

Fergal Barr – Summary of Career from June 1987 – March 2024

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In short - Parent, Grandparent, Youth Worker, Facilitator, Trainer, Airbnb Host, Landlord, sometimes-suffering Liverpool Supporter, Tea Drinker, avid Book Reader, Humour and Music Lover, Law Changer, and Occasional Author.

**Background**

**Third-Level Qualifications:** Masters in Education and Contemporary Society (UUC, 2006); BA in Cross-Cultural Facilitation and Mediation in Divided Societies (MediationNI, 2012) ; Adv Dip in Management (UUJ, 2004) & Dip HE in Community Youth Work (UUC, 1995); Supervising Practice in Community and Voluntary Settings (Module), (UUM, 2015);

**Areas of Work:** Youth Information, Education Welfare, Community Relations, Volunteering, Peace & Reconciliation; Centre Based-Street-Participation-Rural-based Youth Work; Family Support; Facilitation (local-international), Consultation, Evaluation, and research; YOUTH/Youth in Action/Erasmus+; Social Justice, Community Development and Shared Education.

**Previous Employers: (Months in brackets)** Western Education & Library Board Youth Service (33), NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for Care and Resettlement of Offenders) (50) St. Columb’s Park House (18), Eglinton Youth Club (6), Off the Streets Community Youth Initiative (53), NI Youth Forum (3), The Inside Out Programme (85), CYPNI (Clubs for Young People NI), EXTERN (12), Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (5), & Education Authority (24).

**Freelance Work:** Momentum World, British Council, Ecorys, Leargas, Co-operation North/Ireland, The Warrington Project, NUS/USI, Anna-Lindh Foundation, NI Youth Forum, Youth Council for NI, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Viennese Association of Youth Clubs & ELT (Austria), Klick e.V. (Germany) and YouthArt (Turkey), South Bank University, Coleraine Youth Forum, Public Achievement, University of Ulster, NEELB Curriculum Development Unit.

**What I bring to ‘The Job’**

A **belief** in what we’re doing; **confidence & competence** to complete task(s); **agreeableness** that allows me to work smoothly with my colleagues; **perseverance** during difficulties & challenges that arise; **resilience and strength of character** to keep going against trying circumstances; **leadership & reassurance** when things go a bit astray; **imagination & creativity** to help illuminate particular issues and to respond to problems that arise; **critical thinking & reflection** to ensure we ‘are on the mark’; **openness & willingness** to listen to feedback and respond accordingly; and most importantly (in my humble opinion); a great **sense of humour** that brings perspective, maintains group spirit and cohesion and makes the experience much more enjoyable, fun and memorable; and, I always do this against a **wonderful soundtrack** that supports the learning process.

**Experience**

**Organisational Management:** Youth Service Manager with Ballymun Regional Youth Resources (July-Nov 2019); Co-ordinator of The Inside Out Programme (Rural Youth Work), Claudy, 2006-13; Project Director with Off the Streets Community Youth Initiative (Detached/Street Work), Derry, 2002-06; Development Officer, Eglinton Youth Club, Eglinton, 99-00; Co-ordinator of Foyle Youth Institute (Young Leaders Programme), Derry, 1999 - 2005

**Staff Management:** 41 Full/Part-time staff (including 4 managers) at BRYR (2019) 15 full-time staff (2 Assistant Managers, 12 Key Workers & 1 Project Worker) for Extern (2018); 2 full & 1 part-time staff for The Inside Out Programme (2006-11); 12 full & Part-time Staff at Off the Streets 2002-06; 2 full-time seconded employees & Apprentice Worker at NIACRO (96-98); Internal and External supervision of four university students (one from overseas) at varying times

**Project Management:** includes: SEUPB-funded **Third Space** Project for Extern (2018); EC-funded **LID+ project** and **‘Redhead300’** (2017); **The LID Programme** (2008- ); DfID-funded OCN-accredited **‘Network Earth: Global Citizen for 21<sup>st</sup> Century’** Training Programme (2010-12); NW Mentoring Project 2000-02; Post-primary Political Ed & International Youth Leadership Programme (1998-99); 6 x 12 week Prince’s Trust Volunteer Programmes (1995-98); 17 x week-long residential international training programmes (2001- )

**Financial Management:** BRYR’s €1.6M Core-funded Programme of delivery (July-Dec 19); Extern & Verbal’s €1M SEUPB-funded Third Space project in 2018; Secured and managed European Commission-funded ‘LID+’ project in 2017; Between 2002-12 (before working freelance) secured and managed more than €1M from funders including YESIP, Erasmus+, DfID, Children In Need, Tudor Trust, Volunteer Development Agency, Community Relations Council, CFNI, DCSDC, Halifax Foundation, Western Area Children and Young People’s Committee, IYF & IFI.

