Cards (Stepping Forward)



**Claire:** You do not like school and often do not attend. You hang out with friends instead. At night you go down the town and hang about and you are looking forward to being eighteen as there is nothing for young people to do.

**Andy:** You had polio as a baby and you now need a wheelchair to get about. You like reading but the local library has steps and you cannot get in without help. You do not like going out when it is dark because the street lighting is not good in your area and it makes it difficult for you to get about.

**Cas:** You have recently moved to Northern Ireland as a refugee with your parents and you can speak a little English but you cannot read English very well. You are shy and you do not like going to large meetings.

**Paul:** You are living in a residential children's home at the moment. You are interested in reading and playing football. You would like to get a computer because you do not have one. You attend school and your favourite subjects are music and drama.

**Martin:** You live in Tempo and have a slight visual impairment. Your computer is adapted so that you can read text that is sent to you via e-mail but you cannot read standard text very well.

**Janet:** You have two young children and you are a single parent. Your mother helps you out a lot with the children but she does not like babysitting at night because she does not feel safe walking to your flat in the dark. You plan to go to college when your youngest child starts school.



## Role Cards (Stepping Forward)

**Marie:** You live with your mother and sister in Bangor and you are fourteen. You have dyslexia and find it difficult to read and complete forms. You are very creative and enjoy photography and art-based activities.

**Patrick:** You live with your family who are Travellers in a caravan on the edge of Belfast. You have been to four primary schools, each in a different town. You like your current school best and you have met new friends in the area. You would like to get linked up to the internet at home but you do not think it will be possible.

**Nitra:** You live with your parents, your two brothers and sister in Ballycastle. You are planning to go to university next year and you would like to study computer science. You speak English at school but not at home.

**Tom:** You are fifteen and you live with your mother and younger sister. Your mum is a single parent and works during the evenings. When you get home from school you look after your sister until your mum gets home from work at about 7pm. You have a Saturday job to earn money for going out.

**Peter:** You live with your parents in Ballymena and you go to the local youth club on a Thursday evening. Your mother works as a community worker and your father works within the planning section of the Council. You enjoy surfing the net both at home and at the youth club.

**Helen:** You live on a farm with your family in Swatragh, a rural community. It is expensive to travel to Belfast or Derry and you have only visited these cities once in your lifetime. You do have a computer and access to the Internet.







# Promoting Acceptance and Understanding of Others



## Shown by:

- Creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for young people, staff and the wider community
- Communicating clear messages e.g. signs and leaflets that encourage a wide range of people to get involved
- An outreach service to those not involved
- Being proactive - don't wait for young people who find it difficult to get involved/are excluded to come to you
- Staff and young people using respectful language, demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviour
- Staff and young people demonstrating ease with difference and difficult conversations
- Providing training and support for staff and young people
- Young people gaining an understanding of difference and the importance of rights, fairness and equality

# Promoting Acceptance and

## Role of the youth worker:

- To have a range of resources that reflects the diversity of identities and needs in our society
- To create an environment which is accessible and inclusive
- To take into account different abilities and needs when planning
- To challenge stereotypes, prejudice, discriminatory language, behaviour and attitudes
- To support young people and staff who are marginalised or excluded
- To encourage young people to be positive about and make connections within the community
- To reflect on their practice and be aware of their own values, attitudes etc
- To be a positive role-model

### Practical examples:

- Young people help to design and deliver programmes that examine and explore diversity e.g. through creative activities, sport, music and group work
- Provide diversity training for staff and young people
- Hold roadshows/open nights for the community to encourage new people and break down barriers
- Young people help to celebrate difference acknowledging diversity in your setting both on an on-going basis and through special events, e.g. cultural evenings
- Publishing programmes/opportunities in formats that meet the needs of young people in the community e.g. put information into schools, local papers etc

## Understanding of Others

### Potential benefits to young people:

- Young people gain confidence with their own identity
- Young people have a better understanding of difference
- Young people have an increased ability to deal with difference in themselves and others
- Young people experience a richer, more diverse learning environment
- Young people have increased awareness of the world around them
- Young people have increased ability to communicate within and beyond their own community

## Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice states:

The Promotion of Acceptance and Understanding of Others involves enabling young people to respect and value themselves and others.

