

Training Youthreach Staff in Non-Formal Guidance Skills

Final Report



NCGE

2000



A pilot project supported by the European Union Employment
Youthstart Programme and the Department of Education and Science

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Training Youthreach Staff in Non-Formal Guidance Skills' was a second phase YOUTHSTART project, supported by the YOUTHSTART strand of the EU Human Resources Initiative EMPLOYMENT. The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) promoted this project.

This YOUTHSTART project was a systems based response to the guidance needs of early school leavers. It linked in to emerging guidance policy for YOUTHREACH during the two years of its existence. YOUTHREACH is a generic name covering educational and basic vocational programmes for over 7,000 early school leavers in the Republic of Ireland. Research was undertaken into existing YOUTHREACH guidance provision and training programmes in Non-Formal guidance for YOUTHREACH staff were developed.

The project involved an innovative training approach for YOUTHSTART staff. This model consisted of the development and delivery of National University of Ireland courses in Non-Formal Guidance in Dublin, Cork and Sligo based on training needs analyses. Additionally, modules of training in front line guidance were developed in cooperation with the National Council for Vocational Awards. A study was undertaken of existing support services and projects for early school leavers.

NCGE's project target groups included forty Youthreach Staff, 24 Trainers of Youthreach Staff and approximately 750 Youthreach participants as end beneficiaries. Three full time YOUTHSTART staff, comprising a Project Co-Ordinator, Project Assistant and Research/Information Officer were recruited to carry out the project. NCGE's Director acted as Project Manager, while other NCGE staff provided support and assistance.

Primary actions carried out in 1999 and 2000 included:

- An audit and analysis of YOUTHREACH staff training needs in relation to guidance;
- A national study of Youthreach Centre guidance needs;
- Development and delivery of 3 National University of Ireland Certificate courses in Non-Formal Guidance for YOUTHREACH staff by University College Dublin, University College Cork and St. Angela's College, Sligo;
- Inclusion of staff from 3 YOUTHREACH strands in training courses;
- Discussions with College authorities on curricular content, assessment procedures and course delivery to meet YOUTHREACH staff identified training needs;
- Development and approval of NCVA Level 3 modules in Non-Formal Guidance & The Psychology of Adolescence;
- National and regional consultative meetings on project progress;
- Information exchange of guidance provision and support mechanisms with other EU countries and with NCGE's partners in the UK, Germany, Denmark and Spain;
- Transnational co-operation on joint publications on guidance for young people at risk to be published in English, Spanish and German;
- External evaluation of NCGE YOUTHSTART project;
- Discussions with national policy makers on Evaluation Report recommendations for YOUTHREACH staff induction and in-service training;
- Production of Induction Training Templates for YOUTHREACH managers and staff;
- Evaluation of NCGE's Youthstart transnational 'NETWORK' project;

- Development of common approach amongst 7 Irish Youthstart projects focusing on guidance and mentoring, culminating in the publication 'Someone Who Believed In Me';
- Production of a Directory of Support Services for Early School Leavers;
- Production of a study on Guidance for Early School Leavers.

Project Impact:

The project highlighted a range of training needs, including guidance training of YOUTHREACH staff. It particularly highlighted the need for all staff to have as part of induction and continuous training:

- pedagogic skills;
- behavioural management skills;
- knowledge of learning difficulties;
- guidance and referral skills.

It also highlighted the need for common national standards/objectives for induction and continuous training of YOUTHREACH managers and staff. It demonstrated how this could be fruitfully achieved through involvement of all 3 strands of YOUTHREACH (Department of Education and Science, FÁS, Travellers) in a common training programme.

The project's potential impact is on in-service and continuing training provision for YOUTHREACH staff and other practitioners working in non-formal educational settings.

Three outcomes indicated the project's success in this regard. Firstly, as a result of an external evaluation of NCGE's Youthstart project, The National Centre initiated discussions with national policy makers on systematic induction training and on-going training for YOUTHREACH staff and managers. This resulted in training templates being drawn up in conjunction with the three National YOUTHREACH Co-Ordinators forming the basis for a countrywide consultative process on YOUTHREACH staff training. These templates are linked into the YOUTHREACH 2000 document on the future direction of early school leaver provision. Secondly, the Department of Education and Science funded a fourth course in Non-Formal Guidance for YOUTHREACH staff in the southwest region. Thirdly, the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) formally approved NCGE/NCVA Level 3 training modules in non-formal guidance for piloting purposes.

INTRODUCTION

'The Training Youthreach Staff in Non-Formal Guidance Skills' project, was one of twenty four projects funded by the second round of the YOUTHSTART strand of the EU Human Resources Initiative EMPLOYMENT and the Department of Education and Science. As a Human Resources Initiative, YOUTHSTART's objectives included:

- Promotion of social solidarity and equal opportunities;
- Contributions to the development of human resources;
- Improved access to the labour market.

YOUTHSTART aimed to increase the employability of poorly qualified young people through assisting innovative responses in training delivery and systems development. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, as the National Authority for the European Social Fund, had overall responsibility for administering EMPLOYMENT Initiatives in Ireland.

SECTION ONE

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

1.1. Project Promoter:

'Training the Youthreach Staff in Non Formal Guidance Skills' project was developed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) in co-operation with the national co-ordinators for YOUTHREACH. NCGE is an agency of the Department of Education and Science, which supports and develops guidance provision and practice in all areas of education, and informs the policy of the Department in the field of guidance. The National Centre provides support to the following:

- Guidance counsellors in second level schools;
- Careers and appointments officers and counsellors in third level education;
- Guidance practitioners working with adults in education;
- Guidance practitioners working in YOUTHREACH and similar programmes.

The Centre carries out the following activities:

- Development and evaluation of guidance materials;
- Technical advice and information on guidance practice;
- Support for innovative guidance projects;
- Informing practitioners of developments in guidance;
- Support for research into guidance practice and needs;
- Organisation of in-career development training;
- Informing the policy of the Department of Education and Science on matters pertaining to guidance.

In 1995-98 the National Centre developed, in cooperation with Cork City Partnership(CCP) and Cumas Teo, two training programmes in Non-Formal Guidance for community based guidance agents in areas of high drop out from post-primary schools. In the case of CCP, NUI Cork delivered a training programme in Non-Formal Guidance, the first university to do so.

The agency secured assistance from EMPLOYMENT YOUTHSTART to pilot development and delivery of accredited in-service training courses for Youthreach staff in non-formal guidance and support skills. Programme participants received NUI college certificates. Certificates given from all colleges carried credit ratings that successful participants could use when obtaining further academic qualifications. Participants were given opportunities to 'upskill' themselves in dealing with the challenging behaviour patterns, learning difficulties, and evidence of multiple disadvantage that YOUTHREACH trainees often present.

The establishment of non-formal guidance courses for YOUTHREACH staff responded to recommendations made by:

- The ESF Evaluation Report on Early School Leavers Provision;
- The Task Force on Guidance in Youthreach.

1.2. Project Delivery:

Advised by an extensive training needs audit amongst Youthreach staff, and by regional consultative meetings, the National Centre for Guidance in Education commissioned three colleges to develop and deliver relevant courses. The National Centre contracted University College Dublin, University College Cork and St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo, to deliver Non-Formal Guidance courses to Youthreach staff in Eastern, Southern and Western regions. Course participants included managers and staff from Vocational Education Committees' Youthreach programmes, from Senior Traveller Centres, from FÁS's Community Training Workshops and others dealing with young people at risk. It was anticipated that involvement by all three Youthreach strands would complement national policy developments, and add value to mainstream practice and provision.

1.3. Formation of Advisory Consortia and Consultative Groupings:

The National Centre for Guidance in Education initiated, consolidated and participated in a number of advisory and consultative groupings and contacts during the course of the project. These include:

- A National Advisory Consortium;
- YOUTHREACH Managers Consultative Group;
- Committee of Course Directors of all 3 colleges;
- Non Formal Guidance Course Committees in each of the three colleges;
- Transnational Network Partner Steering Group;
- A Youthstart national thematic cluster group on guidance and mentoring;
- An External Evaluator.

The National Advisory Consortium was composed of policymakers, professional and social partner groupings. The Consortium terms of reference included:

- Contributions to the informal formative evaluation of the project;
- Advice on dissemination of project outcomes;
- Guidance on how project results could mesh into national initiatives;
- Creation of complementarity between the NCGE's Youthstart project and other related projects and initiatives.

NCGE convened national meetings of the managers of the YOUTHREACH centres involved in the project to obtain feedback on their experience of, and to disseminate learning from, the project.

