



YOUTH WORK + EMPLOYABILITY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
A EUROPEAN ISSUE & A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE



Seminar Report

24 -26 March 2015, Belfast, Northern Ireland



Acknowledgements

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) is indebted to the Centre for Effective Services, Include Youth, YouthAction NI, Youthnet, and the National Youth Council of Ireland for their contribution to the planning and successful implementation of the seminar.

YCNI is grateful to the international contributors for taking the time to prepare for, travel to and present at the seminar; and along with the local contributors for exchanging their knowledge, expertise and experience of engaging young people in employability initiatives.

Thanks also to all those who attended and engaged so positively throughout the event. Special thanks to Dr John Bamber for chairing and steering the event on the day.

This report was compiled by Cathy Brolly, Graduate Intern at the Centre for Effective Services, Belfast.

Illustrations by Patrick Sanders

Contents

Background and Introduction	4
The Contributors.....	5
Welcome	6
Exploring Practice.....	7
Estonia.....	8
Ireland	9
Northern Ireland	11
Feedback and Analysis: Practice Session	12
Partnership with Business and Employers.....	13
Belgium	14
Germany	16
Northern Ireland	17
Feedback and Analysis: Partnership Session	18
The Policy Context	20
Germany	21
Ireland	23
Northern Ireland	25
Feedback and Analysis: Policy Session.....	26
Policy Session Question Time Panel.....	27
Next Steps.....	29
Appendix 1: Programme for the Day.....	30
Appendix 2: Participant Evaluation	31
Appendix 3: Table discussion questions and guidance	33

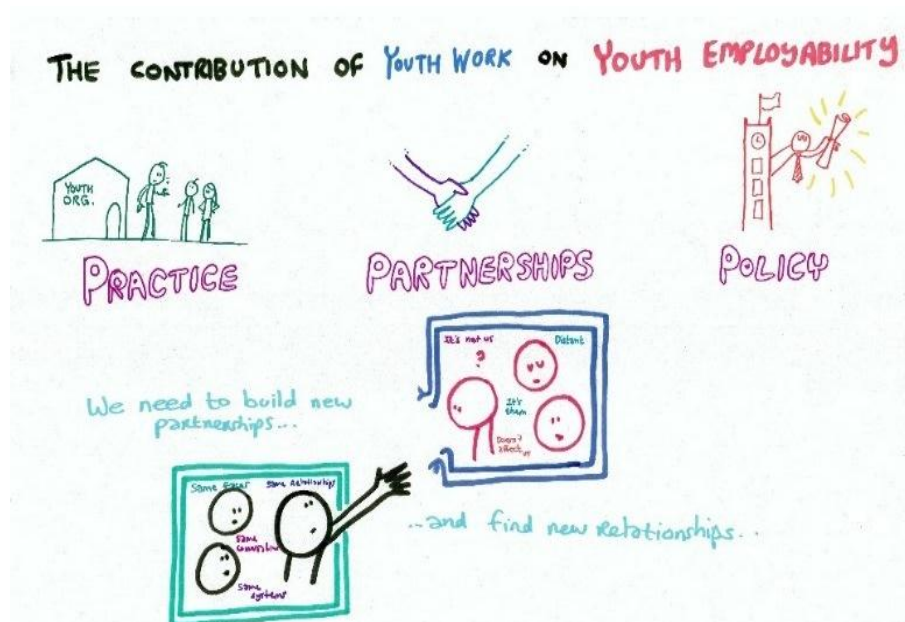
Background and Introduction

On Wednesday 25th March 2015, the Youth Council for Northern Ireland hosted 'Youth Work + Employability – a European issue and a European perspective', an interactive seminar designed to illustrate and explore the contribution of youth work to young people's employability, with specific consideration of those furthest away from the labour market, but not exclusively.

The event took the form of a 'learning/knowledge exchange' around three thematic areas:

- Practice
- Partnership (with employers and the business sector)
- Policy

It included a European dimension, with eight contributors attending from Belgium, Estonia, Germany and Ireland.



The event was facilitated by Dr John Bamber of the Centre for Effective Services (Dublin and Belfast). John is also the main author of the European Commission Expert Group Report on *"Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability"*.

The seminar took place in Belfast and was aimed at practitioners, managers, employers and policy/decision-makers. 56 people from 25 organisations across the Northern Ireland voluntary, community, statutory and business sectors participated across the day.

The event was co-ordinated and funded by YCNI and planned in co-operation with the Centre for Effective Services, Include Youth, YouthAction NI, Youthnet, and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

For further information and background reading on the contribution of youth work to young people's employability, visit www.ycni.org and follow the links for [Youth Work+ Employability](#)

More information:

European Commission Expert Group Report: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

The Contributors

Northern Ireland:

- **John Bamber:** Project Specialist at the Centre for Effective Services (CES) (Belfast and Dublin)
- **Dearbhla Holohan:** START Programme Coordinator at Include Youth (IY) (co-presented with **Pete Wray**, START youth worker with NI Alternatives)
- **Clare Conlon:** Team Leader of the Training Unit within YouthAction Northern Ireland (co-presented with **Walter Radar**, representing The Rotary Club of Belfast)
- **David Broadhurst:** Further Education Policy and Strategic Development, Department for Employment and Learning NI

Ireland:

- **Donal Kelly:** Work Winner Project Coordinator, Tipperary Regional Youth Service (TRYs)
- **Marie-Claire McAleer:** Senior Research and Policy Officer at the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

Estonia:

- **Kaisa Orunuk:** Project Manager at the Estonian Social Insurance Board
- **Pille Soome:** Project Manager of the 'Children and Youth At Risk' programme, Department of Children and Families, Ministry of Social Affairs

Belgium:

- **Jeroen Bels:** Staff Member at JES city lab
- **Thomas Surmont:** Staff Member at JES city lab, Antwerp

Germany:

- **Tim Pieper:** Project Manager for 'Strengthen the Youth: 1000 Chances', Junior Chamber International (JCI) Germany
- **Tina Jansen:** Public Officer in the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

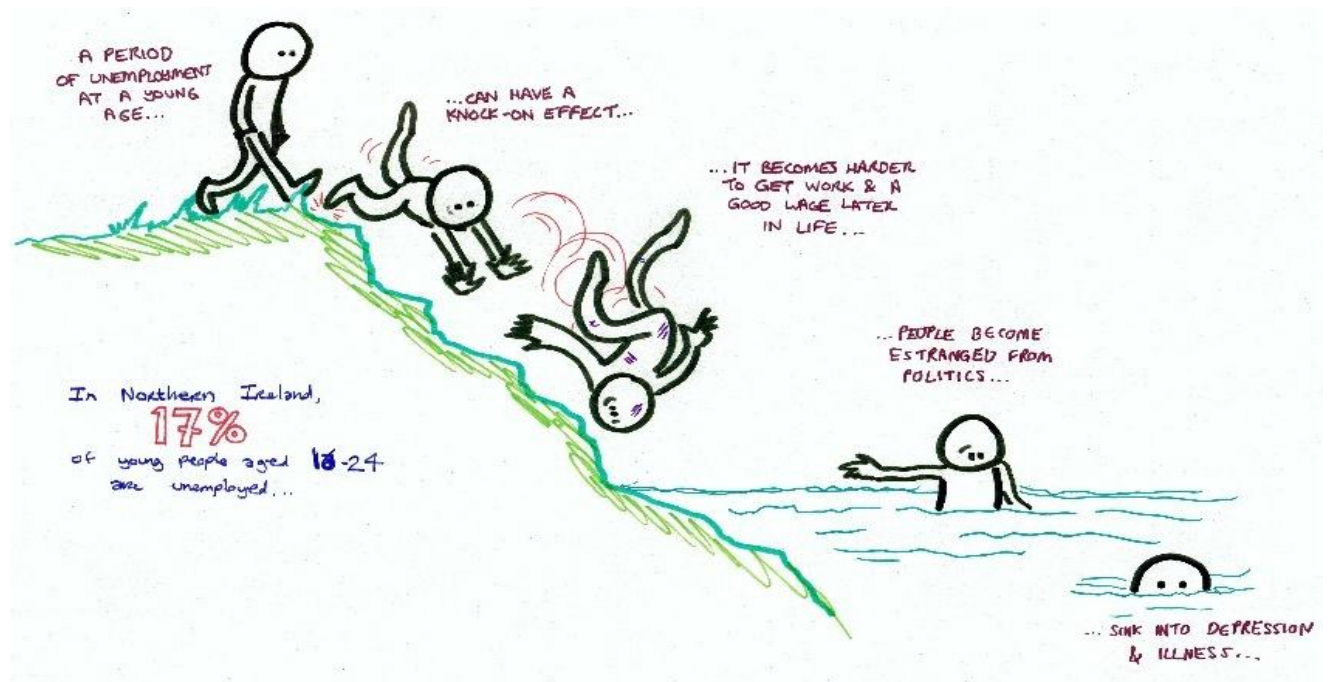
Welcome

David Guilfoyle, the Chief Executive of YCNI, opened the seminar by welcoming all attendees and contributors, providing an overview of the event and setting out its aims: "to explore the contribution of youth work to young people's enhanced employability"; and "to enable those within and outside youth work to get a deeper insight into what youth work does and how it does it".