**Partnership Management:** Extern’s Third Space project in partnership with Verbal, alongside stakeholders including SEUPB, YouthPact, Queens University, Department for Communities, and OCN (2018); 3-year DfID-funded OCN-accredited **‘Network Earth: Global Citizen for 21<sup>st</sup> Century’** Training Programme in partnership with Children in Crossfire (2010-12); the NW Mentoring Project for NIACRO supported by Social Services, PBNI, Extern and Education Welfare; Managed/hosted 44 International Programmes (4 on behalf of the UK National Agency) with partners from 40+ countries.

**Event Management:** The Humour Alliance **Humour Festival** (2021); **‘Market Place’** – Northern Ireland’s only public and large-scale 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Erasmus+ in 2017); **The PoP (Paths of Participation) Youth Assembly** (2012); European Youth Capital Consultation Events (2010); **‘Getting it Right - Human Rights for Young People in Rural Areas’** Conference (2008); **‘Generation 2000’** Conference (2005); Off the Streets **‘LEGACY’** 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (2005); Off the Streets Annual Celebrations (2003-2006); Inter-Schools Tenpin Bowling League, Derry (1993); Fundraising walk Derry to Limerick (1988)

**Values**

**Honesty:** I believe in being true and therefore honest; **Integrity:** ultimately, it’s all that matters in the end; **Trust:** my word is my bond, once it’s gone, it’s gone; **Compassion:** we are not complete without it; **Humility:** I came in with nothing, I go out with nothing **Commitment:** once I’m in, I’m in; **Reliability:** if I say I’m going to do it I will; **Simplicity:** less is more – let’s not complicate it; **Responsibility:** for what I control I assume ownership off; **Perseverance:** I see things through to completion

