

Foreword

The value of youth work as an educational process is widely recognised. For a great many children and young people in Northern Ireland the opportunities for friendship, meaningful relationships, the acquisition of new skills, and the growth of confidence and self-esteem provided by youth services, are a vital element of a life-long learning process.

Young people today are having to face increased challenges and pressures arising from societal change and the rapid pace of technological innovation. Our vision for youth work is to help all young people, in particular those who feel socially excluded, to develop their potential to the full and to build their capacity, individually and collectively, to participate in the creation of a democratic and socially just society and to meet the challenges which change inevitably brings.

The re-launch of "Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice" gives youth workers the opportunity to demonstrate that informal education is open to all young people. The updated Model is designed as a framework that can be adapted to meet the needs of children and young people whatever their personal circumstances may be. It provides an important vehicle for the delivery of youth work, promoting young people's involvement in programme planning and delivery so that what is being offered is relevant, and at all times seeks progression in what is being experienced and learnt.

This curriculum framework Model builds on the work of the recent Youth Service Policy Review and is another important step towards ensuring that Northern Ireland's young people have access to the quality of provision they deserve.

Government is committed to supporting the further development of youth services and, in the interests of effectiveness, efficiency and best value for young people, encourages the closest possible collaboration between voluntary and statutory agencies in the youth work sector, other key community agencies, formal education and young people. A youth work approach centred around active participation will inevitably lead to the development of a credible and accountable voice for young people built on strong local foundations.

Our thanks are due to those individuals and agencies who have contributed generously to the content of this document. Particular thanks are due to John McCormick of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the staff and Management Committee of the Curriculum Development Unit.

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Minister with Responsibility for Education

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Section 1

A Curriculum Framework for Youth Work



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INTRODUCTION

Youth Work's Contribution to Young People and Society

In spite of the profound impact on young people of more than a generation of armed conflict, turbulence and concurrent rapid societal change, youth workers and the Youth Service have consistently responded to the needs of young people, supporting them and enabling them to meet the challenges of growing up in a deeply divided and contested society. The damaging impact of the "troubles" on young people in Northern Ireland has undoubtedly been alleviated by the efforts of a predominantly voluntary force of youth workers (currently estimated at over 18,000 working in registered groups alone) who give their time and their services through a rich diversity of organisations and projects, thus offering young people a wide choice for their involvement. The significance of this contribution is best characterised by considering that 1 in every 100 of our population is involved through youth work in the learning, growth and development of children and young people between the ages of 4 and 25.

The past six years since the first launch of the document, "Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice" have seen significant political and social change. In the aftermath of the Belfast Agreement important legislative changes and accompanying structural changes (such as the creation of the Human Rights and Equality Commissions) have sought to encourage a new culture of equality, inclusion and peace-building. The Executive's Programme for Government is directed towards social inclusion and equity in addition to economic and social development. Whilst the results of economic development are clearly visible, many children and young people in Northern Ireland

continue to experience poverty and related disadvantage, and where the ongoing effects of sectarian strife are most evident they are particularly at risk.

"New TSN", the concept of targeting social need in the application of every government policy and measure, is fundamentally directed towards inclusion. It calls for public action to be directed towards those in most need, defined either geographically or by membership of some particularly disadvantaged group. **Youth work combats social need principally through programmes of personal and social development which are geared to the age range, interests and capacities of the children and young people who become involved. Whilst the focus on social need is important, the Youth Service also continues to provide services to young people from a broad range of social backgrounds and brings diverse groups of young people together to share with and learn from each other.**

A broad, diverse and exciting range of youth work activities are voluntarily taken up by around 200,000 young people aged 4–25 years. The programmes provided are valued by young people and they both complement and enhance the growth and learning provided through formal schooling. Even more could be done with increased resources and clearer direction in regard to focus and priorities. Such support is essential if government policy requires the Youth Service to increase its responsibility for meeting the needs of more disadvantaged groups.

Youth work has striven to keep pace with the changes in society and consequently with the circumstances, experiences and expectations of young people. To do so it has had to meet the challenge of recruiting, training and retaining

volunteers in the face of competing demands on their time and a growing perception that youth work is now more difficult than it once was. **This is compounded by the reality that the needs of young people, especially the most disadvantaged, are such that patterns of support and development, resources and infrastructure, are increasingly stretched and inadequate.** Alongside these twin challenges of retaining volunteers and securing sufficient funding, youth work must also continue to be attractive and relevant to young people. Maintaining relevance and ensuring quality and consistency in programme development and delivery were at the heart of the rationale for the youth work curriculum first presented in 1987.

Re-launch of “Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice”

The subsequent publication of *“Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice”* in 1997 was based on a revision of a decade’s experience and was an important milestone in the development of Youth Services in Northern Ireland. The Model devised by the Curriculum Review Group was in essence a curriculum and programme development tool. It involved a cycle of actions and engagements with young people which ensured they had an active part in planning, shaping and delivery of their own programmes, in reviewing the effectiveness and relevance, and changing or developing them on the basis of reflection and evaluation. Three core principles were identified as underpinning the personal and social development of young people – Participation, Testing Values and Beliefs and Acceptance and Understanding of Others,

In the period since 1997 there has been a major review of Youth Service in Northern Ireland culminating in the Report of the Youth Service Policy Review Group – *“A Youth Service for a New Millennium”* (DE, 1999). The Review confirmed the importance of the publication of *“Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice”* as giving guidance and leadership to youth work, and in the light of this and the development of practice over the past six years there has been a call for it to be re-launched. The Model has been employed, to varying degrees, within the youth service sector and has been felt to be an effective framework on which to base youth work practice. Re-launched, disseminated and comprehensively supported with resources available through the newly established Curriculum Development Unit, it has the potential to be equally valuable to a broader Youth Service constituency.

This updated model (hereafter referred to in this document as The Model) is not intended to lead to a single, prescriptive and inflexible curriculum framework. Whilst it encapsulates a central theme and suggests core principles which reflect shared youth work values, it also recognises that there will be organisations for whom additional principles may equally be considered to be core. It is hoped that this model can significantly ‘overlap’ with the values base of individual organisations. **The Model should be viewed as a framework within which there is scope to develop approaches best suited to the age range, contexts and issues in which young people are engaged.**

Curriculum Resources

A description of The Model is outlined in the pages which follow. It is presented in a loose-leaf ring binder so that other information and materials can be added. The Curriculum Development Unit is compiling a database of references to resources, and will be designing and publishing new materials and disseminating examples of practice. Consideration will be given to developing other means of supporting The Model and to interpreting it in an age appropriate way.

The Education and Training Inspectorate are producing a DVD designed to convey the ethos of youth work, and to demonstrate the central theme and core principles in a way that a 'hard copy' never can.

A number of other useful resources are referenced in the Appendices including recent publications emerging from the JEDI Initiative around policy development, practice, training and evaluation. In particular the framework for *'Reflection in Practice: Guidelines for Embedding EDI Principles in Youth Work Practice'* is a valuable complement to this document.

For The Model to have optimal effect it must be supported through on-going training and research, and adequately resourced to encourage sector-wide implementation. It is also a useful framework for those not familiar with youth work, such as those from other sectors who may wish to engage and collaborate with the youth work community.



A Youth Work Curriculum

Youth work is distinctly educational and involves constructive interventions with young people in non-formal settings. As an educational activity it is at its most effective when it is planned and delivered with clear objectives, and informed through continuous monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection on the processes and practices employed.

To this end the document "*Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice*" (1997) was designed to be a supportive framework and is broadly referred to as a curriculum framework. However, the use of the term "curriculum" has met with some resistance within youth work. This may be because of its association with formal education and a perception that it equates to organisation and delivery through subject areas, time-tabling and an emphasis on academic attainment.