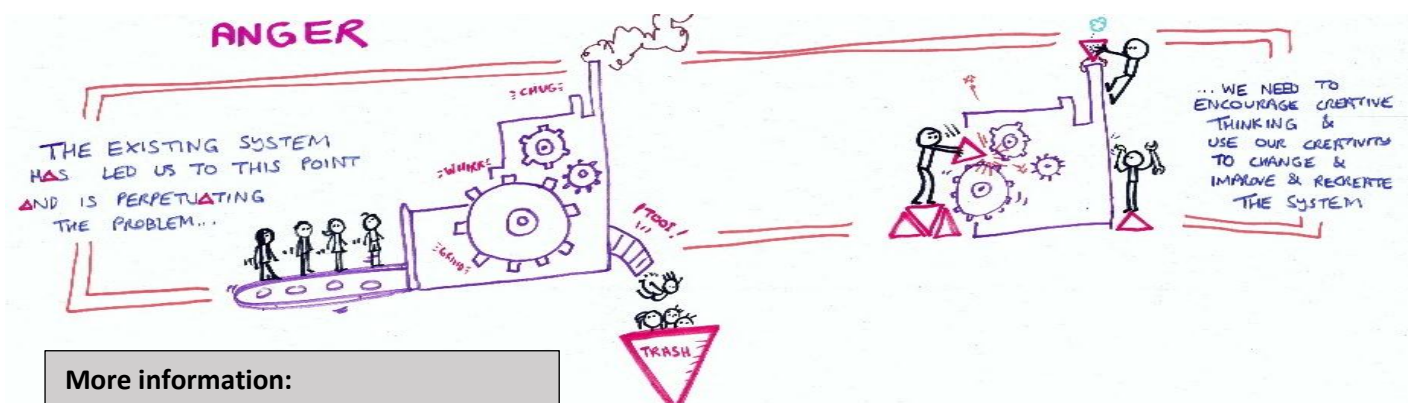
Attention was also drawn to the key purpose of youth work; "to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential".

Context

This was followed by [a presentation from Dr John Bamber](#), who set the context for the event by discussing youth unemployment across Europe and in Northern Ireland, the consequences of this, and policy responses to youth unemployment.



In concluding his presentation John stressed: "we are not starting from scratch. What we have to do is to come together to build on the knowledge and the practices that we already have".



More information:

YCNI: <http://www.ycni.org/index.html>

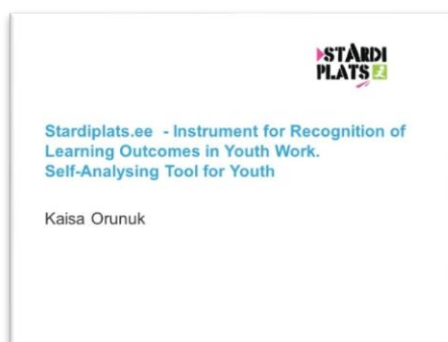
CES: <http://www.effectiveservices.org/>

Exploring Practice

The first three presentations from Estonia, Ireland and Northern Ireland highlight the relevance of youth work programmes to the aim of enhancing young people's employability.



Estonia



Stardiplats.ee – Instrument for Recognition of Learning Outcomes in Youth Work. Self-Analysing Tool for Youth presented by Kaisa Orunuk

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of Estonian Social Insurance Board:

- This is a government authority, operating within the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- Role in society includes providing individuals with statutory pensions, allowances, benefits; providing victim support and conciliation services; and child protection.
- Board is involved in piloting and implementing regional support units that aim to channel national policy related to children, youth and families to the local level.

What is Stardiplats?

- A web platform, managed by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, for youth to create CVs in preparation for entry into the labour market.
- Aims to enhance youth employability through better recognition, by universities,

employers, and young people themselves, of competencies gained in non-formal learning contexts.

- Online CV includes information on Learning Experiences (e.g. studies, trainings, youth camps), Work Experiences (e.g. jobs, volunteering), Additional Information (e.g. public speaking, published creations, hobbies), and Skills (e.g. languages, logical/mathematical competence, computer skills, entrepreneurship).
- Used as a tool in work with young people by youth career councillors, open youth clubs, and youth workers, and is linked to Youth Pass, Europass, and Volunteer Pass.
- Website also hosts additional resources such as self-analysing tools measuring communication types, character strengths and capabilities, and information on work experience opportunities.

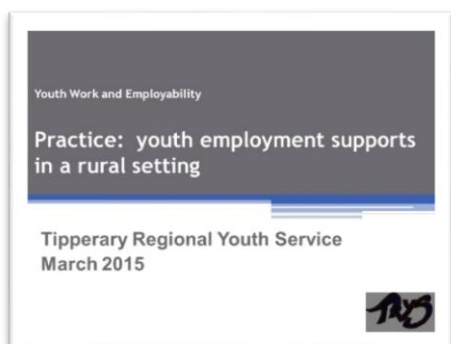
More information:

Estonian Social Insurance Board: <http://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/?lang=en>

Stardiplats: <http://www.stardiplats.ee/>

Estonian Youth Work Centre: <http://www.entk.ee/eng/estonian-youth-work-centre>

Ireland



Youth Employment Supports in a Rural Setting *presented by Donal Kelly*

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of TRYs:

- A voluntary, integrated youth service that works with young people aged between 8 and 25 years in small rural towns in Co. Tipperary.
- Mission is to “work through a rights-based, youth-led approach to foster learning, innovation, hope and high expectations in young people, their families and their community”.
- 2020 Activation Programme – 18 month programme that works with 24 young people aged 20-25, supporting them into employment – current programme almost completed with 11 young people already progressed to employment or further training.

TRYs Youth Employment Services:

- Involved in youth employment since 2009 – have engaged with 207 young people.
- Work in partnerships with other agencies in the area such as the Education and Training Board (ETB), the Department of Social Protection, local development companies and local employers.
- Shorter programmes (under 12 weeks) – REACH programme, Learning to Fly, Tipperary Enhancement Programme, Wheeler Dealer Programme.
- Work Winner Model – 22 week programme that works with 20 unemployed young people aged 18-25 at a time.

Key Features of Programmes:

- Targeted at those furthest from the labour market.
- Combines long term work placement in small local businesses with additional skills based training and ongoing one to one support/mentoring.
- Young person driven.
- Voluntary participation.
- Youth-work approach.

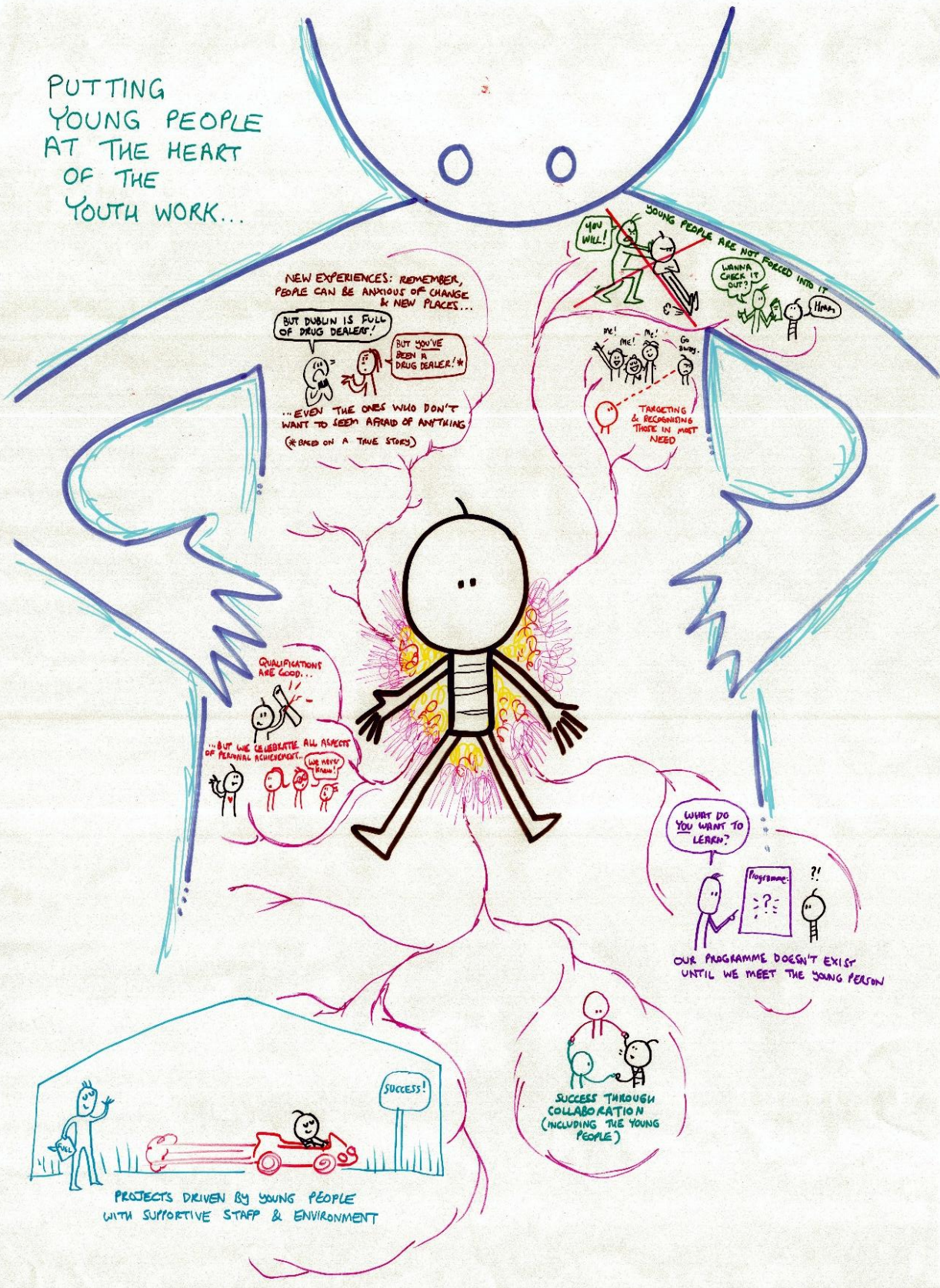
Challenges of a rural youth employment programme:

- Limited choices, employment, training and education opportunities, and limited range of supports.
- Transport – lack of public transport, distance.
- Mobility – small town mentality, fear.