NCGE convened meetings with a Committee of Course Directors representing the three colleges contracted to deliver the training.

On NCGE's recommendation, each college established a Course Committee, on which the NCGE was represented, to assist and support effective delivery of their respective programmes.

The National Centre contracted an international guidance expert, Professor Tony Watts, to carry out an external evaluation of its Youthstart project. A summary version of his Evaluation is appended to this report.

In common with most EU programmes, the National Centre for Guidance in Education worked collaboratively with other European Member States on this project. Members of the Transnational Steering Group Committee included NCGE's four European partners: the Institute of Careers Guidance UK, the Vocational Training Agency of Madrid, the LVU/VUB teacher organisations in Denmark, and Germany's Hessische Jugendbildungsstätte Dietzenbach. The international partners shared information on their innovative models of guidance and intervention with disaffected youth. These models aimed to provide accessible training templates, train trainers, and inform policy on early school leavers and on mainstream provision. Two publications were produced on innovative models of guidance/intervention for young people at risk; one is entitled 'Innovative Guidance Models for Young People at Risk I: Evaluation and Overview' is assisted by Spanish sponsorship, the ESF and EMPLOYMENT Youthstart; the second is 'Innovative Guidance Models for Young People at Risk II: Thematic Reports from Transnational Partners'.

NCGE negotiated successfully with its transnational partners to employ an External Evaluator, Professor Tony Watts, to participate in transnational meetings, guide thematic discussions and draw together the learning points. His evaluation report on the work of the transnational Network featured in three languages in a Handbook publication. A summary version of his transnational evaluation is appended to this report.

NCGE's YOUTHSTART project supported the learning of Youthreach staff from the eastern, southern, western and mid western regions of Ireland through colleges based in Dublin, Cork and Sligo.

SECTION 2

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Despite Ireland's current Celtic Tiger economy and consequent employment opportunities, approximately 12% of Irish school leavers possess minimal, if any, educational or vocational qualifications. To combat links between education disadvantage, long-term unemployment and social exclusion, Ireland's Department of Education and Science and The National Training Authority (FÁS) with assistance from the European Social Fund, launched YOUTHREACH in 1988. YOUTHREACH was targeted at early school dropouts between the ages of 15 and 18.

Twelve years later YOUTHREACH interventionist programmes cater for up to 7,000 early school leavers. YOUTHREACH programmes identify young people's needs and abilities and provide personal development, pre-vocational training, along with literacy and numeracy skills. The success of YOUTHREACH stems from its client-centred participative approach, experiential methodologies, and involvement of local management, communities and participants in creating user-friendly learning environments. Experience gained from Irish YOUTHREACH programmes has impacted on other EU second-chance school initiatives, and YOUTHREACH's effectiveness as a model has 'pulled down' additional Structural Funds, under the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development, to expand and develop services aimed at tackling disadvantage more effectively.

2.1 Identified needs for guidance provision within YOUTHREACH

Both national and EU evaluations identified needs for strengthening guidance provision within YOUTHREACH programmes. Unlike post-primary schools, YOUTHREACH centres do not have guidance counsellors on their full-time staff. YOUTHREACH client groups present a range of challenges for their instructors and teachers. While the YOUTHREACH ethos encourages identification and affirmation of personal competencies, rather than deficits, amongst its clientele, YOUTHREACH participants present diverse needs. These may include young people with specific learning difficulties, attention deficits, challenging behaviour patterns, or histories of 'anti-social' involvement with crime or substance abuse. Home and community environments, and strong in-group peer pressure, may also influence 'anti-authoritarian' values with negative perceptions of formal schooling. Life, work and career choices, where they are perceived to exist, may be unrealistic.

Despite the diversity and extent of the challenges presented by YOUTHREACH trainees, guidance provision to this target group had been ad-hoc and insufficient. In the absence of such provision/support, the demands on YOUTHREACH staff are high. Many such staff, while delivering vocational training and education, are listening simultaneously to the personal narratives and problems of the adolescents in their care. Although experienced staff establish pragmatic strategies in dealing with such information, there had been no systematic training for YOUTHREACH instructors in guidance, despite their front-line role at the coal face of disadvantage.

2.2. Aims of the National Centre for Guidance in Education's (NCGE) Youthstart Project:

The NCGE project 'Training Youthreach Staff in Front Line Guidance Skills' aimed to develop and deliver front-line guidance training responding to the needs of YOUTHREACH staff, working with disaffected early school leavers, in line with ESF recommendations. It was intended that these models would be developed in two ways, (a) by piloting courses in non-formal guidance in UCD, UCC and St. Angela's College, Sligo throughout 1999, and (b) by developing guidance training modules, accredited by the NCVA. The academic option was intended to mainstream practitioner training in colleges that normally delivered postgraduate guidance courses. National University of Ireland accreditation was sought to confer status on guidance training for YOUTHREACH staff. The NCVA option aimed to offer future flexible modular access to relevant training for all YOUTHREACH staff that use front line guidance in the course of their work. It was hoped that these options would prove complementary to initiatives in the advocacy/mentoring area developed by other agencies such as FÁS and similarly clustered Youthstart projects.

2.3. Addressing Gaps in Guidance Provision for YOUTHREACH Staff:

The National Centre for Guidance in Education is the Government agency charged with supporting and developing guidance provision in formal and non-formal education settings. It also contributes to the continuous raising of guidance service standards while supporting exchange and innovation in guidance through national and international collaboration.

To address the gap in guidance and support provision for Youthreach staff, the NCGE YOUTHSTART project aimed to develop and pilot relevant training programmes. Informed by EU and national evaluations that highlighted needs for systematic guidance services within Youthreach programmes, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) carried out an audit to identify the training needs of Youthreach staff in these areas.

Drawing on identified training needs (ITNs), NCGE negotiated with three higher education colleges to provide accredited training in non-formal guidance. In addition to accreditation from the colleges themselves, NCGE sought approval for parallel national accreditation of the guidance modules from the National Council for Vocational Awards.

The NCGE Youthstart project could also be viewed as a continuous vocational training programme, providing training for YOUTHREACH staff in non-formal guidance - regionally clustered in the eastern, southern and western regions of Ireland.

2.4. Anticipated Impact of NCGE's YOUTHSTART Project

NCGE 's YOUTHSTART project was expected to impact on four main groups and areas. The groups include YOUTHREACH staff, higher education college staff providing guidance courses, NCGE's YOUTHSTART transnational partners in their working approaches with disaffected young people, and on national policy provision.

2.4.1 Objectives in relation to YOUTHREACH staff included:

- The development and delivery of training in non-formal guidance and support, with national accreditation, piloted with selected YOUTHREACH staff and others working with early school leavers;
- Potential (given financial commitments from the Department of Education and Science) for this training to be replicated for all VEC YOUTHREACH centres, and for other YOUTHREACH centres within the non-formal educational sectors;
- Development of alternative routes to national accreditation in guidance for YOUTHREACH staff;
- Broadening access to this training.

2.4.2. Objectives relating to higher education colleges providing guidance courses included:

- An expansion and widening of the curricula and methodologies used by higher education colleges in training guidance counsellors to meet the needs of clients in non-formal sectors;
- Increased sensitivity amongst future school guidance counsellors to the needs of disaffected students within formal schooling, leading to higher school retention rates.

2.4.3. Objectives for transfer of learning amongst NCGE's transnational partners included:

- The demonstration of new forms of guidance capacity within non-formal educational structures through the experience with NCGE's Danish, German, Spanish and UK partners;
- The exchange of knowledge and skills with personnel and organisations working with similar target groups of young people;
- The development of new methods of working with young people who have fallen, or are at risk of falling out of mainstream education systems;
- Learning from observation of models of best practice in Ireland and in partner countries;
- The identification of common themes and core staff competencies when working with young people at risk of social exclusion.

2.4.4. Objectives of the National Centre for Guidance in Education in promoting policy change:

With its advisory and developmental brief from the Department of Education and Science, NCGE is critically positioned to impact on national policy. NCGE disseminates information through its regular national and international publications, through attendance at conferences and seminars, and through its web-site. With its links with the guidance systems of other European countries, NCGE remains strategically placed to demonstrate how such models of guidance and support can be adopted in other national and international contexts to tackle disadvantage.

SECTION 3

NCGE YOUTHSTART ACTIVITIES DURING 1999/2000

3.1. Project Management:

Overall project management was undertaken by NCGE's Director, John McCarthy. The Youthstart team consisted of Avril Burgess as project co-ordinator, Sarah Ryan as research officer, and Gemma Marlowe (until March 99) and Audrey Delany (from March 99) as project assistants. This core Youthstart team was supported by NCGE's development officers Richard Keane (until July 99) and Liam Harkin (from September 99) and by its executive officer, Jane Murnaghan.

