

YOUNG VOICES

Have Your Say

How can young people be more included in society, especially those who are not in employment, education or training?

Summary Report



INTRODUCTION

This research was part of the 'Young Voices - Have Your Say' series of regional consultations with young people on how they can be more fully included in society. 'Being included in society' means feeling like you are an important part of and involved in the world around you, for example, with your family and friends, in your school, area and clubs. The 'Young Voices- Have Your Say' consultations were part of a European programme called 'Structured Dialogue' which gave young people all over Europe a chance to influence decisions that affect their lives. The consultations in Ireland were conducted by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the National Youth Council of Ireland, on behalf of the National Working Group on Structured Dialogue.

WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT ?

This report tells you what was found out in consultations about how young people who are out of education, work and training can be better included in society.

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO ?

We spoke to young people, youth workers and experts (people who make policies and decisions in government, youth organisations and other organisations).

HOW DID WE SPEAK TO THEM?

- ➔ 274 young people who attended the Youth Day event in Croke Park in May 2013 had the chance to have their say in workshops and by leaving comments on large placemats in a special 'zone' during the day. There was a very positive response from young people at the event and a large number gave feedback on the placemats.
- ➔ 13 focus groups (group interviews) were carried out with 84 young people who are:
 - ➔ not in employment, education or training
 - ➔ from the Traveller community
 - ➔ parents
 - ➔ in care
 - ➔ in a Youthreach programme
 - ➔ graduates (finished college)
 - ➔ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT)
- ➔ Youth workers filled out a survey.
- ➔ Experts got together to talk.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT ?

Here is a summary of what we found out from the consultations. Findings are listed from the most to the least mentioned points:

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WHAT HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MAKING CHANGES ?

The main things we found that could help young people with making the following changes in their lives were:

Primary to secondary school:

- Learning more **hands-on subjects** and **life skills** in secondary school
- **Better** teaching methods
- Support from **family and friends**
- Open Days
- 'Buddy' systems

"There should be free education in college."

Secondary school to college/training:

- Free **education** and **grants**
- **Better** career guidance
- Changing the '**points system**'
- Open Days
- **Access programmes** that help young people go on to college
- **Transition programmes** that help young people settle into college



Education to getting a job:

Help with getting ready for **interviews** and **writing CVs**

Work placements

Learning **business skills** in all college courses

More information on **careers and jobs** in schools and colleges

More jobs for young people who have finished school/college

Support from family and friends

“More practical, relevant and interesting subjects in school so students would care more and stay in education.”

“There should be rent allowance for young people starting off on lower wages”

Living at home to moving out:

Grants and cheap rent

Learning **social skills** and **life skills** in school/college

Support from family, friends and your community

More Information about **living on your own**, e.g. leaflets and websites aimed at young people

Help with **finding somewhere to live** and living on your own for young people who do not have family to support them, e.g. **young people in care**

“High unemployment may bring a bad reputation to the community.”

“Being at home all the time causes arguments, (I’ve) nowhere to go, if I do, I get hassled from Gardaí.”

FAMILY AND COMMUNITIES

Not having enough money

Stress, fighting and relationships breaking up in families

Mental health problems among young people

Drink and drug problems

Young people leaving Ireland to find work

Homelessness

Crime, anti-social problems, racism

Young people leaving school early

Teenage pregnancy

Positive effects of young people being out of education, work and training included the chance to learn new things, start a business, travel, get involved/help in local projects, spending more time with your family and communities working together to help young people

What are the effects of young people being out of education, work and training?

The key effects of young people being out of education, work and training on families, communities, the economy and Ireland were:

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THE ECONOMY

- Less taxes for the government
- More people on social welfare
- Businesses closing
- Poor education and skills among people looking for jobs
- Young people leaving Ireland to find work
- Lack of foreign companies setting up business in Ireland because of poor education and skills among the workforce

“No jobs so no taxes in Ireland.”

IRELAND

- More mental health problems
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem among people
- More crime and anti-social problems
- Need for more social welfare benefits and pressure on government services
- People leaving Ireland to get work
- People have no money
- Young people leaving school early

“More mental health issues.”

“Asking what the young people are interested in rather than teaching them stuff they don’t want to know.”