More information:

TRYs: <http://www.trys.ie/>

PUTTING
YOUNG PEOPLE
AT THE HEART
OF THE
YOUTH WORK...



Northern Ireland



Youth Work and Employability presented by
Dearbhla Holohan and Pete Wray

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of Include Youth:

- An independent non-governmental organisation that actively promotes the rights, best interests of and best practice with disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.
- Undertakes activities aimed at influencing public policy and policy awareness in areas of youth justice and education, and employment and training. Also works directly with young people to improve their employability.

IY employment services:

- Give and Take Scheme – aims to increase the employability, self-esteem and confidence of vulnerable young people aged 16-21 who are not ready to participate in mainstream training.
- Give and Take: One-to-One Project – works with young people who have been identified as having experienced, or who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.

- New Leaf - discreet project within Give and Take Scheme targeted at young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour.
- Aiming Higher – mentoring project which matches young people with experience of care with mentors.

START programme:

- Employability programme which supports young people aged 16-24 who need education, training or employment.
- Main aims of the programme are to increase the self-esteem and confidence of participants and to make them more employable.
- Takes a youth work approach and involves employability, personal development and mentoring, adventure learning, essential skills, volunteering and diversity days.
- Delivered by IY in collaboration with YMCA Lisburn, NI Alternatives, and Youth Initiatives.

More information:

Include Youth: <http://www.includeyouth.org/>

Feedback and Analysis: Practice Session

After each set of presentations there were round table discussions among attendees regarding what they had just heard. Each table had a facilitator who led the others through the discussion, and a recorder who noted the key points of the discussion.

Attendees at each table were asked to consider how the presentations they had just heard were relevant to their own organisational practice; what are the enablers and barriers to effective youth work practice in the area of employability; and what action they could take away from the session that would enhance their work with young people.

With regards to the **relevance of the presentations to attendees' own organisational practice**, some of the main points from the discussion were: the importance of translating young people's skills and competencies to employers and matching them with employers' needs; finding new ways to show informal skills and learning on CV's; the importance of involving the young person in their own learning process and co-designing the programme around and with the young person; and the importance of collaboration and links with employers. There was also much discussion around the value of youth work and the importance of celebrating youth work.

A number of common **enablers of effective youth work practice** that contributes to young people's enhanced employability were identified in the table discussions. These included: the young person being central to the work and starting at where their needs lie; building good relationships with both the young person and business and community partners; and using a creative and flexible approach.



Funding was identified as the main **factor/issue/barrier that acts as a blockage to organisations enhancing or sustaining effective practice**, particularly the short-term nature of much funding and difficult funding applications. Other barriers to effective practice that were identified in the table discussions included: the 'small town mentality' and environment in rural areas; the lack of a coordinated approach; and a lack of knowledge about what is happening elsewhere.

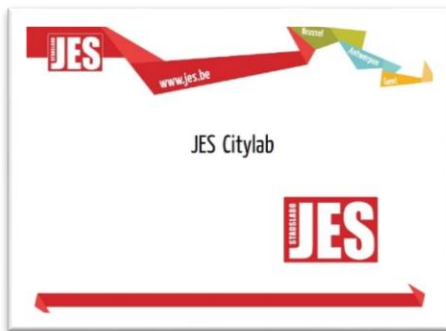
Finally, with regards to **what they could take away from the session**, attendees identified a number of realistic and practical actions and ideas. These included: bringing young people out of their comfort zone and encouraging them to take ownership of their own programme; how to get employers and others to recognise what youth work actually does; the importance of needs led programmes; and trying to get a better awareness of what is already out there.

Partnership with Business and Employers

This session, which included presentations from Belgium, Germany and Northern Ireland, explored the relationship with employers and the business sector. Participants looked at whether or not youth work should be collaborating more with such agencies; and considered the potential dangers and rewards of this work.



Belgium



JES Citylab presented by Jeroen Bels and Thomas Surmont

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

What is JES?

- JES is an urban laboratory which is constantly developing new innovative projects for young people in the cities of Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent.
- Target group are young people aged 6-30, of whom many are low-skilled and have a migrant background.
- JES projects are situated in various areas such as leisure, training, culture, education, wellbeing, sports and employment – JES works in an integrated manner so a project is often situated in different areas simultaneously.
- The competences and talents of young people have a central place in the work of JES, as does the participation of young people.

Youth Competence Centres (YCC):

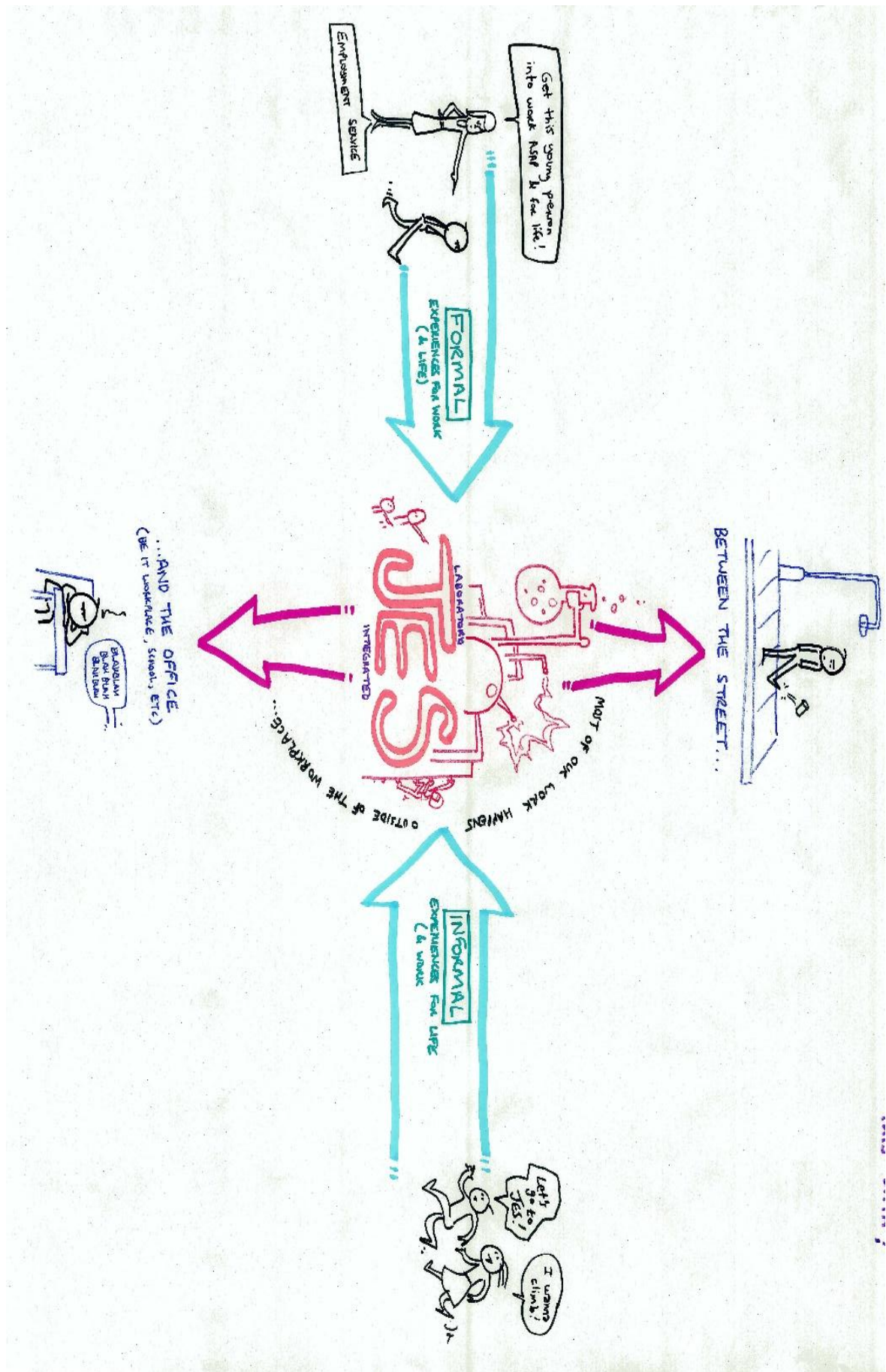
- Accessible centres for young people in Antwerp that provide integrated activities regarding leisure time, competencies and work.
- Explicit learning and development spaces that empower young people with a view to personal development, and increased social orientation and participation.
- YCC Partnership: City of Antwerp; Flemish Employment Service; Public Centre of Social Welfare; Civil society organisations (JES)

More information:

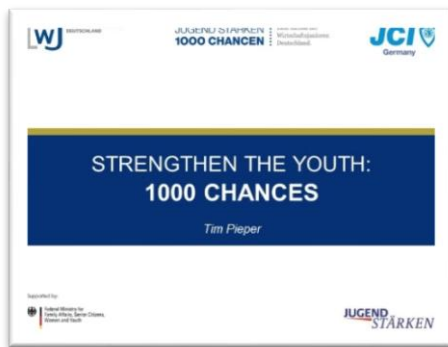
JES: <http://www.jes.be/>

Youth Competence Centres:

<http://www.jesexpertise.be/downloads/049.pdf>



Germany



Strengthen the Youth: 1000 Chances presented by Tim Pieper

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of JCI Germany:

- Non-profit organisation of young active citizens aged 18-40 who are engaged and committed to creating impact in their communities.
- Biggest German association of young leaders and entrepreneurs with more than 10'000 active members under the age of 40.