However, the youth work context is different from that of formal education. In particular, whereas formal education up to the age of sixteen is compulsory, children and young people engage voluntarily in youth work. This key differentiating factor between school and youth work, and the fact that young people are encouraged to participate in shaping their own programmes, requires us to view the term curriculum from a broader perspective when applying it to youth work. The Model in this context is an attempt to identify the central elements of an educational process in a form that is open to scrutiny and capable of being translated into practice.

At the heart of this re-launched "Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice" are a central theme and three core principles. These are proposed with the understanding that the young person must be at the centre of the youth work process and that the success of youth work will be largely dependent on the relationship between the youth worker and the young person. Trust and safety in this relationship are important. Child Protection policies and practice should be in place to provide assurance for young people, their parents and those who work with them.

The Model is presented as a guide to help youth workers to think about their work before, during and after interventions. It can be used to make judgements about effectiveness, the direction the work is taking and can promote the type of debate that will enhance practice. The content of The Model is not intended to be prescriptive, nor should it restrict spontaneity and improvisation. On the contrary, opportunities taken as they arise can enrich the work when they contribute to the overall goals and objectives of a programme.

Youth workers are encouraged to use The Model to develop their practice, and to see it as a tool that can be adapted or re-shaped to suit the situation in which they are working.

The Range of Youth Service Provision

Youth Service in Northern Ireland extends to a wide range of provision for children and young people between the ages of 4 and 25 years. It has been categorised by the Youth Service Policy Review Group as: “*services for children under 10 years of age, services for young people between 10-16 years of age and services to young adults over the age of 16 years*”. Meeting the needs of young people across this extent of age are a myriad of organisations and projects traditional and new, voluntary and statutory offering an impressive breadth of services. They are too numerous to list comprehensively but they include one night per week clubs, full-time youth centres, detached and outreach projects, church-based groups, faith groups, uniformed youth organisations, after school clubs, school-based projects, community-based projects, health projects, organisations providing for disabled young people, for ethnic minorities, for young people of the Travellers Community, special programmes for young people in the older age group focusing on the needs of young men, young mothers, preparation for employment, helplines, counselling projects, peer education projects, cultural, environmental and citizenship projects. Society benefits immeasurably from this complex mix of provision and from the input and commitment of a predominantly volunteer workforce.

A Flexible Curriculum Model

It is neither possible nor desirable to set out the content of a detailed curriculum to cover the breadth of provision indicated above. The curriculum offered by each youth group will, in fact, be shaped by a combination of factors such as the particular needs of the young people, their age range, the nature and size of the

group, the facilities and resources available and the knowledge and skills of all those involved in making the provision. Some organisations may already have a curriculum process and programme content arrived at in consultation with young people and may reasonably feel there would be little added value in using The Model proposed. Others will feel The Model provides a very useful rationale and framework around which to structure and manage their youth work practice. Realistically there will be a continuum of use and application of the Model, just as there is a continuum of level of provision within the Youth Service.

The Model can be simplified or elaborated, and whether the worker is a volunteer offering services one or two sessions per week or a professional youth worker working full-time in a project, it provides elements of structure and direction that can make youth work more purposeful and rewarding.

Core Values

The Youth Service Policy Review (DE 1999) lists a set of youth work values (para 5.2, see Appendix 1) and recommends that these should form the basis of all strategies and activities undertaken by the Youth Service. Deriving from these are values which inform the curriculum development process.

- young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to meet friends, make new acquaintances and have fun;
- youth work starts where young people are at, supports their right to make choices, to develop at their own pace and empowers them to voice their own ideas and attitudes;
- every young person is respected for their combination of qualities and capabilities;
- recognition of the contribution of staff/volunteers and of the potential through co-operation with others to develop and educate young people.

Whilst these values are important in the shaping of a youth work curriculum they must be seen within a broader framework. A major initiative (entitled JEDI - Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence), involving key partners in the youth work sector has sought to enable the Service to meet the challenges posed for those working with young people in contributing to the creation of a more equitable, diverse and democratic society. Equity, Diversity and Interdependence - EDI are more widely recognized as the underpinning values of a pluralist society.

EDI

EQUITY: is essentially about fairness. At one level it is about ensuring that people have equality of opportunity regardless of things such as their ethnic or community background, gender or sexuality, or

disability. However, it is important to note that equity is more than equality - treating everyone the same is not the same as treating everyone fairly. It is about ensuring that we do not directly or indirectly exclude people, and that we positively seek ways of including those who might otherwise feel excluded.

DIVERSITY: encourages respect for and expression of the range of identities represented by the youth of Northern Ireland, and those who work with them in the youth work sector.

It is about seeing difference as something that can enrich us, thus appreciating the value of different experiences, cultures and perspectives. It is crucial in youth work that the youth worker is a positive model in terms of attitudes and responses to difference.

INTERDEPENDENCE: recognises and explores ways in which our individual paths are intertwined. It is about building robust relationships and developing our understanding of how the actions of individuals and groups affect each other. It is about appreciating the value which can come from working inter-connectedly on the basis of respect and mutual trust.

Equity, Diversity and Interdependence permeate the values set out in the Policy Review document, and sit easily with preparing young people for Participation, testing Values and Beliefs and promoting Acceptance and Understanding. They are **CORE VALUES** against which each youth work agency, organisation or group should regularly test their policies, procedures and practice.

These values flow through and underpin the components of the recommended Model for Effective Practice (see Figure 1).