<p><b>Leadership Positions:</b> Member of the IYWT (International Youth Work Trainers) Guild 2014-17); Chairperson of the CASCADE International Network (2009-11); member of WIFH's (Western Investing for Health) Teenage Transitions/Children &amp; Young People's Sub-group (2007-14); Member of Youth Council for Northern Ireland (2000-03); Chairperson of CRYWN (Community Relations Youth Work Network) in Northern Ireland (1998-2000);</p>	<p><b>Strategic &amp; Policy Development:</b> Oversaw policy reviews and development of three-year Strategic Plans for <a href="#">Off the Streets</a> &amp; Inside Out; contributed to the strategic development of the IYWT Guild 2014-16; part of the UKNA's Trainer/VC Pool from 2012-2016 performing the role of VC (Visit Co-ordinator) and Trainer on 3 &amp; 2 occasions respectfully; Participation Worker for 'The Big Deal' Project (incl. ELB's Youth Service, NI Youth Forum, YouthNet &amp; Youth Council for NI)</p>
<p><b>Training:</b> Data Protection, Marketing &amp; Communications, TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), Outcomes Star, Child Protection, Safeguarding, Management Skills and RSA Team Leaders Award with Extern (2018);; QNUK Level II in Safeguarding with NWVC in Oct 17); Storytelling with Holywell Trust (2015); 'Active Citizen' Training with British Council (2010); Chaperone Training with BELB (2008); OCN Level III Exploring Diversity with Youth Action (1999) (Level 3, 4 credits)</p>	<p><b>IT and Social Media:</b> Competent in the use of e-mail, word, spreadsheet, power point, website design including <a href="#">Fergal Barr</a>; <a href="#">The LID Programme</a>; <a href="#">Humour is Serious Business</a>; <a href="#">PinBoards: Redhead300</a>; Social Media examples include <a href="#">LID+ Facebook Group</a>, <a href="#">LID+ Twitter</a>; Mailchimp - <a href="#">Lifting the LID Newsletter</a>; Music Production - <a href="#">Mix Cloud</a>; Video production - <a href="#">YouTube</a>; Columnist &amp; Opinion pieces - <a href="#">Personal Blog</a>; Surveys and Research - <a href="#">Survey Monkey</a>.</p>
<p><b>Guiding Mantras</b></p> <p><b>It is what it is:</b> focus on the 'what is' and do not dwell on the what 'should be' – reflect on 'the why' when time permits</p> <p><b>There's always somebody worse off than you:</b> no matter how bad it feels, remember there are those in worse situations</p> <p><b>Be careful what you wish for:</b> getting what you desire or want might be more problematic than that which you already have</p> <p><b>Laughter is the shortest distance between people:</b> humour brings us closer together so ensure learning is fun &amp; enjoyable</p> <p><b>Actions speak louder than words:</b> ultimately I will be judged by what I haven't done than by what I said I would do</p> <p><b>Not a matter of if, only a matter of when:</b> if I say I will do it, it will be done</p>	
<p><b>Specialist Skills</b></p>	
<p><b>Facilitation &amp; Training:</b> including hosting 44 international residential programmes in Northern Ireland, 17 of which have been at minimum of 6 days in length. Overall record in an international context is: Facilitator only (14); Co-ordinator &amp; Facilitator (8); Co-ordinator (21); Co-ordinator &amp; Trainer (9); Trainer only (17); Co-ordinator/Trainer/Facilitator (1); Advisor (1); Co-ordinator &amp; Moderator (3); Youth Leader (1); Participant/Facilitator (1); Facilitator &amp; Trainer (1); Visit Co-ordinator (4); Many of these programmes were designed 'from scratch' and covered a wide range of themes including Conflict, Culture, Humour, Alcohol, Upcycling, Citizenship and Open Space among others. If you take the average duration of an E+ programme, I have spent almost 2 years of my entire professional career (120+ programmes) working residentially with international groups.</p>	<p><b>Generating Ideas:</b> <a href="#">Beyond Erasmus, Stories from Outside The Box</a>; <a href="#">The LID (Leadership through Intercultural Dialogue) Programme</a> which provided international learning opportunities for young people, young leaders, youth workers and 'other' practitioners; <a href="#">Humour is Serious Business</a> – a training programme using humour to engage people while positively contributing to Health and Well Being; '<a href="#">LID+</a>' - tailored services that promoted awareness off, accessibility to and supported participation in the Erasmus+ programme; <a href="#">Youth Work &amp; Trainers Bazaar</a> which supports practitioner learning <a href="#">PinBoards</a> – supporting the meeting and conference needs of groups; <a href="#">Perspectives</a> – Training that supports individuals to examine and reimagine how they view challenges; <a href="#">Social Technology</a> – helps people to re-engage with one another; <a href="#">FRIENDSHIP Connections</a> supporting practitioner relationships.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> Having submitted 40 successful applications to Erasmus+ and assessed almost 100 Youth in Action, Erasmus+ &amp; Causeway Applications for British Council &amp; Youth Council for NI, much insight has been gathered as to what it takes to make a successful submission</p>	<p><b>Humour:</b> not in the way of a comedian telling jokes but rather insight and knowledge of how humour benefits us physically and psychologically, intercultural differences, types of humour, the history of humour and how it can be used practically to engage individuals &amp; support learning</p>
<p><b>Publications</b></p>	
<p><b>Research:</b> (i) <a href="#">Claudy Visioning Process</a>, (ii) <a href="#">Anti-Social Behaviour in the Greater Shantallow Area of Derry: Reasons &amp; Causes - Developing effective responses for addressing the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour and Young People</a>. (iii) <a href="#">Anti-Social Behaviour: Issues, Concerns and Experiences of Young People in the Greater Shantallow Area</a> (iv) <a href="#">'A Study of Values, Attitudes and Opinion Young People in the Greater Shantallow Area'</a> <b>Evaluations:</b> (i) <a href="#">Focus on Family</a> and (ii) <a href="#">Coleraine Youth Forum</a>, <b>Project Reports:</b> (i) <a href="#">The 'Why?' Project</a>, (ii) <a href="#">The PoP (Paths of Participation) Youth Assembly</a>, (iii) <a href="#">Youth Manifesto</a> (iv) <a href="#">Anti-Social Behaviour: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY?</a> (v) <a href="#">Measuring the Intangible</a> (vi) <b>Consultation Reports:</b> (i) <a href="#">'The only game in town-Embedding a culture of participation in youth provision'</a>, (ii) <a href="#">CYPNI report on Participation Structures</a>; <b>Other reports:</b> Reports and Activity Packs for Erasmus+ funded Training Programmes (i) <a href="#">Ethnicity, Radicalism and Conflict in an Evolving Europe</a> (ii) <a href="#">Creating a Common European Consensus</a> (iii) <a href="#">Web of Experience</a>; Writing report into <a href="#">The Case for Embedding International Youth Work in Youth Service Delivery in Northern Ireland</a> <b>Strategic:</b> <a href="#">Off the Streets Strategic Plan</a> &amp; <a href="#">The Case for Supporting Our Work</a> as well as their <a href="#">Annual Report</a> in 2005 and <a href="#">Annual Report</a> in 2004; <b>Contributions to 'Third Party' publications:</b> (i) Youth Council for Northern Ireland's <a href="#">'Impact of International Youth Work'</a> (ii) <a href="#">Global Links: Human Rights, Democracy and good practices of social transformation (P76-82)</a>; <b>Storytelling:</b> <a href="#">Beyond Erasmus, Stories from Outside The Box Volume 1</a></p>	