'Strengthen the Youth: 1000 Chances' Programme:

- Aims to support socially disadvantaged young people like young school dropouts or teenagers with a foreign background in order to (re)connect them with the working society.
- Local JCI organisations and individual members offer help through different projects and activities such as mentoring, internships or job application trainings.
- Target group – deprived young people aged 12-26 with problems in their transition from school into the working environment.

Impact of Programme:

Results of an independent evaluation in 2014:

- 77% of young people felt motivated to care about their vocational training after participating.
- 54% gained a better knowledge of their opportunities in the labour market.
- 77% found it interesting to get to know a real businessman/women.
- 75% want to participate in the project again.

Trainee for a Day:

- A new yearly nation-wide event which gives socially disadvantaged young people the chance to be a trainee for one day.
- Young people invited to the companies of JCI members to accompany a real trainee through his/her working day – get a realistic insight into the job and responsibilities of a trainee.

More information:

JCI Germany:

https://en.wjd.de/wjd_wer_wir_sind_en.WJD?ActiveID=15645

Northern Ireland



Get Set: Working in Partnership presented by Claire Conlon and Walter Rader

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of Youth Action NI:

- A membership-based, regional youth organisation that works with young people to tackle inequalities in their lives.
- Tackling youth unemployment is a key priority through pathways to increase skills, qualifications and employability of young people.

Working in Partnership: Background and Context:

- Youth Action sought to enhance their youth employability initiatives by building better partnerships and developing additional links with the business sector.
 - To extend the range of opportunities for young employed people.
 - To tap into business skills and developmental opportunities of private sector employers.
 - To support a process of relationship building between young people and business people.
 - To develop innovative, creative and supportive business partnerships in working with young people.

GET SET to Go (GSTG):

- A series of one day skills events led by business partners who plan and lead practical, skills based workshops for young people.
- Activities include interview skills, 'dragons den' entrepreneurial workshops, CV support, goal-setting.
- Careers Service hold one-to-one sessions with young people to follow up on information provided in the workshops.

Impact of GSTG:

- Over past two years – 12 regional GSTG skills days involving 44 business partners and attended by just over 680 young unemployed people.
- Young people report:
 - 60% increase in knowing what skills they need for jobs.
 - 60% increase in feeling more motivated to get a job or access training.
 - 90% said they felt more confident in applying for jobs.

More information:

Youth Action NI:

<http://www.youthaction.org/>

Feedback and Analysis: Partnership Session

For the partnership session round table discussion, participants were asked to consider the relevance of the presentations to their own work and experience; how they think employers rate young people and what is the possible role of youth work in enhancing these perceptions; how they would rate their understanding of employers' needs and whether youth work should have a stronger role in validating young people's development to support the needs of employers; and what they could take away from this session that would further enhance partnership and co-operation with employers or the business sector.

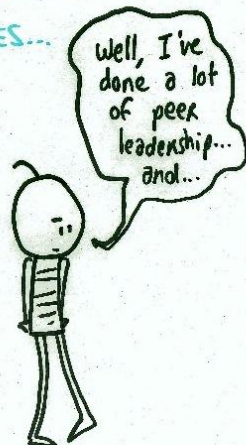
Overall, it would appear from the table discussions that attendees found the presentations in the partnerships section **relevant to their own work and experience**, particularly with regard to the struggle of bringing together the business world and young people. There was much discussion around managing expectations on both sides as employers often do not have a good understanding of vulnerable young people. While some found the European perspective helpful, others noted that it was important to recognise the context in Northern Ireland (i.e. 80-95% of businesses in Northern Ireland are small and medium sized enterprises), and to be aware that there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

With regards to **employers' perceptions of young people**, there was a mixed response from attendees. While a few believed that employers rated young people negatively, others were of the opinion that employers did actually have time for young people and that they enjoyed "giving something back". **Youth work was thought to have a role in enhancing employers' perceptions of young people** through awareness raising programmes for employers and drawing out the potential in young people, as well as supporting the development of practical and interpersonal skills - "how to shake hands". Some of the **potential rewards and dangers for youth work** in this were identified as better support structures and valid partnerships and sending young people out before they were actually ready.

Overall, participants believed that there are still a lot of knowledge gaps with regards to their **understanding of employers' needs**. However, youth work was thought to have a role in addressing employers' needs and could do this through the accreditation of informal learning, the provision of support and role models, and the empowerment of young people to negotiate challenges. Some of the identified **issues for youth work that are associated with this** include a requirement for more business skills, providing relevant opportunities, and knowing when to pull away from the young person and place more of the responsibility on them.

Finally, participants discussed what **one practical thing or realistic action they could take away from the session** that would further enhance partnership and co-operation with the business sector. The majority of participants stated that they would take away from the session the importance of building good relationships with businesses and sharing good practice. Other actions included identifying employers' needs and what specific employers want, and the recognition that it is a long term process.

YOUTH WORK CAN GIVE
YOUNG PEOPLE SO MANY
USEFUL SKILLS, CONFIDENCE,
COMMUNICATION SKILLS,
SELF-RELIANCE
& EXPERIENCES...



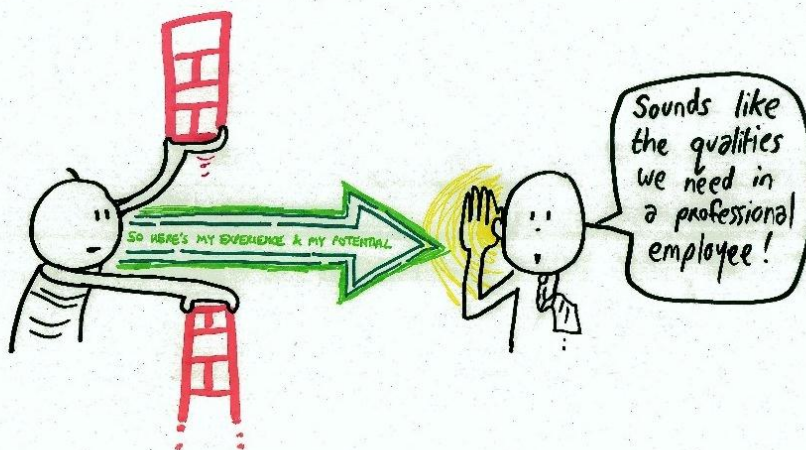
...BUT HOW DO WE HELP
EMPLOYERS SEE THEIR POTENTIAL?

SORRY - I don't understand
how that's relevant - where
are your QUALIFICATIONS?