3.2. Advisory Groups for the Project:

During this period, the National Centre consolidated its specific advisory groups for the project. A list of group members is attached in the Appendices. The groups were as follows:

3.2.1. The National Advisory Consortium:

Key policy makers and representatives of statutory, professional and youth organisations contributed their time and expertise to the NCGE Youthstart National Consortium. Members included personnel from the Department of Education and Science's Further Education Unit and Psychological Service, the YOUTHSTART National Support Structure, Institute of Guidance Counsellors, Irish Business and Employer's Federation, the Combat Poverty Agency, National Youth Council of Ireland, Teacher's Union of Ireland, Department of Health and Children, the Irish Vocational Education Association, Eastern Health Board, National Economic and Social Forum, Probation and Welfare Service, Area Development Management Limited, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, National Association of Youthreach Co-ordinators, Irish Association of Community Training Organisations, and the three National YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators. The Consortium met on three occasions during 1999/2000.

The Consortium's Terms of Reference were as follows:

1. To contribute to the informal formative evaluation of the project through discussion of project reports;
2. To advise on dissemination of project outcomes;
3. To consider how results of the project could be incorporated in mainstream provision;
4. To exchange information and ideas on relevant national initiatives;
5. To create complementarity between the National Centre for Guidance in Education's Youthstart project and other related programmes.

3.2.2. Committee of College Course Directors/Training Institutions

This group included course directors and other staff from University College Dublin, University College Cork and St. Angela's College Sligo, along with NCGE personnel. The group met regularly during the project's duration. 'Training the Trainers' was a key purpose of these meetings. The briefing meetings provided opportunities to exchange information on course content, methodologies, recruitment of course participants, and assessment and marking schemes.

3.2.3. College Course Committees

NCGE encouraged each college to establish Course Committees to support their non-formal guidance courses. The committees were composed of course administrative staff from the relevant college departments, college course co-ordinators, key lecturers, and representatives from the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and from the local Vocational Education Committees, along with an NCGE representative. On going meetings took place during this period to assess course progress. Final meetings focused on assessment and certification eligibility for course participants and on award ceremonies.

3.2.4. Training Needs Analysis and Course Recruitment

The initial audit of Youthreach staff training needs (1997-98) was augmented by extensive regional consultative meetings of YOUTHREACH staff and management that took place in Mayo, Cork and Dublin in November 98. High turnouts at each of these meetings indicated considerable interest in the Non-Formal Guidance courses. The regional meetings allowed potential course participants to discuss issues of concern, such as commitment necessary for courses, course content and future currency, substitution and travel issues. National and regional YOUTHREACH management from VEC and FÁS also attended these regional meetings, offering support and advice to both their staff and to NCGE. These meetings provided the opportunity to staff from the three YOUTHREACH strands to meet and discuss training issues of common concern. Networking between staff was another benefit of these regional cluster meetings.

Further briefing meetings took place in 1999 when many of the initially interested course participants did not take up training places because of industrial relations issues (relating to YOUTHREACH pay and conditions) and difficulties with staff substitution. New recruitment drives took place early in 1999 with UCD and UCC commencing their courses in February, while St. Angela's course started in March 1999. All three courses were officially launched by college and NCGE personnel.

Extensive consultations took place between the 3 National YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators, 15 Vocational Education Committees and FÁS in relation to perceived staff training needs. All YOUTHREACH centres that expressed interest in their staff undergoing training in non-formal guidance were contacted regularly.

3.2.5. YOUTHREACH Managers Consultative Group

NCGE hosted two national meetings in 1999 of YOUTHREACH managers whose centre staff were involved in the training courses. These took place in June and December 99. Their purpose was to brief managers on course progress and to elicit their feedback on the impact and learning points from their staffs' participation in the training programmes.

3.2.6. NSS Youthstart Management and National Guidance Cluster Group

The National Centre participated in Youthstart National Support Structure (NSS) project management meetings, and NSS Cluster Group thematic meetings on guidance. Benefits accruing from these meetings included peer support, opportunities to learn and share information, knowledge, experiences and best practice, opportunities to devise common strategies, identify common solution to challenges and collaborate in the development of resources. This collaboration led to a dissemination seminar in March 2000 and to the publication of '*Someone who Believed in Me*'.

3.3 Transnational Activities:

Transnationality was a core requirement of the EMPLOYMENT initiative and a vehicle through which change in policy and practice could be affected at different levels, from the local to the European. Transnational partnership involved the joint conception of, and agreement on a common work programme. This allowed project partners mutual opportunities to benefit from each others experience, expertise, insights, track records of achievements, innovations and research.

Experience from the NCGE Youthstart project, with its Danish, German, Spanish and UK partners, provided the opportunity to demonstrate new forms of guidance within traditional structures, while developing new methods of working with young people who had fallen outside the systems.

The LVU/VUB Danish project sought to improve educational options for young disadvantaged people through collaboration between locally based education institutions and training schemes offering formal and non-formal qualifications. A second Danish objective was to train teachers and trainers in guidance and support competencies, self evaluation and team reflection. Important aspects were quality assurance and exploration of guidance practitioner roles.

Germany's Hessische Jugendbildungsstätte Dietzenbach aimed to implement methods for self-evaluation among groups of trainers, advisors and social workers. Its project focused on staff selection, training and evaluation and analysis of research results.

Spain's project was promoted by IMAF, the Vocational Training Agency of Madrid. The main purpose of the project was to facilitate and reinforce access to jobs for youth and other groups at risk of social exclusion. IMAF ran a number of programmes in technical assistance, social and job guidance and Job Insertion Accompaniment.

Stepping Stones was the title given to the Institute of Careers Guidance's YOUTHSTART project. Thirteen Careers Services Companies were involved in the Stepping Stones

partnership. Stepping Stones aimed to provide training for practitioners working with young socially excluded people, while offering support and training to the young people themselves.

Three (3 day) transnational Steering Group meetings took place in 1999. Denmark hosted meetings in April and October, while Ireland organised a June meeting. Following 1998 transnational Steering Group decisions, both the June and October meetings coincided with seminars and work shadowing placements for project staff. Ireland's June seminar on Working with Challenging Young People was followed by 2 day work placements in the eastern region for 17 international visitors. On-going transfer of information between transnational partners occurred before, between and after these meetings.

At NCGE's insistence, the transnational partnership contracted the services of an international guidance expert, Dr. Tony Watts, to assist the deliberations of the partnership and to contribute to the formative evaluation of the transnational component of the project. Professor Watts' report is included in the joint transnational publication 'Innovative Guidance Models for Young People at Risk I: Evaluation and Overview'. His report represents a distillation of the partnership's collective learning and covers seven issues:

- (a) The nature of each transnational partner's project.
- (b) The nature of the ultimate target group - the young people.
- (c) The need for a holistic guidance approach to be adopted in such work.
- (d) The competencies of staff working in this area.
- (e) The role of networking within projects.
- (f) Ways in which the learning from the projects might be mainstreamed - i.e. integrated into the mainstream education/training and guidance systems.

A summary of Professor Watts' Evaluation Report is appended to this publication.

International dissemination of NCGE's Youthstart project took place at an international Conference in Helsinki ***Crossing the Jobs Threshold*** organised by two European level Thematic focus groups from the Adapt and Employment initiatives. NCGE gave a presentation on its Youthstart project during this November 99 event attended by over 300 people.

NCGE also presented its project's findings at a UK (Cheshire Guidance Partnership) seminar for 100+ policy makers and practitioners in February 2000.

SECTION 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF CORE ACTIONS

NCGE's core actions in 1999/2000 remained linked to the central aim and objectives of the project. These were to provide a system based response to the guidance needs of early school leavers through developing, piloting and evaluating guidance training programmes appropriate to the needs of Youthreach staff.

4.1.1. Objective: Audit existing provision of guidance in YOUTHREACH:

NCGE's Youthstart research officer commenced data analysis and compiled a report of a survey conducted by the National Co-ordinators of YOUTHREACH. '*Perceived Needs for Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres*' was written in October 1998 and published in 1999.

4.1.2. Objective: Carry out national audit of guidance provision in statutory and non-statutory agencies working with the disadvantaged:

A questionnaire covering basic project/ programme details and provision of guidance was sent to over 700 individual projects and programmes.