A Model for Effective Practice

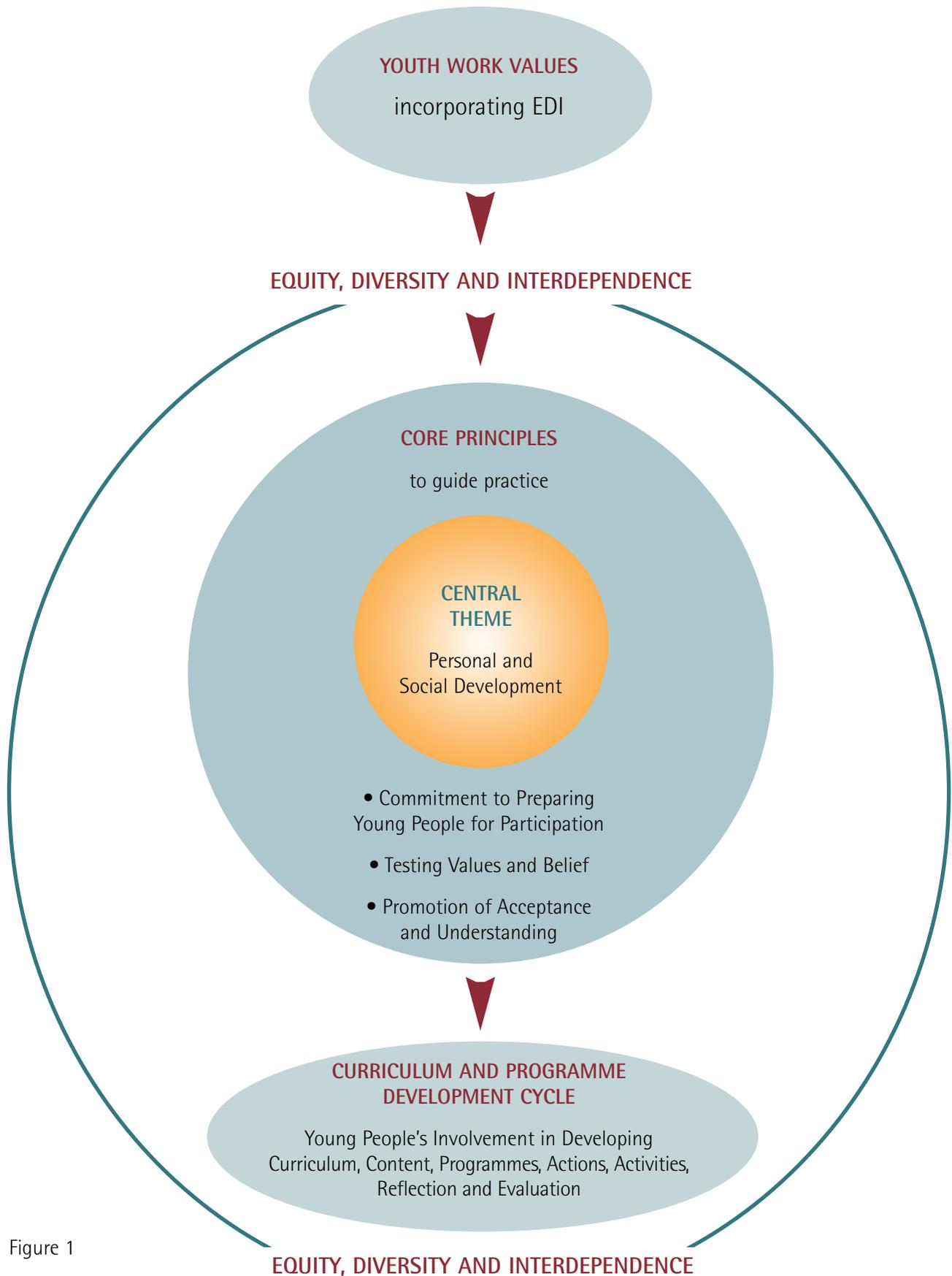


Figure 1

The Central Theme:

Personal and Social Development

Amongst the organisations that make up the Youth Service in Northern Ireland are many who have their own ethos and vision. They are included within the Youth Service family because at the centre of their work are activities to support, encourage and challenge young people to realise their potential. Their 'primary purpose' is therefore the personal and social development of children, young people and young adults (Policy Review, par 3.3).

Personal and social development is an expansive term which must be adapted to the constantly changing circumstances of young people. Cultural, economic and political changes challenge youth workers to respond with skilled interventions and carefully planned programmes to help young people to:

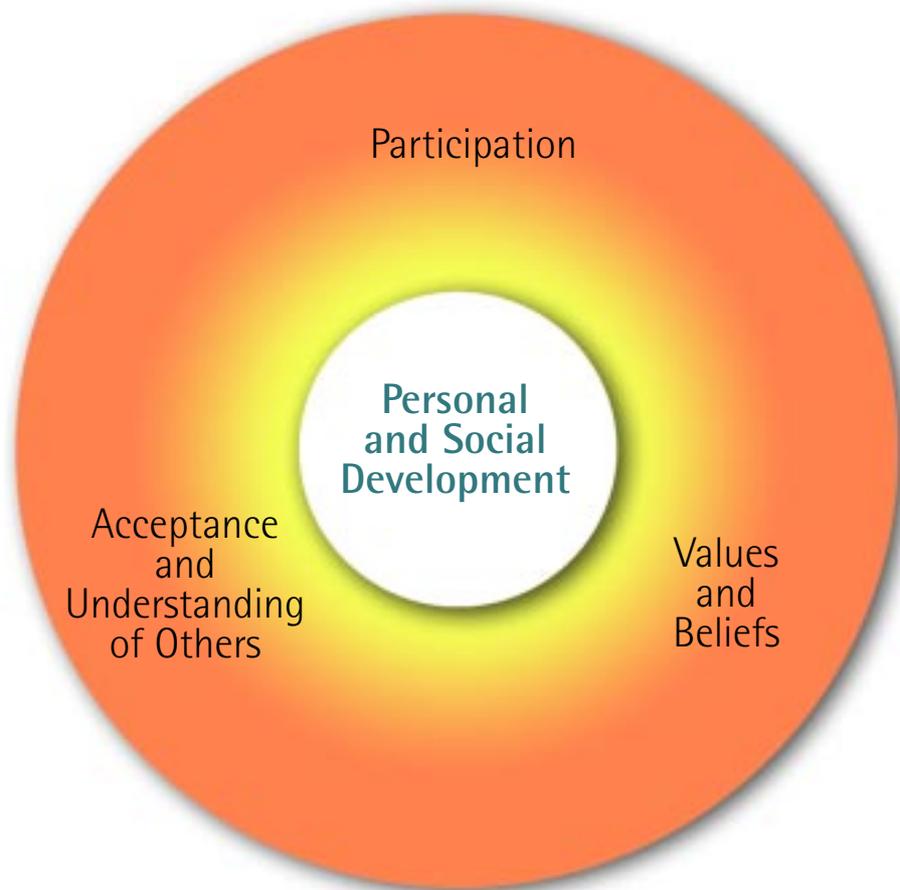
- experience enjoyment and achievement;
- sample activities and develop interests;
- build self-esteem and confidence;
- develop meaningful relationships;
- manage feelings and conflict;
- develop communication and social skills;
- clarify their personal attitudes, values and beliefs;
- develop their own identity and sense of independence;
- recognise, understand and respect difference;
- address inequalities;
- be involved in the community;
- acquire life skills and enhance their employment prospects;
- develop respect for others.

Personal and social development is about supporting young people to address inequalities which hinder their development, challenging them to be active and equal citizens within their community and enabling them to come to an awareness and understanding of the deeper structural, social and political dilemmas that underpin the labelling and exclusion of many young people.

In summary, it may be said that personal and social development is concerned with 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. On the strength of that relationship will hinge the young person's confidence and readiness to seek the help and advice they need.

Relationships with the youth worker are identified as a critical factor in young people's perceptions of youth groups (Benefits of the Youth Service, YCNI 1998). They value having access to youth workers who they trust and who they believe will provide advice, guidance and information to the best of their ability and are devoid of vested interest. Much of that trust is developed through conversation, the quality of the youth worker/young person engagement and dialogue. This element of skilled intervention cannot be over-stated in terms of the benefits for personal and social development.

Core Principles



Any curriculum has underlying principles. Those which underpin and permeate youth work include:

- i. commitment to preparing young people for **participation**;
- ii. testing **values and beliefs**
- iii. the promotion of **acceptance and understanding of others**;

These core principles underpin the personal and social development of young people.

The range of provision available calls for a flexible Youth Service curriculum which allows for diversification and permits practitioners to respond to the local and specific needs of the children and young people with whom they work. Whilst it is recommended that the three core principles are reflected in youth work, it is recognised that in some contexts other principles will be deemed to be important.

For example, organisations who work with people with disabilities may focus on promoting inclusion by building the capacity of young disabled people and developing awareness amongst non-disabled people.

For the purposes of this document each of the three core principles is dealt with separately, but they are inter-connected and they are enhanced by being considered in the light of the values of EDI.

Commitment to Preparing Young People for Participation

Participation is a key element of the youth work process, a way of thinking and working which facilitates collective decision-making by young people and youth workers and promotes personal and social development. It involves valuing children and young people as individuals able to articulate their needs and interests and to be actively involved in the design and delivery of their own projects. Participation is about young people not only taking part in activities but actually having a say in what is provided, how things are run and very often organising and running programmes themselves.