Acceptance and Understanding of others includes:

- Appreciating the differences between and interdependence of people including:
  - Your own youth group
  - Family
  - Peers
  - Close community
  - Wider society
- Seeing cultural diversity as a positive thing from which everyone can gain enrichment
- Recognising the rights and potential of young people from different backgrounds, interests, cultures and abilities



The Promotion of Acceptance and Understanding of Others as a core principle goes to the heart of personal and social development. It presents challenges to youth workers to create and facilitate processes whereby young people can learn and grow in their understanding of people's different experiences and realities.

Accepting others as equal yet different can be challenging. It requires an understanding of the meaning of equity and a commitment through youth work to oppose sectarianism, racism and any form of discrimination.





### Why is Promoting Acceptance and Understanding of Others important?

- To ensure that prejudices and stereotyping do not get in the way of developing healthy relationships in a youth setting, with peers, family and the wider community
- To encourage and support young people as proactive agents of change within their families, among their peers and in the wider community

### What helps youth workers Promote Acceptance and Understanding of Others?

- Building trust between the youth worker and young people encourages and enables them to engage in potentially contentious work. This will include programmes that help young people arrive at a better understanding of diversity in regard to beliefs, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnic background, culture and tradition, in order to challenge prejudice and to pursue equality of opportunity for themselves and for others.
- Having access to a range of programmes and experiences that help connect young people with different situations and meet with people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.



# promoting acceptance and understanding of others

<b>Title</b>	<b>Celebrating Identities</b>
<b>Size of group</b>	8 - 30 people
<b>Core Principle</b>	Acceptance and Understanding of Others
<b>Purpose</b>	To embrace difference and affirm identity
<b>Duration</b>	Up to 45 minutes (depending on the size of the group)
<b>Materials/ Resources</b>	A4 paper, pens, carrier bag
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish ground rules with the group e.g. respecting each other, one person speaking at a time ....</li> <li>2. Everybody is handed 3 blank pages.</li> <li>3. Participants should write down 3 of their identities (one identity on each piece of paper). It can be whatever you choose (mother, son, daughter, gymnast, footballer, swimmer, etc).</li> <li>4. When finished participants put the papers in a carrier bag in the centre of the room.</li> <li>5. The facilitator then takes the papers and one by one reads them aloud.</li> <li>6. Participants are instructed to stand each time they identify with one of the identities, be it factual or just a feeling. The rest of the group applauds those who stand.</li> <li>7. This continues until all the papers are read out.</li> </ol>
<b>Handouts</b>	None
<b>Suggestions for the debriefing.</b>	<p>What is understood by identity?</p> <p>Why did participants choose the ones they did?</p> <p>What significance is there in the ones they chose?</p> <p>Were there any surprises?</p>
<b>Tips for the facilitator</b>	<p>It is important to ensure that all participants are heard, their choices respected and they feel safe enough to share among others. It is vital that the facilitator ensures ground rules are set with regard to this at the beginning. It is also vital that the facilitator is able to manage the process to ensure it stays focused.</p>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Lemons</b>
<b>Size of group</b>	Various
<b>Core Principle</b>	Acceptance and Understanding of Others
<b>Purpose</b>	This is an exercise which introduces the idea of identity. It can be used to explore stereotyping, differences and equality of opportunity.
<b>Duration</b>	approximately 30 minutes
<b>Materials/ Resources needed</b>	Enough lemons for everybody in the group A carrier bag
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give each group member a lemon.</li> <li>2. Ask everyone to look closely at their lemon/lemons, feeling the skin and examining it for distinctive marks.</li> <li>3. Encourage each person to personalise their lemon by giving it a name.</li> <li>4. Allow five minutes to do this and then collect all the lemons into the carrier bag. Shake the bag to mix the lemon/lemons.</li> <li>5. Spread all the lemons out on the floor in front of the group. In turn, ask each young person to come forward and collect their lemon. If there is an argument over whose it is, try to adjudicate, but if they still can't agree, place the lemon to one side as unidentified. If this happens, you should be left with two at the end to reunite, but will find that most people (amazingly!) can successfully claim their lemon/lemons.</li> </ol>
<b>Handouts</b>	None
<b>Suggestions for the debriefing</b>	<p>Once all the young people have been reunited with their lemons you can facilitate a discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How sure are they that they claimed the right lemon/lemons?</li> <li>• How can they tell?</li> <li>• Encourage them to look at the parallels between this exercise and differentiating between people. Examine the stereotypes: are all lemons the same colour?</li> <li>• Are they all the same shape?</li> </ul> <p>Reflect this into the stereotypes that exist between people of different cultures, races and gender.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does this mean to the group?</li> </ul> <p>Your evaluation of this process and the issues that emerge will help you develop further sessions around differences and equality of opportunities.</p>
<b>Tips for the facilitator</b>	Young people might feel a little 'odd' or 'strange' at completing such an exercise – it is important to expect such a reaction and therefore be able to encourage or motivate participants to complete the exercise.