<p><b>Team work:</b> including working in teams of between 2 and 4 alongside trainers/facilitators from 24 countries delivering residential programmes in at least eleven countries over periods of 3-7 days on themes that have included Conflict, Conflict Management, Culture, Diversity, Working with Young Men, Experiential Learning, Participation, Group Organisation, Humour, Citizenship, Alcohol &amp; 'Upcycling'</p>	<p><b>Working Independently/lone working:</b> including delivery of 2 (of 6) Prince's Trust Volunteers 60-day programmes, Development Officer with Eglinton Youth Club managing a 'Drop In' and range of activity; Co-ordinating The Inside Out Programme (2011-13 &amp; throughout 2017); co-ordinating delivery of <a href="#">Claudy Visioning Process</a> (2017-18); Assessing Erasmus+ applications for UK National Agency (2012-16)</p>
<p><b>Resilience:</b> organising and completing a fundraising walk from Derry to Limerick (230 miles, 10 days) on my own in 1989 and from Derry to Crosshaven, Co. Cork (300 miles, 14 days) in 2017 as part of a team of 3; working freelance from June 13 – Dec 16, Dec 18 – July 19 &amp; Dec 19 – July 20 but managing to remain solvent, motivated, create new ideas, develop projects and engage in a process of 'self-education'</p>	<p><b>Dealing with Challenges:</b> including continuing to do my job when subject to bullying, intimidation &amp; exclusion by a former employer; having to find additional funding when faced with financial shortfalls; foregoing income to ensure project survival; presenting to audiences of 1 when anticipated numbers don't materialise; continuing to write funding applications even when previously unsuccessful</p>
<p><b>Other Achievements</b></p>	
<p>Represented myself at an Industrial Tribunal and singlehandedly fought a test case leading to a change in employment law in Northern Ireland (2002); developed &amp; designed Street Work Training Programme, which paved the way for the first formal qualification in 'Outreach and Detached Youth Work' (in Northern Ireland) at OCN Level 3 (2005); Received a 'North West Person of the Year' Award (2006); published <a href="#">The Things People Say – Political Quotations from the NI Peace Process</a> (2008), <a href="#">The Yet Unknown Little Brown Book...A Collection of Poems</a> (2010) and <a href="#">In No Particular Order</a> (2020); Co-authored <a href="#">Derry City Council's shortlisted bid for European Youth Capital 2013</a> (2011); produced six video documentaries for Foyle Youth Institute on a range of international programmes - three accompanied by activity packs (1999 – 2006); I've been a Landlord with NIHE since 1999; delivered a 'Tool Talk' at Tool Fair XV in Porto in 2021 on the theme of <a href="#">'Shiny Sophisticated Tools – the last thing we need'</a></p>	

#### MY APPROACH AT A PERSONAL LEVEL

**Perspective** – the more I know, the more I don't know. We live in a world where we think we know a lot but in reality we don't...and the sooner we accept that the better we will be and we will begin to live our lives differently. Most of what we think doesn't really matter because we are limited as to what we can control, so we as a people, need to begin to think differently. If we can start, supporting people to develop this capacity then much greater perspective can emerge and we can start to create real change, the most important change, the change that matters.

