

Clubs for Young People Northern Ireland (CYPNI)

Participation Research Project

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Introduction

This report documents findings from research carried out into levels of participation across a wide range of CYPNI (Clubs for Young People Northern Ireland) youth provision between January and May 2011.

The research forms part of Clubs for Young People's on-going efforts to identify and respond to needs of young people in an effort to enhance youth provision across a wide geographical remit in the west stretching from Derry to Dungannon.

The research involved a number of already existing CYPNI-registered youth clubs or youth organisations currently or previously engaged in projects with Clubs for Young People.

The aim of the research was to determine the diversity, extent and nature of youth participation in CYP member youth clubs and organisations in the North West area and the resources and support needs for further development.

I have attempted to do this by first of all outlining an Summary which provides a bullet point guide to the main findings followed by a contextualisation of participation, past events and future challenges facing youth provision and how CYPNI should position itself in this context.

The report then goes on to outline the purpose of the research, clubs and groups involved, schedule, process and methodologies, detailed summary of findings and direct observations by facilitators, an overview of issues and recommendations for moving forward.

The report attempts to convey the feedback received from young people and practitioners but within the context of an ever changing society. I have attempted to connect feedback received with the current context for youth service provision.

I hope this report will provide a foundation from which to further establish the presence of CYPNI in the North West whilst informing its future direction.

Fergal Barr
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June 2011

Summary

In this section of the report I have attempted to summarise the key points of our findings. Our research focused on two areas - Derry and Dungannon – and we elected not to replicate the exact same approach in both areas but rather vary it so as to ensure a broad representation of views, ideas and opinion.

An example of this is that we adopted a survey-styled approach to our research in Derry for the Exploring Issues phase, i.e., Phase II whilst in Dungannon the views of young people were sought through a process of semi-structured questions.

Another example was our approach to the final phase, i.e., ‘Testing Findings’ where in Derry we carried out a survey-styled approach whilst in Dungannon the same points were raised during Individual Interviews with Leaders-in-Charge.

With this in mind we have been able to provide a summary of key points in 3 different ways: (i) survey-styled findings from our work in the Derry area (ii) informal feedback from our semi-structured conversations in the Dungannon area and (iii) identifying a range of issues important to young people across both areas. These are summarised below.

Key points from discussions with young people in groups in Derry area

- Almost 90% of respondents were in agreement that they were involved in the day-to-day running of their club but only marginally over 60% believed the same regarding ‘bigger decisions’ affecting the club although there was a recognition by 72% of respondents that there were opportunities to increase participation within the club.
- The youth club is a sanctuary of democracy compared with other mechanisms such as school and public planning processes where between only 15% and 33% believed they had opportunities to participate in decision making processes and only ¼ of respondents felt that the opportunities existed at all.
- Only ¼ of respondents were aware of other participation structures, e.g., youth forums/councils but 70% believed staff and volunteers would be aware of these structures although 9 out of 10 respondents believed participation could be further developed and (positively) all had expressed a willingness to engage further in developing these.
- Respondents were largely in agreement (minimum of 76%) that almost all adults including paid and volunteer leaders along with other staff contributed positively to participation in their club
- There was greater disagreement over resources with 60% agreeing that their club was well resourced but all agreed that programmes contributed to encouraging participation and all had experienced interaction with other clubs or groups

- All respondents believed that all age groups and young people with disabilities benefitted from fair and equal provision whilst 85% of those from ethnic backgrounds benefitted from the same. Where there was greater disagreement was around the issue of equal provision for young people of different religious backgrounds and gender with just under 70% believing that females benefitted from fair and equal provision.

Key points from conversations with young people and leaders in Dungannon area:

- Most clubs are accessible to young people and in some cases are viewed as the 'only thing open to young people'
- Clubs have a wide range of facilities and resources on offer but in some cases some of these are limited and dated
- Members tend to be active in their clubs taking advantage of a wide range of programmes on offer – however activities such as sporting activities and trips tend to be most popular and there is a reluctance on occasion to engage in programme/group work
- Young people are involved in the running of the clubs and those with senior members group are able to exert greater influence re programme content
- In most cases the relationship between worker and young person is positive but where it wasn't evident this had a negative impact on the level of engagement in programme activities
- The use of youth clubs is more popular among young men
- Clubs are open to and engaging with young people with disabilities but there is limited evidence of actual engagement with young people with disabilities - physical or otherwise
- Young People would like clubs to be open more often and stay open longer

Issues prioritised as important to young people from both areas

- **'Otherness':** Young people are faced with a growing range of diversity in society and find this challenging
- **School:** Many young people find engaging in school difficult
- **Rights/Boundaries:** Young people feel restricted by boundaries and would like to change the various rules that govern their life
- **Money:** Young people are frustrated with not having enough income and the pressures and challenges that the consumer society projects onto young people