# Testing and Exploring Values and Beliefs

## Shown by:

- Young people having the opportunity to explore their own values and beliefs
- Young people making informed choices
- Young people's attitudes, opinions and beliefs being valued
- An open and welcoming environment
- Young people's values and beliefs being explored and challenged in a non-threatening way
- Young people having an awareness of their personal feelings and the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- Young people being able to change their values and beliefs as a result of exploration

# Testing and Exploring

## Role of the youth worker:

- To promote opportunities for young people to explore and reflect on their values and beliefs in a safe and supportive environment
- To have and share an understanding of the underpinning ethos and principles of their organisation
- To be sensitive and support young people in exploring and at times changing their viewpoint
- To reflect on their practice and to be aware of their own values and beliefs
- To show a commitment to exploring values and beliefs with young people
- To be a positive role model for young people



### Practical examples:

- Design and deliver group-work sessions that test and explore values and beliefs
- Provide creative opportunities supporting young people to experience different environments
- Deliver community relations programmes
- Create opportunities for young people to participate in experiences on international work
- Facilitate the sharing of personal stories around values and beliefs
- Take advantage of informal interaction – listening and having conversations with young people

# Values and Beliefs

### Potential benefits to young people:

- Young people have increased self-esteem, confidence and ability to make their own decisions
- Young people have a greater sense of self and others
- Young people have an increased awareness of community, locally and globally
- Young people have an increased awareness of how values and beliefs affect behaviour
- Young people have an increased awareness of personal responsibility
- Young people develop critical and reflective thinking

## Testing and Exploring Values and Beliefs

### Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice states:

Values and Beliefs tend to be learned from others including parents, peers, teachers and youth workers. These people play an important role in shaping the lives of young people by passing on a value and belief system.

### Why is it important to Test and Explore Values and Beliefs?

- To help young people explore and test the origins of their values and beliefs
- To help young people to be attentive to the opinions and beliefs of others
- To be empathetic and show understanding to another's position and view of life
- To help young people explore alternative viewpoints and develop skills for dealing with difference. This is particularly important in Northern Ireland where views are often entrenched and where community divisions have affected all aspects of life
- Many young people are interested in developing a belief system, which may or may not involve a spiritual dimension that can make sense of their experiences and inform their relationships with others and with society, both locally and globally
- Young people need opportunities to discuss and ask questions about their own personal life experiences and about the causes and effects of global events



We live in a diverse and changing society therefore understanding difference beyond the 'Catholic/ Protestant divide' is an important aspect of exploring and testing values and beliefs. Discrimination and isolation are not confined to the 'two' traditions. Therefore recognising difference in others of different faith, cultural backgrounds and community should also be taken into consideration when working with young people.

## What helps youth workers to Test and Explore Values and Beliefs?

- Reflecting on their practice and having an awareness of their own values and beliefs
- Understanding the impact of living in a divided society on their youth work practice
- Being aware of what young people are learning in regard to value systems through the formal school curriculum
- Being aware of the value and beliefs systems of young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds



It is important to acknowledge that at times young people and adults can shy away from discussing controversial issues, values and beliefs. However to ignore these issues is to leave a wide gap in the young person's education and development in the youth work setting.



**In keeping with the National Occupational Standards for youth work, youth workers are seeking to support young people to 'explore ethical, moral and cultural values, addressing the need to respect the beliefs and values of others.' NOS**