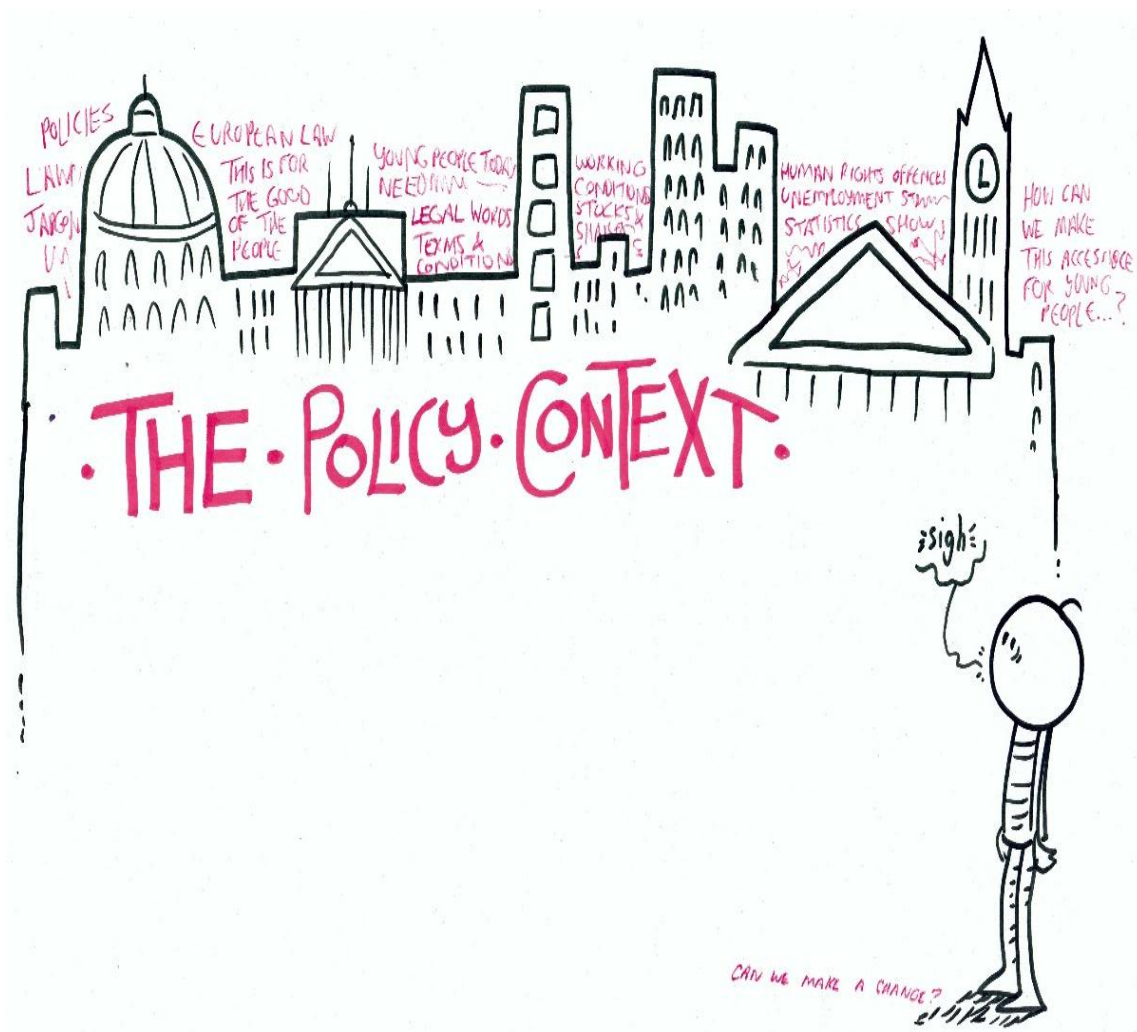
...WE CAN HELP YOUNG PEOPLE
EXPLAIN THEIR QUALITIES IN A
LANGUAGE EMPLOYERS UNDERSTAND...

...AND HELP EMPLOYERS
TO SEE BEYOND A
LIST OF STATISTICS...



The Policy Context

The afternoon session explored public policy relating to young people and their employability/employment. The aim was to increase participants understanding of what youth work can offer to the achievement of government policy as it relates to young people and their employability.



Germany



ESF – Pilot Programme: Encouraging Youth in the Neighbourhood presented by Tina Jansen

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

What is 'Encouraging Youth in the Neighbourhood'?

- Part of the 'Encouraging Youth' initiative - comprises two nationwide programmes (one of which is 'Strengthen the Youth: 1000 Chances') which offer support for socially or otherwise disadvantaged young people facing different challenges whilst making the transition from learning to employment.
- Pilot programme – January 2015 – carried out by 185 local youth authorities in Germany who were able to tailor the programme to their local needs.
- Characterized by strong link between support for young people and support for neighbourhoods with a development priority.
- Co-financed by the European Union; Developed/Co-financed/Administered and steered by Federal Government; Brought into agreement with Bundesländer (Federal States); and Implemented and co-financed by 185 local authorities.

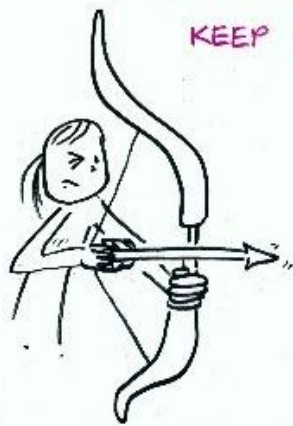
Challenges of setting up the programme and implementation:

- Danger of "frazzling/dilution and overloading – keep target groups and targets clear.
- Different interests of federal and local level.
- Multi-stakeholder structure slows processes and makes it difficult to predict time lines.
- Risk of not achieving target values.
- Bureaucratic barriers despite efforts to minimise this.
- Connecting grantees, exchange of ideas and best practices.
- Too many EU requirements (especially concerning output and impact measurement).
- Tailored support for 185 local authorities which are all quite different.

More information:

ESF: <https://www.jugend-staerken.de/unsere-programme/jugend-staerken-im-quartier.html>

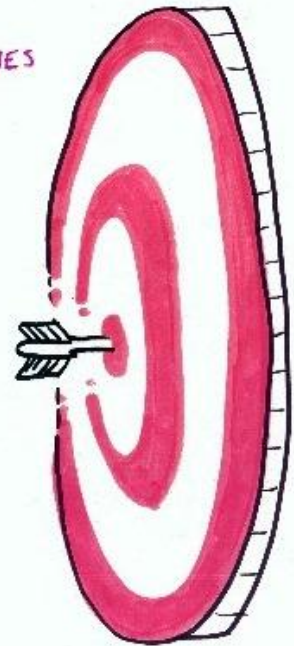
Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/>



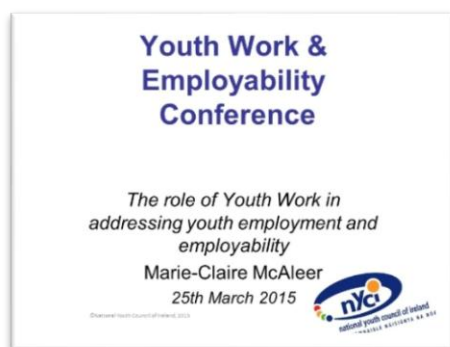
KEEP YOUR TARGETS & YOUR TARGET COMMUNITIES
CLEAR & CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT...



...BUT THE APPROACHES DIFFERENT
ORGANISATIONS TAKE MAY VARY & ADAPT...



Ireland



The role of Youth Work in addressing youth employment and employability presented by Marie-Claire McAleer

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

Overview of NYC:

- The representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland.
- Represents and supports around 50 voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.
- Seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society.

The Youth Guarantee (YG):

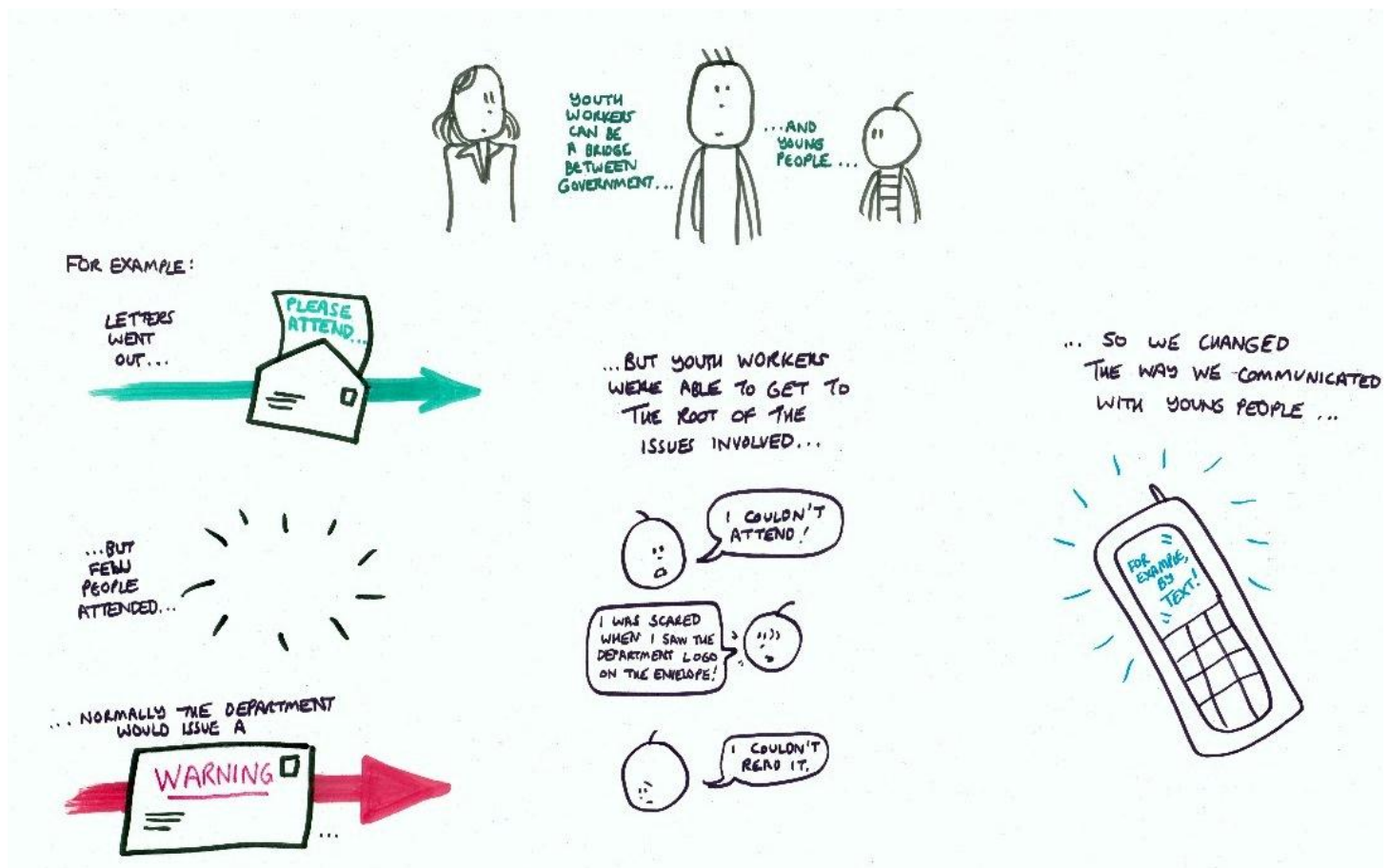
- EU Youth Guarantee prioritised under Irish EU Presidency 2013 – Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) very supportive of youth work sector role in YG but lead department, the Department of Social Protection (DSP), thought they could engage young people through formal channels.