- **Bullying:** Very much a live issue and more so now in terms of the digital age we now live in
- **Rural:** Young people are frustrated by the lack of engagement from politicians in rural life
- **Internet Safety:** Young people are more conscious of the need for protection and require more training to anticipate and deal with potential dangers
- **Stress:** Young People face stress at all levels and need more info and advice on how to deal with it. This falls within the context of growing awareness around issues of mental health and well-being
- **Technology:** Young people are frustrated by the performance of some of the products available to them thus questioning the quality on offer.
- **Policing:** The relationship between young people and policing is still fraught with difficulties
- **Health:** Young people have genuine concerns regarding drink and drugs and this requires more engagement with young people on this subject
- **Weather:** Young people expressed frustration with how the weather limits opportunities to play sport
- **Lack of Facilities:** Young people recognise the need for greater facilities they can access
- **Relationships:** Young People recognise difficulties they face in everyday relationships with their peers but in particular with certain groups they view as different or vice versa
- **Violence in our town:** Many young people feel a distinct fear for their safety and there is a need to raise this issue at higher levels
- **Celebrity:** Young people value fame but also recognise the challenges that come with it although they look to celebrity as 'heroes' and 'role models'

Context

The issue of participation in youth work is one that has been dominating the youth work agenda for a considerable period of time. It's one that practitioners, researchers, scholars, policy writers and even young people have been deliberating over with varying degrees of intensity since the 1980's.

There are many terms to describe participation – engagement, involvement, active participation, proactive participation, non-participation, advisory participation and so on and so on. But what exactly is participation?

Shenton describes Participaiton as 'a way of working rather than an event, a project, an unachievable dream or a box to tick....a culture of participation from top to bottom and side to side.....Participation is a dialogue between adults and young people as equal partners in a process where decision-making occurs and change happens'

How do we ensure participation? In 'The only game in town', a report on participation across youth provision in the WELB area in 2006 highlighted 8 areas that ensures young people participate: Opportunities, Recognition, (it's) Personal, (the role of the) Worker, (it's) Practical, (it's underpinned by clear) Principles, (it has a clear) Focus and (there are) Benefits. For more info see Appendices.

Cleaver describes participation as having become 'an act of faith in development, something we believe in and rarely question. This act of faith is based on three main tenets: that participation is intrinsically a 'good thing' (especially for the participants); that a focus on 'getting the techniques right' is the principal way of ensuring the success of such approaches; and that considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obstructive.'

Avoiding power and politics though is a little difficult in the modern world especially when bodies such as The Council of Europe and European Commission also view participation along political lines. In **(Year to be inserted)** they wrote of participation

'The rise of youth participation up the political agenda reflects significant developments in the thinking and emphasis given to youth policy and youth work within Europe....The notion of participation of young people in society, particularly in the civil and political organisation of society is developing. Participation in this context means more than mere consultation with young people about changes and initiatives that will affect their lives and shape their futures.... The participation of young people with fewer opportunities is a barometer of the underlying health of our democracies and societies.'

Against this backdrop how can we ensure participation is to the fore when we know the world is a rapidly changing place – is there even time for participation or are young people already participating when they interact with others through mediums such as Twitter or Facebook?

The latter years of the 20th Century and the formative years of the 21st Century has witnessed to a number of major change such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, redrawing of borders in Eastern Europe, introduction of a single currency, expansion of the EU, the information technology revolution, displacement, , social networks, banking crises, world economies on the verge of collapse and most recently the 'Arab Spring.'

Northern Ireland is no different having undergone a sustained period of change including population shifts, smaller families, breakdown in traditional family structures, greater mobility, changes in traditional gender roles, deteriorating health among young people, increases in young people staying in education and more recently a sustained period of relative political stability albeit against impending government cutbacks and an upsurge in dissident republican activity.

On an economic level there has been the demise of traditional industries which has coincided a change in Northern Ireland's 'Objective 1 Status' and the growth of particular sub-groups, i.e., unskilled and less skilled young people alongside a reduction in European Funding and a shift away in PEACE monies from local communities.

The changing social, political and economic climate has had an impact on government thinking and this in turn has helped shift youth policy from one of containment or management at the height of 'The Troubles' to one where young people are now viewed as central to the future development of Northern Ireland.

The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 outlined a vision of *a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society*, whilst OFMDFM (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister) proposed a vision of *A Northern Ireland in which children and young people thrive and look forward with confidence to the future.*

The challenge however of emerging from a deeply divided society remains and if proof was ever required we need only look at the number of 'Peace Lines' in existence – we have more now than at the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Northern Ireland has also witnessed a growth in levels of racism with the rate of racial incidents estimated at 16.4 per 1000 non white population as compared to 12.75 per 1000 in England and Wales.

Throughout it all Youth Provision in Northern Ireland has remained largely sustainable even if we have seen a reduction in real terms of overall projects and services - 170,000 children and young people benefit from the Youth Service each year with more than 2,500 youth organisations offering young people opportunities for social, intellectual, cultural, physical and spiritual development.

In addition to the existing Youth Sector we have seen greater strategic and policy commitment to Children and Young People with the advent of the Government's Children and Young People's Unit and NICCY (Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People) which has brought an added dimension to underpinning the rights of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

These developments have also coincided in recent times with a review of the Youth Service, the formulation of 'NI Youth Work Priorities' and the publication of Strategic Plans for children and young people by both NICCY and Government.

In addition to these recent developments we are currently operating in challenging and dynamic times with the period between 2010 and 2015 highly significant for Children and Young People on both a European and Global Scale. In August of last year International Youth Year (IYY) commenced with young people all over the world engaging in a wide-ranging programme of activities. This was followed in September, world leaders gathered for the 10th anniversary of the development of the Millennium Development Goals to review their progress.

In 2013 the YiA (Youth in Action) programme will end whilst at the same time the *EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering* will be at mid-way point and in 2014 the 25th anniversary of the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) will take place.