**Greater self-awareness** - helps you to reflect and thus enables you to critically think about what you do, how you do it, where and when, why and so on. Essentially, it's being more aware of the message you deliver and the things you do and the implications of your actions and how you need to alter your behaviour to reflect these thoughts.

**Sense of Humour** - an essential part of life and delivery, and when I talk about delivery, I mean how you apply yourself to each setting and situation you find yourself in. Everyone needs a large degree of humour so as not take themselves too seriously, or to lighten the mood in times of tension, to create a positive environment and to engage with people in meaningful ways.

#### **At a personal level I invest in any project I take on. This includes:**

- Energy, enthusiasm, and drive
- Strong work ethos and commitment to delivery
- Ensuring knowledge of the subject matter
- Commitment to having an understanding of and ability to manage project process
- Ability to provide constructive feedback on an individual basis or within a group context
- Openness, honesty, and transparency
- Committed to hearing the views and opinions of others in a bid to support and inform learning
- Enjoy discourse, debate and discussion as part of a natural process of learning
- Not afraid of conflict or dealing with difficult issues
- Sense of humour, self-deprecation, and humility
- Ability to recognise the value and importance of diverse views that are 'at odds' with my own but can support the process
- Willingness to go 'the extra mile' to support the process
- Ability to leave feelings and personal interests to one side
- Commitment to working to a finish
- Clear from the outset about the values and principles that underpin delivery and process

## **Because of my 35 years experiences I have learned to:**

- be adept and to adapt
- be flexible
- innovate when necessary
- be resilient
- have a sense of humour
- ask the 'right questions'
- be patient
- overcome obstacles and 'deal with' (often unexpected) challenges at immediate or short notice
- be honest whilst also 'biting my lip'
- reflect on my own practice and come to terms with my own limitations and 'inadequacies'
- work under pressure
- initiate in uncertain circumstances and against unknown backgrounds
- support and listen to others when necessary even when it deviates from 'the plan'
- motivate myself and others in difficult and challenging circumstances
- lead when appropriate
- be tolerant of behaviour that is designed to 'scupper' or is based on 'personal agendas'
- problem-solve and/or mediate when 'protagonists' can't resolve difficulties

## **My Ideological Statement**

It is my strongly held belief that the development of individuals should be foremost in our work. It is our inescapable responsibility to share in the development of individuals by at least providing at the outset, the means by which to do so in accordance with their needs and desires.

I aim to provide various settings and environments that will facilitate the journey from dependence through independence to self-sufficiency enabling individuals to establish and assert their individuality whilst undertaking to take account of the environment that surrounds them.

Whilst learning from their experiences it is my hope that they will grow in knowledge and understanding of the processes that have assisted their development.

My intention is to facilitate a process whereby my input supports and creates opportunities for young people to make informed decisions without feeling that they should subscribe to any particular set of beliefs or opinions.

I would hope that I am in fact helping to lay the foundations for each individual to discover their own potential through co-operation with one other and by maintaining a level of dignity and respect in their everyday interaction with those around them whilst striving to achieve an enhanced level of self-fulfilment and expectation.

By helping each young person develop enhanced levels of expectation I am asking them to take ownership of their learning and development so as to create greater awareness of their skills and capacity for learning. By doing so I hope to encourage them to find their own way in life and make most of their own resources and talents.

It's as important as it is essential that young people should be able to get along with others and be compassionate and concerned about people's needs as well as their own. There is no one setting or method which achieves this but rather a combination, however, young people need to be free to 'run their own show', being encouraged to become involved and given opportunities to develop the necessary skills and leadership to do so

Overall, I engage in and attempt to facilitate a process of learning based on interaction that helps to create a pro-active environment for progressive change.

The process for me is more important than the actual results but a belief in setting targets provides the springboard to achieve.

I am prepared to take risks to give substance and foundation to the belief that process is priority. I endeavour to employ this approach in my practice at all times.

My commitment to this approach is underpinned by a strong belief in having fun, learning by doing, using humour and being honest.