Organisations who received the questionnaire included the following:

- All YOUTHREACH Centres (VEC YOUTHREACH, Community Training Workshops, Senior Traveller Training Workshops);
- Area Based Partnership Companies and Community organisations funded by the Local Development Programme;
- Department of Education and Science : 8-15's Early School Leavers Projects;
- Department of Health and Children: Springboards Projects;
- Barnardo's Family Support Projects;
- ISPCC Steps Advice and Counselling Services;
- Foroige Projects;
- Youth Information Centres;
- National Youth Federation Youth Services;
- City of Dublin Youth Services Board : Youth Services and Youth Projects;
- Catholic Youth Council : Youth Services;
- ICTU Unemployment Centres;
- Local Employment Services;
- Programme for Peace and Reconciliation funded projects;
- Combat Poverty Demonstration Programme;
- Integrated Services Process;
- Members of the Early School Leaving Network;
- INOU unemployment centres and relevant affiliate organisations;
- EU Projects including EMPLOYMENT, Leonardo da Vinci, URBAN etc.;
- Drugs Task Force funded projects and initiatives inc. Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund;
- Probation and Welfare funded centres, hostels and projects (Department of Justice and Law Reform);

- Garda Special Projects (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform).
- Relevant projects funded by the Ireland Fund;
- Neighbourhood Youth Projects (Department of Health and Children);

'Reaching Out The Provision of Guidance and Support Services for Early School Leavers and Young People at Risk in Ireland' is the title of the study emanating from the research (see Appendix ix).

This report examines practitioners' perceptions of early school leaving, success and limiting factors in working with early school leavers, and extent of guidance provision available to these young people. The report concludes with a suggested model for guidance provision for the target group.

Based on information from the questionnaire a database of 'Support Services for Early School Leavers and Young People at Risk' was compiled. The database contains contact details and further information on the main activities of the organisation and the guidance provision available.

The database is searchable by county and type of organisation. For the purpose of the database, the entries were divided into three categories.

Category 1. Projects and programmes which directly target early school leavers

Category 2. Measures aimed at preventing early school leaving (Department of Education and Science 8-15s Early School Leaving Initiative)

Category 3. Other more general supports and services for young people and for disadvantaged areas, e.g. neighbourhood youth projects, youth information centres.

The database also contains an alphabetical list of organisations. The database can be accessed from NCGE's website <http://www.ncge.ie>

4.1.3. Objective: Develop a template for audits of guidance support in an area-based context:

Based on the data from the projects and programmes dealing with early school leavers and responses on preventative measures, NCGE developed a questionnaire to assist YOUTHREACH centres to assess their existing strengths and further needs for guidance provision. This was used in the study referred to in 4.1.2.

4.1.4 Objective: Remediation of gaps in existing YOUTHREACH guidance provision:

A series of meetings was held with the 3 National YOUTHREACH Co-Ordinators to discuss the findings on NCGE's External Evaluation Report. The Report recommended a cohesive and systematic approach to YOUTHREACH staff induction training, including a basic introduction to non-formal guidance skills. At the time of writing, no such systematic induction training exists despite good will at national policy level and available funding. Because of the diverse delivery mechanisms of the YOUTHREACH programme with its three strands, responsibility for such training rests with individual Vocational Education Committees and local FÁS Community Training Workshop Management Boards. Examples of good practice exist in some areas, but availability of such training, access and staff take up is erratic on a countrywide basis. The YOUTHREACH 2000 document, compiled by the three National YOUTHREACH Co-

Ordinators arising from regional consultative meetings, stresses the importance of staff training and points towards growing professionalisation of YOUTHREACH staff. NCGE Youthstart evaluation report's findings and recommendations are therefore timely. The resulting templates for induction and continuous training for YOUTHREACH managers and staff, drawn up by NCGE and the three National Co-ordinators, will form the basis of further consultations with relevant stakeholders. The recent establishment of the National Education Psychological Service, along with continuing funds for 'specialist services' from psychologists, guidance and counselling professionals, should dovetail effectively with the proposed front line guidance, support and referral skills of YOUTHREACH staff.

The National Advisory Consortium, composed of policy makers from 22 statutory, professional and community agencies, met on a further 3 occasions in 1999 and early 2000 to examine NCGE's Youthstart project progress and advise on mainstreaming of the project.

4.1.5 Objective: Train trainers in appropriate guidance strategies:

Briefing and induction sessions with college authorities and staff during 1999 laid the basis for the training of trainers. Visits of some college staff to YOUTHREACH centres for briefing and informational purposes also took place.

However the Evaluation Report recommended that a more systematic approach to training of trainers should take place. In the fourth non-formal guidance course, funded by the Department of Education and Science, considerable care was exercised to ensure that the trainers were familiar with, and well briefed on, the needs of YOUTHREACH staff.

4.1.6 Objective: Develop accredited modules in guidance and disseminate same:

Regular meetings with training institutions (UCD, UCC and St. Angela's College, Sligo) and regional meetings of potential course participants in the project's start up phase were hosted by NCGE. These meetings resulted in agreed curriculum design and methodologies for courses in Non Formal Guidance for Youthreach Staff.

Successful negotiations with colleges resulted in commitments by NUI colleges to accredit the Non Formal Guidance courses while delivering detailed transcripts for participants on course completion. It was agreed that academic progression options would be negotiated on an individual basis.

All colleges obtained approval for ECT points for successful course participants which can be used for further academic qualifications in relevant subjects within the NUI framework.

Two (locally devised) Level 3 modules in *Front Line Guidance for YOUTHREACH staff* were written by NCGE and approved for piloting and accreditation by the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA).

4.1.7 Objective: Training of YOUTHREACH staff in selected centre clusters:

Thirty-nine YOUTHREACH staff, two Home School Community Liaison Officers and one outreach drug prevention worker enrolled on the 3 college courses (42 in all) and twenty eight participants completed them.

New recruitment drives for course participants commenced towards the end of 1998 and were increased in early 1999. These were necessary because of the drop out of initial applicants because of industrial relations issues connected with pay and conditions, and because of substitution difficulties.

Successful negotiations had taken place with the Department of Education and Science, and with FÁS regarding release of YOUTHREACH staff and possible centre closures during course duration. Both agencies agreed to financially support substitution hours for course participants. However these agreements at national level failed to materialise at local level leading to the substitution difficulties mentioned above.

4.1.8 Objective: Develop standards and protocols for guidance provision and practice within YOUTHREACH:

NCGE began consultations with YOUTHREACH National Co-ordinators regarding centre practice in relation to standards and protocols for guidance provision and practice within YOUTHREACH.

4.1.9 Objective: Develop policy for guidance provision in YOUTHREACH:

NCGE developed mechanisms (through audit of training needs, research on existing provision and on-going consultations with YOUTHREACH staff and trainees) through which recommendations on policy formation were grounded in a 'bottom up approach'.

NCGE also initiated on-going discussions with the National YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators, with the Department of Education and Science and with FÁS, regarding policy framework for non-formal guidance in YOUTHREACH.

The international guidance expert, Professor Tony Watts, in his Evaluation Report of NCGE's project made policy recommendations for guidance provision in YOUTHREACH. NCGE instigated several meetings with the three National YOUTHREACH Co-Ordinators early in 2000 to assist in policy formation.

4.1.10 Objective: Disseminate good practice and standards:

This objective was accomplished in the 1999/2000 period as follows:

- Publishing information about the project and its progress in NCGE publications;
- Distribution of a summary version of NCGE's Project Evaluation Report.

- Publication of transnational handbooks (I and II) on guidance policy and practice, arising from NCGE's transnational NETWORK project in English, Spanish and German.
- As a collective output from NCGE NETWORK transnational partners, Handbooks on guidance policy and practice were written in English, Spanish and German. The Handbooks' content includes an external evaluation of the NETWORK project, details of transnational partner projects and thematic articles on working effectively with young people at risk.
- Hosting an international seminar *Working with Challenging Adolescents* where models of good practice in non-formal guidance, basic counselling and mentoring, and networking were disseminated.
- Involvement in the publication of *Someone Who Believed In Me* compiled by the Irish Youthstart Thematic Cluster Group on guidance with the Mainie Jellet Project. This publication arose from the experience of seven Youthstart projects, of which the NCGE was one. It identifies models of good practice and calls for complementary guidance provision for young people outside formal education, training and labour market services.
- Giving presentations on NCGE's project experience at an international conference in Helsinki, in the United Kingdom, and at various Irish workshops and seminars.