A fully participative approach will involve young people in management and having access to power. For this they will require preparation and ongoing support. Positive experiences of participation involving democratic involvement in decision-making within their own group can generate a confidence and a belief that young people can make a difference, and may encourage them to become actively involved in their local community and beyond. **Participation is an inclusive concept and in any youth group or unit all the members should have opportunities in line with their competence to take the initiative and share responsibilities in matters such as:**

- policy-making;
 - planning and implementing programmes;
 - the management and organisation of facilities;
- and
- decision-making on aspects of the finances of the unit.

Young people should also, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability be able to participate in the life of the unit on the basis of equity. In some instances additional support, encouragement and resources may be needed to facilitate participation on an equal basis.

The emphasis in youth work on the importance of the active and critical participation of young people is in keeping with the view that young people have rights as citizens. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, gives children the right to participate fully in how services are provided for them. The right of the young person to opt out of the participation process must also be respected.

Appendix 2 provides an account of a youth-led initiative

Testing Values and Beliefs

Values and beliefs tend to be learned from others including parents, teachers, peers and youth workers. These people play an important role in shaping the lives of young people by passing on a value and belief system. It is an important aspect of youth work to help young people explore and question the origins of their values and beliefs and to be attentive to the opinions and beliefs of others. Other people's values and beliefs may be difficult to accept, but learning to be empathetic to another's position can be a liberating process and the maturation and personal growth that ensues can make the effort involved worthwhile.

There may be some justification at times for shying away from those values and beliefs that are controversial but to omit informing about and discussing them with young people is to leave a wide gap in their educational experience and development. When dealing with issues, controversial or otherwise, strategies that allow young people to recognise bias, encourage them to examine alternative viewpoints and look for sources of evidence that are reliable should be adopted. This is particularly important in Northern Ireland where views are often entrenched and where community divisions have affected all aspects of life. It could be argued that the general perception of the 'two community strife' obscures any other conflict or prejudice. Discrimination and isolation are not confined to the 'two' traditions.

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. Natural disasters, human atrocities and personal tragedy can give rise to uncertainty, anxiety and despair in young people. They need opportunities to discuss and ask questions about their own personal life experiences and about the causes and effects of global events.

It is important to be aware of what young people are learning in regard to value systems through the formal school curriculum so that youth work programmes are complementary. It is anticipated that the citizenship curriculum, for example, will include opportunities to examine whether a globally accepted values base exists within the various human rights international charters, which outline the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups in democratic societies.

Appendix 3 provides a description of a project which challenges young people to explore their values and beliefs in the area of car crime.

The Promotion of Acceptance and Understanding of Others

The promotion of acceptance and understanding of others is a principle which is underpinned by EDI and involves enabling young people to respect and value themselves and others. It seeks the appreciation of the differences between and interdependence of people within society, one's own youth group, close community and beyond. It includes seeing cultural diversity as a positive thing from which everyone can all gain enrichment, and recognises the abilities, potential and rights of young people with disabilities. Recognising others as equal, different yet related to us, is not easy. It requires an understanding of the meaning of equity and a commitment through youth work to oppose sectarianism and any form of discrimination.

In the youth work setting key values of acceptance, understanding and empathy need to be cultivated so that prejudices and stereotyping do not get in the way of developing healthy relationships. Young people can be proactive agents of change within their families, among their peers and in the wider community where a climate of diversity is celebrated, interdependence cultivated and creative ways are found to establish equity.

One of the most powerful influences in encouraging young people to engage in potentially contentious work is the trust they have in the youth worker. It is important to work on building that trust, and to establish agreed and realistic ground rules. On a foundation of trust, programmes can be devised to help young people arrive at a better understanding of diversity in regard to beliefs, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnic background, culture and tradition, to challenge prejudice, and to pursue equality of opportunity for themselves and for others. This

spirit of challenge and the pursuit of fairness and justice have application both locally and globally.

Against this backdrop it must be realised that within Northern Ireland, youth work takes place within the context of a legacy of violence and communal strife, alongside the other issues that affect modern society. In effect it operates within a climate of diversity where the potential to perpetuate divisions exists. Any one young person is likely to reflect a range of identities both in terms of the categories mentioned earlier and in terms of their socio-economic background, interests and self-image. Investing time in getting to know the circumstances within the youth group and the local context in which the young people live and the pressures and influences they face determines where, when and how quickly or otherwise a worker can proceed.

Appendix 4 contains a report on a joint initiative aimed at creating a more inclusive environment for working with young people.

Application

These are the **values, central theme and three core principles** around which it is recommended youth work should be planned, implemented and evaluated. They form the foundation of a youth work curriculum which can be simplified or elaborated.

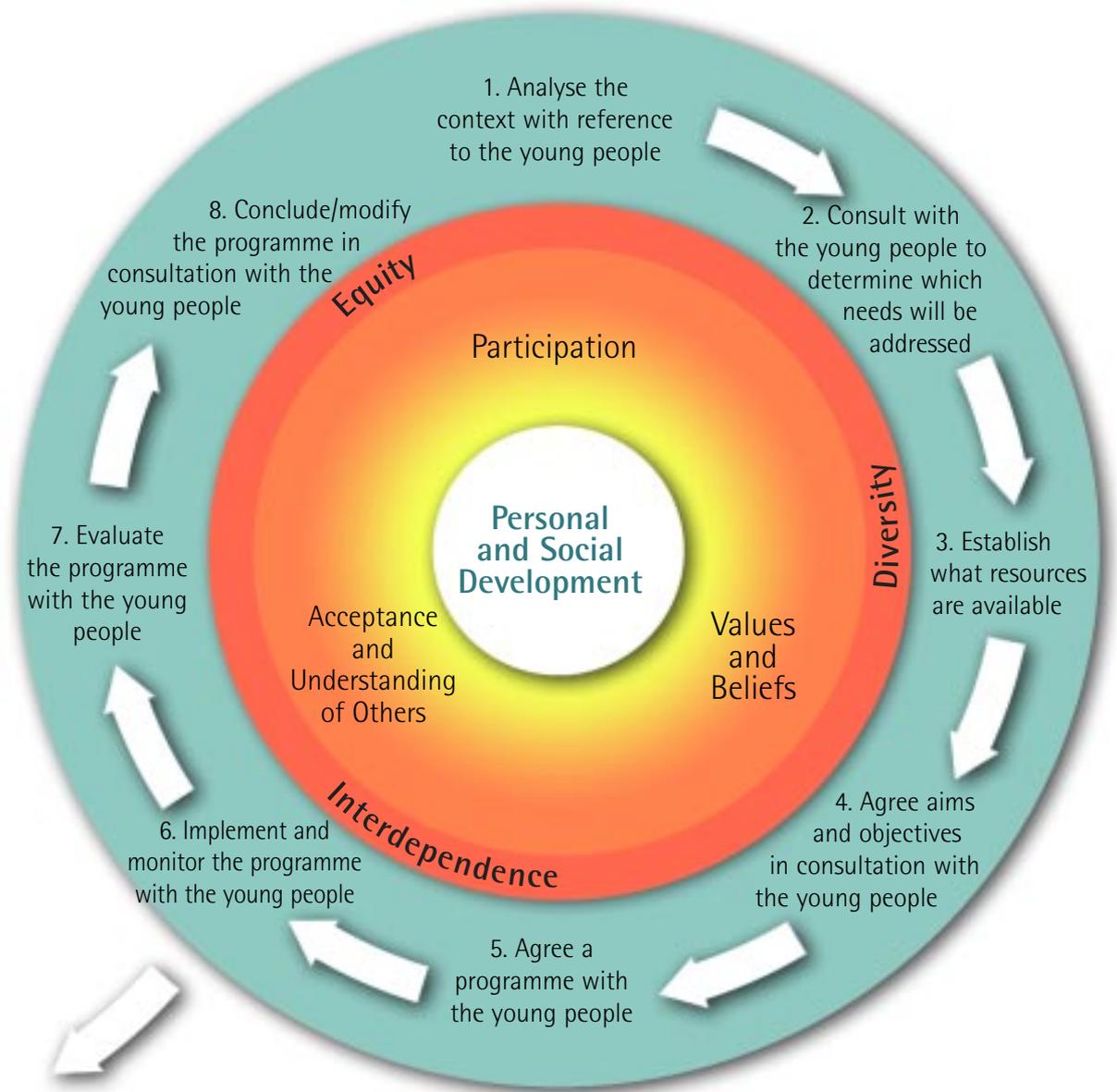
For example, a one night per week club might decide to place particular emphasis on progressing one principle. If the principle decided upon was participation the club might set as a goal: to get young people to understand that they should take responsibility for their own actions. Subsequent reflection and evaluation can assess to what extent the goal was achieved. Another project could be operating on a full-time basis with professional staff and engaging young people in a programme of analysis and action around a range of social issues. This could require careful attention to all the elements of the Model, a knowledge of social structures and policy, high levels of youth work skill and a deep understanding of educational/youth work theory and methodology.