Ballymun Pilot Study:

- NYC invited by DSP to be partner in the YG pilot in Ballymun (a Dublin suburb).
- Rationale for participation – opportunity to showcase Youth Work and for Youth Work sector to contribute to youth employment policy.
- Role of Youth Workers – to advocate for young people and liaise with DSP; to work with range of other local agencies to deliver the project; and to support the participation and feedback of young people.
- Positives – increased opportunities for young people, and also to work with more of the target group; opportunity to contribute to design and redesign of initiative; opportunity to build partnerships and contacts with other local agencies, and also to highlight role and value of Youth Work.
- Negatives/Challenges – conflict between values of Youth Work (e.g. voluntary participation) and labour market policy; young people are not a homogenous group and was still a struggle to reach the most marginalised; significant amount of time required with no additional resources.

Important Lessons:

- Youth Work sector should be clear about its role and its capacity to contribute from the start.
- Youth Work sector needs to engage with other sectors and raise their awareness of what the sector can contribute.
- The sector needs to be aware of potential conflict between Youth Work values and labour market policy.
- The sector should be aware of its' unique role as a bridge between young people and the Public Employment Service.
- Sector should acknowledge that it can't reach everyone.



More information:

National Youth Council of Ireland: <http://www.youth.ie/>

Irish Youth Guarantee: <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Youth-Guarantee-Ireland.aspx>

Ballymun Youth Guarantee: <https://ballymunpilot.wordpress.com/>

Northern Ireland



Review of Youth Training presented by David Broadhurst

Click on the image opposite to see the full presentation

More information:

Department for Employment and Learning:

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/>

Review of Youth Training Interim Report:

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/del-youth-training-report.pdf>

Overview of Department of Employment and Learning (DEL):

- Aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

Review of Youth Training report:

- Interim report of the review of youth training published for public consultation in November 2014.
- Key policy proposals:
 - A new youth training system, available to all young people aged 16-24, that facilitates progression into an apprenticeship, further education or sustained employment.
 - A flexible system with two routes: Employed route for those in starting a new job or in an existing job and Non-employed route.

Learning from International Best Practice:

- MBO system in the Netherlands: Key case study of effective VET at upper- secondary level. Trains young people through either school-based training and a structured work placement or work-based training for youth in employment.
- 48-hours initiative in Denmark: Young people given practical

assignments relating to a problem a company was facing.

- Traineeships in Wales: Focuses on giving young people the skills needed to progress to further education at a higher level, an apprenticeship or employment. 67% of leavers in 2012/13 having a positive progression to employment or further education.
- Trade Committees in Denmark: Play key role in designing the curriculum for their sectors and in quality assurance measures.
- Registration of host employers in the Netherlands: In conjunction with local colleges, the Foundation for Co-operation between Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market, recruits, accredits and monitors firms in relation to the quality of work placements delivered through VET.

Next Steps:

- Link proposed approach with ongoing pilot testing activity.
- Explore opportunities to pilot elements of proposed approach.
- Develop the branding and marketing of the youth training system.
- Scope out the development of the new baccalaureate-style professional and technical award.

Feedback and Analysis: Policy Session

Participants were asked to consider the relevance of the presentations to their own organisational or own country's work with young people in the area of enhancing employability; how can we better 'package and promote' the value of youth work (or a youth work approach) to those engaged in public policy and decision-making; and what they would like to ask the panel (see below for more information).

With regards to the **relevance of the presentations**, participants believed that tensions between meeting the needs of the labour market and the pure experience of youth work, and the disconnection between policy makers and on the ground workers, was especially relevant to their own organisational or country's work. Other issues from the presentations that were identified included: the need for a better way to recognise the impact of the informal sector; the need for a clear role for youth work; and increased awareness of the capacity of youth workers. Participants were also asked to identify **what stood out to them from the presentation as especially interesting or challenging**. Responses to this included: the challenge of describing the role of youth work; how funding often depends on meeting targets which is in conflict with youth work principles and values; and what input do young people and youth workers have in relation to policy-making?



Participants in the table discussions identified a number of **options for better 'packaging and promoting' the value of youth work or a youth work approach**. These included: impartial/objective evaluations and research to show that the youth work approach is value for money in increasing employability; better marketing about what youth work does including helping young people to better explain the impact of youth work on their lives; and stronger relationships, trust and engagement with officials and other networks. One table pointed out that youth work can be sometimes seen as a "soft option", and that it is therefore the responsibility of youth work to engage with policy makers and identify key champions.

Policy Session Question Time Panel

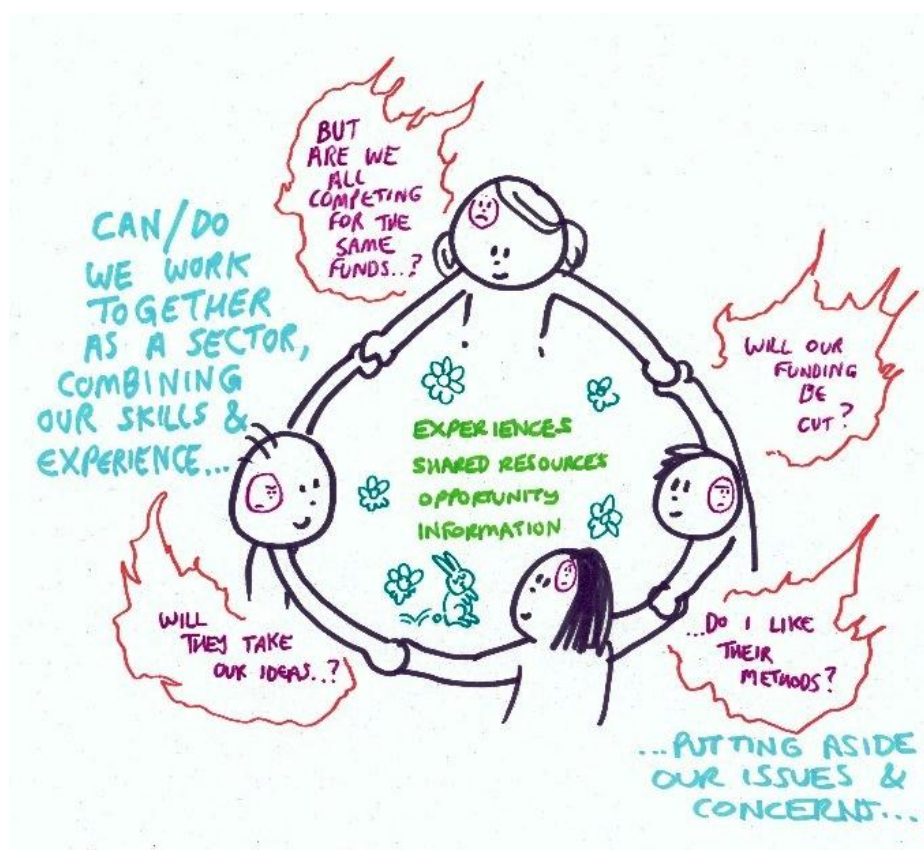
Following the policy session round table discussions, the three presenters from the session (Tina Jansen (Germany); Marie-Claire McAleer (Ireland); and David Broadhurst (Northern Ireland)) formed a panel and responded to questions from the audience.



Marie-Claire responded to this question and advised that young people will engage if the offer is something that they are interested in. The importance of 'thinking outside the box' and being creative was also emphasised. Thomas Surmont and Jeroen Bels who presented on partnership in Belgium also commented that youth work has to meet young people's needs but that this is almost never funded by the government, and that working with young people is a long term process, making it very difficult to record all of the small steps in this process.