STAY IN SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND TRAINING

Change the way young people learn in school, e.g. less exams, continuous assessment, more project work, more fun, personal development courses, online learning

Support from family and friends

More information and career guidance on higher education courses and training from teachers/guidance counsellors

Free education and grants paid on time

Better relationships between pupils and teachers and better teacher training

More information on the importance of staying in school

More work experience

More sport in schools

More Youthreach places

Extra supports for young people who need it, e.g. young people with learning difficulties, young people with mental health problems

Anti-bullying, anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies in schools

Better preparation for college/training in schools

Give young people a voice, e.g. through student councils

What helps young people stay in education, work and training?

The consultation shows that the following things could help and encourage young people to stay in school, college and training, get jobs and stay in work and take part in youth programmes and other projects:

“More awareness via social media.”

GET JOBS AND STAY IN WORK

- More work experience for young people when they finish school/college
- Limit social welfare payments for those out of education, work or training
- Better pay, rights and opportunities for young people in work
- More information on finding jobs and work rights
- Career guidance in schools
- Help with interviews and CVs
- Free courses, e.g. personal development, youth leadership, job training, how to start your own business
- More jobs for young people with no work experience
- Pay young people who volunteer
- Youth exchanges
- Introduce a "Youth Guarantee" in Ireland, e.g. all young people aged 18-24 years are offered a job, work experience, apprenticeship or training within a certain number of months after leaving school or becoming unemployed
- Lower tax rates for young people and companies who take them on
- Equal work laws for all young people
- Give young people a voice, e.g. through student councils

"Better connections between schools and youth centres and groups."

TAKE PART IN YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND OTHER PROJECTS

- More information and better advertisement of youth projects and programmes, e.g. through schools, colleges, Facebook and Twitter
- Get young people to help design and run programmes and projects
- If it is friendly, welcoming, fun and free
- No bullying, discrimination or racism and everyone is included
- Wheelchair access
- Trips away and youth exchanges
- Lots of good programmes and projects to choose from
- Well-trained, friendly young leaders
- Good food
- Create links with schools and colleges
- Proper transport
- Activities to suit different age groups

"Put more government funding into providing work experience and jobs for young people when they complete training/college. Young people have no 'in' into the world of work."

We found that the following things could help improve young people's access to services, e.g. going to the doctor, finding somewhere to live, getting information, help and social welfare payments, to make sure they are not left out:

Up-to-date information aimed at young people on how to access services, e.g. websites, leaflets and walk-in information services

"I lost my rent allowance twice because I went on Youth Exchanges and couldn't sign on. I told them but they didn't know what it was."

Help young people with filling out forms

Better advertisement and spreading of information on how to access services, e.g. through TV, Facebook and Twitter

Employ Youth Engagement Officers in social welfare services

HOW CAN ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BE IMPROVED?

Easier access to mental health services

Make social welfare services and staff more young people friendly

"Better information about (social welfare) services - social network sites, TV advertising, media has a huge influence on young people."

"The (social welfare) staff need more social skills, more interpersonal skills and to be more patient."

HOW CAN YOUTH ORGANISATIONS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE BE INCLUDED ?



Organisations working with young people can make sure they are better included in society in the following ways:

Consult with young people in a meaningful way

Work together with other organisations

Share information on projects and programmes with young people and those working with them, e.g. through Facebook and Twitter

Provide good, easy to access, youth friendly services for all young people

Give support to young people who need it when projects and programmes finish

Stand up for young people

“All youth services should be able to identify and acknowledge the different cultures and backgrounds young people come from. Simple things like training events or having cultural nights would help youth services be more inclusive.”

“Being unemployed with nothing to do takes its toll, I think this youth service helps to prevent suicides from happening.”



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The European Steering Committee for Structured Dialogue looked at all the main points from consultations in Ireland and other European countries. Based on this information, they decided on the themes for discussion at an EU Youth Conference which was held in Lithuania in September, 2013. The outcomes of the discussions at the EU Youth Conference - where three young people who took part in these consultations represented your views - are part of a larger report on including young people and will also be part of an EU Council Conclusions (a type of 'pledge' to take action) on Social Inclusion. Click on the link below to see the EU Conference Conclusions of the Lithuanian Presidency:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/joint_conclusions_of_the_eu_youth_conference_in_lithuania_final.pdf