A curriculum and programme development cycle is set out overleaf in diagrammatic form. The activities and experiences offered should enable young people to:

- become involved in the life and work of the group, with increasing opportunities to take responsibility and to participate in, and contribute to, the life of their local and wider communities;
- work as members of groups; build meaningful and comfortable relationships with their peers and others; be accepting, understanding, respectful and tolerant, when living and engaging with others, and recognise the need to manage feelings and conflict;
- explore and clarify their values, test their beliefs and examine moral and spiritual issues in an accepting and non-threatening context.

Assessment and evaluation of the programmes and outcomes of youth work need to be based on the extent to which these core principles are progressed through a wide range of high quality learning experiences and so promote the personal and social development of young people.

Curriculum and Programme Development Cycle



The above is a proposed needs-based curriculum cycle underpinned by the central theme and three core principles. Illustrated as a cycle involving analysis, experience, observation, reflection and action, and informed by active and critical reflection of young people, it can be used to plan and deliver a specific project, issue-based initiative or the overall work of a unit.

The above cycle promotes consideration of the environment in which young people are growing up, their identified needs, their participation in a process in meeting their own needs, and the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of programmes.

The following pages outline the steps in more detail. The steps are to be viewed as sequential but are not exclusive of one another.

1. Analyse the context with reference to the young people

Youth work takes place in a wide variety of settings, each having limitations and possibilities. A possible starting point for a programme, the work of a unit or a project may necessitate research into the background of the young people it hopes to serve. Such research may be informed from previous surveys or data collected by other agencies or may be carried out by the individual worker. Its aim is to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the young people and the environments in which they live. It may on occasion be influenced by Government policy such as New Targeting Social Need.

The knowledge gained can be further enhanced by creating working relationships with other agencies, consulting with colleagues, identifying and engaging with potential target groups of young people, establishing suitable working environments, checking funding and resource implications.

In short this stage is about gaining a knowledge and insight of the context in which any given work will take place. (This reconnaissance stage is covered in the new Introduction to Youth Work - accredited by OCN - see Learning Outcome 7).

2. Consult with the young people to determine which needs will be addressed

This cycle proposes that at the centre of effective youth work is an analysis of young people's needs and issues that effect their personal and social development. Needs may arise from personality, gender, race, family background, socio-economic factors amongst others, as well as any individual's developmental stage. Although part of this identification of needs will have commenced during research this stage is concerned with

taking the process a step further through consultation with young people. Care will have to be taken to be inclusive of the needs of all young people rather than just the most articulate and assertive. This may involve facilitating young people in expressing their needs. There may also be occasions where young people research their own needs and be facilitated to respond accordingly by devising programmes.

3. Establish what resources are available

Part of this step will have been addressed in Stage one, however, following consultation with the young people and prior to agreeing a programme, an assessment of cost and identifying realistic and available resources is required. At this stage personnel who may be of assistance in delivering a project should also be considered. It may be that an agency, an individual, a young person or group of young people have particular expertise and play a key part in delivery.

4. Agree aims and objectives in consultation with the young people

Each programme, project or work of a unit should have clear aims and objectives appropriate to the needs to be addressed and be established in consultation with the young people, clearly reflecting the 'central theme and core principles'. In the process of devising these aims and objectives (including timescale), the more general aims, objectives and ethos of their respective organisation should be considered. This stage should also take into account the methods of monitoring and evaluation and when they will take place.

5. Agree a programme with the young people

Involving young people in the planning of programmes entails different approaches for the various age groups, levels of maturity and interest. The most effective involvement occurs when young people and youth workers work together to pool ideas, discuss options and arrive at proposals for programme(s) that are feasible. Through this process they will also assume responsibility for their individual and collective contributions to the programme. In addition, they need to anticipate problems or difficulties which may arise at the implementation stage, such as securing sufficient resources, Child Protection issues or health and safety requirements to be met.

6. Implement and monitor the programme with the young people

The programme may be broken down into sessions or elements that are manageable in regard to delivery. Young people are encouraged to be involved at all stages in implementing the programme and arrangements are made for reflection and discussion with the young people about the programme and how it is working in practice. On occasion the process may need to take account of unforeseen developments and move in a direction not originally planned whilst still paying regard to aims and objectives that have been agreed. Changes should be negotiated with the young people and recordings should be kept of key outcomes of the engagement between youth worker and young people, including their feedback and reflections.

7. Evaluate the programme with the young people

Evaluation takes place at the end of the designated period, or may have to take place

earlier taking account of the recordings and monitoring of the previous step. It is used to determine the extent to which the agreed aims and objectives have been realised, the degree to which the central theme and core principles have been promoted and how efficiently and effectively the available resources have been deployed in implementing the programme. As in planning, implementing and monitoring, the young person's involvement in evaluation is necessary.

8. Conclude/modify the programme in consultation with the young people

At step number four, consideration will have been given to the duration of the project or programme. In light of this time scale and the ongoing monitoring a conclusion will be made to the project. Any programme will need to address the issue of closure and the inherent issues that arise out of the termination of a process. The recorded learning from this stage could prove to be a valuable resource for future work.

Use of the cycle above should help youth workers to set and monitor youth work goals, implement action steps, report on progress or lack of progress and move on. A strength of this process is that there are no prescribed outcomes other than those agreed in consultation with the participants. If the outcomes fall short of expectations then the cyclical nature of the strategy brings the reflective and evaluative process into play to find out what has happened. When the process is genuinely participative the outcomes will be closely matched to the needs of the young people.

(The Certificate for Part-time Youth Workers - OCR, deals fully with the Curriculum and Programme Development Model in Unit 2: Plan and Deliver a Youth Work Programme Relevant to the Needs of an Identified Group of Young People).

Programme Areas

The importance of conversation, dialogue and interaction between youth workers and young people is underlined in the section entitled Central Theme: Personal and Social Development. In many instances this is the sole, but nonetheless important skill that the youth worker can employ to build relationships with young people based around reciprocity. Given sufficient time the youth worker can, through relationships alone, help young people to achieve considerable growth and development.

However, youth workers tend to use a varied range of methods or activities in their work, including:

- recreational and sporting activities and outdoor pursuits
- creative, artistic and cultural programmes and activities
- issue-based programmes, e.g., environmental projects, development education, active citizenship programmes
- faith and spiritual development programmes
- programmes for specific groups, e.g., young mothers, young people with disabilities, unemployed young people
- programmes concerned with welfare and well-being, e.g., health promotion, relationships and sexuality, advice and counselling.