# Exercises for work with young people

<b>Title</b>	<b>The Value of Music</b>
<b>Size of group</b>	4-12 if there are more than 12 in the group it might be more effective to break the session into two
<b>Core Principle</b>	Testing and exploring values and beliefs
<b>Purpose</b>	To explore values that are important to participants
<b>Duration</b>	Up to 2 hrs depending on the size of the group
<b>Materials</b>	CD player - music the young people bring along
<b>Instructions</b>	<p>Preparation: Each participant should choose a piece of music and bring it with them to the session. They are asked to draw an image or write down a few words, as to why they chose that song, why it is important and how it influences them:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite each participant, one by one, to introduce their piece of music through their drawings or words they have prepared before playing it. It is not necessary to hear each complete song – a participant might only want to play the ‘important bit’ and this is also ok.</li> <li>2. Ask all other participants to write down a few words or draw an image about their thoughts whilst each song is playing. It could be about their impressions of the song, what it means to them, how it affects them or why they see the importance of the song to the person who chose it.</li> <li>3. At the end of each song ask other participants for their thoughts.</li> <li>4. Go through the same process with each person until the end.</li> <li>5. Thank the group and then begin the debriefing.</li> </ol>
<b>Handouts</b>	None
<b>Suggestions for the debriefing</b>	<p>In the group consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the common themes for participants?</li> <li>• Why are these themes important to us?</li> <li>• What kind of music was played?</li> <li>• In what ways does music affect us and how does it influence us and our behaviour?</li> <li>• What does the choice of songs tell the rest of the group about us?</li> <li>• What values or beliefs can we connect with each piece of music?</li> <li>• Why are those values or beliefs important to us?</li> </ul>
<b>Tips for the facilitator</b>	The songs chosen and connecting issues may be sensitive to participants so it is important to be aware of this and to take care to ensure that participants are ‘cared for’ if they are talking about an issue that triggers, for example, a difficult event in their life. It is also vital that when other participants are offering their thoughts on the music it does not turn into a ‘slagging session’, e.g., ‘I don’t like that band’ or ‘that song’s rubbish’, etc.



<b>Title</b>	<b>Facing Identity</b>
<b>Size of group</b>	Various
<b>Core Principle</b>	Testing and exploring values and beliefs
<b>Purpose</b>	To examine our identity considering how we see ourselves and how others may see us
<b>Duration</b>	Around 20 minutes personal, 30 minutes exchange (up to 90 minutes maximum)
<b>Materials</b>	A big sheet of paper and a pen for each person Different coloured pens and/or pencils
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every participant receives paper and pen and draws the profile of his/her face on the paper (alone or with the help of somebody else).</li> <li>2. Participants reflect personally about various aspects of their identity (elements to be put inside of their face) and how others might see them (elements to be put outside of their face). The participants should be given sufficient time for this, trying to think through different elements constituting identity (family, nationality, education, gender, religion, roles, group belongings...).</li> <li>3. Participants reflect on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How they see themselves</li> <li>– How they think others see them</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Participants are asked to join together in small groups (maximum five) and exchange their reflections, it is important that participants share only what they are comfortable with. <p><b>Some questions to consider</b>  How do we see ourselves? How do others see us? What influences me?  How do perceptions and attitudes change over time and why? How do I deal with elements of myself I dislike and where do they come from?</p> </li> </ol>
<b>Handouts</b>	None
<b>Suggestions for the debriefing</b>	<p>The sharing should probably remain in the small groups, but some general remarks can be brought back to the large group, or participants can give feedback on what they learnt from the exercise in one huge face drawn in the large group (with symbols or remarks).</p> <p>Continuing questions can be: How do we work with our own and others' perception of ourselves? How far is identity a "dynamic concept" and what are relevant factors influencing changes? Which influences my identity in this group? Which influences in society impact on my identity and how are they linked? (Discussion about nationality, minorities). Subjects to follow could be perception &amp; stereotypes, identity &amp; encounter.</p>

4:30pm:- Participation!

hi  
no  
th

What did you find worthwhile?

BRING IT APART

+

SAC

the  
centre  
the past year summary.  
get  
understanding of 'the model'.  
Oway  
le (for a class?)  
(in a group?)  
Galt





# Monitoring and Evaluation



## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice states:

Monitoring and Evaluation are essential elements of good youth work practice. It is important to include young people in this process from the beginning in order to ensure the outcomes are relevant to young people and their setting.

### What is Monitoring and Evaluation?



**Monitoring** is about checking progress on an ongoing basis, and noting, for example, how programmes are developing and how young people are responding. This can enable any necessary adjustments to be made at appropriate times throughout the work.

**Evaluation** is about tracking quality, effectiveness and progression, but generally it tends to judge the value of a piece of work at its conclusion.