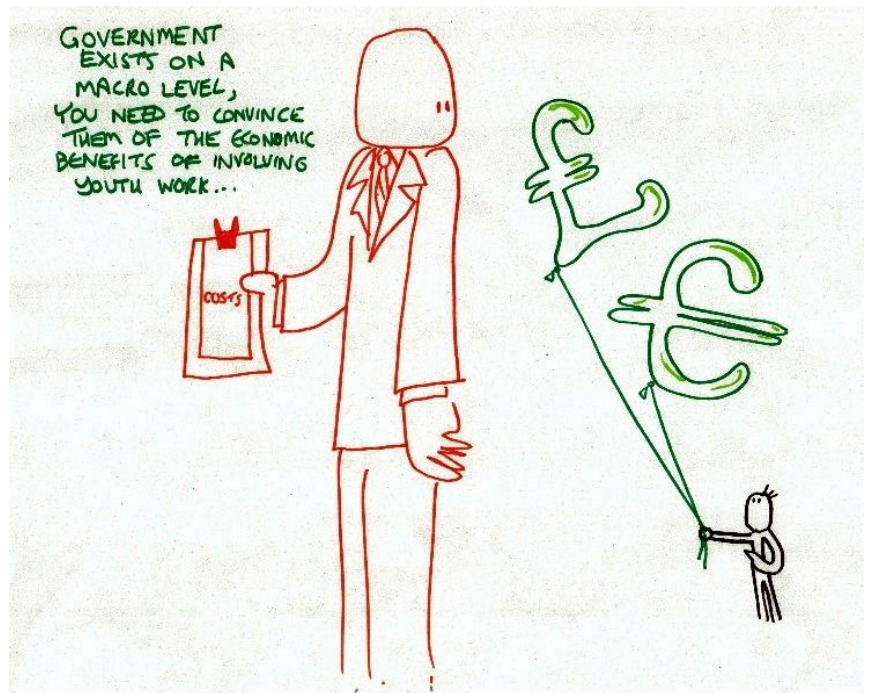
Q.2. "How did you form and sustain such strong partnerships?"

This question was directed at Tina who responded that they initially started with just some of the 185 local authorities and conducted workshops with them. However, the main issue proved to be how to sustain these relationships. A member of the audience commented that because Northern Ireland is so much smaller than Germany, there should be more opportunities to engage with local authorities.

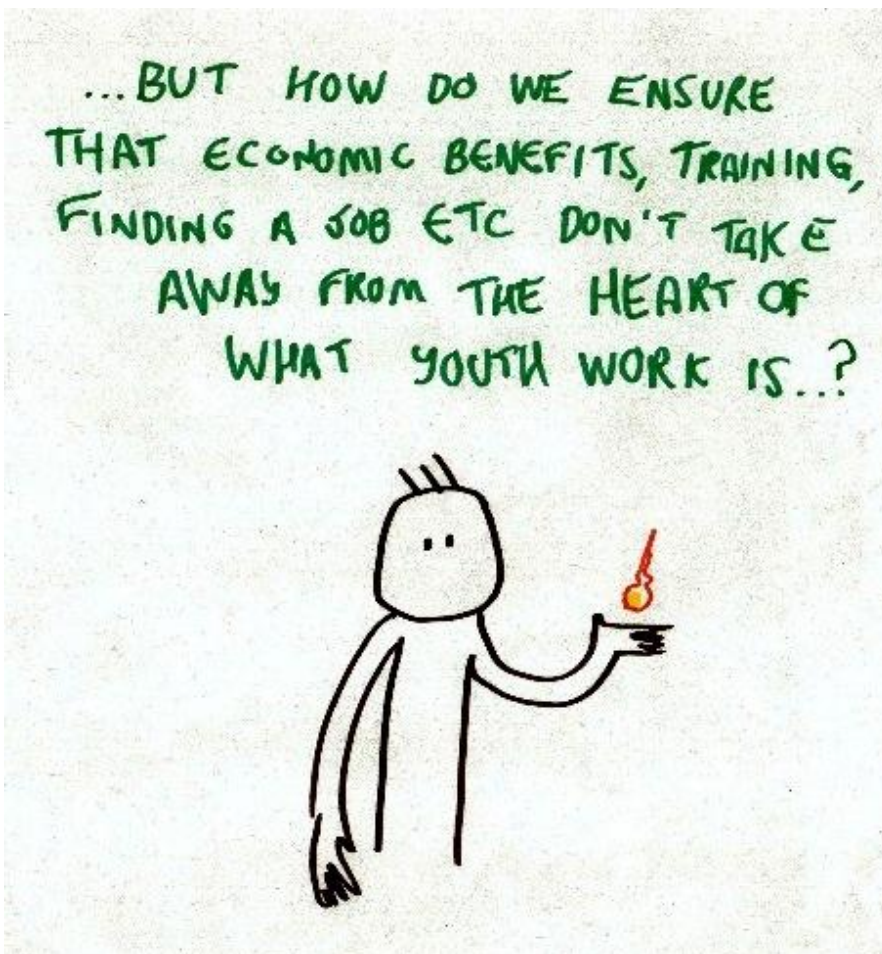


Q.3. "What helps youth work get recognition?"

Marie-Claire suggested that a combination of political lobbying and communication, and economic assessment of youth work would help increase recognition of youth work. Tina advised that the best measure to promote youth work is local authorities showing, though data, that money can be saved through youth work.



Q.4



David responded that while policy writers are conscious of the support that is needed by young people, there is, unfortunately, no easy answer to this.

Next Steps

Planning Group Reflection

The planning group and contributors met on the morning of Thursday 26th March to reflect on the event and explore the value, potential and focus of any future collaboration. Those attending the meeting reported very positive feedback from participants at the seminar the day before, which reflected their own opinion of it being a successful event. The European dimension, coupled with the advertised role of Dr John Bamber as facilitator, were identified as having added significantly to the interest in, and subsequent success of, the seminar. Three indicators of the relevance and value of the topics selected by the planning group for discussion were:

1. Almost all those registered to attend the event, did so;
2. The high number of attendees who “voted with their feet” and stayed for the whole day;
3. The consistently high energy levels demonstrated by participants throughout the day.

The use of an Illustrator to capture and reflect in images the inputs and outputs of the event was also felt, by both the planning group and contributors, to have had a positive impact on the participation of attendees.

Future Collaboration

Following a discussion on the format, style and length of this report the discussion moved to exploring collaboration.

Those attending highlighted and shared information on some of the other European collaborative projects there were either working on or working-up, for example, developing

an online method of recognising soft skills and using peer-learning in the validation of soft skills. It was felt that there were significant opportunities for the individual organisations involved to build on the links and connections made during the planning and implementation of this seminar. Therefore it was agreed that if the partners in this venture were to work together again it should be at a strategic level, e.g. to identify an issue and seek to influence or effect change at a national policy level.

There was recognition of the time commitment involved in such work, especially to embed a culture of partnership rather than an “alibi partnership”, and one that is not dependent on individuals. It was also recognised that to work-through an issue you need a mix of the ‘right’ people (national level reps), willingness and trust.

Some initial suggestions for further collaboration were around the recognition and validation of the outcomes of youth work, “how do we convince the non-believers of the value of a youth work approach?” There was consensus that this would be about taking a strategic approach, engage young people, practitioners and policy makers, perhaps involve a residential experience (European Youth Centres), and make use of cascade processes.

Next Steps

The meeting was concluded with agreement that there would be value in a further discussion on a North/South Ireland basis with the wider planning group and contributors kept informed of the progress or otherwise.

Appendix 1: Programme for the Day



Wednesday 25th March 2015

9.30	Registration, Tea and Coffee
10.00	Welcome and Introduction - David Guilfoyle
10.05	The Issue at Hand and Context - Dr John Bamber
10.15	Exploring Practice - Estonia - Tipperary Regional Youth Service - Include Youth
10.35	Round table discussion
11.05	Break/Networking
11.30	Feedback and Plenary - Dr John Bamber
11.40	Partnership with Business and Employers - JES, Belgium - Junior Chamber International, Germany - YouthAction NI
12.00	Round table discussion
12.45	Feedback and Plenary
13.00	Lunch
14.00	The Policy Context - Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany - National Youth Council of Ireland - Department of Employment and Learning NI
14.30	Round table discussion
15.00	Question time panel
15.30	Closing Remarks and Next Steps - Dr John Bamber - David Guilfoyle

Appendix 2: Participant Evaluation

Following the conference, a feedback survey was circulated to all participants by the YCNI. Participants were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of the event, as well as the following questions:

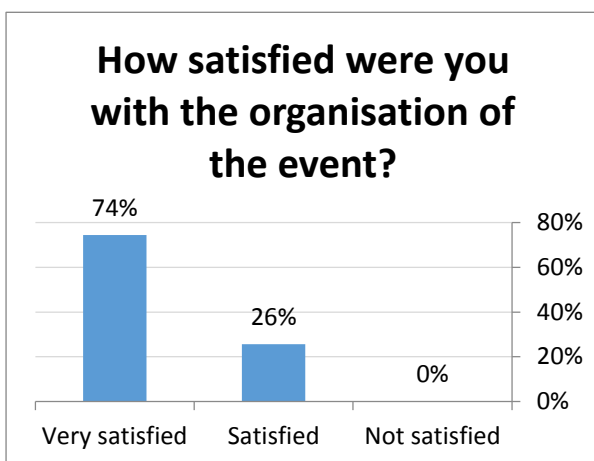
Q1. What did you find most useful about the event?

Q2. Any other comments, feedback or observations on the event or the issue of Youth Work + Employability?