Guidance in relation to developing some of these programme areas were included in the 1997 document:

- Health Education
- Information, Guidance and Counselling
- Testing Values and Beliefs
- Creative Arts
- Outdoor Education
- Sport and Recreation
- Widening Horizons
- Community Involvement
- Community Relations
- Political Awareness and Active Citizenship
- Development Education
- Environmental Awareness
- Information Technology

Programme areas will inevitably be subject to change in response to the needs and issues that are current. Guidance materials have been produced for Health Promotion, and the JEDI document - *"Reflection in Practice: Guidelines for embedding EDI principles in youth work practice"* builds on the Community Relations Guidelines (YCNI) published in 1994. Other curriculum materials will be produced and disseminated through the Curriculum Development Unit.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is central to any model of good youth work practice, and should be an integral part of any unit or organisation working to improve the personal and social development of young people. In the youth work context, self - evaluation, and the search for continuous improvement, are at the heart of the process of monitoring and evaluation.

Clearly defined aims, objectives and methodology set out before any work begins, are crucial to effective monitoring and evaluation. Those who work with, or on behalf of young people, need, for example, to take a systematic and critical approach to assessing the quality of the experiences they have provided for those young people. They need to be able to ascertain the learning and personal growth achieved by the young people as a result of their youth work experiences.

Monitoring is about checking progress on an on-going basis, and noting, for example, how programmes are developing. This can enable any necessary adjustments to be made at appropriate times.

Evaluation is also about tracking quality, effectiveness and progression, but generally it concentrates on judging 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 outcomes for the young people;
- The effectiveness and efficiency of the resources deployed;
- What should be done differently, and what should remain unchanged.

Appendix 1

(Taken from: A Youth Service for a New Millennium: Youth Service Policy Review, May 1999)

Mission Statement

5.1 The core values and emphasis described below have led the Review Group to define a Mission Statement for the Youth Service, as follows:

To ensure opportunities for children, young people and young adults to gain for themselves knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals.

Values

5.2 It is the view of the Review Group that these values should include the following:

- a focus on young people;
- work with an educational purpose in which young people are partners in a learning exchange process;
- relationships between young people and adult workers remain voluntary;
- co-operation with others to develop and educate young people;
- a commitment to work effectively with those young people in need of help to realise their full potential;
- open and equal access to all;
- addressing society's expectations about young people;
- actively encouraging participation of young people;
- accountability and cost effectiveness;

- recognition of the contribution of staff/volunteers as a key/valuable resource; and
- delivery of progressive personal development and social education for young people.

Objectives for Youth Work

5.4 The Review Group has refined its definition of objectives outlined in 'Initial Considerations' following further deliberation and consultation. In defining a set of objectives for Youth Work, the Review Group has been conscious of the need to relate its recommendations to the particular circumstances of each age group. With this consideration in mind, the objectives of Youth Work should be as follows:

- to encourage personal development and social education, shaped in part by young people, based on learning from experiences in safe and enjoyable environments;
- to promote health and well-being at all stages of development;
- to build positive self-esteem, self-awareness and self-acceptance as a support to young people in making informed life decisions;
- to promote respect for individual differences and an acceptance of the individual's right to personal choice;
- to encourage and give opportunities for involvement in initiating, planning, management and evaluation of youth work, at all levels and in all areas;
- to encourage understanding of diverse groups in society and the involvement of young people in peace building and conflict transformation; and
- to challenge young people to develop their role as active citizens and to identify issues at personal, local and global levels and create strategies for action.

Appendix 2

Participation: An account of a youth-led initiative.

The voice and beliefs of staff, volunteers and members of an inner city youth centre were the catalyst for a unique youth led project established five years ago. The strong ethos of self-help, community spirit and resourcefulness fuelled research into the needs of the young people in the area. This was carried out by a core group of workers and young people, all of whom were under the age of twenty-five years. The outcomes reinforced and supported the notion of a youth led initiative. This basis of identifying needs is a process that has continued to underpin the development of the work in the project.

The initial belief system carries throughout the organisation and has held the project together during the difficult stages when resources were scarce. Participation was born through the innovation, motivation, enthusiasm and belief of the core group of young people through its integration into every aspect of the project's life. From the outset strategies were put in place to facilitate participation and active decision-making. For example, a steering group was established to oversee the management of the project and undertake negotiations to secure premises, form a constitution, seek charitable status and fund raise. Furthermore, the steering group consists of local young people 15-25 years who meet on a monthly basis to plan, monitor and evaluate progress. They have been involved in all aspects of the project from interviewing job applicants, designing of refurbishing their premises to volunteering opportunities at various levels, reflective of the success of participative model of youth work.

The capacity of these young people to show leadership, initiate projects and work as team members has been greatly enhanced by their participation in the project. For example, although the project now employs some eleven members of staff, whose roles are to 'facilitate and provide the voice of experience and support' to the young people in their own roles, a group of young people from the centre undertook a piece of action

research and identified a need to respond to young mothers in the area. They put together a project proposal, applied for and were successful in securing £14,000 to undertake the project. They were fully responsible for acquiring the resources, facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the programme itself as well as accounting for the money acquired.

Such cases of responsibility and participation have led to more fulfilled young people as well as enabling them to become active leaders within the club. This has enhanced the development of the whole ethos and further work of the project. Consequently youth achievement awards, peer led education projects, a drop-in facility and opportunities for volunteering and exchange programmes amongst others are in operation. Many of the young people engaging in the projects offered from the centre enter into a process of giving back whereby they go on to train and act as volunteers.

A current initiative is the Youth Forum. This forum, in its very early stages of development, has a brief to provide a service to (3 - 4,000) young people in a wide geographical area taking in two distinctive neighbourhoods. This group, (aged 18-25 years) see themselves as providing for the needs of young people through centre-based work, outreach and detached work. They have a very broad view of how to respond to need and intend to make a special effort to provide a service that is in keeping with the needs and wishes of the young people they hope to serve.

These initial stages of group meetings, research projects, recreational and educational trips provide the forum with opportunities to socialize. They see this process providing them with opportunities to get to know their own skills, strengths and weaknesses plus those of the other members, as well as building confidence.

The young people see the forum as a 'platform for young people to get their voices heard and as a support for themselves in order to be better placed to respond'. To this end, the initial and 'crucial' task they set themselves, is to 'find out what the real issues are' and to 'get everyone's point of view' through informal chat as well as using formalised questionnaires. The young people have a strong desire that all youth facilities in their area be used to their full potential, they have little time for token gestures of involving young people.

For some of them the experience of being in Senior Member Committees or Management Committees had been less than satisfactory. They were consulted, however control remained with the organisation or adult management. During these experiences they rarely felt valued or that their contributions were acted upon to influence policy or practice.

The youth forum would see the following as useful if not necessary guidelines for active youth participation...

- "Listen to the young people. Ask young people what are their interests and their needs."
- "Give real responsibilities." Some members of this forum had the experience of seeking funding to the tune of £14,000 and administered it in providing services for a young mothers group.
- "Take risks." Hand over control- control of seeking, spending and reporting on finances.
- Check and get to know the potential of the young people in the area.
- "Give ownership of any given project to the young people." Instil a sense of pride and respect in property and each other.

- As adults make real commitment in relationships with young people. 'Don't ask for opinions and ideas and then walk away'.
- Help create and build self-esteem and self-confidence thus leading to feelings of worth and pride in who they are and what they can offer.
- 'Talking at the level of young people, that can be patronising'. Be genuine and treat with respect, building trust.

The above gives a description of young peoples' active participation. They engage in a process of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This process seeks to keep them actively involved.