4.2. Innovative Features:

The National Centre for Guidance in Education's Youthstart project had various innovative features including:

- Development of a new systems based approach to an identified gap in guidance provision for young people at risk of social and economic exclusion.
- Development of new training models and training delivery within academic mainstream colleges (UCD, UCC and St. Angela's College) and within a modular system (National Council for Vocational Awards).
- Development of new forms of accreditation (National University of Ireland, NUI; National Council for Vocational Awards, NCVA).
- Curriculum development.
- Capacity building at organisational level through the impact on higher education colleges of the need to expand their guidance courses to accommodate those working outside the mainstream system (through the transfer of information from the proposed NCGE Non Formal Guidance courses).
- Actions to increase awareness amongst college staff in Psychology, Applied Psychology, Education, and Adult and Continuing Education Departments of the guidance needs of disaffected young people;
- Use of innovative approaches and methodologies, such as participative and client group involvement, in developing new training models.

4.3. Alterations to Action Plan

A number of pragmatic alterations were made to the NCGE YOUTHSTART Action Plan in 1999 because of factors outside NCGE's control. These factors included industrial relation issues and substitution difficulties and increase in course duration to meet accreditation requirements.

Because of industrial relations problems relating to YOUTHREACH pay and conditions issues, most initial non-formal guidance course applicants withdrew their applications. The postponement of industrial arbitration processes from July 98 to early 1999 engendered disappointment, frustration and low morale. This resulted in additional recruitment campaigns for participants in 1999 and postponed the start of the college courses until February and March 1999.

Added to this challenge were the difficulties centres, originally committed to training of their entire staff teams, encountered in obtaining substitution hours to cover staff absences while on the training courses. Although both the Department of Education and FÁS agreed to provide substitution cover verbally, this was not communicated officially by these agencies to local Youthreach management.

These factors had two major effects on the Project Action Plan. Firstly the initial concept of training all staff from 10 selected VEC YOUTHREACH centres had to be changed. Instead, individual staff members from a considerably larger number of centres, across all three YOUTHREACH strands, participated in the training courses. The two other strands involved were the FÁS managed Community Training Workshops, and the Senior Traveller Training Centres.

A further challenge arose from initial course applicants' requests for recognised accreditation attached to the Non Formal Guidance Courses. NCGE pursued this matter with college authorities. All colleges, by the end of 1999, agreed that successful participants would receive college NUI accreditation, detailed course transcripts on course completion, and that their access to other relevant academic courses would be enhanced. ECTS points were obtained for successful participants for further academic qualifications within the NUI framework. In the case of Sligo this enabled (a) non-graduates to be exempted from one third of the first year of the modular degree programme in Education and Training, and (b) graduate participants to be exempted from one of four modules of the Masters Degree programme in Training and Development.

However, the development of NUI accredited courses necessitated increasing course duration from 80 hours to 144 hours in the case of UCD and St. Angela's, and to 100 hours in UCC.

SECTION 5 OUTCOMES

5.1. Outcomes

As mentioned in Section 4, various alterations to the initial Action Plan were implemented. These brought some innovative and positive features into the project. A number of advisory and consultative groupings were consolidated or established providing NCGE with both bottom up and top down insights. These groupings also advised on policy formation. NCGE, with its transnational partners, achieved joint objectives and disseminated information on models of good practice. Various publications were written and published, again disseminating learning from the NCGE Youthstart project and forwarding policy recommendations on guidance provision for young people at risk.

Outcomes from the 1999/2000 period were as follows:

- Involvement of all three YOUTHEACH strands (VEC, Senior Traveller Training Centres and FÁS Community Training Workshops) as Non Formal Guidance Course participants. This was innovative in that individual YOUTHREACH centres often express a sense of isolation in their work with socially excluded young people. The mixture of staff from all three strands was thought to be extremely useful for local, regional and national networking while providing opportunities to exchange learning and materials.
- The involvement of the three YOUTHREACH strands also encouraged an inter-agency approach to the project, with the active support of both FÁS and the Department of Education and Science.
- The development of college courses to NUI accreditation gave participants opportunities for additional academic qualifications.
- Consolidation, initiation and establishment of interagency advisory consortia and groupings.
- A searchable webbased database of guidance and support services including programme providers for early school leavers, preventative measures and other general guidance, support and information services was developed to be launched and disseminated in 2000.
- 'Reaching Out.... The Provision of Guidance and Support Services for Early School Leavers and Young People at Risk in Ireland' research report to be published and disseminated in 2000.

5.2. Transnational activity

Three transnational meetings took place in 1999, NCGE Youthstart staff participated in transnational Steering Group meetings of the 5 country-partnership. These took place in Ireland and Denmark. The focus of the meetings was to exchange experience and ideas of the projects in each Member State, to define the most relevant issues and to plan joint activities, particularly a publication – a handbook of good practice in guidance.

Ireland and Denmark both organised transnational seminars to support the project. The seminar, set up by NCGE was entitled "Working with Challenging Young People". This

was attended by project participants from the UK, Germany and Ireland. The Danish seminar focused on "Competencies of Guidance Workers". This was attended by project participants from the UK, Germany, Spain and Denmark. Additionally, transnational work placements were provided for participants in Ireland and Denmark.

SECTION 6

LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

6.1. Timescale Issues

The NCGE met all achievable objectives in 1999, making pragmatic alterations as necessary to the Action Plan.

As previously stated, industrial relations issue concerning difficulties with substitution and closure of YOUTHREACH centres resulted in alterations to the original Action Plan in relation to college course delivery. These factors delayed course commencement in all three colleges.

A lesson which emerged from the project was the recognition that academic institutions need considerable time to implement change and deliver new certified courses. For example, changing the course title 'Non-Formal Guidance', previously used for a similar course with volunteer participants, would have taken UCC longer to effect than the time span of the Youthstart Project.

Similarly negotiations, regarding outline approval of Front Line modules at a pilot Level 3 with the National Council for Vocational Awards, took longer than expected.

Another lesson relates to the initial Action Plan and time schedule. Glitches and outside factors affected both. Future project proposals could build in alternative contingency plans and factor in additional time for unavoidable delays.

Transnational activity, a key part of the project, involved a significant additional workload.

Promotion of the project's rationale involved a significant workload as all Vocational Education Committees and FÁS regional management, whose centres were involved, had to be individually informed of the project's rationale and implications.

The Commission requirements for frequent reports (6 monthly, quarterly financial returns, mainstreaming, certifications etc.) took considerable time.

6.2 Unexpected Benefits

Despite these glitches, Action Plan alterations brought a number of benefits to the NCGE Youthstart project and its profile. While previously staff from only one YOUTHREACH strand was to be involved in training (those delivered by Vocational Educational Committees), the inclusion of staff from the other two YOUTHREACH strands brought benefits. Although dealing with the same client group of disadvantaged young people, staff from all three YOUTHREACH strands (VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, FÁS's Community Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres) had rarely (if ever) come together for collective training. This was advantageous at many levels:

- Interagency networking at national level;
- Interagency networking at regional level;

- Interagency networking at local level;
- Opportunities for staff from all 3 YOUTHEACH strands in an area to come together and discuss common issues relating to guidance provision for the target group.

6.3 Course Delivery Issues

Few of the lecturing staff had any direct experience of YOUTHEACH, suggesting a stronger training of trainers input for similar future courses.

The location (distance travel) and time tabling of the courses were problematic for some participants. Future delivery mechanisms need to take these into account while recognising that it is impossible to meet the exact needs of all participants.

The importance of establishing an appropriate and adequate substitution mechanism so that YOUTHEACH staff can access in-service training was highlighted in the project.

6.4 Course Content Issues

The courses were constructed on the basis of training needs analysis, regional consultations and the requirements of the colleges in terms of National University of Ireland (NUI) accreditation. However, most participants had not previously participated in any training for instructing and teaching in YOUTHEACH. Accordingly the courses to some extent acted as proxy for such training and included elements not normally included in guidance training. This has highlighted the need for a systematic approach to the provision of training for all YOUTHEACH staff into which guidance elements can more easily fit.

Benefits reported by participants included: increased listening and referral skills, awareness of boundaries, and opportunities for sharing experience with staff from other YOUTHEACH centres, for 'refreshment' and for reflecting on their practice.