Participation in monitoring and evaluation should encourage young people and everyone involved with them to reflect on:

- What they are doing?
- Why they are doing it?
- The quality of provision offered
- The learning and outcomes for the young people
- The effectiveness and efficiency of the resources used
- What should be done differently and what should remain unchanged

## Why Evaluate?

Evaluation helps workers to examine what they are doing in a systematic and purposeful way and to use the findings to improve youth work practice.

Here are three key reasons why evaluation is useful:

### 1. To explain

It is helpful to be able to explain to the people who fund youth work in your setting where and how their money has been spent. This is also called 'accountability', where you account for the money and the impact of your project. This can happen by:

- Reflecting on what you are doing
- Recording what is working well in your setting and what needs changed
- Providing clear feedback and communicating your findings to young people, staff, funders, parents, community



### 2. To improve

It is helpful to know what is working well and not so well in your youth work setting. Information from the evaluation can be used to make improvements to your practice and in your youth setting. This can happen by:

- Rating how you are doing and identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Identifying areas for improvement and long term planning
- Planning to improve
- Taking action to improve

### 3. To share

It is important to celebrate the work of young people and youth workers and to tell others so they can learn from your experiences. It may be beneficial to others if you are willing to share and exchange your experience. This can happen by:

- Celebrating your work
- Publicising the work you have done

## Who needs to be involved in Monitoring and Evaluation?

Everyone involved in a programme can be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of it.

## Evaluation can be both qualitative and quantitative

- The **Quantitative** approach involves recording facts usually in the form of numbers and figures.
- The **Qualitative** approach can involve discussion, small group feedback and the use of creative methods.

Below are some quantitative and qualitative methods you may find helpful

### Quantitative

- Recording attendance numbers
- Number of young people taking part in specific programmes/activities
- Numbers attending training
- Numbers in different age groups
- Completing questionnaires about opinions on the youth group (making a chart or graph to show this)

### Qualitative

- Group discussion – getting everyone to say one good thing about a session
- Writing a journal or a diary
- Writing a song or a rap
- 'Big Brother' style diary room/ video diary
- Chatting about what you think on a forum on your website
- Taking photographs



Worker(s)

Parents and wider  
community organisation



Some useful questions for thinking about your work

This may be useful to use at the end of a session and/or programme

Question	Response
<b>What did I the youth worker do?</b>	
<b>What did the young people do?</b>	
<b>What did I learn?</b>	
<b>What did the young people learn?</b>	
<b>How worthwhile was it?</b>	

<b>What do I intend to do now? What would I change/adapt as a result of my reflection?</b>	
<b>Have I made good use of the resources available to me?</b>	
<b>What else is happening in the club/community/society that has influenced this piece of work?</b>	
<b>Have I created the opportunity for young people to reflect on their learning?</b>	
<b>Do I need further support/advice to improve what I am doing?</b>	
<b>What impact has the work had on?</b> Individuals Groups The Organisation The sector Society	

# Appendix



## Appendix

### THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

#### **Article 1**

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

#### **Article 2**

The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.

#### **Article 3**

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

#### **Article 4**

Governments should make these rights available to children.

#### **Article 5**

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

#### **Article 6**

All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

#### **Article 7**

All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

#### **Article 8**

Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

#### **Article 9**

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, for example if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

#### **Article 10**

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.

**Article 11**

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

**Article 12**

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 13**

Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**Article 14**

Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

**Article 15**

Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 16**

Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

**Article 17**

Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

**Article 18**

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

**Article 19**

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

**Article 20**

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

**Article 21**

When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.

**Article 22**

Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

**Article 23**

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.

**Article 24**

Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 25**

Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

**Article 26**

The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

**Article 27**

Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

**Article 28**

Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29**

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

**Article 30**

Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

**Article 31**

All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

**Article 32**

The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

**Article 33**

The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.



**Article 34**

The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

**Article 35**

The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

**Article 36**

Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

**Article 37**

Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

**Article 38**

Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army.  
Children in war zones should receive special protection.

**Article 39**

Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self respect.

**Article 40**

Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help.  
Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

**Article 41**

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

**Article 42**

The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

**This wording of the UNCRC is taken from [www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk](http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk)**



Curriculum Development Unit  
Antrim Board Centre  
17 Lough Road  
Antrim  
BT41 4DH

**Tel: 028 9448 2336**  
**Fax: 028 9448 2324**  
**[www.youthworkni.org.uk](http://www.youthworkni.org.uk)**

**£10.00**