These are significant events in their own right and of course will help to inform and shape future youth service policy and provision. The greater significance of these events is the correlation that exists between them - many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are mirrored in the priorities of International Youth Year, the EU Youth Strategy and the NI Youth Sector 'Priorities for Youth'.

There is for example, a strong correlation between the MDG's and NI Youth Work Priorities, e.g., poverty, education, gender equality, HIV and AIDS, sustainability and partnership.

The *EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering* has 8 key themes - Education & Training, Employment and entrepreneurship, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Social Inclusion, Youth and the World and Creativity and Culture.

There is an overlap between the priorities identified by the Youth Sector in Northern Ireland and those contained within the EU Youth Strategy. It's essential therefore to take cognisance of the links between NI Youth Sector Priorities, the EU Youth Strategy and the YiA programme.

Government for example, has a vision for Northern Ireland as a *preferred region of choice for partnership working (7)* and with the development of the *Youth In Action* Programme with it's emphasis on 'Young People with fewer opportunities' and accompanying Social Inclusion Strategy includes specific such as

- promoting the fundamental values of the EU among young people, in particular respect for human dignity, equality, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination;
- facilitating participation in the Programme by young people with fewer opportunities, including young people with disabilities;

If we take all of these factors into consideration then issues of Participation, Social Inclusion, Equality, Health, Rights, Education and Employment should be high on our agenda of work with young people.

If we consider the issues that have been identified as NI Youth Work Priorities (see appendices) we can immediately see a correlation. Recent research also reaffirms this and offers an indicator of some of the other future challenges that lie ahead:

- The economic gap within countries will widen significantly - poverty will increase
- Information technologies will dramatically reduce the privacy of individuals
- Inequalities between those who have access to information technologies and those who do not will increase dramatically
- Conflict of interest between developed and developing countries will increase
- The cost of obtaining adequate water will increase due to population growth, deforestation and environmental deterioration
- Migration flows from poor to rich areas within and between countries will have an impact on security and social order
- Increased use of genetic engineering will create more complex ethical questions
- Economic growth will be fuelled by knowledge (ideas, innovations and inventions) more than natural resources
- Increased regulation and control by governments
- Decline in people's sense of community and social responsibility
- Increased consumerism
- Rise in drug-related crime

There is a clear link between these predictors and those priorities already mentioned and therefore in the context of this report key issues for Clubs for Young People to consider are the following:

- **Active Participation** of young people in their youth provision and in society or at least in their local communities
- **Social Inclusion** where all young people irrespective of background, religion, ability, gender, sexual preference or circumstance are involved in the systems and processes that affect them
- **Equality** for and between all young people and addressing issues or factors that reduce or minimise equality particularly with regard to equality of opportunity
- **Rights** based approach to services in order to ensure young people are able to be fully represented in decisions that affect their lives

This report will highlight findings from our own consultation with young people and youth workers and in doing so highlight the issues which are priorities for young people and that will entitle Clubs for Young People to 'map out' an updated approach for future provision taking cognisance of these four key areas.

Purpose of Research

Project Purpose

Youth Participation is considered to be a fundamental element in youth work. In Northern Ireland, in terms of membership, voluntary youth organisations are the main youth service providers, in regular contact with more young people than any other part of the youth service.

As an umbrella body for over 180 community-based voluntary youth clubs and youth organisations in Northern Ireland, Clubs for Young People (CYP) established a pilot project to review the current state youth participation within its voluntary membership.

Aim:

To determine the diversity, extent and nature of youth participation in CYP member youth clubs and organisations in the North West area and the resources and support needs for further development.

Objectives:

To identify how participation is expressed and undertaken in CYP voluntary youth clubs and organisations from both an organisational and young person's perspective

To ensure that children and young people are afforded opportunities to contribute, to have their voices heard and their views taken into account in decision making on all issues that affect their membership of a CYP club and of a local community.

To identify what activities young people undertake

To determine what resources and forms of support are available and the gaps in resources

To look at how local youth clubs and organisations disseminate and champion youth participation activities within their own organisations and how these activities are integrated with wider participation and community development activities

To identify effective evaluation processes for assessing and promoting the benefits of youth participation

Outcomes:

A clearer understanding of the philosophy, history, methods and activities of youth participation practices as currently applied in CYP voluntary youth centres and organisations

Identification of the priorities for future development of centre-based participation and to make recommendations to CYP's wider membership

Identification of resources and support needed for the future including a role for CYP central office

To contribute to the overall understanding of youth participation in Northern Ireland and inform further developments of the work of the Youth Council for NI, Network 4 Youth, CYP (UK) and CYP member organisations.

Long term objective:

To provide a clear commitment from all CYP member organisations to developing children and young people's participation and a consistent message to organisations and agencies in a range of different youth work contexts of their role in supporting children and young peoples' right to be heard on issues that affect their lives.

The establishment of appropriate youth representative structures which reflect a rights-based and democratic approach to the involvement of children and young people and their representatives in decision-making and consultative structures from local CYP members to regional, national (UK) and international levels of youth participation.

Clubs Engaged

Dungannon Youth Resource Centre

Dungannon Youth Resource Centre is based in Dungannon Town Centre and is open five nights per week from September to June. The club also runs a summer scheme during the first two weeks of July. Junior members (7-11) attend 3 nights a week, i.e., on Tuesday and Thursday from 5pm – 7pm, and on Friday from 6pm – 9pm. Senior members (12-25) attend Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 7pm – 10 pm. Monday night is used as a programme night, where programmes at present include a young men's group, and an art and drama project. On an average night 30 juniors and 30 seniors attend the club. Membership is drawn largely from the Catholic Community.