SECTION 7 ACTING ON THE LEARNING

Recommendations on Policy and Training of YOUTHREACH Staff

Recommendations for policy and practice are as follows:

- A coherent national policy in increasing Youthreach staff skills in front line work with challenging young people be examined with regard to training and financial implications.
- Practitioner-based training be highly responsive and relevant to participant needs.
- Organisational and structural mechanisms be put in place to allow systematic induction and continuous training of YOUTHREACH staff without deleterious effects of their absence on the trainees in their care;
- Acknowledgement of the work of YOUTHREACH staff.
- Academic institutions become more cognisant of the needs of life long learners and of creating academic progression options to certificate students through the accrual of credits.
- Non-Formal Guidance training needs to encompass and reflect articulated practitioner needs while still 'fitting into' academic requirements.
- Routes to professional status as guidance practitioners should be examined, with a view to making progression options open, accessible and transparent.
- Although individual college staff were committed to the idea of innovation in relation to the non-formal guidance courses, it appeared that the college structures themselves were bureaucratic and more geared to the needs of full time students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Audited accounts for the period January 1999 until 31st March 2000.

"Youthstart Programme"
Training Youthreach Trainers in Guidance

Income and Expenditure Account
For the 27 Months Ended 31st March 2000

	<u>2000</u> <u>IR£</u>
Financial Support to Project	
ESF	306,681
Matching Funds Public	117,653
Total aid to Project	<hr/> 424,334
Project Expenditure	
Trainers costs	67,379
Premises, Equipment and Materials	41,847
Administration and General Overheads	285,208
Transnational Costs	27,833
Other	2,067
Total Project Expenditure	<hr/> 424,334
Returns to Exchequer	<hr/> 77,872

"Youthstart Programme"
Training Youthreach Trainers in Guidance

Source of Matching Funds
For the 27 Months Ended 31st March, 2000

2000
IRE

Source
Department of Education

117,653

"Youthstart Programme"

Training Youthreach Trainers in Guidance

Report of the Auditors
For the 27 Months Ended 31st March 2000

We have examined the Income and Expenditure Account and have obtained all the information and explanations we considered necessary for the purposes of our audit.

It is our opinion that proper records have been kept and the Income and Expenditure account which is in accordance therewith is accurate and reflects a true and fair view of the projects Income and Expenditure for the 27 months ended 31st March 2000.

It is our opinion that the expenditure is in accordance with EU regulations on eligibility as laid out in commission data sheets 1 to 22 (Eligible Expenditure under Structural Funds, 1st May 1997).

R. Brophy & Co.,
Chartered Accounts
& Registered Auditors,
Merchamp House,
Vernon Avenue,
Clontarf,
Dublin 3.

15th May 2000.

APPENDIX B STAFF DETAILS AND ROLES

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION
YOUTHSTART
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

John McCarthy
Director
Project Manager

Sarah Ryan Project Researcher	Gemma Marlowe/ Audrey Delany Project Assistant	Avril Burgess Project Co-ordinator	Richard Keane/ Liam Harkin Development Officer	Sarah Murphy Development Officer	Jane Murnaghan Executive Officer
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APPENDIX C

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

'TRAINING YOUTHREACH STAFF IN FRONT LINE GUIDANCE SKILLS'

YOUTHSTART NATIONAL ADVISORY CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE</u>
Department of Education & Science	Margaret Kelly, Principal Officer, Further Education Unit, Department of Education and Science.
Department of Education & Science	Torlach O'Connor, Psychological Service, Department of Education and Science,
Probation and Welfare Service	Martin Tansey, Principal Probation and Welfare Officer, Probation and Welfare Service.
Eastern Health Board	Mary O'Connell, Director of Special Projects, Eastern Health Board.
Health Promotion Unit	Owen Metcalfe, Department of Health.
Area Development Management Unit	Joan Walsh, Bernie Judge, Area Development Management Ltd.,
Combat Poverty Agency	David Silke, Combat Poverty Agency.
Teachers Union of Ireland	Billy FitzPatrick, Acting Research and Information Officer, Teacher's Union of Ireland.
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Oliver O'Donoghue, Press and Information Officer,

	Irish Congress of Trade Unions,
Irish Business and Employers Confederation	Padraig O'Grady, Executive IBEC, Irish Business and Employers Federation,
FÁS National Youthreach Co-Ordinator	Guss O'Connell, Project Co-Ordinator, National FÁS Youthreach Co- Ordinator, FÁS LES representative.
Dept. Ed National Youthreach Co-Ordinator	Dermot Stokes, National Youthreach Co-Ordinator, Curriculum Development Unit.
National Co-Ordinator of Senior Travellers Centres	Gerry Griffin, National Co-Ordinator of Senior Travellers Centres.
National Association of Youthreach Co-Ordinators	Michael Crowley, Chris Heffernan, Chairperson
National Economic and Social Forum	Sean O'Hegarty, Director NESF, National Economic and Social Forum.
Institute of Guidance Counsellors	Roisin Kelleher.
IACTO	Arthur O'Daly, Chairperson, Irish Association of Community Training Organisations.
Directors Association of Traveller Training Centres	Albert Kerr Chairperson, Directors' Association of Traveller Training Centres.
Irish Vocational Education Association	Deirdre Frawley, Chief Executive Officer, Limerick City VEC.
National Youth Federation	Tony Murphy, Chief Executive, National Youth Federation.

National Youth Council of Ireland

Peter Byrne,
Director,
National Youth Council of Ireland.

Youthstart NSS

Bernie McDonnell,
Helen Campbell,
Co-Ordinator,
Youthstart National Support
Structure.

CDVEC Psychological Service

Paul Hyland,
Psychologist,
City of Dublin VEC.

National Centre for Guidance in Education

John McCarthy,
Director,
National Centre for Guidance in
Education.

National Centre for Guidance in Education

Avril Burgess,
Project Co-Ordinator.

National Centre for Guidance in Education

Gemma Marlowe,
Audrey Delany,
Project Assistants.

National Association of Training Centres

Peter Geraghty,
Chairperson,
National Executive.

APPENDIX D

Guidance Needs Analysis (1997)

The National Centre for Guidance in Education carried out a needs analysis in ten Youthreach centres. The core staff attended the meeting in the majority of centres. In two centres the co-ordinator only was met. The meetings provided a useful forum in which to discuss the NCGE, the Youthstart project and guidance for early school leavers. The centres audited the existing guidance provision, assessed the guidance needs of trainees and the staff training needs. The following is a compilation of the results of the analysis.

1. THE EXISTING GUIDANCE PROVISION IN THE CENTRES

1.1 Personal and Social Guidance

- ↵ Access to a counsellor (Clondalkin, Edenderry, Leixlip)
- ↵ Home Liaison teacher (Ballyfermot)
- ↵ Personal Development and Life Skills Programme
- ↵ In-formal personal support/guidance
- ↵ Copping On programme
- ↵ Social Outings

1.2 Educational Guidance

- ↵ NCVA Modules in communications etc.
- ↵ In-formal advice on local training opportunities

1.3 Career Guidance

- ↵ Work placements
- ↵ Access to an Advocate (Leixlip, The Glen, Edenderry)
- ↵ Visits from outside agents i.e. Local Area Based Partnership (Clondalkin)
- ↵ Multi-media career resources (Clondalkin, Ballyfermot)
- ↵ Industry Visits (Edenderry)

2. THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF TRAINEES

2.1 Personal and Social Guidance

- ↵ Social and Personal Competencies
- ↵ Self Awareness
- ↵ Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills
- ↵ Assertiveness
- ↵ Personal Effectiveness
- ↵ Planning Skills
- ↵ Decision Making Skills

- ↳ Confidence and Self -Esteem Building
- ↳ Counselling
- ↳ Self Expression Skills
- ↳ Sexuality and Relationships Education
- ↳ Drugs Education

2.2 Educational Guidance

- ↳ Motivation and Learning
- ↳ Application to training
- ↳ Choices - post-primary, training courses

2.3 Career Guidance

- ↳ Career Information
- ↳ Employment Opportunity/Labour Market Awareness
- ↳ Interest and Aptitude Awareness
- ↳ Suitable and Supported Work Placement
- ↳ Further Education/Training Opportunities
- ↳ Job Searching Skills

3. YOUTHREACH STAFF: IDENTIFIED TRAINING NEEDS

Front-line Counselling

- ↳ listening skills
- ↳ crisis counselling
- ↳ issues and ethics
- ↳ developing and maintaining boundaries
- ↳ networking and referral

Working with Challenging Adolescents

- ↳ Developmental psychology (adolescents)
- ↳ Issues related to disadvantage
- ↳ Learning and behavioural difficulties
- ↳ Engaging young people

Communication Skills

- ↳ Mediation skills
- ↳ Conflict Management

Group Work

- ↳ Group facilitation skills
- ↳ Presentation skills
- ↳ Relationship/sexuality education

Career Information

- ↳ Accessing, managing and presenting information
- ↳ Labour market knowledge

Career Guidance

- ↳ Delivering career guidance in groups
- ↳ Interviewing skills
- ↳ Matching skills, aptitudes and interests
- ↳ Teaching job-seeking skills

APPENDIX E

Perceived Needs for Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in Youthreach, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres: Research Summary (1998)

A questionnaire was sent to all YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators, and Managers of Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training centres (133 in number) as part of the consultative process in the allocation of additional guidance resources to these centres, arising out of the mid-term review of EU structural funds 1994-1999. The questionnaire, designed by the National Co-ordinators of Youthreach was sent in early March 1998 from the Curriculum Development Unit. Sixty-five questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 49%. The sample of respondents was made up of thirty-four Youthreach centres, eighteen Community Training Workshops and thirteen Senior Traveller Centres.