Appendix 3

Testing values and beliefs: an approach to tackling car crime.

A joint statutory-community response to the issue of car theft in an urban area of disadvantage fostered the development of a unique partnership project, targeting young people actively involved in and those vulnerable to involvement in car theft related crime. This project is essentially a participative model of practice and challenges young people to explore their values and beliefs in the area of car crime. For example, young people may be asked to identify, in their opinion, "who are the victims of car crime?" Alternatively, they may be invited to take part in a values continuum where they are asked to respond to statements by placing themselves on an imaginary line between agree and disagree and consider their reasons for their decision.

Car theft as a 'social' issue effects almost every major city in the developing world and is nothing unique to Belfast or indeed West Belfast, although the community has endured and suffered a particularly long and tragic history in relation to this activity. Car crime is essentially a social problem, perpetrated mainly, although not exclusively by groups of adolescents who live in and are part of the communities most affected by the problem. Acknowledging the 'social' nature of this issue helps in attempting to build solutions to address the problem because it requires a response within a 'social' context. Fundamental to this context is recognising that young people learn socially and develop a belief and value system at a point in time that supports and justifies their decision making process that in turn translates into personal choices and modes of behaviour. For example, the young people actually believe that car crime is a victimless crime. They believe that car owners are recompensed through their insurance; therefore they don't view their behaviour as harmful.

The workers in the project use group dynamics and prompts to draw reactions from the participants in the project. A typical exercise the young people are asked to engage in provides them with a photograph of a burnt out car. Responses offered

by the young people include: *'just a scrappy old fiesta'*, *'it's a scrapper anyway'*, *'done them a favour'*, *'so that's what you do with them'*. These responses are 'uncritical' beliefs and values. Using the group setting these distorted beliefs are drawn out. Techniques used include, inviting the group to consider the victim as a member of their family, e.g. their father. They are asked to identify the many occasions their father may use his car on a typical day and consider the impact of car theft for their father and the consequences it would hold for him, for example, increased expense in bus / taxi fares to get to work or do shopping, new arrangements to pick younger brothers or sisters from school, missing appointments, the inherent difficulties if the car has been under hire purchase. Their youth sub-culture supports their behaviour; their belief that their behaviour has no consequences is challenged.

Central to the ethos of the project is the principle of working with young people targeting and changing 'thinking' to focus and change 'behaviour'. Practically, the objective is not on judging or condemning young people, but rather on creating a non-threatening environment and entering into a process that encourages participants to explore, examine, review and reflect upon the beliefs and values they hold in relation to the issue of car theft. That is, on beginning the programme, the young people are 'uncritical' thinkers, they think only of themselves and they do not have the skills of thinking ahead. They need to develop consequential thinking skills. The essential aspects of this 'journey' (involvement in the programme) are to emphasise creating an awareness and empathy for victims and facilitate an exploration of the consequences of actions for those involved and for the wider community. The project workers stimulate this process by using cards containing details of 'real' situations that are familiar to the young people and facilitate the process for developing recognition of excuses, triggers, risk factors and the potential consequences for all if they engage in car crime.

This entire process is dependent upon the risk levels, needs and developmental age of the young people involved. For example, the 'school based programme' assumes no active involvement in car theft by participants, but, does assume that the young people are vulnerable to involvement due to their exposure to the sub-cultural influences and the possible approval and acceptance of dubious, uncritical beliefs, values and myths that seek to justify this type of behaviour. A typical statement often articulated by those involved in car theft illustrates the pattern of thinking that the project targets for change, "*...sure no was hurt and the insurance money more than covered the cost of the trashed car. There are no victims. It was only a bit of crack. What's the big deal?*" Part of the work of the project is taking statements such as the above and assisting young people to work through the 'real life' implications. Some young people may well need to take part in the process a number of times in order to process the development of consequential thinking.

Regardless of the setting the main purpose of the project is creating working environments using the above approaches to engage young people on the issue of car theft. This is also very much the function of the 'informal educator' and the contribution made to these endeavours by Youth Service is yet another illustration of how, in a very practical way, the project applies core curriculum principles, such as the development and testing of values and beliefs to guide and focus their work. Inherently the work is challenging, yet a real example of promoting the personal and social development of young people and in particular, sections of young people marginalised in under resourced communities of greater social need.

Appendix 4

Acceptance and Understanding of Others: A joint initiative to help promote and support inclusion

Throughout childhood and adolescence, the majority of the population does not have contact with people with disabilities. Relatively few disabled children attend mainstream schools or are members of youth organisations. Many social venues are still inaccessible. This lack of contact sustains the belief that disabled people are "different", that they do not have the same aims in life as their non-disabled peers, and the common stereotypes about disability are not challenged.

Many disability organisations provide services solely for disabled people, and whilst they are of great value, they also tend to perpetuate segregation.

Children and young people with disabilities are very often marginalized. The main barriers to disabled individuals being fully participating citizens often will be the negative (and sometimes hostile) attitudes they encounter. Educational and social segregation means that these negative attitudes are rarely challenged.

Against this background two agencies came together to pilot some work with a belief that integrated and inclusive youth provision can make a vital contribution to the breaking down of barriers between young people with and without disabilities. One of the providers was from the mainstream Statutory Youth Service: the other a voluntary organisation with an ethos of providing opportunities for inclusion of both physically disabled and non-disabled people.

This process involved the planning and implementing of integrated activity days, residential, disability awareness training for leaders and members and training workshops for parents and members of management committees. Residential were seen as one of the most effective ways to address barriers where participants work and socialise together and participate in challenging fun-filled interactive activities in an inclusive setting.

Training sessions were delivered for leaders to brief them about the issues involved in working with young people with disabilities. A comprehensive programme of members' awareness raising was also delivered in the pilot locations.

The whole pilot programme was evaluated at a weekend Residential Conference where key learning outcomes were identified and future strategies agreed. During the programme leaders were able to share their existing knowledge and experiences with regard to inclusive youth work environments. They were able to discuss concerns and anxieties in a supportive environment. At the end of the first phase it was clear that leaders had increased their knowledge and understanding of integrated programme planning. They also displayed an increased confidence with regard to working in an integrated setting.

As an aid to this working in an integrated setting the following are provided as possible guides to good practice when attempting to create an environment where acceptance, inclusion and understanding of others is fostered:

- Focus on the young person first not whether they have or have not a disability
- Treat all young people with respect and dignity
- Tailor programmes to meet young people's needs
- Recognise and develop the abilities and potential of young people with disabilities
- Provide opportunities for young people to influence the design and delivery of the project which take account of any disability related difficulties in understanding or exercising choice
- Openly address issues that directly impact on the young people with or without disabilities
- Promote and develop good relationships with parent, guardian or carer of the young people involved.
- As leaders, be open to learning from experience as well as providing opportunities for the young people to learn.

Through the awareness training members increased their understanding of young people with and without disability. During the pilot programme young people were able to break down the barriers that existed between themselves and their disabled peers.

The experience and learning of the pilot programme can be shared and replicated in other settings.



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See also Section 2 page 32 for further references and suggested reading

Section 2

Background and Developments



SECTION 2

Background and Developments

CHANGES SINCE 1997 WHICH IMPACT ON THE YOUTH WORK CURRICULUM

The intervening period since the youth work curriculum was last revisited have seen historic developments in Northern Ireland. The Belfast Agreement and subsequent political devolution had notable impact on the life of all in Northern Ireland, particularly young people. A raft of legislation, much of it stemming from the Agreement itself, has begun to reshape the design and direction of public sector policies.