Aughnacloy Youth club

Aughnacloy Youth Club is based in Aughnacloy College and is attended by both members of the Protestant and Catholic communities. A part time club it is open 3 nights a week - 6.30pm – 9.30pm on Wednesday and Friday nights for senior members (11 and 18) and Thursday nights for junior members aged (7 and 11). On average around 30 seniors and around 40 juniors attend.

Ogras Youth Club

Ogras Youth Club is set in Coalisland approximately 4 miles from Dungannon. The club is open 4 nights per week from Monday to Thursday and junior club runs from 5.30 to 8.00pm and senior club from 8pm to 10pm. On average around 20 juniors and 20 seniors attend each evening. Members are drawn from the Catholic Community.

Irvinestown Youth Club

Irvinestown Youth Club in County Fermanagh and is a large youth club with 400 members and is located in the Bawnacre centre. It opens on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights.

What If? Project

The What IF? Project is a three year project funded by the International Fund for Ireland that works with young people from Interface areas in Derry Londonderry and cross border in Donegal. The project uses creative arts activity to enable young people to work with others from areas they are apprehensive of and support each other as they work towards common goals.

Cathedral Youth Club

This club provides a means for young people of the Fountain to participate in community and cross-community activities, to develop the skills necessary to participate and excel in higher education, to find better higher-paying jobs, be better citizens and to enjoy a peaceful and happy life. The youth club works with

other area agencies and people to develop, promote and deliver local training programmes, interface projects and community events that makes life in the Fountain better for everyone. Young people from the centre and their families are actively involved in projects across the city working to improve the image of the area and to create a sense of shared responsibility for city life, community events and local government.

Long Tower Youth Club

The Long Tower Youth Club is a full-time voluntary youth club. The club is open for youth activities from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday. Community activities occur throughout the day. The youth club provides a wide variety of activities: Judo, indoor football, basketball, disco dancing, computers, snooker, pool, camping, residential weekends, etc. The Long Tower Youth Club provides a safe friendly environment for members to mix and meet and enjoy new friends and experiences.

Eglinton Community Limited

Eglinton Community Ltd was founded from an amalgamation of the Village Association, Women's Group and Youth Club to fundraise for a new Community Hall to be built on a site donated by a local businessman. It now manages and runs Eglinton Community Hall with a very successful programme of health, fitness, sport, arts and education.

It currently operates at full capacity every evening running a wide variety of programmes including a drop-in for young people in the Eglinton area on a Friday night. Activities for young people also include day trips, courses, residential and through working in partnership with other organisations accessing programmes and projects that will enhance their learning, skills and knowledge as well as providing accredited learning.

Cumber and Upper Cumber Youth Club

Cumber and Upper Cumber Youth Club Is a small part-time church-based youth club based in Cregg Road, Cumber and is open to young people from the age of 7 to 18 on Saturday evenings.

Inside Out

Inside Out was established in Claudy as a targeted youth initiative, funded by the Local Strategy Partnership for Derry City Council area (DLSP), in 2004, through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. Inside Out provides a range of services, training, accredited courses, projects & programmes that aim to minimise feelings of alienation and marginalisation. Activities include information meetings, social visits, outdoor activities, text service, newsletter and a Youth Information Point. Unlike youth clubs it does not provide drop-in element or a fixed night-time programme but rather operates on an 'as and when young people are available basis.'

Programme Schedule

Phase	Focus	Location	Group & Date	Content
I	Initial Discussion Workshops	Derry	Inside Out & Cumber & Upper Cumber Youth Club – 18 th Jan What If? Group - 22 nd Jan	Discussion Workshops highlighting key issues through ‘Why?’ Questions
		Dungannon	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre - 20 th Jan Aughnacloy Youth Club - 26 th Jan	
II	Exploring Issues	Derry	Cathedral Youth Club - 3 rd Feb Long Tower Youth Club - 10 th Feb	Exploring a range of questions on levels of participation within club/group with small focus groups
		Dungannon	Irvinestown and Ogras Youth Clubs – 3 rd Feb	
III	Individual Interviews	Derry	Cathedral Youth Club - 17 th Feb What If? Group and Cumber & Upper Cumber Youth Club - 8 th March	Questions for individual members focusing on participation
		Dungannon	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre, Aughnacloy, Irvinestown and Ogras Youth Clubs	Questions for individual members and leaders in charge focusing on participation
IV	Exploring Issues II	Derry	What If? Group, Eglinton Community Limited, Inside Out, Cumber & Upper Cumber Youth Club, Dungannon Youth Resource Centre, Dublin City Youth Service – 29 th March	Open Space Workshops identifying issues and organising action points
V	Testing Findings	Dungannon	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre, Aughnacloy, Irvinestown and Ogras Youth Clubs	Interviews with leaders in charge
		Derry	Long Tower Youth Club	Agree/Disagree statements with members

Process and Methodologies used

We began this piece of research with a number of informal but structured group meetings as we attempted to identify a range of issues through a process of providing young people with the opportunity to ask 'Why questions', i.e., questions they've always wanted to ask but never had the opportunity or questions they've asked and only got answers like 'just', 'because', 'that's just the way it is' or 'don't know'.