The following common themes emerged throughout the analysis of the perceived needs for guidance, counselling and psychological services, the desired responses to those needs, and current responses to those needs:

- Need for counselling – access to a centre counsellor, frontline guidance and counselling training for staff;
- Need for adequate and efficient referral to psychological services;
- Need for vocational guidance

These themes were reiterated in the suggestions for a new service and how it should be integrated with existing provision.

Almost 90% of respondents reported the need for the provision of counselling for trainees. Two-thirds of respondents reported the need for referral to psychological services and just over one-third the need for the provision of vocational guidance. At present responses to these needs include: centre staff *'doing their best'* by falling back on limited resources (32% of respondents); providing access to a counsellor (29%); and using referral to psychological services (41%). Experience of referral to psychological services is mixed, lack of access being the main problem. One fifth of the centres reported not having access to any guidance, counselling or psychological services. These centres do not have access to guidance, counselling or psychological services to address the personal needs of trainees; they lack access to either an Advocate, Mentor or any other career-oriented guidance or counselling service; and they do not have any staff qualified or trained in the guidance or counselling area.

The same overall guidance, counselling and psychological service requirements emerged from respondents views on the desirable provision to respond to trainee needs – access to referral services, access to a centre-based/full-time counsellor, and need for training. The most frequently reported method of response is the provision of an efficient and reliable psychological service available by referral to all trainees who require it (45% of respondents).

Suggestions for a new service recommended that counselling, referral to psychological services and vocational guidance be provided in an integrated approach to addressing the needs of trainees in Youthreach, CTW's and STT's. The importance of easily accessible referral services was again stressed as crucial to the operation of any new service. It was proposed that the new service should incorporate adequate referral to psychological services, training in frontline guidance for existing staff, and on-site access to a counsellor in the form of a locally provided shared facility.

The results of the research clearly show a number of elements are necessary to establish a systematic response to trainee needs. Most important of these and most prevalent throughout respondents' answers was access to professional psychological and other specialist services. This access must be available to all trainees when required. Referral needs to be immediate and professional services must endeavour to see trainees within a limited timeframe. Of about equal importance are (i) the need for staff training in front-line guidance and counselling skills and (ii) the need for access to an onsite qualified counsellor, ideally full-time but possibly shared between centres. The combination of these two elements (i & ii) would begin to respond to the needs of trainees as expressed by nearly 90% of respondents. Trainees also require vocational guidance to prepare them for 'life after Youthreach'. These elements should be provided in a locally based integrated approach based on collaboration between clusters of Youthreach centres.

APPENDIX F

Summary External Evaluation of NCGE Youthstart Project (2000)

1. Introduction

This document summarises the results of an external evaluation of the National Centre for Guidance's YOUTHSTART project. The project aimed to embed guidance in the YOUTHREACH Programme through the provision of training and support in guidance to YOUTHREACH staff. It also aimed to impact on guidance provision and policy within YOUTHREACH and similar programmes. Through the project, training courses in non-formal guidance were developed and delivered by three colleges, NUI Cork, NUI Dublin, and St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. The project fits into a three-level strategy for developing the extent and quality of guidance and counselling in YOUTHREACH. The other two levels are on-site access to a part-time counsellor as a local shared facility, plus referral to psychological services where appropriate. The project was funded by the EU YOUTHSTART programme and the Department of Education and Science. NCGE collaborated with partners in Denmark, Germany, Spain and the UK in a transnational dimension to the project.

2. Evaluation methodology

Professor A.G. Watts, Director of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling, UK, carried out the evaluation in November 1999. The methodology used included interviews with key policy makers and with college staff involved with the training, focus group discussions with course participants, visits to YOUTHREACH centres, and inspection of project documentation.

3. YOUTHREACH provision for early school leavers

YOUTHREACH offers education and training to 7,000 early school leavers of up to two years duration. There are 3 types of YOUTHREACH provision: 74 VEC YOUTHREACH centres, 46 FÁS Community Training Workshops and 30 Senior Traveller Training Centres. Many of the 15 to 18 year old VEC and FÁS YOUTHREACH trainees present substantial learning, personal or social difficulties. Increasing numbers of adults attend Senior Traveller Training Centres, viewing the centres as part of an available educational continuum.

4. Context for the YOUTHSTART Pilot Project

There has been an increasing recognition of the importance of guidance and counselling in YOUTHREACH programmes:

- Growing awareness of the complex problems that YOUTHREACH trainees present.
- Increased attention being given to supporting trainees 'progression' both within the programmes and to further education, training or work afterwards.
- The recommendations of a 1996 ESF evaluation report that in addition to the availability of qualified personnel in counselling/guidance/advice, "all YOUTHREACH personnel....should be provided with training, as required, in front-line counselling skills" and that "this should be implemented soon after induction training".

Additionally, "a professional code of conduct should be drawn up for personnel in respect of responsibilities and boundaries in the area of counselling/guidance" (ESF Programme Evaluation Unit, 1996).

- The recommendations of a National Economic and Social Forum (1997) report that "health, guidance, counselling and support services be clustered around the programme".
- Financial allocation by a 1998 Task Force for specialist guidance, counselling and psychological services for early school leavers, along with financial commitment to 'comprehensive training of staff' in front-line skills.
- National YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators' survey (Ryan, 1998) for front-line training for YOUTHREACH staff, access to part-time counsellors and adequate referral services.

5. The delivery of NUI Certificate Courses in Non-Formal Guidance

NUI Cork, NUI Dublin, and St. Angela's College of Education were contracted by NCGE to deliver the training programmes in non-formal guidance. Following an audit of training needs with selected YOUTHREACH centres, NCGE held regional consultative meetings with potential participants, attended by representatives of the three colleges. The audit and meetings contributed to shaping the content of the courses. Few of the lecturing staff had any direct experience of YOUTHREACH, suggesting a need for "training the trainers". The location and time tabling of the courses were problematic for some participants. Another major issue was arranging substitution in their centres. 42 participants enrolled on the courses, and 28 completed them. The courses were the first to be focused specifically on the needs of YOUTHREACH staff and to be accredited.

5. Course Content

There were some differences between the courses provided by the colleges in terms of length, style and content, but all covered guidance and support, communication skills, working with challenging adolescents and research skills. The courses focused on three broad roles: enhancing aspects of the instructor/teacher role; equipping participants with some basic skills for working with individuals in a counselling/support role; and enabling them to offer some career guidance to trainees. The balance between the three roles varied across the courses. Most participants had not previously participated in any training for instructing/teaching in the YOUTHREACH context. Accordingly, the courses to some extent acted as a proxy for such training. Some elements of the three roles were likely to apply to all YOUTHREACH staff. In some cases, however, the counselling/support and career guidance roles could be "semi-specialist" roles within centres, allocated to particular members of staff.

6. The Views of Course Participants

The original NCGE YOUTHSTART plan was to provide training for all staff from 10 VEC YOUTHREACH centres which would act as 'beacons' for other centres. This plan was changed when these centres pulled out of the process because of difficulties with centre closures during training, the involvement of part-time staff, staff substitution, and industrial relations issues relating to pay and conditions current at the time. In response, course recruitment was changed to include individual staff from VEC centres, and staff from Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres.

The model of transversal training across all three YOUTHREACH strands was found to be very beneficial and worthy of future replication not only in the guidance field.

Some participants found the courses to be too theoretical and not sufficiently related to practice. In general, only limited attention was given to strategies for ensuring that centres made full use of the learning acquired from the courses. Many participants felt that the level of commitment required by the courses was not matched by their "currency", particularly in relation to progression to higher-level qualifications. Benefits reported by participants included increased listening and referral skills, awareness of boundaries, and opportunities for sharing experience with staff from other YOUTHREACH centres, for "refreshment", and for reflecting on their practice. All successful participants received course transcripts and marks attained on completion, with NUI certification and enhanced access to other relevant academic courses. Two colleges negotiated ECT points enabling subject exemptions for the participants.

