

Research Report

IRELAND

**Competence development of youth workers & youth
trainers who work towards the social inclusion of
young people with fewer opportunities**



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Current situation in Ireland

Overview of Future in Perspective Ltd. (FIPL Ltd.)

Future In Perspective Ltd. is a private company working in the field of youth development, adult education, e-learning, digital media and social inclusion. The company focuses its work in six main areas:

1. Conducting research and analysis in the fields of education, business development and support, migrant integration, social inclusion, and rural development with a special focus on participatory action research;
2. Developing innovative continuous professional development training resources for youth workers, youth trainers and adult education professionals;
3. Developing bespoke training for entrepreneurs and business owners to support workplace learning;
4. Designing and implementing evaluation frameworks and conducting quality assurance audits and assessments;
5. Multimedia design and retraining, the development of media rich learning tools, resources and environments, and audio-visual production;
6. Developing overarching branding concepts and promotional campaigns for the community and voluntary sector and education providers to attract reluctant learners to lifelong learning.

The company generally works with organisations addressing the needs of those on the margins of society for whom traditional education and second chance education has failed and places particular emphasis on developing self-directed learning pathways to encourage the educational development of “Free Agent Learners”. FIPL harnesses the latest technologies in its service, offering target group members the opportunity to develop their key competencies in accessible blended learning environments.

FIPL work extensively with Youthreach, a national second-chance education and training programme targeting young people on the margins of society and economy, and Fit Kids/Fit Teens, a not for profit company working with young people through dance and drama in over thirty four locations along the east coast of Ireland.

Overview of youth work (formal, informal and non-formal)

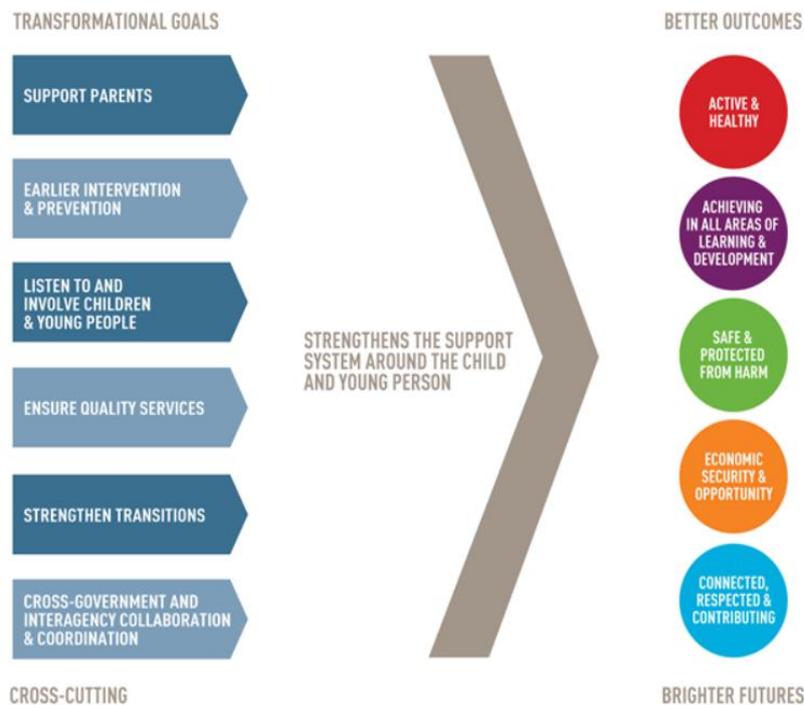
From the desk-research activities conducted, it is clear that youth work is quite a well-developed field in Ireland. Youth work in Ireland is based largely around the delivery of non-formal education programmes to all young people with a particular emphasis on those aged between 10 and 24. It is an inclusive field, with organisations providing project and group work activities for young people from all communities, social classes and cultures. Youth work services are primarily facilitated by voluntary organisations, with statutory support from the Department of Education and Skills, the Youth Affairs Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Education and Training Boards (vocational education providers).

The 2001 Youth Work Act, penned by the then Department for Education and Science, outlines the national structure which governs youth work in Ireland. The purpose of the Act is to help coordinate and further develop youth work programmes and services nationally, and to integrate youth work activities within the formal, informal and non-formal education structure in Ireland. The Act defines youth work as: *A planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.* (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2016)

Policy is developed by the Youth Affairs Unit (YAU) of the governmental Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In 2015 the YAU launched “Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020” This policy hopes to strengthen the support systems for children, young people, their parent and guardians, by identifying and pursuing transformational goals at all levels of service provision.

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The following diagram provides an overview of what this policy hopes to achieve.



The following organisations engage with youth work in Ireland:

Youth Reach have 110 centres throughout Ireland providing accredited and non-accredited training programmes for young people aged between 15 and 20 years. The initiative aims to provide young people who have left school early and have no qualifications, with knowledge and skills to progress to further education, training and employment. Programmes run from September to July each year with referrals accepted throughout the year.