The education sector has been undergoing change, under the guidance of the Education Executive, with the review of the school curriculum and proposed reforms to post-primary selection. The Youth Service itself has also completed its policy review, and the publication of "A Youth Service for a New Millennium" in 1999 includes revised objectives and priorities for the Service, and proposals for further development. These objectives and priorities impinge on the contents of this publication.

Despite the historic political developments within Northern Ireland, evidence points to little change in some of the fundamental issues which impact on the lives of many children and young people. Levels of child poverty in Northern Ireland remain the highest within the UK, and the range of indicators commonly used to quantify social exclusion would suggest little sign of improvement. Indeed, in the area of health inequalities, the gap between rich and poor has been widening faster and further than in the rest of the UK (NI Yearbook 2002). The extent, causes and ramifications of social deprivation remain, therefore, matters of pressing concern to those working with children and young people.

Despite the faltering political peace process, sectarianism remains endemic within society in Northern Ireland. Sectarian attacks in interface areas have brought about the extension of 'peace lines', certain schools have become the focus for sectarian protests, and the late 1990s also witnessed increasing displacement of families.

Specific localities and local communities within Northern Ireland therefore have borne the brunt of sustained sectarianism. On a broader scale, a recent survey of over 6000 young people from post primary schools found that just over a fifth think the area in which they live is unsafe, with reasons cited being gangs, vandals, and sectarian name-calling. Around a third felt they are likely to be subjected to name calling because of their religion, and just over a fifth felt they are likely to be a victim of assault because of their religion (Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes, NISRA, 2001).

There is also increasing recognition of the extent and impact of other forms of prejudice, particularly racism, and crime statistics indicate an increase in racially motivated attacks (Connolly, P and Keenan, M, "Racial Attitudes and Prejudice in Northern Ireland", 2000).

Current Trends

An analysis of survey data and government statistics relating to children and young people indicates some overall trends suggesting little change over the past five years. (Sources: "Barometer 2001", YCNI; "Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey", NISRA, 2001). For example, there has been:

- a slight decrease in the number of teenage parents;
- little change in the overall proportion of underage drinkers over the past decade;
- no overall significant changes in underage smoking rates over the past five years, but this masks an increase amongst teenage girls;
- a slight rise in drug use among young people as a whole, with signs that drug use is disproportionately increasing amongst girls.

However, general statistics can be misleading in that they mask the numerous 'hot spots' around Northern Ireland; for example where youth unemployment may run to 80% (as opposed to a Northern Ireland youth unemployment rate of around 11%), where drug abuse and addiction have dramatically increased, where there have been 'clusters' of teen pregnancies, etc. Some youth workers are reporting having to deal with unacceptable behaviour from children and young people and the age is evidently getting steadily lower. A wide-scale survey of young people in 2000 found that just under half have been victims of bullying. There has been a marked increase in the number of children and young people making contact with counselling services, but increases in the incidents of deaths of young people by suicide is worrying for youth workers, other caring professionals and the community at large.

Legislative and Policy Developments

Arguably, the needs of children and young people have taken more of a centre stage within Northern Ireland politics since the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly. This followed the ratification (Dec 1991) by the UK government of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention paved the way for legislation and codes of practice for youth work among other professions that puts the rights and needs of young people at the centre of provision. Thus international standards in protecting children rights are now protected in law for Northern Ireland

The Programme for Government takes this further and looks forward to a peaceful, cohesive, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the "achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights for all" (*Northern Ireland Executive (2001) Draft Programme for Government*). A draft Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland has been devised. This draft Bill includes a section specifically referring to the rights of young people under 18. Significantly, the draft Bill states: "The State undertakes to make the rights of children widely known and accessible to all. To this end, the State undertakes to include human rights on the school, Youth Service, and training curricula . . ." (*"Making a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland", pp 126*). Children and young people need help to make sense of the world and their place within it. Sufficient knowledge of their rights and of the rights of others will be needed by young people as a basis on which to build key values such as respect for others.

Further developments are the establishment of the Children Fund, the decision to appoint a Children's Commissioner, the intention by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to devise a Children and Young Person's Strategy for Northern Ireland, and the establishment, in

early 2002, of a Children and Young People's Unit within OFMDFM, reflect that children and young people's issues are high on the political agenda. Early indications are that there will be a consistent focus on children's and young people's rights, and their involvement in decisions that affect them.

So too, the *Northern Ireland Act* has proven to be a significant outworking of the Belfast Agreement, and Section 75 of the Act in particular has ramifications for young people. Even prior to the Act there had been a marked increase in the number of public bodies who were attempting to engage with young people, either through consultative events or by establishing reference groups of young people. The Act, which now obligates public bodies to consult with certain groups - including young people - has accelerated this trend. The implications for young people are varied: those who have the motivation, knowledge and skills to engage with public bodies have a greater range of opportunities to do so; those who do not have the skills are less likely to play a meaningful role. This points to the need for civic or citizenship education and highlights the need for the core principle of participation to remain a key element within the Model.

Section 75 of the NI Act (1998) requires public authorities to appraise key policies to ensure they do not adversely impact on certain groups within society. Whilst this obligation is required only from public bodies (such as the Education and Library Boards, Department of Education, etc) there is inevitably an indirect obligation placed on statutory and voluntary groups in receipt of public funds via their organisations to ensure that policies and practices are anti-discriminatory.

Some young people highlighted under Section 75 and New TSN are currently included within the Youth Service but their participation is not encouraged in a planned and comprehensive way. Young people with disabilities, for instance, can successfully participate in mainstream provision but may require additional supports and encouragement, or recruitment by proactive outreach. Preparation for independence is important for all young people, but young people with disabilities can face additional barriers in making the transition to adulthood. Youth workers are uniquely well placed to support and assist young people in overcoming those barriers.

The Youth Service Policy Review (May 2000) has a direct bearing on this re-launch and the updating of the youth work curriculum framework. It outlines a new set of objectives for the Service and logic would dictate that an updated curriculum should harmonise with these objectives. Also highlighted in the Policy Review are priority areas for development in the Service. These relate to Needs, Age Range and areas of work devolved to Implementation Panels, (see Youth Service Policy Review, May 2000, pp 47-49). Some of the work of the Panels has been subsumed by other key initiatives, e.g., the Community Relations Policy Panel by JEDI. In as far as it is possible the updated curriculum model synchronises with the broad intentions and recommendations of the Review.

Proposed new legislation is underway to bring standards in Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK in terms of disability discrimination. This will include strengthening the rights of children with special educational needs to be integrated into mainstream education, and introducing a range of requirements to ensure disabled children and young people are not unfavourably treated in educational

establishments. It is expected that the Disability Discrimination Act will come into force in Northern Ireland in 2004.

Taken in combination, the introduction of equality legislation, of the Human Rights Act, the forthcoming Bill of Rights, Disability Discrimination Act and relevant developments within the formal education sector, a raft of challenges are presented to Youth Service.

Other developments relate directly to curriculum programme areas and these include:

- the DHSS Health of the Nation Strategy
- Drugs and Alcohol - Regional Action Plan
- the Youth Arts Strategy
- rapid expansion in technological innovation
- Greater awareness of global issues including care for the environment.
- The DE proposed curriculum changes for schools

All of these will impact upon curriculum development and the Youth Sector is now better placed to respond through its own recently established Curriculum Development Unit.

The aim of this Unit is to enhance and support curriculum development within the Youth Service. It is the intention to provide a service that will assist delivery of practice across all sections of provision. A key role for the Unit is to be aware of developments within the field and assist all providers with curriculum resources in line with the needs of young people and the role of the youth worker. It will be important to be aware of developments within the formal sector in order to inform, complement and develop practice within the informal and non-formal arenas.

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See also Section 1 for further references and suggested reading



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