7. Alternative accredited training in non-formal guidance

In addition to the three courses, the project involved the development of an alternative accreditation route through the National Council for Vocational Awards. Two modules were devised in Front Line Guidance and in the Psychology of Adolescence. This modular approach offers opportunities for:

- (a) increasing geographical access and flexibility in taking the training modules;
- (b) lateral and vertical progression routes, as other modules in related areas are built up;
- (c) developing a creative tension with college courses which are sometimes viewed as less flexible and less responsive to learner needs.

Concerns arising from this modular approach include:

- (a) the reduction of opportunities of sharing experience with staff from other YOUTHREACH centres during the learning process;
- (b) issues around support and supervision;
- (c) current lower status of NCVA qualifications in comparison with college accreditation;
- (d) uncertainties about equivalence and transfer arrangements in relation to educational qualifications.

8. Roll out? Appraisal of the training model developed in the project

In the light of the evidence collected, the evaluation report concluded that the courses, as presently structured, do not provide a *sufficient* model for national "roll-out". Extending the numbers of courses would involve considerable scaling up and associated costs. Possible alternative models include:

- To adapt the courses to provide a more broadly based induction training for all YOUTHREACH staff;
- To include guidance elements in this induction training but also to provide progression routes for those who wish to develop their guidance skills further;
- To develop supplementary ways of supporting all staff in their guidance roles e.g. offering shorter courses on a whole-staff basis, with provision for continued staff reflection and support into centre policies.

9. Issues arising from the project

- Should training in front-line guidance be mandatory or merely accessible to all YOUTHREACH staff?
- Is certified guidance training needed for all staff? Or for some, would shorter uncertified training suffice?
- Should certification be based on an academic and/or a vocational training model?
- Should strategy be based on training or also on systemic interventions, e.g. using visiting counsellors to work with staff as well as trainees?
- Could a generic YOUTHREACH training (as part of standardised staff induction) include guidance elements, with further guidance training being available to those in semi-specialist guidance roles?

10 The Evaluation Report recommendations

- The courses to be adapted to provide more broadly based induction training for all YOUTHREACH staff.
 - Guidance elements to be included in this training.
 - Progression routes to be provided for those wishing to develop their guidance skills further.
 - Consideration to be given to the need for stronger professionalism and a more consistent learning culture within YOUTHREACH.
 - The present courses to be run for a further year to maintain momentum while the implications of induction training and training progression routes are considered.
 - Adequate arrangements to be made for substitution while YOUTHREACH staff are being trained.
 - Other strategies to be considered to support all staff in their guidance roles, including running short courses plus regular support sessions within centres for all staff.
 - Piloting and evaluating the NCVA modules in relation to potential for future training in guidance and their relationship with academic routes.
 - More generally, consideration to be given to interweaving academic and vocational accreditation within structural developments in the national qualifications framework.
 - The Institute of Guidance Counsellors review whether it might broaden its membership to embrace people working in guidance and counselling roles in other sectors, and consequent implications for its membership requirements.
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APPENDIX G

Summary External Evaluation of the Transnational Network Project (2000)

TARGET-GROUP AND COMPETENCES

Introduction

1. This report addresses two of the issues discussed at the project meeting held in Skanderborg on 30 March 1999:
 - (a) The nature of the projects' target-groups.
 - (b) The competences required for guidance-related work with these target-groups.
2. As in my first two reports, the propositions offered are tentative in nature: comments and suggested amendments are welcome.

Target-group

3. The *immediate* target-group addressed by the projects is the adults working with specified groups of young people. The *ultimate* target-group is however the young people themselves.
4. The precise specification of the ultimate target-groups varies between the projects. All have in common, though, that they focus on young people who are unable to cope with, or to flourish within, the mainstream education and training system: hence the development of the innovative planning structures to which the projects are linked.
5. Because the innovative training structures have been developed as a residual alternative rather than as a positive option, they tend to represent a deficit model of the young people themselves: i.e. implying that young people lack the capacities or attitudes to survive within the mainstream system. It is also possible, however, to represent the young people in more positive terms: as having learning styles and/or goals which the mainstream system is not able to cater for effectively. In this view, the deficit is seen as belonging to the system rather than to the individual. For this view to be converted into practice, however, the alternative would need to be open as an option not only for the current target-group but also to young people who *are* able to cope with the mainstream system but who view the alternative system as catering *more* effectively for their needs (cf. Evaluation Report 1 on "Mainstreaming").

6. Some projects define young people in much more specific terms (e.g. lone parents, ex-offenders). In some cases, this may be because the projects find it more effective to work with specific sub-groups: for example, some German projects work solely with young women, or with *aussiedler* (Germans from Russia and other "German" territories before the Second World War).
7. It is however important to recognise that:
 - (a) All young people have a complex and distinctive mix of "problems". It is essential that their situations should be identified and understood at an individual level if interventions are to be effective. This requires going beneath stereotypes and "presenting" problems to underlying issues; it also emphasises the importance of strong diagnostic provision at an early stage in the contact between the project and its target-group.
 - (b) Even if it is difficult to avoid a deficit model in specifying the target-group, it is important that the *delivery* of projects should be based on valuing the young people's positive resources, helping them to build upon these resources and where appropriate to rechannel them to activities valued within the mainstream society.

Competences

8. The competences required for guidance work with the target-groups can be classified in a number of ways:
 - (a) Distinguishing between *knowledge*, *skills* and *attitudes*.
 - (b) Distinguishing between competences which can be developed by *training*, and those which are less "trainable" and so have to be addressed in *selection*.
 - (c) Distinguishing between those which are *personal* and those which are *professional* in nature.
 - (d) Distinguishing between those which are *core* (central) and those which are *supplementary* (optional).
 - (e) Distinguishing between those which are *generic* (applying to all those carrying out such work) and those which are *specific* to particular roles.
9. At the Skanderborg meeting, the items identified through the brainstorm at the Birmingham meeting were elaborated, supplemented, and classified in terms of the typology in para.8(a): i.e. into knowledge, skills and attitudes. There seemed however to be a tendency to place more items under "skills", and to recognise their links with items in the "knowledge" and "attitudes" columns.
10. In the Annex, therefore, a tentative rearrangement is offered, with items in the "knowledge" and "attitudes" columns being linked to the "skills" to which they

seem most closely related. I have tried to stay close to the items identified at the meeting but also, as agreed, to permit myself some licence in adapting and grouping them. I have not attempted to complete the task. If the group decides to do further work on this, it is free to decide whether to use this list as the basis, or to return to the "raw" list included in the minutes of the Skanderborg meeting.

11. Further work might include:
 - (a) Identifying gaps in the present list.
 - (b) Reviewing whether certain items should be regrouped or reallocated.
 - (c) Applying some of the other distinctions in para.8(b)-(e) above.

Annex

Knowledge

Youth culture
Adolescent development and
life transitions
- gender differences

Legal/medical issues

Assessment methods

Guidance methodologies
Labour market
- segmentation by gender

Skills

Communication skills
- for working with young people
- for working with their families
- use humour appropriately

Relationship-building skills
- engaging
- befriending
- trust
- respect
- non-paternalistic
- maintain confidentiality

Boundary-maintenance skills
- professional and emotional
detachment
- balance
- patience
- composure
- establish limits and apply them
- awareness of danger
- know when to let go
- know when to let go
not to create dependency

Group-leadership skills
- take responsibility
- activate
- set goals
- maintain pursuit of goals
- know when to take action
- know when to take risks

Assessment skills
- able to access where young
person is
- identify problems
- estimate needs for help
- distinguish presenting and
underlying issues

Guidance skills
- enable young people to
see choices
- able to distinguish between information,
guidance, counselling and advice
- provide effective feedback
(positive, negative) to young person
- make young person co-responsible
in the process

Attitudes

Empathy

Sense of humour

Non-judgmental
- acceptance of what
young person wants
- respect for values and
choices of others
Personal concern
- solidarity

Self awareness
- abilities, values
emotions

Sense of adult identity
- to be a holistic person
- not mimic young
person's behaviour/style
speech/values
- provide positive role
model: showing adults
are o.k.

Democratic

Imagination

Recognise young people
as individuals

Other agencies

Advocacy skills
Referral skills
Networking skills
Teamwork skills

Funding sources

Administrative skills
- programme development
- fund-raising

Self-development skills
- self-evaluation

Openness to learning and
self-development