We elaborated on this by asking participants to think about issues that annoy or irritates them or 'gets under their skin' so as to encourage them to think critically. We were able to identify a wide range of questions and from this prioritise issues most important to them. So for example, the top three issues for groups we engaged with in the following areas were:

- Derry: Males, Religion, Friends
- Eglinton: Teachers, the Wealthy
- Claudy: Drink, Drugs, Money
- Aughnacloy: Youth club – limited opening hours, Homework, Exams
- Dungannon: 'Foreign nationals', the Weather, Violence in the community
- Ogras: Policing, Travellers, Drugs
- Irvinestown: Boundaries, Regulations regarding driving, Parents

This also provided us with a foundation from which to work from because many of the young people we engaged (at this stage) of the process would later be involved in the Open Space meeting in Derry and by exploring these issues at this early stage it would help to inform the process at the Open Space meeting.

Stage Two of the process comprised visits to a selected number of youth clubs to meet with small groups of young people and using a series of prompts/questions (see appendices) we were able to get a sense of perspective regarding participation inside and outside of their club. We used this opportunity to also address involvement of adults in their club and issues of equality.

The third stage involved return visits to explore further participation but with individual members in an effort to gather a more in-depth insight into the thinking among young people.

We followed this up by hosting an Open Space meeting where young people involved in our research were able to identify a wide range of issues and facilitate a number of workshops around these issues.

From this we were able to develop a range of statements that we could 'test' with young people and also in interviews with club leaders in the final stage of the project in an effort to draw some conclusions.

Findings

Survey re Participation (young people in Derry area)

- 85% young people agreed (5% not sure, 10% disagree) that they are involved in decision-making that affects them in the day-to-day running of the club, e.g., activities, trips.
- 62% (24% not sure, 14% disagree) believed they were involved in decision-making that affected their club as a whole, e.g., choice of programmes, accessibility, opening times.
- 72% (28% disagreed) felt there were other ways to participate in the club, e.g., improving their club environment, taking greater responsibility within the club
- Only 15% agreed they had opportunity to participate in decision making outside of their club, e.g., school (40% and 45% not sure and disagreeing respectively)
- 33% felt they had opportunities to participate in public decision making (67% disagreed)
- 25% agreed there was an opportunity to become involved in local community or action plans (10% unsure and 65% disagreed)
- 24% were aware of youth participation structures such as the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (10% unsure and 66% disagreed)
- 70% believed that staff and volunteers were aware of youth participation structures (30% disagreed)
- 100% said they had experienced interaction with other youth participation structures/youth groups
- 86% agreed that participation structures could be further developed whilst (14% were unsure) but significantly no-one disagreed
- 100% had expressed interest in engaging with participation programmes at a local, national or international level
- 68% said that there was fair and equal provision for work with females (32% disagreed)
- 100% agreed that all age groups were served equally in terms of provision
- 100% agreed that there was fair and equal provision for young people with disabilities
- 76% agreed there was fair and equal provision for young Catholics and young Protestants (24% disagreed)

- 85% agreed that there was fair and equal provision for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds (15% disagreed)
- 76% agreed that adult leaders made a positive contribution to participation in their club (10% were unsure and 14% disagreed)
- 89% agreed that other adult staff, e.g., caretaker, administrators contributed to positively to participation in their club (11% unsure)
- 100% agreed that adult volunteers contributed positively to participation in their club
- 60% believed their club was well resourced (40% disagreed)
- 100% agreed that programmes encouraged members to participate in the life of the club

Key points from conversations with young people and leaders in Dungannon area:

- Most clubs are accessible to young people and in some cases are viewed as the 'only thing open to young people'
- Clubs have a wide range of facilities and resources on offer but in some cases some of these are limited and dated
- Members tend to be active in their clubs taking advantage of a wide range of programmes on offer – however activities such as sporting activities and trips tend to be most popular and there is a reluctance on occasion to engage in programme/group work
- Young people are involved in the running of the clubs and those with senior members group are able to exert greater influence re programme content
- In most cases the relationship between worker and young person is positive but where it wasn't evident this had a negative impact on the level of engagement in programme activities
- The use of youth clubs is more popular among young men
- Clubs are open to and engaging with young people with disabilities but there is limited evidence of actual engagement with young people with disabilities - physical or otherwise
- Young People would like clubs to be open more often and stay open longer

Issues highlighted and summary of key points raised by young people in all discussions including Open Space session

<p>‘Otherness’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign nationals living in same areas as young people – ‘coming in here & taking all ‘the jobs’ • Travellers living in the town & ‘thinking they run the place’ 	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework – shouldn’t be any • School is boring • Relationship with teachers – teachers are not fair • School exams - difficult 	<p>Rights/ Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to drive until you’re 17 • Not being able to access clubs till you’re 18 • Strict parents • Domestic duties at home 	<p>Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop prices are a rip off • Not having enough money-parents not providing enough pocket money
<p>Bullying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different forms – emotional, cyber, psychological, physical, mental, social exclusion, name calling) • ‘Girls are worse’ – boys tend to be more physical <p>Cyber-Bullying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People writing cruel things about each other on the internet-causes embarrassment and humiliation • people gang up on each other • people get depression and suicidal feelings • People ‘taking the hand’ out of you 	<p>Rural Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement between politicians and people living in rural areas 	<p>Internet Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One login lock • Young people should post less info into their status, • You can be watched on webcam without knowing • No age range (13) • Advertising houses 	<p>Stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how and why you got stress • how to control it – types of stress - boyfriends, studying, moving house, exams, school, family problems, people, make up, life, exercise, yoga, health, acting, marriage, parents, all friends, talking to someone, disease, stress, jobs, bills, money, studying • suggestions – acting, music, yoga, talking to someone, exercise, stress ball, smoking