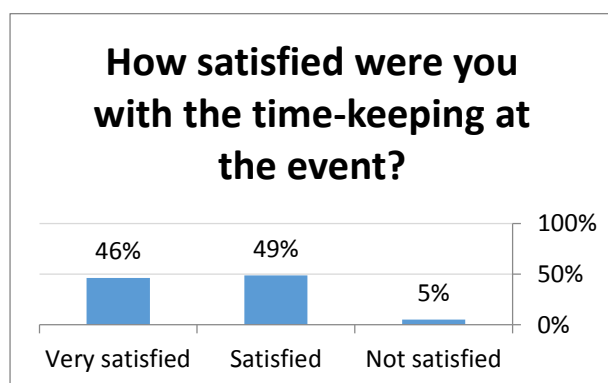
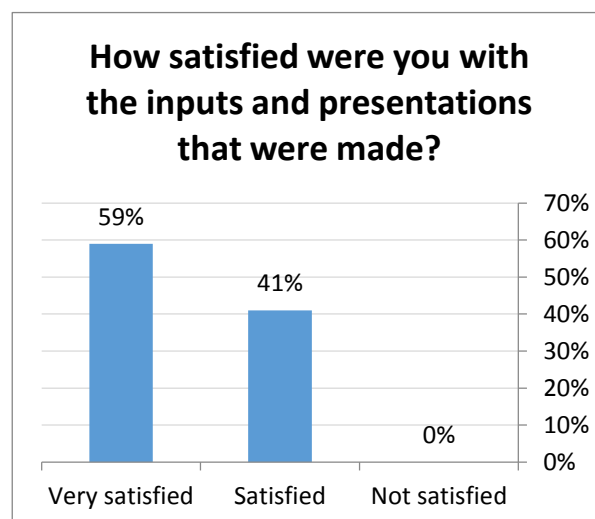
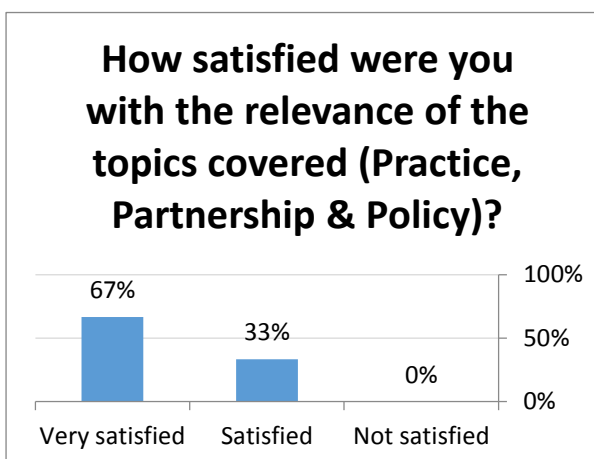
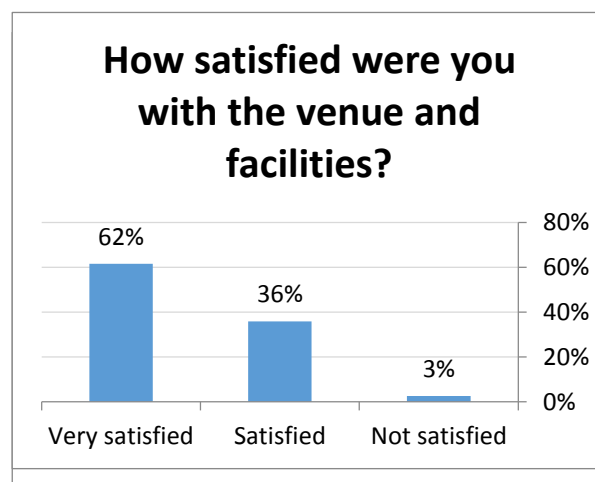
Q3. What would you suggest as a theme or issue to explore at future YCNI events (including shorter lunch-time events)?

Q4. If you had one piece of critical reflection on the event, what would it be?

39 individuals (i.e. 70% of attendees at the event) completed the survey. Below is an overview of the results.

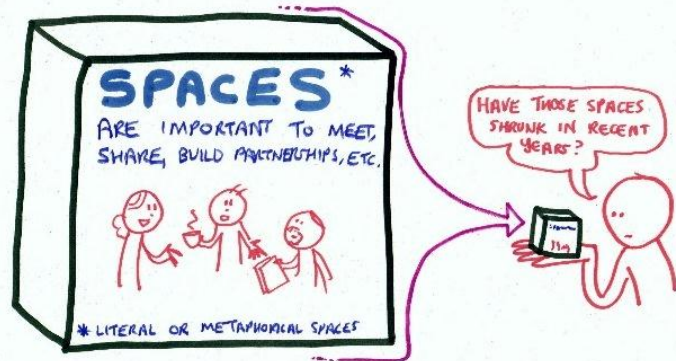


Overall, it would appear that attendees were very **satisfied** with the organisation of the event, the venue and the facilities, the relevance of the topics covered, the inputs and presentations that were made, and the time-keeping at the event.



The majority of respondents to the feedback survey identified the opportunity to hear from a wide range of groups from different countries with varied experiences, and the opportunity to share good practices as the **most useful thing about the event**.

Other useful elements of the event identified by attendees included the round table discussions following the presentations which gave participants the opportunity to discuss good practice and generate ideas, and the opportunity to network and develop new contacts.



Other comments on the event included praise of the 'MC', Dr John Bamber, and this point made by one attendee: *"really great to have such a cross section of projects and experience at the one event"*.

Respondents also suggested a number of possible **themes/issues that could be explored at future YCNI events**. These included: partnership working (both locally and at European level); evidence in youth work; practice to policy links and how to influence policy-makers; effective funding of youth employment programmes; workforce development; creative ideas for engagement; partnering with overseas projects.

With regards to **critical reflection on the event**, the number and timing of the presentations appeared to be an issue for a small number of attendees, with the majority stating that they would have liked more time for group discussion. Some respondents also suggested that more time should have been given to each presentation as some of the speakers, especially in the later stages of the day, were a bit rushed.

Appendix 3: Table discussion questions and guidance



Practice Session

A facilitator has been appointed at your table who will lead you through the planned discussion.

They will ask you to introduce yourself; just name, job title or role and organisation. We have allowed **2 minutes** in total for introductions.

A recorder has also been appointed at your table. They will be noting the key points of the discussion only. Following the event, a short summary report, not attributing comments to individuals, will be posted on the YCNI website for downloading, along with copies of the individual presentations.

Q1. Thinking about the presentations you have just heard, were they relevant to your own organisational practice in the area of enhancing employability?
If so, in what way did they relate? **(5 Minutes)**

Q2. In your work with young people, in particular those furthest away from the labour market, what **ENABLES** effective (youth work*) practice that contributes to their enhanced employability **and** what are the critical factors, issues or barriers that are a **blockage** to your organisation enhancing or sustaining effective practice? - How can these be overcome? **(18 minutes)**

*Recognising that not everyone at your table will be from a youth work background

Q3. From what you have heard in the presentations and our discussions, is there **one** practical thing or realistic action you can take away from this session that would further enhance the employability of the young people you work with? **(5 minutes)**



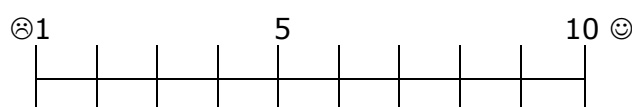
Partnership Session

Before we get started; on a 1-10 scale answer the three questions below

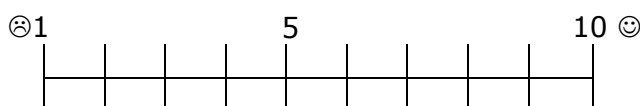
Don't think too much about the questions; just give a 'gut-reaction'

1 is very limited ☹ - 10 is brilliant ☺

Q1. Reflecting on all 3 together, how would you rate the relevance of the presentations you have just heard to your own work or experience?



Q2. How do you think employers rate young people generally?



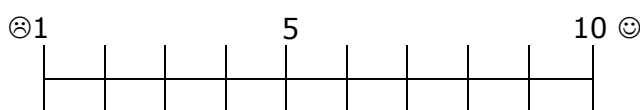
“What role, if any, has youth work* in enhancing employers / businesses perception of young people?”

What are the potential rewards and dangers for youth work in this?

12 minutes

*Recognising that not everyone at the table will be from a youth work background, what do they think the youth work sector needs to consider?

Q3. How would you rate your understanding of employers' needs?



Linked to this question we want you to consider:

“Should youth work have a stronger role in validating or accrediting young people's development to support the needs of employers?”

What are the issues for youth work associated with this?

12 minutes

Q4. From what you have heard in the presentations and our discussions, is there one practical thing or realistic action you can take away from this session that would further enhance partnership and co-operation with employers or the business sector?

8 minutes

Policy Session

Q1. Thinking about the presentations you have just heard, were they relevant to your own organisational or your country's work with young people in the area of enhancing employability? What stood out for you as interesting or challenging?

8 Minutes



Q2. How can we better 'package and promote' the value of youth work* (or at least a youth work approach) to those engaged in public policy and decision-making?

15 minutes

*Recognising that not everyone at the table will be from a youth work background, what do they think the youth work sector needs to consider?

Q3. From what you have heard in the presentations and our discussions, is there **one question** you would like to pose for the panel (which will be made up of the 3 people presenting)?

5 minutes



Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Forestview, Purdy's Lane

Belfast, BT8 7AR

Phone: 028 9064 3882

Email: info@ycni.org