Foróige is a leading youth organisation in Ireland, working with over 50,000 young people aged between 10 and 18 and operating within 26 counties in Ireland. The aim of Foróige is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their development and in the development of society. There are 614 Foróige Clubs and 160 Youth Projects; as well as the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programme, the Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship programme and the Foróige Youth Citizenship and Youth Leadership programmes. Foróige coordinates a number of national Drug Education and Prevention Projects as well as Teen Parent Support Programmes. Their Special Youth Projects target young people who are disadvantaged or at-risk of social exclusion. These are funded by the

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Education and Training Boards. Foróige projects are delivered through their volunteer-led youth groups. Activities vary depending on the needs or preferences of the people involved, and can include outdoor activities, personal development programmes, community and environmental work, sport as well as issue based programmes on youth and health related topics.

Comhairle na nÓg (Youth Council) is the national Youth Council of Ireland. There are 31 local and regional branches of the Comhairle composed of young people aged under 18. These councils give young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local programmes and policies for young people. Each of the 31 Comhairle branches has a steering committee comprising local government representatives, youth workers and youth advocates, policy-makers and community representatives, as well as two young people drawn from the local council

Jigsaw is a national service which is funded by Headstrong. Headstrong is a non-profit organisation which supports young people's mental health nationally. Jigsaw provides a free and confidential youth mental health support service for young people aged between 12 and 25.

Jigsaw works actively with this target group to promote positive mental health through one-to-one and group activities and by providing information on topics such as loss, depression, anxiety or distress.

National Garda Youth Diversion Projects are supported by Foróige. These are community based and supported youth development projects which aim to divert young people away from becoming involved (or further involved) in anti-social or criminal behaviour. These projects facilitate personal development and promote civic responsibility among young people through group activities. Young people who are identified as being at risk of becoming involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour are referred to these projects by An Garda Síochána.

The majority of young people engage with these projects have issues with alcohol, mental health, poor concentration levels, ADHD, ADD, and Dyspraxia.

Youth Work Ireland is the primary organisation working for the social and personal development of young people in Ireland. The organisation works with over 100,000 young

people, and their families and communities, on over 150 projects and through 300 youth clubs which have been established across the country. Fifty per cent of Youth Work Ireland's National Board is made up of young people. The services are supported by over 7,000 Garda Vetted volunteers who are trained in the 'Keeping Safe' programme.

Through a network of youth clubs, projects, drop-in centres, youth information centres, youth cafés as well as music, arts and citizenship programmes, Youth Work Ireland promotes an open, integrated and accessible approach to working with young people.

Overview of training provision for professionals working with young people

Most of the youth services in Ireland are staffed by volunteers who receive in-house training from the organisation. Paid employment is available but, while in the past relevant experience has been more important than a qualification, increasingly employers are asking for a recognised qualification. There are some youth work undergraduate or postgraduate courses available. However, most are full time, expensive and have specific entry requirements. The National Youth Council of Ireland provides accredited and non-accredited training designed for 'youth work practitioners, including youth workers, leaders and students, development educators, peer educators and youth work trainers. These include the following:

- Developing an Intercultural/Diversity Policy and Implementation Plan
- Intercultural Awareness and Cultural Competency
- Practical Supports for Doing Intercultural Youth Work
- Tackling Racism, Homophobia and Sexism
- How to design and deliver sessions on Inter-culturalism and Inclusion (2 day course)
- Exploring Inclusive Youth Work
- Embedding Diversity in Youth Work
- Designing a programme of activities on cultural understanding
- Child Protection
- Web safety in Youth work
- Designated Liaison Person Training
- Let's Beat Bullying - An organisational approach for the youth work sector
- Mindout: Mental Health Promotion Programme for Out of School Settings

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- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)
- Good Practice in Sexual Health Promotion
- B4U Decide/Delay Training
- Moment to Moment – Mindfulness for Youth Workers

Accredited arts related youth training courses

The **Certificate in Youth Arts** is a part time programme of study in Irish Youth Arts Practice. The programme is a partnership initiative of Maynooth University and the National Youth Council of Ireland Arts Programme and leads to an award of the National University of Ireland, placed at Level 7 on the National Qualifications Framework. The aim of the Certificate in Youth Arts is to *'further develop and enhance arts practice in youth work, so that more young people have the opportunity to experience arts in a non-formal educational setting as makers, creators, participants, audience members and critics'*. The overall cost of this programme is €1250.00 making it very expensive for a lot of youth workers who volunteer or are on low incomes.

The **Educational Training Board** (ETB) provide courses that are affordable or sometimes free for certain participant who might also qualify for a training allowance. Courses specifically for youth workers are limited but are available in some regions. One such course is ArtsTrain which is contracted by the City of Dublin ETB to Youth Theatre Ireland and provides accredited training in youth drama facilitation.