<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers are unreliable - not working properly or crashing 	<p>Policing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Getting hassled' by the police • Police – 'stopping and questioning you' 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drunk people causing a nuisance • Underage drinking • Drugs & people who do drugs 	<p>Bad weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects where and when you can play sport
<p>Lack of Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Club could open more often • Current facilities in youth club not good enough • Lack of public facilities means lack of options • Some events are out of town and not easy to reach 	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting on with your peers – particularly in small towns where contact is more regular • Problems with parents • Getting on with 'snobby people' or 'nerds' • Men – behaviour/not showing feelings/bravado/distance 	<p>Violence in our town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety - dangerous to walk through Dungannon at night • Anti-social behaviour in the community • Bullying 	<p>Celebrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important? Young people base their image on celebrity – a lot of it is vanity • Issues of wealth • Media Intrusion • How do people become celebrities? • What you need to become a celebrity? • Use of internet • Levels of importance • Role of celebs – 'heroes' and/or 'role models'

Direct Observations by Facilitators

Dungannon Area

Youth Clubs in the Dungannon represent the more 'traditional' type of service provision, i.e., centre-based night time work, operating a minimum of between 3 and 5 nights per week (week nights) and all have a steady and active number of users.

Young people were by and large willing to engage in facilitated workshops and meetings although there had to be some negotiation with them as regards length of time and timing of the workshops due to it 'eating' into 'their time' which was preserved largely for sporting activities.

Young people were mainly aged between 12 and 16, were drawn largely from either Catholic or Protestant communities and were in the main white, male and able-bodied. For example, in the first round of meetings 37 male and 9 female members were engaged in discussions

Derry Area

Youth Clubs and organisations in the Derry area represented a wider range of service provision with only one full-time statutory youth club and the remainder made up of part-time voluntary, project and church based provision. Provision covered every night of the week apart from Saturday but unlike Dungannon only two clubs are centre-based and therefore the volume of night-time operation was less.

Similar to Dungannon young people were willing to engage in workshops and probably even more so due to a higher proportion of young people already used to project-based work. Also similar to Dungannon young people ranged in age from 12 to 16 and were drawn from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds although there was a greater mix of religion and gender among groups in Derry, i.e., 36 Catholic and 15 Protestant of which 29 were male and 22 female.

Overall

In most cases users seem content with their club and the facilities and resources on offer but as with many spoke of the need for better or more facilities and resources. In the main there were positive relationships between members and also between members and staff resulting in a welcoming atmosphere. This most probably contributed to members coming across as friendly and warm in conversations and in many cases vocal and/or articulate in opinion, i.e., because of the relationship they had with leaders they felt they could be expressive and open in their discourse.

This most likely had an influence on member's perception of their organisations as being open and welcoming to all young people including those with disabilities although the percentage of young people with disabilities (of any kind) using facilities was quite small.

Most young people felt that there were enough programmes appropriate to age group and gender although given the number of males involved in our discussion and their leaning towards sporting activities (such as football) then this is questionable. As we also discovered with feedback from some female members there certainly was a feeling that activities favoured males and in some cases activities for females were more traditional in nature and less contemporary.

We found that most young people were happy or at least willing to express their views on a range of subjects and given the informality of our approach there was certainly an 'appetite' for getting into issues once young people felt comfortable and were reassured their views would not be accountable to any one individual but would rather reflect the overall opinion of participants

Young people willing to express their views without fear or censure is usually an indication of comfort with the setting or environment and only occasionally did the presence of friends appear to inhibit or stifle opinion. And where opinion was challenged or questioned young people felt confident enough to argue the points they made.

In an effort to ascertain the various levels of participation in clubs and groups we visited we can take the almost unhindered expression of opinion and identification of issues by young people in this project as testament to their willingness to engage in discussion and debate and thus an indicator of the level of involvement and ultimately participation in their club or group.

Interests and Needs

The range of Interests (or rather Issues) and Needs that come up during our research were as follows:

- 'Otherness'
- School
- Rights/Boundaries
- Money
- Technology
- Policing
- Health
- Bad weather
- Lack of Facilities
- Relationships
- Violence in our town
- Cyber/Bullying
- Celebrity
- Rural Areas
- Internet Safety
- Stress

This of course is an enormously broad range of topics and not so easy to cluster or connect but there was some common themes reoccurring throughout the research.

An example of this was young people's inability to relate to those who were different to themselves or where there was a clash of culture or boundaries there was a difficulty in accepting the ideas and/or opinion be that the police, parents, teachers, 'foreigners' or Travellers.

Another example was one of stress – this featured prominently during the Open Space workshop and was closely followed by Bullying and Cyber-Bullying which also led to a discussion on Internet Safety.

Dealing with Diversity or having the capacity to accept difference is as we already know a key issue for young people in Northern Ireland but one which is now being given due recognition is the issue Mental Health which of course incorporates issues such as stress.

A report into Mental Health by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Republic of Ireland) in June 2009 stated that it 'is clear that when considering the negative impacts on mental health, self-image, bullying and family are the three issues to the fore in young people's minds. In addition, school, relationships with significant others, death, peer pressure and isolation are all important.

Many of these issues came up in our research and therefore suggest that a need to focus on Mental Health is a pressing one. The same report goes on to say 'the importance of having a well-resourced youth café or club to hang out with friends in

a safe environment was considered of paramount importance in maintaining positive mental health.'

We know only too well the importance of a safe space for young people but one where young people are not only participating in activities but actively engaged in all levels of the club can bring benefits to positive mental health.

This view is reinforced in a report investigating the role of youth clubs in supporting mental health. 'Somewhere to talk – Someone to listen' states that 'Youth clubs provide many of the resilience building factors associated with positive emotional wellbeing, such as increased social support and participation. These strengthening factors enhance young peoples' ability to cope with and survive adversities in their daily lives.'

We also know that positive mental health can also have a positive bearing on young people's ability to deal with diversity. The role of centre-based work cannot be underestimated - nor too can the role that Clubs for Young People NI plays and/or continues to play in supporting the work of youth clubs 'on the ground' through providing a wide range of services to registered clubs.

Strengths and Areas for Improvements

In February 2010, ETI (Education and Training Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of provision in the Dungannon area and commented that one of the strengths of the service in the area was *the effective management of, and commitment, at all levels, to increasing participation that is clearly understood and accepted by the young people.*

Clubs for Young People has a role in continuing to support the work of clubs in the Dungannon area and with an already established membership (including those that took part in this research) then this potential can be fully exploited.

In the Derry area, work has been on-going with a number of groups including some of those who took part in the research. There is much potential here to build upon this work and use the connections to develop participation-based approaches to promote programmes that engage young people in Dealing with Diversity and Positive Mental Health.

In an effort to promote these kinds approaches there is still a need to ensure that the issue of Participation remains prominent in youth provision. A Summary Evaluation Report of The Big Deal Programme by ETI in January 2011 highlighted that 'the active participation of children and young people in strategic decision-making in the youth sector remains an area for further development.'

The need to continue to strengthen participation through pro-active approaches to Dealing with Diversity and Promoting Positive Mental Health can be achieved at the outset through on-going CYPNI programmes including the wide range of sporting activities it currently co-ordinates which provides a foundation to increase engagement with clubs in those areas stretching from Derry to Dungannon.

The importance of Sport in this context cannot be underestimated as was highlighted in an ETI report compiled in 2009. Set up to evaluate the context in which children and young people engage in sport it found that 'approximately one-quarter of the young people reported themselves as not fit enough to participate in sports and physical activities' and that in 'line with the 'Fit Futures' agenda, there is a need to place an appropriate focus on establishing levels of fitness across the age bands, on taking part and on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.'

CYPNI has a wide range of activities it can offer young people through their membership with CYPNI registered clubs. Using sporting activities as an outlet to engage young people it can build a rapport with a view to implementing Diversity and Mental Health programmes and this is where the focus of CYPNI should now turn towards.

Under Context we highlighted four key themes that CYPNI should consider in it's current output: Active Participation, Social Inclusion, Equality and Rights. In order to begin to this process there are a number of recommendations listed below which will give CYPNI some steer in this direction. They are of course only recommendations and are not exhaustive and should only be taken as a guide to moving forward.

They are as follows:

- Initiate a series of events that will raise discussion among youth service personnel and members regarding the promotion of Diversity and Mental Health
- Consider current output and how this relates to addressing and/or promoting Diversity and Mental Health in a meaningful way
- Carry out further work on areas of Active Participation, Social Inclusion, Equality and Rights so as to inform policy and practice
- Develop a co-ordinated approach among member organisations by engaging in further discussions around the four themes
- Engage member organisations in a series of events that explore existing programmes and how they address the four themes
- Seek out funding opportunities and work in partnership with member groups to deliver programmes across geographical remit
- Develop and/or implement a series of Training events on the four key themes

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- Teenage Mental Health: What helps and what hurts? Report on the outcome of consultations with teenagers on mental health
- Somewhere to talk – Someone to listen - The Role of Youth Clubs in Supporting the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- '*The only game in town*' Embedding a culture of participation in youth provision, Findings from research into participation across youth provision in the Western Education and Library Area, WELB, 2006
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Appendices

Statements used during Phases II (Exploring Issues) & III (Individual Interviews)

1. Young people are involved in the making of decisions that directly affect them e.g. the day to day running of their club, the activities that take place on a day-to-day basis.
2. Young people are involved in the making of decisions that affect their club as a whole
3. Young people are able to participate in other ways within the club
4. Young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision making outside of their club, e.g. schools, sports clubs etc
5. Young people are able participate in public decision making within their communities, e.g. community strategy, local action plans, etc. for the local area?
6. There is an opportunity for young people to be involved with the formulation of a community action plan, in connection with local and/or regional development initiatives
7. Young people are aware of youth participation structures and structures / organisations e.g. local Council's or NI Youth Forum
8. Staff/volunteers are aware of youth participation structures and structures/organisations e.g. local Council's or NI Youth Forum
9. You engage/interact with other projects or organisations with regards to youth participation
10. Your participation in decision making could be further developed
11. You and your club would be interested in local, regional, national or international Youth Participation programmes
12. There is fair and equal provision for the following groups in the youth club:
 - Young Women & Girls' Work?
 - All Age groups - Under 10/11-15/16/Older
 - Young People with Disabilities
 - Young Catholics and Protestants (mixed)?
 - Young People from Minority Ethnic backgrounds
13. Adult Leader/s, e.g., youth workers, sessional workers etc, contribute positively to participation at the club
14. Adult Staff, e.g., caretaker, cleaners, admin, etc contribute to positively participation at the club

15. Adult Volunteers contribute to positively participation at the club
16. Your club is a well resourced facility with e.g., Sports hall; Dance; Internet Cafe etc?
17. Programmes encourage young people to participate in the life of the club, e.g., diverse and engaging with accreditation?