Statistical overview of youth unemployment and disadvantaged youth

Youth Unemployment Statistics

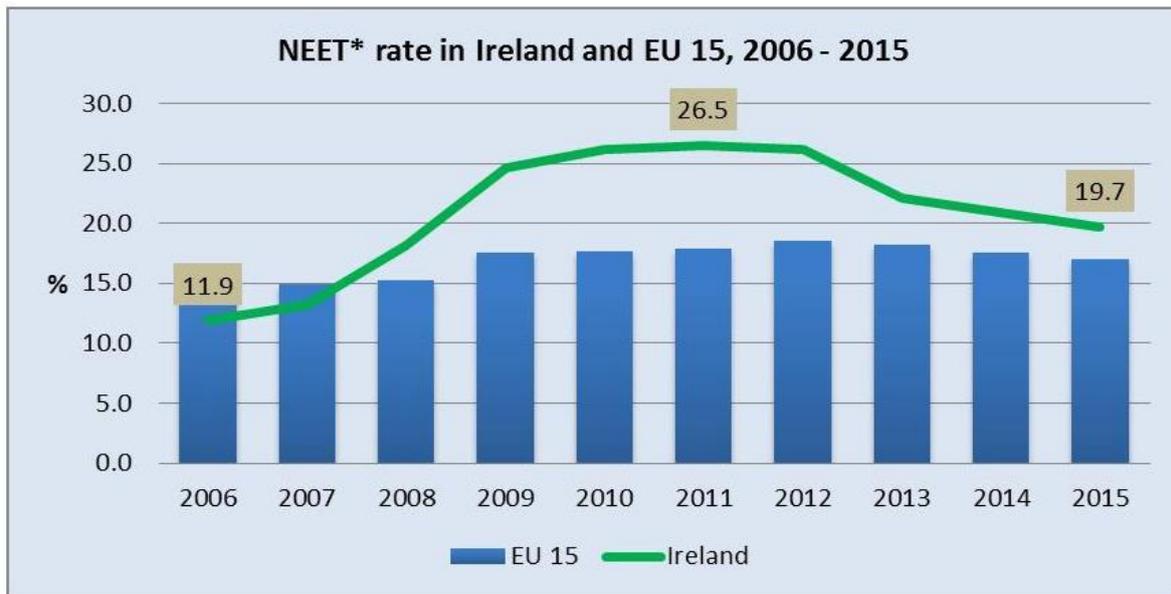
Seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment by sex - persons aged 15-24 years
(Central Statistics Office)

		Number of persons			Unemployment rate (%)		
		Male	Female	All Persons	Male	Female	All Persons
2016	January	21,300	11,800	33,100	21.3	13.8	17.8
	February	20,900	11,600	32,500	20.6	13.4	17.3
	March	20,900	12,300	33,100	20.1	13.5	17.0
	April	21,600	13,500	35,100	19.9	14.0	17.1
	May	21,800	14,300	36,200	19.8	14.6	17.3
	June	21,800	15,300	37,100	19.9	15.7	17.9
	July	21,500	15,500	37,000	19.4	15.7	17.7
	August	20,800	14,800	35,600	18.9	15.1	17.1

Youth Poverty Statistics Ireland

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The NEET rate is the proportion of 15-29 year olds who are not in employment, education or training. In 2015 Ireland had the fifth highest share of young people categorised as NEET in the EU, at 19.7%. Higher shares of NEETs were found in Italy (31.1%), Greece (26.1%), Spain and Cyprus (both 22.2%). The NEET rate increased in Ireland by 7.8 percentage points between 2006 and 2015. One in five young people aged 20-24 years in Ireland are NEET.



Needs Analysis

Best practices in the design, development and provision of train-the-trainer programmes for youth professionals

Youth Theatre Ireland is the national development organisation for youth theatre, supporting a network of youth theatres who deliver year-round programmes of drama workshops and performance opportunities to young people aged 12 - 21 across Ireland. As mentioned previously, Youth Theatre Ireland deliver a full-time course called **'ArtsTrain'** which is funded through the City of Dublin Education & Training Board (CDET). The course is the only accredited and dedicated youth drama facilitation training programme in Ireland. It runs throughout the year and participants receive a weekly training allowance which is the equivalent to a social welfare payment. The course provides training in drama facilitation and youth arts, giving participants an understanding of good youth theatre practice. Learning takes place through workshops which are dependent on trainees' active participation, observation, dialogue and analysis. As part of the programme, participants undertake a range of modules including creating drama, drama facilitation theory and practice and improvisation. The training is delivered at QQI level 6 and successful trainees achieve a QQI Major Award in Drama.