Issues identified during Phase IV (Exploring Issues II) - Open Space Session

Workshops Identified:

- Cyber-Bullying
- Natural disasters
- Talk about stress
- Do protests work?
- Why are we not all rich and famous?
- Why are there no young people with disabilities in youth clubs? Where are they?
- Why are we not famous?
- Why don't politicians come to rural communities?
- Internet Safety
- Why I don't like school because it's for only girls
- We should pick our own teachers
- Celebrity – why is it so important?
- Why are we in a recession?
- Why are people so self-conscious?
- Why do you have to wear a helmet driving a bicycle?
- Rural Transport

Feedback from Group Discussions

Cyber-Bullying

People writing cruel things about each other on the internet, people gang up on each other, people get depressed and feel suicidal with it happens to them, people can feel embarrassed about what is said about them as all their friends can see it. Different forms – emotional, cyber, psychological, physical, mental, social exclusion, name calling, girls are worse – boys tend to be more physical

Celebrity

Why is it important? Critiqued celebrities – overpaid, complaining, young people based on image of celebrity, plastic surgery, fake, selfish, only human, show-offs (attention seeking), wealthy – big issues, betrayed and portrayed by the media, footballers are ballerinas; **How do people become celebrities?** Looks, style, people of influence, family background, higher than life – invincible; **What you need to become a celebrity?** Talent, good looks, lucky, agent, know someone

famous, access to internet, webcam/youtube/twitter/facebook, know-how, a certain level of intelligence, reality-tv, personality/confidence/termperament; conversation also about various celebrities – good, bad and indeifferent and different levels of importance – some also highlighted some 'heroes', 'role models'

Why don't politicians come to rural communities?

Nobody has contacted them to come out – more facilities would attract more politicians and get publicity.

Internet Safety

One login lock, post less into it (status), watch on webcam without knowing, no age range (13), advertising houses

Stress

We talked how and why you got stress, then we talked about to control it – boyfriends, studying, moving house, exams, school, family problems, people, make up, life, exercise, yoga, health, acting, marriage, ma, da, all friends, talking to someone, disease, stress, jobs, bills, money, studying: suggestions – acting, music, yoga, talking to someone, exercise, stress ball, smoking

Statements used during Phase V to 'test' issues raised

1. There's not enough facilities for young people
2. Young people don't have enough rights – they should be allowed to do more
3. Parents are too strict – they expect too much of you at home
4. Northern Ireland would be a more friendly place if more people from across Europe lived here
5. The general costs of products in shops such as clothes, food, etc is just about right
6. There are too many young people taking drink and/or drugs
7. There is too much pressure at school to perform well
8. Young people should be able to get into pubs and clubs
9. There is too much violence against young people
10. Using the internet to leave negative messages about people is bullying
11. Celebrities are good role models for young people
12. Politicians are not really interested in young people
13. Young people should be restricted from using the internet so as to protect them
14. Young people suffer from stress just the same as adults
15. Young people should be able to get into pubs and clubs
16. There is too much violence against young people

NI Youth Sector Youth Work Priorities

1. Safety - Spaces and living with stability
2. Gender Issues
3. Discrimination – LGBT Youth, Ethnic minorities, Travelling Community, etc
4. Child Poverty and social disadvantage
5. Disability
6. Parenthood with a focus on young parents including young fathers
7. Risk-Taking Behaviour
8. Future Prospects
9. Health including mental health, emotional well-being and alcohol/drug abuse
10. Transport
11. Information and Support
12. Perception of Young People in the Media and in 'the Adult World'
13. The Voice of young people - continued consultation and reference to views and opinions and respect for the views of children and young people
14. Enabling young people to participate in decision-making on issues that affect their lives
15. Partnership with other education providers
16. Dissemination, Training and Awareness-raising of the UNCRC and of children and young people's rights/respect for rights
17. Economic and environmental well-being
18. Contributing positively to community and society
19. Enjoying, learning and achieving
20. Play and leisure
21. Children and young people in alternative care and leaving care
22. Short-term funding and its impact on service delivery
23. Volunteering opportunities

What ensures young people will engage?

Opportunities	'Decision Making is serious business'	Generating/ Sharing Ideas	Opportunity to be heard	Sharing experiences/opinions	Friendship
Recognition	Certificates	Incentives & Money/ financial reimbursement	Achievement	Profile	
Personal	Socialising	Fun	Personal Development	Relevance to career/education	Connections with other people/meeting with peers
Worker	Support	Mentoring	Positive Relationships	Information	
Practical	Duration - succinct	Central locations (ease of access)	Small Groups	Variety/ Choice of activities	Training
Principles	Equality/Respect	No Hierarchy	Team Work	Commitment from Adults	Partnership with adults
Focus	Addressing Issues important to young people	Debates/ Discussions			
Benefits	Seen to be making a difference	Can impact on their lives/lives of others lives	Makes connections with other projects	Unique	