The Sanctuary offers a range of courses and workshops in the area of mindfulness and meditation, yoga and movement, creativity and well-being. It has developed a range of programmes working with young and vulnerable people including a facilitator training course for experienced teachers and youth workers. This course provides them with the tools and resources to facilitate ‘The Sanctuary Mindful Warrior Programme’; *“a course for young people who require an alternative, experiential-led approach to their development”*. It is particularly aimed at young teenagers who are having difficulties navigating the transition from childhood to maturity and social integration challenging.

Participants are given the pedagogic tools and provided with a range of alternative techniques to best support the core learning of young people they are working with. This is primarily experiential training but is supported by a course manual, facilitator’s notes on each lesson, a PowerPoint slideshow of each lesson and references to audio and video clips.

<https://www.sanctuary.ie/product/the-sanctuary-mindful-warrior-facilitator-training-course/>

Best practice in the design of blended learning¹ curricula and e-learning environments

Digital Latin Quarter was developed from 2011 to 2013 under the Life Long Learning Programme with the aim of using digital media production as a means of building key competencies of young European citizens. The outputs of the project *“an innovative training programme in digital media production for youth workers coupled with bespoke support learning resources; the production of a series of TV programmes led by young people; the A.C.T. Curriculum for use when working with young people; a range of media-based, interactive, guidance resources and the creation of DLQ-TV for youth engaged in the project”*. <http://digital-latin-quarter.eu/>

¹ Education approach (formal or informal) that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods.

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Sheherazade, 1001 Stories for Adult Learning, a Grundtvig Multilateral Project, introduced storytelling as an educational strategy and a pedagogical tool in formal and non-formal adult learning. Focusing on the linguistic, interactive, performing, social and cultural aspects of stories and storytelling, Sheherazade provides innovative opportunities for adult learners to gain communication skills, develop imagination and creativity, improve intercultural understanding and build competencies for inclusion. The outputs from the project include a manual containing the following sections:

- A review of the place/presence of storytelling in European adult training,
- The potential of storytelling for competence development,
- A methodological background for the use of storytelling in adult training including a large series of exercises and some advice for the adult trainer/storyteller,
- A set of good practice examples from all over Europe,
- A description of the pilots run by the Sheherazade partners,
- A large bibliography.

The manual is available in a number of European languages and is downloadable for free from the project website www.sheherazade.eu.

Prototype tools that use different artistic disciplines to support the key competence acquisition process

There is a wide selection of arts related tools and resources online but few of these use the specific areas addressed in this project to support key competence acquisition. Of those that do the following are two of the most effective and easily available to access. The aforementioned **Digital Latin Quarter** project developed a range of tools to effectively support the key competence process. Participants on the project acquired a range of competencies through embedded learning as well as practical skills acquirement through the administration, technology and creativity areas of the course curriculum. The full curriculum with supporting resources can be found at www.digital-latin-quarter.eu

Creativity, Resilience & Global Citizenship: Activity Toolkit is a step by step guide to a range of activities exploring the themes of Creativity, Resilience & Global Citizenship through a wide range of workshops and tools. It was developed with thirty young people: youth workers, artists and educators from Ireland, Hungary, Italy and UK in Cork, Ireland through

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the Fast Forward training programme. Creative methodologies used in these resources include:

- creative writing
- use of clay
- turning to our environment
- creating a personal poster
- introducing theatre of the oppressed methods
- song writing

These methodologies were identified as the most effective in addressing the following competencies which the group believed to be important 'to nurture if young people are to grow as resilient, active global citizens'²:

- Passion
- Creativity
- Motivation to learn and reflect
- Awareness and critical thinking
- Confidence and motivation
- Initiative and participation
- Commitment and responsibility
- Teamwork and co-operation
- Solidarity
- Open-mindedness, acceptance of diversity, belief in equality and ability to engage with different perspectives
- Empathy, openness and reaching out to others
- Awareness consciousness of oneself and others
- Humility, forgiveness and consideration of others' needs
- Flexibility'

² <http://developmenteducation.ie/resource/creativity-resilience-global-citizenship-activity-toolkit/>

Main issues to be addressed in the proposed curriculum

Many of the youth leaders working with young people in Ireland are dependent on their organisation for any training they receive which is usually limited to child protection and health and safety courses. Accredited training opportunities in the area of arts and creativity are limited and often very expensive. The proposed curriculum will support the professional development of youth workers by providing free and easily accessible resources and tools without them having to be experts in those specific areas of creativity.

Potential areas where the four artistic forms (Digital Media, Storytelling, Drama and Music) can be applied to the design of learning resources for development of key- competencies

When designing the learning resources for this project it will be important to develop tools that can be used by youth workers or educators who have little or no expertise in the four artistic forms. Emphasis will be placed on addressing key competencies through encouraging skills development in communication, social and cultural exploration and expression, use of technology, initiative and creativity.



Erasmus+

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